



The ONTABA Analyst

In this issue

From the President's Desk

2

Announcements

3

Committee Updates

7

From the Membership
feature article by
Dr. Nicole Neil

8

The Cusp

11

What Would You Do?

12

ONTABA Members

14

Presenting the line up for
ONTABA's Annual Conference:

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WILLIAMS
STURMEY

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From the President's Desk

On cultural behaviour analysis...

Houmanfar, Alavosius, Morford, Herbst and Reimerthe (2016) suggest that “the science of behavior has reached a point where we can contribute to cultural change by supporting social actions by individuals in positions of power and creating behavioral technologies that promote human well-being” (p. 5). The authors describe the concept of macrobehaviour as the “operant behavior of multiple individuals that together has a cumulative effect on the environment” (p. 12) and make a plea for behaviour analysts to apply the resultant technology to “promote prosocial behaviour and eliminate aversive conditions within cultural systems” (p. 21).

During the last year, we have observed unprecedented movement within our field and have been given an opportunity to advance the science of behaviour in the service of vulnerable individuals, families, and society. The completion of ONTABA's expert task force report, [Evidenced-Based Practices for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#), marks a new stage in our organization's evolution. By harnessing the passion and expertise of our growing membership and by forming powerful partnerships with parents, advocates, practitioners, and organizations with common interests at home and abroad, we can shape policy and promote an application of our science that leads to positive outcomes for those that need it most. We plan to make these scientific and political macrobehaviours a permanent part of ONTABA's repertoire.

That repertoire is quickly expanding. Last month we met with the Minister of Education to advocate for the right to evidence-based behaviour analytic services in Ontario schools, we solidified partnerships within the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and Behaviour Supports Ontario to bring behavioural gerontology to the forefront of services for seniors, and we advanced our efforts in working towards safe, habilitative environments for adults with developmental disabilities and dual diagnoses through meetings with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This month, after

extensive consultation and research (and hundreds of hours of work by dedicated volunteers) we will present ONTABA's vision of the Ontario Autism Program to parents, professionals, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the OAP Implementation Advisory Committee, and to the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Expert Committee. In each of these instances, the operant behaviour of many passionate individuals can occasion a much larger cumulative impact on the environment.



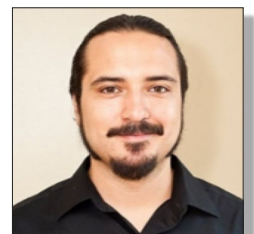
We plan to make these scientific and political macrobehaviours a permanent part of ONTABA's repertoire.

As behaviour analysts we have dedicated our lives to the betterment of society and to individuals who all too often experience aversive conditions. While individuals with autism and their families remain without life changing behaviour analytic services, while adults with developmental disabilities languish in subhuman conditions in group homes, on psychiatric inpatient units, in prisons and on the streets, and while our elders experience abuse, isolation and overmedication in response to the challenging behaviours associated with aging and dementia, we remain far from the “good life” which Skinner envisioned for us as a society.

Each of us has a responsibility of leadership within our communities and the ability to contribute to cultural change, but our ability to promote prosocial behaviour and to eliminate aversive conditions within our cultural systems is contingent upon our interlocking efforts.

Let's keep working together to save the world with behaviour analysis.

Sincerely,



Louis Busch, President
Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis

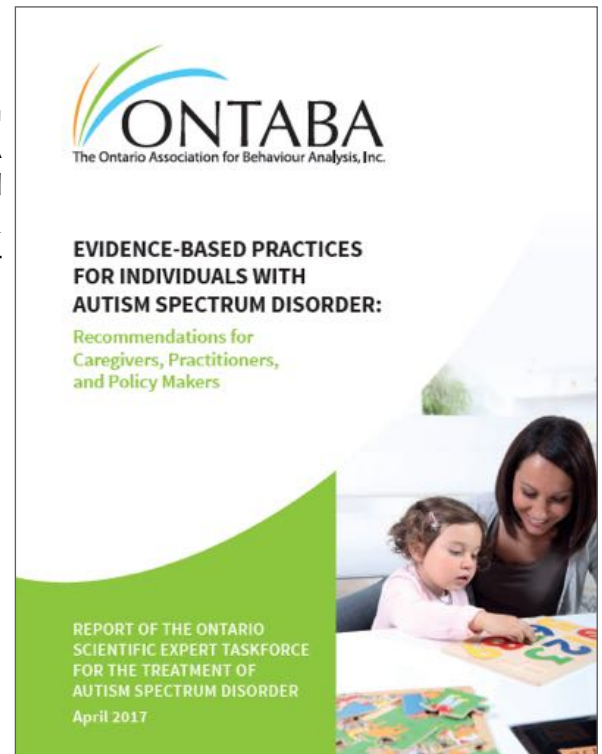
Announcements

Ontario experts unveil scientific report with recommendations for the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder



