

Announcement of The Elle Foundation's 2026 Awards

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Letter to the Editor

Carrying the message and bridging the gap

The Elle Foundation began issuing awards for excellence in the year 2000, to showcase novel innovation by those changing the recovery landscape, to say thank you and to provide hope for addicts still suffering. The first award recipient was Dr. Deborah C. Mash, a neurology professor and neuroscientist at the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami, and the founder of what was at that time the largest brain bank in the world. She is famous for her discovery of the coca-ethylene molecule and the nor-ibogaine metabolite. Dr. Mash was studying RNA while the rest of the world was getting excited about DNA.

Back in 1995, when I incorporated The Elle Foundation in Dallas, Texas, we created the Dragon Slayer Ministry for addicted parents and their children. At that time our mission statement was to stop the generational cycle of addiction. At that time, such a mission seemed improbable if not impossible. But today, in 2026, thirty-one years later, we have the diagnostic and therapeutic applications to do just that, stop the cycle. The future is now.

Genetic addiction risk score (GARS) testing is invaluable for prediction and prevention of dopaminergic disruption which degrades health over the lifespan. We can be so much more effective in treating addiction before it begins. Treatment for reward deficiency syndrome (RDS), the cause, the real phenotype of addiction and mental health disorder clusters is available through RDS Consortium scientists. We believe that by treating causal influences the symptoms or endotypes, such as addictive behavioral patterns become manageable if not moot. RDS Consortium scientists not only created the new field of medical science, psychiatric genomics, but some have quite literally written the textbook.

In recent years, several RDS scientists have received awards from the Elle Foundation as we believe their discoveries are changing the addiction recovery landscape, improving traditional treatment protocol with neuroscience, and with enhanced genomic applications, improving patient experience. We recognize the contributions and body of work of scientist Kenneth Blum who discovered the first addiction gene and coined the phrase RDS, which contributed greatly to global understanding of underlying neurogenetic causal influences of chemical imbalances which lead to symptoms of mental health disorders like addiction. We recognize Raj Badgaiyan, MD, one of the world's first genomic psychiatrists, who also invented neuroimaging equipment for diagnostic purposes.

Last year, the esteemed Dr. Mark Gold and Dr. Panayotis Thanos were honored for groundbreaking scientific contributions, enlarging perspective within the research world. We celebrate their roles as distinguished professors, guiding the next generation of doctors with applications from the genomic era of medicine. Both are still actively contributing to the scientific database.

Additionally, this year, two famous RDS Consortium scientists have been

chosen to be honored with 2026 awards. Their research contributions are legendary. Both are professors teaching psychiatry and/or psychology, including understanding of the RDS paradigm. Even more important for the recovery world and those still suffering is the fact that our 2026 recipients are both practitioners offering their services as psychiatrist and therapist to RDS patients, who may not be able to find treatment for RDS elsewhere in the practitioner-layperson world. The Elle Foundation wishes to shine a social media spotlight on Dr. Edward Modestino and Dr. Igor Elman.

Edward Justin Modestino, PhD, is a neuroscientist, professor, and licensed mental health counselor. After completing his PhD, he did two post-doctoral fellowships in neuroimaging, one in psychiatry and another in neurology. He co-directs the Electroencephalogram (EEG)/Brainwave laboratory and directs the Brain and Behavioral Laboratory at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, where he teaches in the psychology department. He is also a highly respected associate member of Ken Blum's lab and the RDS Consortium of global scientists. He sits on the board of editorial committees for several peer reviewed journals where he is influential in raising awareness and standards for publication.

Dr. Modestino's research broadly encompasses cognitive neuroscience and the brain-behavior relationship using various modalities, including neuroimaging, psychophysiology, neuropsychological assessment, surveys, and genetic studies. One branch of research focuses on using these modalities to study brain disorders like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy, migraines, Parkinson's disease, comorbidities (ADHD with comorbid narcolepsy, narcolepsy with comorbid migraines), and cutting-edge psychopathologies like RDS and rejection sensitivity dysphoria (RSD) in ADHD. A second branch involves attentional processes, including those with ADHD. A third branch involves studying consciousness and religious cognition. Research is conducted at Curry College at The Bruce Steinberg EEG Laboratory, online and at various institutions with collaborators.

Dr. Modestino continues to make significant contributions in neuroscience, expanding perspective and understanding of genomic era applications like the genetic addiction risk severity (GARS) test. He stresses the importance of GARS in prevention and prediction of pathology. He began exploring RDS with Dr. Blum in 2014. He has contributed to enlarging, understanding so that patients, students and practitioners can understand the importance of this new concept, as an umbrella term, which spans a range of diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders diagnoses, including addictive, impulsive, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and the implications for improved treatment.

Dr. Modestino has his finger on the pulse of the RDS patient population and is in a unique position to guide the future of treatment through his roles as research scientist, professor, and licensed mental health counselor/therapist. Many psychiatric disorders have dopamine deficiency in common. Some also have dopamine disruption/dysregulation, including dopamine surfeit as well as deficiency. By bringing cutting edge awareness of new brain imaging, diagnostic, and treatment applications from the genomic era of addiction medicine,

into the classroom and the therapist's office, with his unique charismatic style, Dr. Edward Justin Modestino is an obvious choice for the 2026 Elle Foundation "Award for Excellence" in neuroscience and mental health counseling.

