

THE ONTABA ANALYST

Newsletter of the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis

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Save the Date!



#ONTABACON2020

Stay tuned for keynote speakers



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

At the time of writing this message, we are facing an unprecedented time in history due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. I hope this finds everyone safe, healthy, and managing as best as possible in these uncertain times.

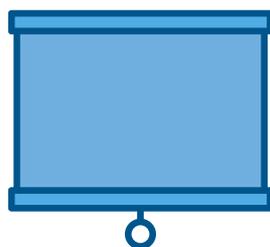
As members of a helping profession, it is extremely important that we take care of our own health so that we can continue to support those we serve, many of whom are vulnerable. Many resources are available for practitioners and for the people we support. We also need to innovate creative ways to offer support.

The ONTABA board of directors is committed to doing what we can to support our members and our community. We shared important government, clinical, business, & ethical information in our March 17 & 23 membership communications and will continue to do so through various mediums (membership communications, social media, and upcoming webinars). We are also providing opportunities for social connection and updates.

The behaviour analytic community is strong, and I have been hearing of many heartening examples of ingenuity and efforts to provide ethical continuation of services. Let us remain resolute in this critical time, supporting each other as a community, while showing compassion to ourselves and others.

Although the pandemic is top of mind, I would like to hold some space to celebrate the many achievements since the formation of the new board at the 2019 AGM. I am pleased to share the following updates that align with our strategic priorities and thank the board, advisory committee, and volunteers for their time and commitment. Since December 2019, we have:

- Onboarded a new group of dedicated board members - welcome and thank you for your dedication. Thanks to returning members who have shown immense leadership and support (see list of board of directors here: <https://ontaba.org/board.php>).
- Continued advocacy efforts for access to evidence based services in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) including meeting with Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) representatives and preparing statements (see December 17, 2019 and January 26, 2020 membership communications).



- Prepared a comprehensive response to the call for feedback from the Ministry of Health & Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (many thanks to Dr. Joan Broto & Dr. Rosemary Condillac for leading this effort). For the full response, please visit ontaba.org under the resources link for 'regulation of ABA'.
- Completed a new strategic planning process for the next three years (executive summary is forthcoming). The three strategic objectives include:
 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
- Completed a board committee restructuring process to align with the new strategic objectives and respond to input from stakeholders (see February 8, 2020 membership communication and new committee structure: <https://ontaba.org/committees.php>).
- Corresponded with the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB®) re: recent changes and advocacy for access to French examination materials (see February 19 membership communication).
- Obtained support from MCCSS to produce educational materials for our members, the general public, and other professionals free of charge. These materials are based on many years of work by the Ethics & Jurisprudence Task Force. Materials will be developed over the next two years with Dr. Julie Koudys as the technical lead (see March 10, 2020 membership communication). A lot of exciting content to come!
- Provided resources to members during the COVID-19 crisis through membership updates (see March 17, 23, 26, & 27, 2020) and social media, and have started a weekly online session to stay socially connected.

I look forward to continuing to serve our membership and the community. With the amazing support of the board, advisory committee, and volunteers, I believe that we can make great strides towards ONTABA's vision of fostering a culture of excellence, integrity, and expertise for the advancement and promotion of the science of behaviour analysis. I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to the outgoing board members including my successor, Jennifer Cunningham, whose shoes are very hard to fill! We remain physically distanced, but socially connected.

In solidarity,



Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D



As we welcome the new members to the ONTABA leadership,
we want to thank the Board of Director Members whose terms have come to an end.

Many thanks to **Shiri Bartman, Jason Bosett, Jennifer Cunningham, Joseph Roberston and Jamie Wallace.**

The New Faces on Our Board of Directors



Evangelo Boutsis, Director-at-Large. Evangelo is currently the program coordinator and a professor in the Bachelors of Behavioural Psychology degree program at Seneca College. Evangelo is a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) and has provided Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) in community based settings with a variety of populations (e.g. children, youth and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders/ Developmental Disabilities, Dual Diagnosis); in a variety of clinical roles (e.g. Instructor Therapist, Behaviour Consultant, Clinical Supervisor); and in a variety of settings (e.g. clinic, family home, group home, specialized treatment homes, hospitals, schools). Evangelo is a proud husband and a father of four beautiful children. He has endured many painful years but is still a committed and passionate Toronto Maple Leafs fan.