In June 2017, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will launch the new Ontario Autism Program. To help individuals with autism access quality services that they deserve, ONTABA assembled a group of behaviour analysts with prominent research and practice expertise. This expert committee has released a comprehensive scientific report on Evidence-Based Practices for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This report emphasizes:

- Individuals with autism have the right to receive effective, individualized, evidence-based intervention across their lifespan.
- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is the gold standard evidence-based intervention for individuals with ASD.
- The type, intensity, and duration of ABA interventions for individuals with autism should be based on need to maximize the individual's success.
- Individuals with autism receiving services and their families should be partners in decision-making throughout intervention.



This scientific report was informed by over 1,000 studies and existing practice guidelines. It is intended to help answer critical questions being posed by parents, professionals, and government on how services should be provided for children and youth with autism in Ontario. Specifically, it addresses intensity and duration of services, how clinical decisions should be made, and how services should be planned, implemented, supervised, and monitored.

"There is overwhelming evidence that ABA interventions can dramatically improve the quality of life of individuals with autism and their families" said Louis Busch, President of ONTABA. "Individuals should be able to access high quality ABA interventions as needed throughout their lives. In addition to advocating for quick access to high quality individualized behaviour analytic services, we are concerned that children and families are protected from false or misleading claims about effective treatments and from unqualified practitioners."

"We sincerely hope the information in this report will be helpful in very practical ways to families and practitioners as they try to make the best decisions for their children and their clients. We also hope this information will help policy makers use public dollars most effectively to meet the needs of this vulnerable population" said Dr. Julie Koudys, Chair of the Expert Committee. Read the full report here: <http://www.ontaba.org/pdf/ONTABA%20OSETT-ASD%20REPORT%20WEB.pdf>.

For more information on about this report, visit <http://www.ontaba.org> or contact us at contact@ontaba.org

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Keep an eye on our website for our upcoming online store!
www.ontaba.org



Have an idea for an item you'd like to see?
Let us know at swag@ontaba.org

Got something for an upcoming issue?

The ONTABA Analyst is released quarterly, the subsequent issue months for 2017 are: **July** and **October**. Interested? Send it to us!
newsletter@ontaba.org



Suggestions or feedback?

Could we really call ourselves behaviour analysts if we didn't want feedback?

contact@ontaba.org or newsletter@ontaba.org




Ontario Association For Behaviour Analysis

SAVE THE DATE

August 18th 2017

JOIN US FOR OUR 2017 SUMMER EVENT

Daytime workshop and evening presentation with Greg Hanley, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Lunch, drinks, door prizes and more!
Location: 918 Bathurst Street, Toronto

Watch your inbox and ONTABA's Facebook page for pricing information and more details.



GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE
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MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

The Satellite Conference Committee is pleased to support upcoming events hosted by Brock University and by Breakthrough Autism



Brock University is hosting two exciting speaker series:

