



STRATEGY 2020

Defining Our Place in Ontario



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INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis (ONTABA) is a professional association that was formed in 1992 by a small group of behaviour analysts in response to a growing interest in the field. ONTABA was officially incorporated as a non-profit (corporation without share capital) in the Province of Ontario, in October 1998. It is currently the largest professional association for behaviour analysts in Canada.

In 1993, ONTABA became an affiliate member of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI), a well-established, international membership organization for those interested in the philosophy, science, application, and teaching of behaviour analysis. ONTABA has become one of ABAI's largest affiliates. ONTABA also is affiliated with the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts, a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and advance the science and practice of applied behaviour analysis.

ONTABA has grown steadily since its inception. However, it has experienced significant growth in membership during the last several years, due at least in part to the high-profile and politically fueled issues concerning autism services in Ontario. As of December 2019, its membership consisted of over 1200 individuals, including practitioners, researchers, educators, students, and supporters of ONTABA's mission.

ONTABA's last strategic planning effort was completed in 2016. As scheduled, the ONTABA Board of Directors undertook a new strategic planning process in 2019 to establish priorities and directions for the organization to 2022.

This report summarizes the data collected and work accomplished to-date in developing a new strategic plan for ONTABA, as well as clarifying next steps in the planning process. In the past, it was commonplace for organizations to develop strategic plans for a five- or even ten-year period. However, today's constantly changing external environment makes it difficult for organizations to predict out beyond three years. Given that ONTABA is experiencing rapid growth and is involved in a major effort to regulate its members, a shorter planning cycle is highly recommended. Therefore, the enclosed strategic plan is in effect from January 2020 to December 2022. The section of this report titled, *Next Steps*, provides recommendations on how ONTABA can monitor its progress in implementing this strategic plan, as well as continue to assess the validity of its strategic priorities between now and 2022.

It is important to note that ONTABA's Board of Directors **owns** this strategic plan with full accountability for its development, implementation, communication, and monitoring.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

During a full day of discussion about critical issues and opportunities, the ONTABA board identified several strategic priorities. From this list of priorities, three (3) were selected for the current strategic planning cycle based on urgency and impact, as follows:

#1: Provide leadership and advocate for ethical, effective and safe behavioural services in Ontario

Ensure that Ontarians are better informed about behavioural services and their use in successfully treating a range of populations and conditions. Advocate for increased, equitable access to services for consumers, directly with policy makers, and indirectly through key relationships. Increase awareness across Ontario about ONTABA, its mission, priorities and accomplishments.

#2: Enhance services and supports for all ONTABA members, in all parts of the province

Provide opportunities for all ONTABA members to build their capabilities and improve their professional success. Ensure that every ONTABA member has equitable access to these opportunities, irrespective of their location in the province.

#3: Build the capacity of ONTABA to achieve its mission and goals

Develop the internal structures, resources and capabilities needed to effectively guide its members and other stakeholders through the changing external environment for behavioural analysis in Ontario.

A summary of these long-term strategic objectives, the associated descriptions and success indicators can be found on the following page.

ONTABA Long-Term Strategic Objectives, 2020 to 2022

Strategic Objectives	#1: Provide leadership and advocate for ethical, effective and safe behavioural services in Ontario	#2: Enhance services and supports for all ONTABA members, in all parts of the province	#3: Build the capacity of ONTABA to achieve its mission and goals
Description	<p>Ensure that Ontarians are better informed about behavioural services and their use in successfully treating a range of populations and conditions. Advocate for increased, equitable access to services for consumers, directly with policy makers, and indirectly through key relationships. Increase awareness across Ontario about ONTABA, its mission, priorities and accomplishments.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for all ONTABA members to build their capabilities and improve their professional success. Ensure that every ONTABA member has equitable access to these opportunities, irrespective of their location in the province.</p>	<p>Develop the internal structures, resources and capabilities needed to effectively guide its members and other stakeholders through the changing external environment for behavioural analysis in Ontario.</p>
Success Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued progress on regulating behaviour analysts in Ontario. Increased membership across the province, especially in geographical areas currently under-represented. Increased and effectively managed social media presence across all appropriate platforms. Improved organizational capacity in public relations and communication. Formalized efforts that ensure proactive responses and consistent messaging. Improved awareness by external stakeholders throughout the province about ONTABA and its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased member satisfaction levels. Increased membership across all classes, geographical locations and practice areas. Increased services/ supports specific to the needs of students and new practitioners (or those seeking to increase their scope of practice). Increased services/supports specific to the needs of those in private (clinical) practice. Increased participation by members outside of the GTA in professional development opportunities, workshops/ trainings, annual conference, and other ONTABA events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of paid staff/ contractor(s) to address the day-to-day needs of the organization. Increased membership fees that are competitive and more consistent with the value of an ONTABA membership. A board of directors that represents the diversity of the membership with a modern governance structure that is suited to ONTABA needs. Expanded number and diversity of active volunteers (beyond the current core of volunteers) and improved volunteer engagement. Increased monetization of the ONTABA website and conference.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

The next step in the strategic planning process is to develop short-term, annual goals for each strategic objective. These goal statements tell us what work will be done each year of the next three (3) years to achieve the long-term objectives.