Jacqueline Gigan, Graduate Student Representative, is enrolled in the Masters of Education in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) program at Penn State University. She earned her BA in Psychology from the University of Western Ontario and recently completed a post-graduate certificate in Autism and Behavioural Science at George Brown College. Currently, Jacqueline is a Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) and works at Shining Through Centre, educating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She is excited to continue to learn about evidence-based practices to best support her clients and the community. As a student representative, Jacqueline looks forward to being a member of the 2020 ONTABA Board of Directors.



Taylor Liggett, Undergraduate Student Representative, is a student in the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College. Currently, Taylor works in the employment sector, supporting college students in gaining employment opportunities. Taylor is particularly interested in understanding innovative ways of utilizing the principles of applied behaviour analysis. Recently, Taylor worked as an Enhanced Support Worker supporting children in a recreational setting. Passionate about the field of behaviour analysis and supporting individuals within hers and the larger community, Taylor is excited to be a member of the ONTABA Board of Directors for this year.



Nancy Marchese, President-Elect, discovered her passion for the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in 1998 when she first started working with children and adolescents with autism. Since then, she's had the privilege of working with hundreds of children and adolescents with autism and their families across Ontario. Nancy is the Executive Director and Founder of Breakthrough Autism. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Clinical Psychologist, she completed her Master of Arts in Psychology with a specialization in Behavior Analysis at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is currently working on her PhD in Behavior Analysis through Endicott College.

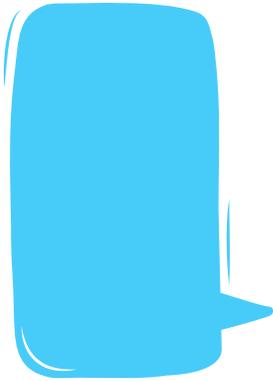


Dawn Marciello, Treasurer-Elect, is a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst with over 14 years of experience in the field of applied behaviour analysis. She currently is in the role of Clinical and Educational Director at Exceptional Learning Centre. In Dawn's role as Clinical and Educational Director she has daily opportunities to provide leadership and training. She has both spearheaded and assisted with the development of staff training manuals, workplace documents, policies and procedures, and orientation and onboarding procedures of new staff. Dawn completed her Masters of Applied Behaviour Analysis at St Cloud State University in 2017. She is also a graduate of the Consecutive Education Urban Diversity Program at York University.



Jaime Santana, Director-At-Large, is a BCBA and has his Masters in Applied Disability Studies from Brock University with a focus in Applied Behaviour Analysis. As a Supervising Therapist, Jaime supports adults on the Autism Spectrum through a program that focuses on community inclusion, vocational skills development, self-help skills, as well as the reduction of problem behaviour. Over the last year, Jaime has become a staunch advocate for a needs- and evidence-based Ontario Autism Program as well as improvements in the adult developmental sector. He plans to continue to advocate for children, families and adults in his capacity as a board member and professional in Autism Services.

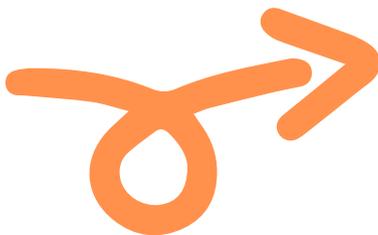
COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING



The ONTABA board of directors is excited to announce a revised committee structure that was approved at the January 2020 board meeting. We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of our volunteers' commitment to ONTABA and thank you sincerely for your service. The rationale for the revised committee structure is to help streamline processes and remain focused on our strategic priorities as well as distribute volunteer resources more effectively.

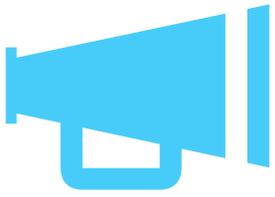
Previously, ONTABA had 12 standing committees:

- 1) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- 2) Adult Services
- 3) Conference
- 4) Elections
- 5) Finance
- 6) Membership, Awards & Recruitment
- 7) Newsletter
- 8) Professional Development
- 9) Professional Practice
- 10) Professional Regulation (PRC)
- 11) Public and Community Relations (PCRC)
- 12) Website



The new committee structure consists of 8 standing committees that integrated the previous committee:

- 1) Advocacy & Communications
- Merge former PCRC and Website Committees
- 2) Conference & Events
- 3) Education & Advancement
- Merge former PRC, Jurisprudence & Education Tasks Force
- 4) Finance
- 5) Governance
- Merge former Elections Committee
- 6) Membership & Member Services
- Merge former Newsletter & Professional Development Committees
- 7) Organizational Development
- 8) Professional Affairs/Practice
- Merge former ASD, Adult Services, & Professional practice committees