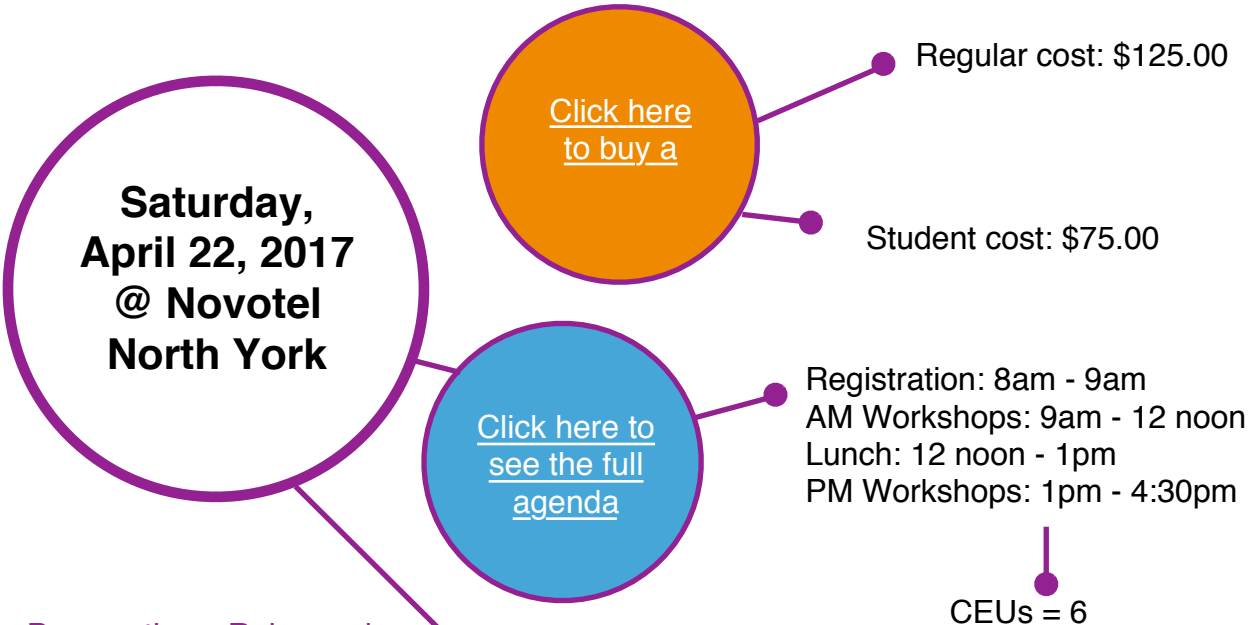
Dr. Wayne Fisher will present Functional Analysis and Treatment of Severe Destructive Behavior in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or Intellectual Disabilities on **April 27th 2017**. **Dr. Cathleen Piazza** will present on Assessment and Treatment of Children Diagnosed with Pediatric Feeding Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorder on **April 28th 2017**. For workshop and registration information, please visit: <https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/departments-and-centres/centre-for-applied-disability>



Questions? Contact info@breakthroughautism.ca

Changing perspectives:

a fresh take on building your skills & developing your career as a Behavior Analyst



The Perspectives, Roles and Repertoires of an Effective Behavior Analyst

The Role of Mentoring in Career Blazing in Behavior Analysis

Speakers



Judith E. Favell, Ph.D

Panel Discussion on Professional Development and Leadership in Behavior Analysis



Linda A. LeBlanc, Ph.D, BCBA-D

Making Teaching Fun Using Naturalistic and Game Based Teaching Strategies

Committee Updates

Conference

ONTABA is pleased to announce that in addition to **Dr. Patrick Friman** and **Dr. Larry Williams**, **Dr. Peter Sturme**y will be joining the conference as a keynote speaker. Further information about the presentations will follow in the coming months so keep an eye out for it!

The call for papers is currently being finalized and will be posted early May. Take the chance to showcase your own amazing work for your fellow colleagues in the province. We are looking forward to reviewing your submissions.

Our host hotel is the Intercontinental Hotel Toronto Centre once again which is conveniently attached to the conference venue. A special conference rate has been secured for \$249.00 per night. This rate is guaranteed as long as there is availability so avoid disappointment and book soon! All the information about the hotel, pricing, and location can be found by clicking on the attendee link (<https://aws.passkey.com/go/ONTABA>). Should you have any questions please contact conference@ontaba.org.

Sincerely,

Your Conference Committee

ONTABA Education Task Force

Meeting with the Minister of Education

The Education Task Force continues to work on its mandate of advocating for effective and ethical behaviour analytic services within Ontario's education system. Committee members submitted a briefing note to the Ministry of Education in December 2016.

