

ABSTRACT PORTAL OPENS: FEBRUARY 9, 2026

WE LIVE IN A TUMULTUOUS TIME, one in which numerous issues at the societal level also sow division within our own community — between scientists and clinicians, younger and older generations, and the politically left and right, to name just a few. Simultaneously, mental health services and research infrastructure are facing extraordinary challenges that threaten to reduce access to care and dissolve mental health research programs on minoritized populations, all the while mental illness rates continue to climb across the lifespan.

At ABCT, we know that the only path forward emphasizes rigorous science and centers compassion for each other, our clients, and our clinical and research communities. Compassion and science combined can help us broadly expand access to evidence-based mental healthcare. To accomplish this and meet this challenging moment, we need to engage in productive dialogue, even when divided, using all the expertise and heart our field has to offer.

ABCT's 60th Annual Convention will showcase advances in research, practice, and education that integrate compassion and science. Additionally, we will emphasize bringing our community together to engage in evidence-based collective action, whether that be advocacy, innovative research, or cutting-edge clinical practice. Please join us in Baltimore in 2026 to collectively envision and enact a more united and compassionate future as we wrestle with some of the big challenges facing our society and field.

We interpret this theme broadly and encourage related submissions. Topics consistent with this theme include, but are not limited to:

- Improving mental health outcomes with CBT approaches that emphasize compassion (e.g., DBT, ABBT/ACT).
- Increasing compassion and communication between different groups within our professional community (e.g., panel discussions that compassionately explore challenging topics with participants who disagree) and highlighting evidence-based strategies for engaging in difficult conversations.
- Highlighting scientific advances in the study of compassion.
- Improving access to evidence-based mental health care in the community through advocacy at the local, federal, or international level.
- Combating stigma and oppression in mental health practice and research by centering those with lived experience.
- Improving mental health training by incorporating a compassionate approach to the delivery and study of mental illness.
- Understanding how mental health professionals are navigating the current socio-political climate and providing evidence-based strategies for meeting this moment and avoiding burnout.
- Examining the impact of public policy on mental health research, training, and clinical practice.
- Advancing dissemination and implementation of CBT with community partners.
- Addressing the mental health needs of communities that are losing access to healthcare resources or facing other threats.
- Using evidence-based strategies to improve mental health in those who are struggling with the current socio-political environment.

Submissions may be in the form of Symposia, Individual Oral Presentations, Clinical Round Tables, Panel Discussions, and Posters. Submissions outside of this theme are also welcome and will not be penalized. Submissions that are judged to be particularly thematic will be recognized in the online program for the 2026 Convention.

ABSTRACT DEADLINE: MARCH 13, 2026