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Advocacy & Communications Committee

The advocacy and communications committee has been working to prepare for a busy 2020. We are hoping to participate in the 2020 Autism Speaks walk in Toronto, and are already busy planning ONTABA's annual Evening for Behaviour Analysis. Also, we are currently exploring ways to expand ONTABA's online presence as well as look for opportunities to engage in fundraising in order to help provide more services for our members. ONTABA members have a wealth of expertise and good will. This committee is interested in promoting our science and practitioners broadly. We wanted to assure the membership that we are keeping a watchful eye on relevant events in Ontario and will continue to be responsive whenever the need to advocate on behalf of our members presents itself. We hope our members stay safe and healthy over the coming months. Keep a lookout on our [facebook group](#) and twitter handle ([@ONTABA1](#)), for relevant updates and information!

Membership & Member Services Committee

The Membership & Member Services committee looks forward to taking on the role of the previous professional development committee. With that, we aim to continue providing the membership with opportunities to gain CEUs and support our community by offering a variety of membership benefits! If members have questions about any of the benefits offered, please feel free to email us at contact@ontaba.org.

Organizational Development Committee

The Organizational Development Committee (ODC) is a new ONTABA Committee founded this year. The mandate of this committee includes supporting the board in the achievement of its ability to build the capacity of ONTABA to achieve its mission and goals. This committee is still in development and will work closely alongside other committee's to ensure that the organization is prepared for continuous growth over the coming years.

Conference & Events Committee

The ONTABA Conference & Events committee is looking forward to our annual conference scheduled for December 11th & 12th, 2020. With the current global pandemic, we are hoping our conference will take place in person but we will make accommodations as needed in order to flatten the curve. We remain dedicated to the dissemination of behaviour analysis in Ontario and providing our community with continuing education units. We encourage our community to keep an eye out for any updates to come!

Education & Advancement Committee

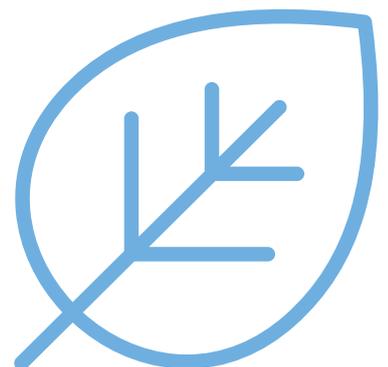
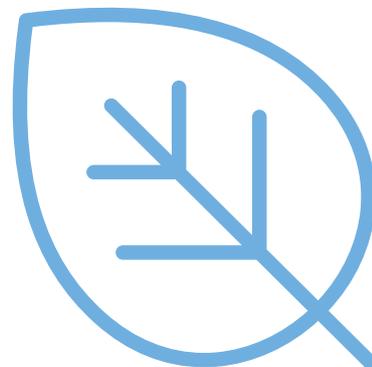
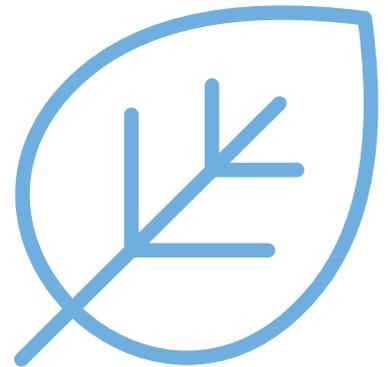
The newly formed Education and Advancement Committee has been working hard completing some of our 2020 work plan. Previously the Professional Regulation Committee, Ethics & Jurisprudence Task Force, and the Education Task Force, our goal this year is to continue our regulation efforts and disseminate our ABA in Schools White Paper document. As of March, the committee completed the following tasks: sent out a survey to our members in regards to regulation, participated in phone consultations, and responded to regulation consultation questions. Under the leadership of our regulation lead Dr. Rosemary Condillac, we delivered our response to the relevant ministries and we hope to continue to be a stakeholder in the regulation process. ONTABA's response to the call for feedback from the Ministry of Health & Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services can be found under the 'regulation of ABA' link in the resources tab of the membership side of the [website](#). The committee also completed the ABA in Schools White Paper document under the leadership of the previous Education Task Force co-chairs Angeline Savard, Amber Zealand, and Tricia-Lee Keller. We hope to disseminate the document to our members and the public soon. Please stay tuned for this exciting development!