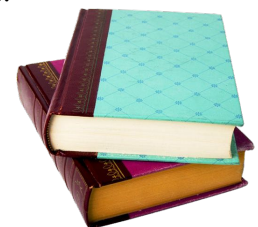
On March 30th, 2017 a few members of the Task Force had the opportunity to meet with the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, at her office in downtown Toronto. Committee members discussed the current state of available supports within schools for individuals with autism as well as other special needs. The discussion continued around a review of the limited funding and requirements for hiring Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBAs) within school boards as well as the limited training opportunities in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) for teachers and school support staff. The committee members brought forward some models from the United States on implementing ABA within schools, such as Dr. Andy Bondy's Pyramid Approach to Education and shared research on the model with the Minister.

Another point for discussion was the importance of collaborating with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) in creating a smooth and effective transition and implementation of the new Ontario Autism Program once it rolls out in June of 2017. The need for a revision of Policy/Program Memorandum 140 (PPM 140) was also on the agenda and included a recommendation to review evidence-based practices research and specifically, the newly released Ontario Scientific Expert Taskforce for the Treatment of ASD (OSETT-ASD) report. Finally, a discussion of the importance of regulation of behaviour analysts took place with an emphasis on establishing quality standards to ensure that the consumers of behaviour analytic services have protection from risk.

Minister Hunter was open to the agenda items brought forward at the meeting and the Education Task Force looks forward to building a collaborative relationship with the Ministry of Education.

Sincerely,

Your Education Task Force



From the Membership

Experiments in Practice: The Brief Experimental Analysis



Nicole Neil, Ph.D., BCBA-D¹

Western University

Deciding which treatments to use for a learner can often feel like conducting a series of experiments. Why not make it one? Brief experimental analysis (BEA) is a process in which instructional variables are systematically presented to a learner to determine which are best suited for teaching a skill. Practitioners choose among multiple or competing treatment options based on the demonstration of experimental control by one or more of those treatment options. Experimental control is demonstrated using single subject design, most commonly, an alternating treatment design. Control is demonstrated when one sees clear changes in responding across different conditions. In essence, it is an experimental functional analysis of instructional variables.

We are aware of the utility of an experimental functional analysis as *the* assessment tool for identifying the environmental variables maintaining problem behaviour. Experimental functional analyses provide us with empirical data on the cause and effect relationship between environmental variables and problem behaviour.¹ In a similar way, BEA provides empirical, functional information about the instructional variables which result in desired responding. When one

instructional variable is identified as more effective than another, it can be used in subsequent interventions for that target response and learner. BEA has been used to identify the instructional components resulting in improved academic performance for almost as long as functional analyses has been used to identify the functions of problem behaviour,² but its popularity has only recently started to grow.³

In a typical BEA procedure, a practitioner identifies several appropriate interventions for increasing a response. A BEA is most useful when there are several known empirically supported interventions. When this occurs, the BEA can be used to distinguish which are effective and ineffective for an individual learner. For example, Baranek, Fienup and Pace (2011) used BEA to compare the effectiveness of eight different interventions targeting sight-word reading for a student with a history of difficulty in this area. Interventions included phonics (prompting to sound out words), flashcards with pictures, incentives, within stimulus prompting, among others.⁴ All of the interventions had some empirical support for their use.

Once empirically supported interventions are identified, each

intervention is presented in an alternating treatment design (most commonly) and change in responding is measured. In the Baranek et al. (2011) study, the student was exposed to each intervention one time in random order and the percentage of correctly read sight words was measured. Presenting each intervention only once has the advantage of an assessment which requires very little time, however, demonstrating experimental control requires clear and immediate changes in responding. If the effects of each treatment are unclear, practitioners might replicate sessions several times until they see clear and consistent changes in responding. Others have also used reversal designs to demonstrate change in responding across interventions, presenting one treatment for several sessions, followed by another, and so on. The choice of design will be predicated on the student characteristics, target response, and interventions being compared.

The effects of each intervention are then measured on a meaningful indicator of performance and one which is also sensitive to instruction. For Baranek et al., (2011) this was accurate reading of unknown sight words. Fluency, accuracy and trials or time to criterion of academic skills such as reading, math and

writing are commonly used outcome measures. More recently, researchers have begun to apply this approach with non-academic targets such as the number of trials to reach criterion for acquisition using varying communication modalities (sign, vocalization and picture exchange) for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The applications of BEA are only as limited as the contexts where behaviour analysts work. BEA might be used to compare prompting strategies for teaching intraverbals to a child with a developmental disability, selecting between writing interventions for typically developing children in a classroom or determining the most effective strategy for increasing compliance with workplace safety protocols.