Strategic Objective 1: Provide leadership and advocate for ethical, effective and safe behavioural services in Ontario

- a. Further the ongoing process of regulation with the intent of securing autonomous practice for behaviour analysts within the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
- b. Coordinate the development and implementation of a public relations/media plan which will include strategies and supporting tactics to, i) educate external stakeholders, including the general public, about ABA, its applications and successes, and ii) increase awareness about ONTABA, its mission and priorities. This plan will include building ONTABA's capacity in public relations, media relations, government relations, communications, and social media.
- c. Engage new and existing stakeholders (members, clients, other professional organizations, service providers, educators, etc.) to advocate together on shared issues.
- d. Develop and maintain relationships with key government officials and policy influencers within government to further ONTABA's direct advocacy efforts.

Strategic Objective 2: Enhance services and supports for all ONTABA members, in all parts of the province

- a. Develop a plan to increase the number of ONTABA members, across membership classes, practice areas, and geographic regions.
- b. Increase ONTABA member satisfaction rates and inform decisions about member services and supports by regularly surveying ONTABA members by class or other relevant category, e.g. new practitioners and those in private practice. Conduct a survey to establish a baseline against which to measure changes. Re-survey in subsequent years.
- c. Develop a plan to increase participation by members outside of the GTA in ONTABA's professional development opportunities, workshops/trainings, annual conference, and other events. Establish a process of recording and saving data on participation rates for each event to gauge interest and inform decisions about future events.

Strategic Objective 3: Build the capacity of ONTABA to achieve its mission and goals

- a. Collect data about how ONTABA's membership fees compare to those of similar associations for comparable value (benefits). Recommend adjustments (increases or decreases) to these fees, as required, and coordinate the implementation of any fee changes, including communication to members and changes to related administration of fees.
- b. Select and transition to an association management company (AMC) to fulfill ONTABA's growing administrative needs.
- c. Explore opportunities to monetize ONTABA's annual conference and generate the revenue necessary to fulfill ONTABA's strategic objectives. Research and select opportunities for each year's conference. Reflect on the learnings from each opportunity and fine-tune the next year's activities accordingly. Aim to increase the amount of revenue generated from these activities each year.
- d. Offer paid professional development events to generate revenue and address specific member needs/interests. Through member feedback, determine the content, timing and price of each event. Ensure that events are geographically dispersed and/or accessible from any location. Reflect on the learnings from each event and fine-tune the next year's events accordingly. Aim to increase the number of these events each year.

IMPLEMENTATION

The final step in the strategic planning process is implementation, which includes the following elements:

- Assign short-term goals to the board and its committees for incorporation into annual work plans. Please note that more than one committee can be involved in implementing a single short-term goal.
- Track and report on the progress of the implementation process.
- Communicate the organization's strategic plan widely.
- Monitor the ongoing validity and achievement of long-term strategic objectives on a yearly basis.
- Evaluate the strategic planning process.

Action Planning

The work done on collecting and analyzing data, strategizing, and developing objectives and goals is lost if the implementation process fails. The short-term goals, while more specific than the long-term objectives, are still too broad to implement. They must be 'cascaded down' into detailed actions through the board and committee work planning process.

Quarterly Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation Process

Monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan involves tracking the completion of the detailed actions against the timelines provided in the board and committee work plans, i.e. Are the annual work plan actions/tasks being completed on-time and on-budget?

It is recommended that the ONTABA Board of Directors reviews the implementation progress on a quarterly basis. During these quarterly reviews, the board should focus on identifying and removing barriers to implementation process, e.g. not enough 'hands on deck', higher costs or longer timelines to implement, etc.

Communicating the Plan

A public or shortened version of the strategic plan should be communicated widely to members, volunteers, advisors, and external stakeholders. Sharing this information to those internal to the organization ensures that there is a context for decision-making, resource allocation and operational activities. Sharing to those external to the organization promotes transparency and accountability.

Annual Review of Strategic Objectives and Short-Term Goals

The environment in which ONTABA operates is dynamic, complex and diverse. Therefore, it is important that ONTABA undertakes an annual process to scan the changing environment, review and if necessary, refine the strategic objectives and short-term goals.

It is suggested that ONTABA use the following to guide their annual review:

- Review the overall implementation progress, particularly the achievement of short-term goals. Recognize and celebrate successes and accomplishments. Identify implementation efforts that did not meet established targets and explore why.
- Identify unanticipated changes in the external environment that have had and will have an impact on future goals and priorities.
- Identify unanticipated changes within the organization (internal environment) that will have an impact on future goals and priorities.
- Identify new or emerging opportunities for consideration that are consistent with the strategic priorities.
- Determine the continued validity of the long-term strategic objectives based on changes to the internal and external environments.
- Assess the progress in achieving the long-term strategic objectives based on the Success Indicators, i.e. Is the work we've done in the last year actually moving us toward the achievement of our long-term strategic objectives?
- Adjust and/or revise for the coming year(s) as necessary.

Evaluating the Strategic Planning Process

ONTABA is encouraged to reflect on this strategic planning process. The current three-year strategic planning cycle will pass quickly, and a new board of directors will be faced with the design of the next strategic planning process. It is important to take time now, when the process is fresh and the participants are still around the table, to consider what worked and what didn't. What are the learnings from this process that could inform the design and/or timing of future strategic planning efforts? ONTABA should record these learnings so that they are accessible to those who will be responsible for the development of the next strategy in 2022.

APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
ABAI	Association for Behavior Analysis International
AGM	ONTABA's Annual General Meeting of Members
AMC	Association Management Company
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
ONTABA	Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis



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