Professional Affairs/Practice Committee

The Professional Affairs/Practice Committee was established in 2020 to support practitioners (technical and business skill development, networks, learning communities) and support policy makers in developing services that reflect the values of behaviour analysts and contribute to the best possible outcomes for consumers of behaviour analytic services. This committee was formed by merging 3 standing committees: ASD, Adult Services and Professional Practice. The goal of the new Professional Affairs/Practice Committee includes supporting the board in enhancing services and supports for all ONTABA members, in all parts of the province!

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is looking forward to the rest of 2020! We are excited to welcome nominations for board members again this year. More information about nominations will be distributed in the coming months. With that, we are eager to continue to connect with our membership about this process!



Jurisprudence Educational Material

Ministry of Community Children and Social Services (MCCSS) Project Update

As per the membership communication on March 10, ONTABA is very pleased to be developing jurisprudence and ethics training resources that will be available free of charge. Julie Koudys, project Technical Lead, and a dedicated group of subject matter experts (Rosemary Condillac, Adrienne Perry, Tracie Lindblad, and Melissa Legree) have been working extremely hard on developing ethics and jurisprudence training content for behaviour analytic practitioners in Ontario, ONTABA members, and other key deliverables for consumers of ABA services, and other professionals. Additionally, Joey Robertson and Natalie Paquet have been assisting with French translation of all material.

The resources being developed and disseminated focus on the following five key milestones related to training and guidance on professional practice for practitioners and inter-professional collaboration:

- Foundational training in ABA Professional Practice Standards (ethics and jurisprudence)
- Application of ABA Professional Practice Standards
- Quick reference guides for ABA professionals
- Quick reference guides for individuals and families
- ABA primer and quick reference guide on inter-professional collaboration

The project deliverables are on target, with a few modifications given COVID-19 and physical distancing. We will keep the membership updated as to when they can start to access these important resources.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

COVID-19 Resources & Information

By **Raluca Nuta**,
Treasurer, ONTABA

The coronavirus pandemic has taken the world by storm. The number of confirmed cases is increasing at an alarming rate, and the death toll is rising as well. The country has already taken great measures to stop the virus' spread and to flatten the curve, but we have a long road ahead of us! There are myriad sources of information and resources online, some more credible than others, but the message is clear: the time to stop the spread of COVID 19 is now, and each one of us, as individuals, must do our part to contribute to our combined success. Below, I have compiled some general information about COVID 19, and some helpful links from credible sources. Many of them have graphs! (I know how much we all love graphs).

What is a coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a type of virus that can cause common diseases in humans and animals. Under a microscope, this type of virus looks like it's wearing a crown, which is where its name comes from (corona = crown). Coronaviruses are responsible for illnesses such as the common cold, as well as more severe respiratory illnesses, and have been known, on rare occasions, to jump from animals to humans.

What is the 2019 novel coronavirus?

The virus that is responsible for the current pandemic, the 2019 novel coronavirus, is a newly discovered coronavirus that has not been seen in humans before. It is believed that this virus initially jumped from an animal species into the human population.

What is COVID19?

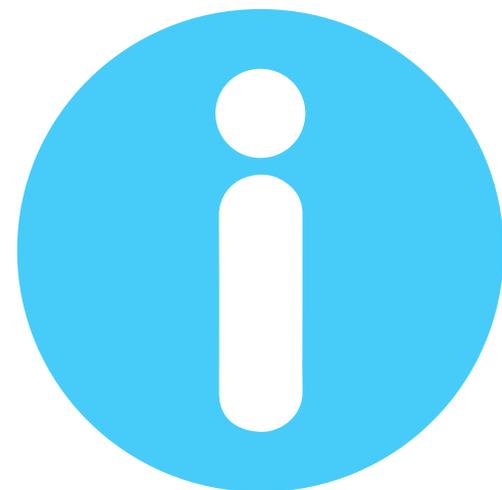
COVID19 is the infectious disease that is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (World Health Organization, 2020). The most common symptoms are a dry cough, fever, and difficulty breathing. In severe cases, COVID19 can develop into severe respiratory failure and can cause death.

What can we do?