Let's look how a BEA could be used to select between two different instructional strategies for teaching tacts to a child with autism. There are two commonly used antecedent presentations when teaching tacts. In the first, an instructor presents a target stimulus, asks the learner, "What is it?", prompts or waits for a response, and provides an appropriate consequence for the learner's behaviour (we'll call this 'Object + Question'). In the second, the instructor presents a target stimulus but does not present the antecedent, "What is it?", prompts or waits for a response, and provides an appropriate consequence for the learner's behaviour (an 'Object Only' condition). If an instructor wants to choose between these approaches to determine the most efficient strategy for a particular learner, they can use a BEA to do so.

Novel tacts would be selected for the learner, in this example, six novel tacts were selected and randomly

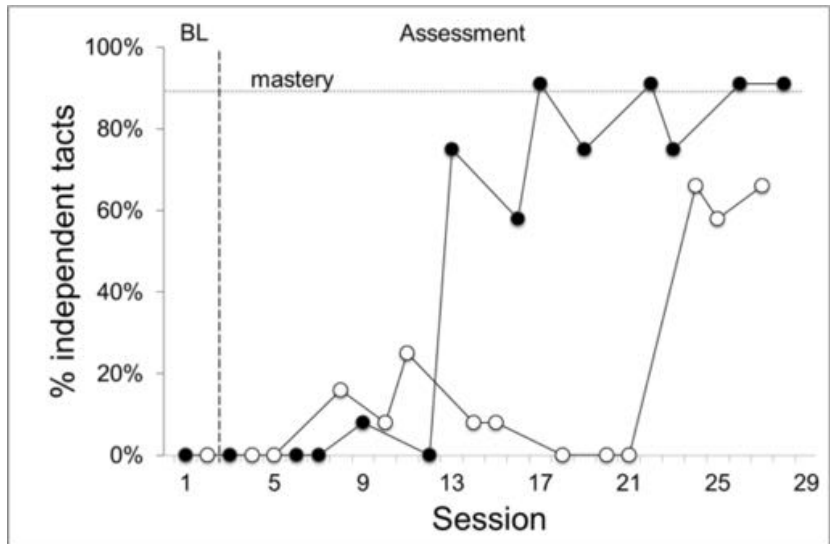


Figure 1. The percentage of independent correct tacts across the two tacting conditions.

assigned to the 'Object Only' or 'Object + Question' using an online random number generator, placing slips of paper in a bag and selecting one at a time could also be used.

A baseline condition would be presented where the novelty of the tacts is confirmed. In some cases a baseline session may not be required. An example is if the goal is to increase fluency of an already acquired skill. Looking at figure 1, our learner did not perform either of the selected tacts during the baseline sessions.

Following baseline, the two conditions are presented in an alternating treatment design. Each training procedure is presented in individual sessions (the order randomly determined) until the learner has acquired the tacts. For this example, tact training procedures were conducted for both conditions each day, with 5 minutes separating administration of each condition. Each session consisted of 12 trials (3 targets presented 4 times in random order). During 'Object + Question' sessions the experimenter placed a target stimulus on the table

and simultaneously said "What is it?" provided a vocal model prompt (when appropriate), allowed the participant 6 seconds to respond, and delivered the corresponding consequence. 'Object Only' sessions were identical except the experimenter did not ask "What is it?" A time delay (i.e., 0, 2, 5 seconds) was used to fade a vocal model prompt as participants met prompt fading criteria (i.e., 90% of trials correct across two consecutive sessions or 100% once). Once a participant met fading criteria at the various time delays, independent trials were presented in which no vocal model was given.

Figure 1 shows independent correct tacting during each instructional procedure. The learner took 13 sessions to acquire tacts when the object alone was presented and met acquisition criteria faster than in the 'Object + Question' condition. These results would suggest that the teaching tacts using the 'Object Only' procedures would result in more efficient acquisition for this learner in the future. In this example, the BEA was used to determine efficiency of intervention, rather than

the effectiveness of intervention.

