

TOPICAL WEBINAR FOR APA MEMBERS

An Educational Resource from Upheal

The Adaptive Mind: How AI Changes the Way Clinicians Think

January 30, 2026

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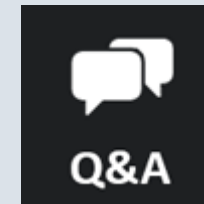
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Ted Faneuff

PRESENTER

- Ted Faneuff, LCSW
 - *Head of Clinical Operations, Upheal*

The Adaptive Mind

How AI is quietly changing the way clinicians think

- Moving beyond the ethics checklist
- Subtle shifts in memory and judgment

(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015; Goddard et al., 2012)

- Intentional vs. passive adaptation

(Gilbert, 2015; Chirayath et al., 2025)

The Question Beneath the Tools

- Moving beyond features and functions
- How AI shapes attention and salience
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- Shifts in what feels “complete” vs. open
(Gilbert, 2015; Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- Cognitive impact across experience levels
(Gilbert, 2015; von Zahn et al., 2025)

What Many Clinicians Are Already Feeling

- Increased speed and organization
(Babu & Joseph, 2024; Vaidyam et al., 2023)
- Reduced documentation burden
(Babu & Joseph, 2024)
- Subtle changes in reflection and monitoring
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- Different impacts for trainees vs. experienced clinicians
(Gilbert, 2015; von Zahn et al., 2025)

Offloading Is Adaptive...Until We Forget What We've Offloaded

- Cognitive offloading as an adaptive human strategy
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015)
- Reduced cognitive load and improved task performance
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015)
- Shifts in where cognitive responsibility is held
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)

It's Not Just Memory

- Offloading affects monitoring, not only recall
(Gilbert, 2015; Chirayath et al., 2025; Goddard et al., 2012)
- External supports reduce internal checking
(Gilbert, 2015; Goddard et al., 2012)
- Cognitive responsibility shifts to the environment
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015; Chirayath et al., 2025)

From Recall to Reliance

- External access reduces depth of internal encoding
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015)
- Reliable systems increase reliance on external output
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- Framing shapes downstream judgment
(Goddard et al., 2012; von Zahn et al., 2025)

Meaning Is Now Co-Constructed

- **AI outputs act as interpretive anchors**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Framing narrows exploratory sensemaking**
(Sensemaking with AI; Goddard et al., 2012)
- **Meaning making becomes distributed across human and system**
(Gilbert, 2015; von Zahn et al., 2025; Sensemaking with AI)

Faster Isn't the Same as Deeper

- Time pressure reduces metacognitive monitoring
(*Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025*)
- Automation increases reliance under speed and load
(*Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025*)
- Efficiency shifts reflection toward confirmation
(*Sensemaking with AI; Goddard et al., 2012*)

Capacity Gained, Curiosity at Risk

- **Automation increases confidence by reducing cognitive effort**
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Metacognitive monitoring may decline with reliable support**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Tradeoffs emerge between efficiency and exploration**
(Sensemaking with AI; Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)

When Thinking Quietly Changes

- **Reliable automation changes cognitive monitoring**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Adaptation occurs without obvious error signals**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Confidence and ease increase under support**
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015; Chirayath et al., 2025)

Metacognition: Knowing What You Know — and What You Don't

- **Metacognitive monitoring requires effort and time**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Reliable guidance reduces self-checking**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Oversight declines under automation**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)

When Confidence and Understanding Decouple

- **Automation increases confidence without added insight**
(Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025; Goddard et al., 2012)
- **Monitoring declines while certainty rises**
(Chirayath et al., 2025; Goddard et al., 2012; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Acceptance of guidance increases under support**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)

Subtle Shifts, Not Obvious Errors

- **Automation bias is often invisible to users**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Anchoring narrows exploration**
(Sensemaking with AI; Goddard et al., 2012; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Alternative interpretations are less likely to surface**
(Sensemaking with AI; Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)

Not a Moral Failure — a Cognitive One

- **Cognitive adaptation follows environmental cues**
(Gilbert, 2015; Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Monitoring declines without reflective support**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Risk emerges from context, not intent**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)

From Predictable Risk to Intentional Practice

- Cognitive effects of automation are predictable
(*Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; Gilbert, 2015*)
- Metacognitive monitoring is modifiable with support
(*Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025*)
- Design and practice can support oversight
(*Sensemaking with AI; von Zahn et al., 2025; Chirayath et al., 2025*)

Compliance and Curiosity Are Often Treated as Opposites

- Documentation systems prioritize standardization
(Rubin et al., 2024; Rollwage et al., 2023; Henry & Cross, 2025)
- Compliance demands shape clinical attention
(Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)
- Reflection is often displaced by administrative requirements
(Rubin et al., 2024; Babu & Joseph, 2024)

Automation Can Reinforce This Tension

- **Automation accelerates documentation workflows**
(Rollwage et al., 2023; Babu & Joseph, 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)
- **Speed can further compress reflection**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Systems may optimize for compliance over insight**
(Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)

This Is Where Scaffolding Matters Most

- **Reflection must be intentionally supported**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Scaffolding can coexist with compliance**
(Rubin et al., 2024; Rollwage et al., 2023)
- **Prompts and structure preserve clinical thinking**
(von Zahn et al., 2025; Chirayath et al., 2025; Sensemaking with AI)

Designing for Both Ethical Fidelity and Growth

- **Workflows shape cognitive engagement**
(Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Reflection can be designed into systems**
(von Zahn et al., 2025; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Ethical practice includes preserving judgment**
(Babu & Joseph, 2024; Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)

What This Looks Like in Practice

- **AI outputs treated as starting points**
(Sensemaking with AI; von Zahn et al., 2025; Goddard et al., 2012)
- **Reflection occurs before final documentation**
(Sensemaking with AI; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Judgment remains clinician-led**
(Babu & Joseph, 2024; Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)

Cognitive Responsibility in an AI-Augmented Practice

- **AI reshapes how clinicians attend, remember, and reason**
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Goddard et al., 2012; Sensemaking with AI; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Cognitive effects are predictable and manageable**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Responsibility includes how tools shape thinking**
(Babu & Joseph, 2024; Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)

The Adaptive Clinician

- **Adaptation is a feature of human cognition**
(Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Gilbert, 2015; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Reflection requires ongoing support**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Expertise includes metacognitive awareness**
(Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)

A Practical Reframe

- **Ask how tools shape thinking, not just outcomes**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Morrison & Richmond, 2020; Chirayath et al., 2025)
- **Use AI as scaffolding, not substitution**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Rubin et al., 2024; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Design workflows that invite reflection**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Rubin et al., 2024; von Zahn et al., 2025)

Final Takeaway

- **AI can support or erode reflection**
(Goddard et al., 2012; Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025)
- **Cognitive effects depend on design and use**
(Chirayath et al., 2025; von Zahn et al., 2025; Sensemaking with AI)
- **Clinical judgment remains central**
(Babu & Joseph, 2024; Rubin et al., 2024; Henry & Cross, 2025)

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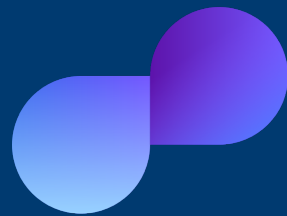
AUDIENCE Q&A

FINAL THOUGHTS

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