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“

If I could only belong to one organization or go to one conference, it would be ADAA.”

Brian Schmaus, PhD



**ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION
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Brian Schmaus, PhD, has been to many conferences related to his field, but going to the ADAA conference has been a bright spot ever since he first attended in 2008 in Savannah.



At the time he was still a graduate student at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Illinois. "I saw right away: This organization is for me," says Brian, now a licensed psychologist at the Anxiety Treatment Center of Greater Chicago.

The director of his clinical practicum had recommended ADAA, and Brian wasn't sure what to expect. He had been to a much larger conference and one that was heavily research-oriented. "I immediately liked the composition and size of ADAA," Brian says. "I get to see a lot of people in my field — my colleagues and also some leaders in the field I may not have access to at other conferences."

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Most of the ADAA symposia and workshops have 20 to 50 people in the room, creating a friendly ask-anything dynamic. *"It's so much easier to interact in that kind of setting,"* he says. Many of Brian's key takeaways come from that kind of interaction. The way the conference reaches across the disorders and pulls together different disciplines and people is also key. *"ADAA has a great balance in terms of size and talking about research and clinical work."*

Brian is in an enviable position because several of his colleagues from the Anxiety Treatment Center of Greater Chicago also attend and present sessions. *"That's something we aspire to. I don't think other clinics do that,"* he says. Having several staff attend builds camaraderie. It also makes them better practitioners because it gives them a chance to talk after the conference and really figure out how to apply new techniques and research to their daily challenges. This year Brian is giving a presentation with three of his colleagues.

"ADAA helps me be a better psychologist, and in turn I'm better able to help my clients overcome their fears."

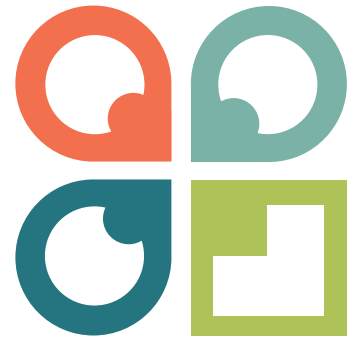
"I never know who I'll meet."

-Brian says.

For him, the conference has become the place to network with colleagues. They could be graduate school peers or people he met last year, or a whole new set of friends who bring new ideas and topics of conversation.

Brian appreciates so much about the ADAA conference. *"It's allowed me to see the country and visit places I never would have gone,"* he jokes. But more than nice scenery, the professionalism, balance of research and practice, and atmosphere have **kept him coming back every year since 2008.**

"I enjoy everything about ADAA. If I could only belong to one organization or go to one conference, it would be ADAA."



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