As is true with brief functional analyses, BEAs also have limitations. The brief nature of a BEA means that a number of different interventions can be tested rapidly and the literature suggests that the highest performing intervention during the BEA will lead to higher performance than baseline. The brief nature of the assessment may also mask the true effects of interventions; it only

assesses the immediate impact of interventions. Some effects of interventions may only emerge after time. If practitioners are to use this approach, they must commit to continuous monitoring of the effects of the selected interventions (as any good behaviour analyst would).

¹Thank you to Larissa Zwick for her contributions to an earlier draft of this manuscript.



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Send it to us! newsletter@ontaba.org





Behavioural cusp · *n.* 1 | be.hav'ioʊr.al cusp | /br'hɛv.jər(ə)l kʌsp/

“any behaviour change that brings the organism’s behaviour into contact with new contingencies that have even more far-reaching consequences...a cusp is a special instance of behaviour change, a change crucial to what can come next.” (Rosales-Ruiz & Baer, 1997, p. 533)

The Cusp

Behaviour Analysis in Ontario: The people behind the work

Editor’s note: It’s spring! At least I think it is safe to say that now...although I did proclaim that in the first week of April...and then it snowed. In the season of all things new, I figured it would be appropriate to seek out someone new to the field and new to ONTABA. Do you remember those early days for you? I sure do! Enjoy! *Lesley*

Michelle Thibeau, BA

Michelle is a full time student completing her first year in the Bachelor of Behavioural Science Program at Humber College Lakeshore



Campus. She previously completed a BA in Philosophy with Dean’s Honour List standing at McMaster University in 2015. Along with her studies, Michelle currently works as a para-funeral assistant and also works at a retirement home.

How did you become interested in ABA? I was in my last year of a three-year Philosophy degree at McMaster University, and I knew I wanted to continue my education, so I looked into various programs. Since I essentially spent the last three years of my life thinking about thinking, I wanted to pursue something that focused on the practical application of helping others. I was intrigued at the sight of a new program, the Behavioural Science program at Humber College, so I started reading about behaviour analysis. I was drawn to behaviour analysis as a continuation of my philosophy background as it involves creative

and critical thinking, and behaviourism touches on many philosophical issues like dualism, empiricism, and language. I loved that it can be applied to a variety of populations and settings and of course the practical, systematic approach to changing behaviour appealed to me.

Tell us about your experience in the Humber program so far. It’s been really engaging. Since this is the first year of the program, we’ve been given lots of opportunities to give feedback. The instructors are dedicated to student learning and involvement, and are focused on our futures as professionals. The class size is manageable, so our interactions feel personal. Our assignments are very much based off of applying concepts to hypothetical situations similar to what we may face in the field. We’ve had guest speakers come in to tell us about their clinical work and research. We have a 14-week work placement coming up, along with a thesis project in our final year. The field of behaviour analysis in Ontario seems very vibrant, and we have been strongly encouraged to attend conferences and get connected in the field. I’m obviously very new to behaviour analysis, but I find that it has influenced my perspective on everyday life; I find myself thinking

about life in behavioural terms.

Is there any particular study that you have read about or a talk that you have attended that really stands out for you? Well, I attended the ONTABA annual conference this past fall, I was only two months into the program, so I was really just trying to focus on deciphering the terminology (laughs). But I loved the variety of the talks; the topics ranged from professionalism and staff training to case studies with specific treatment approaches. I thought all the content was thought-provoking, it is hard to pick out just one in particular, to be honest, I was just really excited to be there! It felt like such a close-knit community, and the high level of enthusiasm remained consistent the whole conference. Since the ONTABA conference to me was very much an introduction to the field, I was hesitant in approaching speakers, but along with meeting volunteers in similar programs like mine, I think the conference poster session stood out for me because I was able to chat with many of the poster presenters and ask them questions. In hindsight, I had no reason to feel shy.

It’s pretty awesome that as a person brand new to the field, you have already gotten involved—I heard that you have already done

some volunteer work for ONTABA. Tell us about that. Our professors told us about professional associations like ONTABA, and they continue to encourage us to become members. Curious about learning more and wanting to get myself involved, I joined. Since I was a member, I heard about the call out for student volunteers for the conference, so I applied and fortunately, my name was randomly selected, and I was offered a spot to volunteer at the event. It was great because I was mostly helping with signing off CEUs at the start and end of sessions, so I was actually able to see a lot of the talks. As volunteers we designed our schedules together, so each person got to shape their volunteer duties around the talks they wished to see.