Canada has taken great measures to slow the spread of COVID19, from restricting travel, to closing non-essential businesses and blocking off public areas, but these measures will not work if we don't adhere to them. It's up to us to flatten the curve! People have become very creative at staying social during this time of social distancing. ONTABA has been offering a variety of support by sharing helpful links and resources related to mental health, ASD, and government changes/updates. Watch your member email updates for information to join our weekly social support hour!

Helpful Resources

- [Advice and Infographics from the World Health Organization](#)
- [Canada Economic Response Plan](#)
- [COVID 19 Statistics - Government of Canada](#)
- [COVID 19 Self assessment](#)
- [Fun Activities for Kids while Self Isolating](#)
- [Official Information on COVID19 from the Government of Ontario](#)





WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Dr. Rosemary Condillac, C. Psych, BCBA

Associate Professor, 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 contact@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. We are in the midst of a Global Crisis, with preventing the spread of COVID-19 as a national priority. We are all in this together, though physically distant, let’s keep our community socially connected. I have been hearing and reading great news about creative ABA service delivery on social media. I have been hearing difficult stories of therapists being laid off and programs worried about their viability if this continues for too long. We all share the concern for our clients’ welfare during this time. Many of us work with vulnerable people who don’t necessarily understand the changes and precautions in place. So many of our clients rely on the predictability of their routines to help them to self-regulate. So how can we help? Many ONTABA members have had questions about service delivery and supporting their clients, through this very uncertain time period. Telehealth has been suggested as an option for continuing services during this period where direct contact is limited. In this issue, I have answered a number of questions regarding telehealth and ethical issues related to service provision during this pandemic.

**Have a Question
or Topic for
What Would You Do?**

**Send it to Us!
contact@ontaba.org**

1. What is telehealth?

The word “telehealth” comes from the greek root “tele”- meaning “far” or “reaching over a distance.” Whether using a land-line, a cellular phone, a tablet, a laptop, or state of the art video conferencing facilities, it is considered telehealth if you and your client are not in the same physical space.

2. Is there any scientific evidence to support the use of telehealth in ABA?

Behaviour analysts are expected to provide services that are evidence-based (1.01, BACB® Code, 2016). Some members have been concerned that telehealth might not be effective. The BACB® has also suggested that Behaviour Analysts consider whether telehealth would be possible and relevant for their clients. There is certainly research to support staff training, parent training, and remote assessment on various ABA skills via telehealth (Tomlinson, Gore, & McGill, 2018). Some emerging research has used telehealth to train parents to implement an experimental functional analysis, and functional communication training (Wacker et al., 2013). Many behaviour analysts who work with clients in more remote Ontario communities do this regularly.

3. Can I use telehealth to provide ABA to my clients during the COVID-19 state of emergency?

There is not one correct answer to that question. It would depend on what type of service you are able to deliver by telehealth and whether that service could meet your client’s need in a valuable way. If you have an employer or supervisor, make sure that providing telehealth is consistent with the agency plan during this crisis, and that you follow any agency policies or requirements. Funding requirements from government or insurance companies must also be followed. A recent ONTABA update provided clarification on the use of alternative formats in providing ABA to children and youth with ASD who are funded through the Ministry of Children, Community, & Social Services (MCCSS). Another consideration would be your client’s particular situation. Is the environment able to manage services under the current circumstances? What equipment do they have access to? Do they have adequate Internet bandwidth? If you are delivering direct services, perhaps a parent or caregiver already in the client’s environment could be trained to deliver some of the programs. If you need to meet with a family or a group home to review data, and provide troubleshooting for new issues that have surfaced, telehealth might be a reasonable option.

4. Does it matter which videoconferencing software I use to provide telehealth services?

Depending on the nature of your services, and the degree to which you have to share personal health information while providing telehealth services, you may be required to use one of the PHIPA (2004) compliant videoconferencing services. Remember to avoid using Facebook messenger, Whats App, and other videoconferencing software that is attached to social media, to avoid accidentally blurring the lines of your relationship with your client, their family, or their support staff. There are many different professional and secure videoconferencing options that are free or offering significant discounts during this crisis.

5. How do I get started with telehealth?

Starting out on telehealth can be a bit challenging, as you and your clients learn to use the systems in place. Practice using your platform and troubleshooting with colleagues or friends before you try to teach your clients to use it. Learn to use the screen sharing function if you need to share a document or if they need to show you a video. Plan out your agenda as you would for a typical meeting. Consider finding or making a screen recording to teach your clients to use your videoconferencing software. Sometimes it is hard to demonstrate and narrate at the same time. Consider creating some video models to teach a parent or support staff person how to run a program or implement a procedure. You can play the video for them on the screen while you explain what to do.