The focus of his counseling interests and specialties includes anxiety disorders, depression, ADHD (often with RSD), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, neurodivergence and couples counseling, in addition to assisting those with developmental traumas and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from emotional and other abuse, often from caregivers/family members with personality disorders. Dr. Modestino uses an eclectic blend of approaches, including a Rogerian base combined with cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, experiential therapies, including Gendlin's focusing (also with a Rogerian base), and the psychodynamic therapy approach of Alice Miller. Additionally, he is a certified hypnotherapist and uses this to assist clients with performance anxiety, test anxiety, public speaking and other anxiety-related issues.

Like other gifted award recipients who have preceded him, Dr. Modestino is making a difference in real time. On behalf of the Elle Foundation, the recovery world, those still suffering, those who have died in their addictions, the families, and the next generation of children, we thank you for your excellence and for your service to humanity. We are pleased to honor you with a 2026 "Award for Excellence" in neuroscience and mental health counseling.

Dr. Igor Elman, MD, is a psychiatrist who uses both traditional and genomic approaches. He is Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry with a subspecialty certification in addiction psychiatry. Following the completion of his residency and fellowships at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH)/Harvard Medical School (HMS), he dedicated over 20 years to serving on the HMS faculty. Dr. Elman also served as chair of two academic Departments of Psychiatry at Boonshoft School of Medicine, Wright State University and Cooper Medical School, Rowan University. His other leadership roles included medical director for HMS-affiliated Community Mental Health Center and at the Providence VA Medical Center Substance Abuse Treatment Program. Currently, Dr. Elman serves on the medical and teaching staff at Cambridge Health Alliance/HMS, is a senior lecturer (part-time) at HMS, a distinguished adjunct professor at Ariel University (Israel), and an adjunct professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

His broad research interests focus on the role of reward and motivational systems in the pathophysiology of several neuropsychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, PTSD, and addictions as well as medical conditions including pain and metabolic ailments. Since the NIMH fellowship, Dr. Elman has been involved in investigating the psychopathology and treatment of schizophrenia. He was involved in the early pivotal studies on glutamate theory of schizophrenia and was the first to report schizophrenia-related stress-induced hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis abnormalities and utilize tracer kinetic methodology (previously only used in cardiac research)

to determine the mechanisms of elevations in the stress hormone, norepinephrine, by atypical antipsychotic drugs, clozapine and risperidone.

As clinical core Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse program project titled “fMRI brain mapping of cocaine actions”. At MGH, Dr. Elman established a clinical research program involving supervising fellows, visiting scientists, undergraduate students, and research nurses. He designed and implemented studies on neuroendocrine and psychological aspects of addiction to opioids and cocaine, introduced biochemical assays of carbohydrate-deficient transferrin and fatty acid ethyl esters for characterizing research subjects, and conducted a long-term follow-up study to ascertain the clinical safety of cocaine administration in the functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner. Dr. Elman’s lab was the first to uncover, using validated probes, the hyporesponsive reward system underlying emotional numbing symptoms in PTSD patients and their high proclivity for substance abuse. These alterations may be targeted through preventive and therapeutic efforts.

Dr. Elman’s current research program, funded through a foundation grant, assesses metabolic and pain outcomes of medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. His research on metabolic factors involved in reward and addiction has resulted in a patent entitled “Treatment of sequelae of psychiatric disorders” and a recently coined eloquent term of “diabetophrenia” referring to a disorder encompassing both metabolic and psychotic components thus turning an astute clinical observation into a measurable scientific fact.

Dr. Elman’s publication record exceeds 150 peer reviewed articles including numerous comprehensive reviews on addiction, pain, obesity, and suicide. These reviews not only discuss multifaceted neuroscientific issues but also advocate for the interdisciplinary collaborative care model, raising clinicians’ awareness and sharpening their sensitivity to the unmet medical needs of psychiatric patients. Due to the wide appeal of

these papers, some have been included in psychiatry residency program’s curriculum as required reading material. In his role as editor-in-chief of *Psychology Research and Behavioral Management* and editor of special issues for psychiatry research, he guides numerous investigators worldwide.

He continues to contribute to the science of genetic addiction risk, supporting GARS or GARS utilized in RDS solution systems. As a highly respected genomic psychiatrist, Dr. Elman is a senior member of the RDS Consortium of scientists. He is bringing awareness of genomic advancements into the layperson practitioner world, by teaching genomic perspective to next generation psychiatry students, as well as by advocating patient care with enhanced protocol using genomic era applications.

On behalf of the Elle Foundation, the recovery world, those still suffering, those who died in the disease, their families, and the next generation, we applaud you for the body of your work, your service, and we thank you for your excellence. We are proud to honor Dr. Igor Elman, with a life-time achievement award.

For more information on prior “Award of Excellence” recipients, RDS solutions, research articles, and education videos, check out ElleResource.com. This website is provided by The Elle Foundation, to provide awareness and access to RDS resources. If you need a referral to RDS Consortium practitioners, genomic psychiatrists, genomic psychologists, therapists, or counselors; wish to be screened for eligibility to participate in Elle Foundation Research 200s or 300s series case study on the efficacy of RDS solutions or need contact information on where to find the GARS test, please call 561-597-3572.

A brief reminder, the Elle Foundation is a private charitable effort. We do not sell anything. We do not solicit nor accept donations. We simply want to help those who are still suffering get the best treatment possible, which means having access to genomic era applications in a world which only sells traditional treatment.