What is the biggest misconception about behaviour science that you have come across so far? When I tell people about the program I am in, a

common response is “Oh, so you’re going to work in the FBI?” (Laughs). I think people just equate ‘behaviour science’ with the TV show Criminal Minds.

Do you have an idea of what kind of job you want when you graduate? Is there a particular population or application that interests you? I am definitely interested in the application of behaviour science in the mental health field, perhaps in addictions. I’m also interested in pursuing my BACB.

Any advice for the incoming class of first-year behaviour science students? The field is established and still growing—there is so much potential, so it is a good investment for your future career. The nature of the program is so different than my university experience which was for the most part courses in lecture halls with hundreds of other students, in which I could keep myself

anonymous. In addition to essay writing, this program has challenged me to open up and get engaged in a variety of assignments like group work and giving presentations. So you have to be open to both individual and group learning experiences. Also, an over-arching theme in first year essential to success throughout the program is internalizing the idea that as much as emotions may or may not influence behaviour, to analyze behaviour objectively is to observe external actions and environments, not unmeasurable internal processes.



Have someone in mind for the Cusp?

Let us know, we love suggestions!
newsletter@ontaba.org



WHAT

Would You Do?

Professional and Ethical Issues

By: Dr. Rosemary Condillac, C.Psych., BCBA-D
 Associate Professor, Centre for Applied Disability Studies
 Brock University

Welcome to the “What Would You Do?” column on ethical and professional dilemmas in ABA. Please submit your questions, issues, dilemmas or tricky situations to newsletter@ontaba.org. My responses are my own, and

are not intended to represent the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB), ONTABA, or any other organization with whom I am affiliated. Responses should not be taken as specific legal or professional advice as it is not possible to have or provide enough information in a column of this nature.

The issue: *We have a number of staff needing BCBA supervision. In order to accommodate as many staff as possible, we rely on group supervision meetings. Over the course of a month, each supervisee in the group has multiple opportunities to be the focus of the discussion. Part of the group time is focused on each supervisee, and the rest of the time the group time is focused on others, so we consider it to be part individual, and part group. Is there a problem with this?*

This issue often comes up when I provide supervision training. The BACB Experience Standards don't leave any wiggle room on this particular issue, "Supervision may be conducted in small groups for no more than half of the total supervised hours in each supervisory period" (BACB, 2016, p. 8).

Though not explicitly stated in the standards, the rationale for these limits seems to be provided in other parts of the standards. For example, some of the required and suggested areas of supervision in these standards include topics relating specifically to the supervisee's skills (e.g., developing individual performance goals, performance feedback, knowledge) and the supervisee's work with clients (e.g., case conceptualization, data analysis and interpretation, clinical supervision). The confidentiality of the supervisee, and the opportunity to have unfettered discussions about strengths and limits irrespective of level of performance of the supervisee, likely require a degree of privacy not afforded by group supervision. Further, client confidentiality can also become a concern in group supervision (depending on the composition of the group) unless specific consent is sought. Another related concern is that the "need to know" information for the supervisor might exceed the "need to know" for the supervision group, potentially limiting disclosure in group supervision situations.

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There are many potential benefits of group supervision for the supervisee, in terms of learning from an array of other supervisee's experiences, practicing professionalism, potentially demonstrating training skills. Group supervision can be efficient for the supervisor, potentially allowing for more supervisees to have the opportunity to collect supervised hours or for supervisees to collect more supervised hours. Supervisors can also find efficiencies in providing training or discussing techniques with groups of supervisees rather than repeating these with individuals.

It is important to note that the "no more than half" limit on group supervision pertains to the supervision that is counted towards their supervised fieldwork hours (currently 5% required). Supervisors can offer additional hours at their discretion to meet their supervisee's individual needs, but they need to be careful about how those hours are counted by the supervisee. Supervision forms must accurately reflect the nature and amount of supervision provided (BACB, 2014). For supervisors looking for supervision resources, I would suggest reviewing the CSUN Structured Supervision Folder (Kazemi & Adzhyen).



Have a question or a topic for

WHAT Would You Do?

Let us know, we love suggestions!
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