6. How do I protect my client's privacy when using telehealth?

Here are a few tips for minimizing risks to privacy while using telehealth:

- Connect with clients from a private location
- Warn others occupying your space that you have a private meeting
- Make a contingency plan in the event that someone needs to interrupt
- Wear a headset to minimize intrusions on client privacy
- Before you share your screen: close windows or apps containing confidential information about clients, staff, or yourself.
- Turn off messages and other notifications that might get shared accidentally.
- At the start of each call, tell your client where you are (e.g. at home), if there are any privacy risks (e.g. using speakerphone) and who might overhear (e.g. your child)
- Mute your microphone if you are interrupted and have to address someone else
- Be supportive, but avoid asking your clients to share personal information about the COVID-19 situation that are not necessary to your service provision

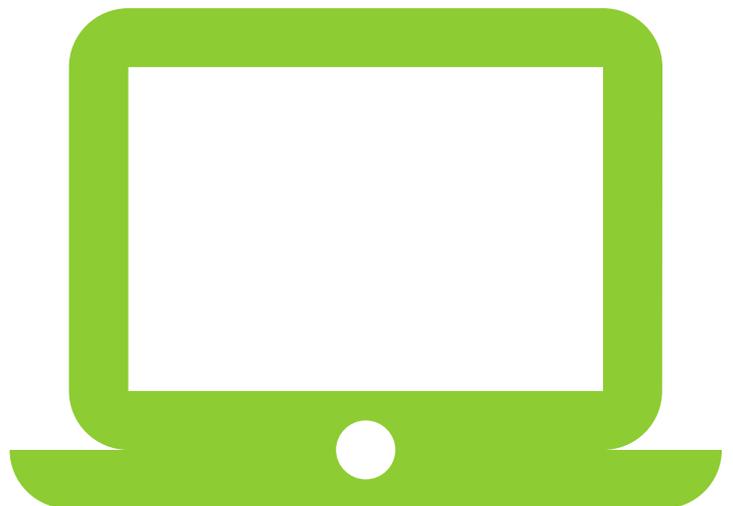
7. I am working from home, how do I protect client privacy?

Working at home can pose challenges to protecting client privacy, especially if you live with others.

- Explain to others in your space about your obligation to protect client privacy
- Set up a private space to work. Keep client information out of plain sight when you are working
- Secure client information when you are not working
- Follow your agency's privacy policy for safeguarding client information
- Place your notes in a locked drawer or filing cabinet
- Save your client information on your strongly encrypted and password protected work computer
- If you must work on a shared home computer, keep client files on an external drive with strong encryption, and store securely

8. Is this interruption of services considered to be "abandoning my clients?"

Behaviour analysts are expected to avoid interrupting or discontinuing services whenever possible (2.15, BACB® Code, 2016). However, behavior analysts must also operate in the best interest of their clients (2.0, BACB® Code, 2016), and must put their client's care above all others (2.04(d), BACB® Code, 2016). Following requirements for physical distancing, social-isolation, and quarantine, would demonstrate that your client's needs are paramount and would be consistent with a behavior analysts' responsibility to comply with legal requirements (1.04(d), BACB® Code, 2016). It is important to document the situation in each client file, and clearly state the reason for the interruption of services.



9. What if I am unable to provide services right now?

An important consideration is whether or not you are personally in a position to deliver services. Illness, financial stresses, having children out of school, caring for vulnerable family members, and anxiety about the current situation can take a real toll on us as clinicians. It is important to think about your own situation, and whether you have the internal resources to be able to deliver effective remote services at present. It is better to get to a place of readiness rather than offer a service that you aren't prepared for. Anyone who has flown on an aircraft has heard the flight attendants say that you have to put your own oxygen mask on first, then you can attend to those in your care. The same goes for the COVID-19 crisis. You have to take care of yourself before you can effectively care for others. Remember that there are many mental health supports available free of charge during this crisis, and pass that information on to your clients and your teams. If you have clients with current needs, and you are unable to work, discuss the situation with your employer (if applicable) and your clients. Ensure that they would want services in the current context, then obtain consent to make arrangements for someone else to provide support within the currently available parameters. This situation provides a good reminder to behaviour analysts, even those who work independently, to always have a back-up plan in the event that you are unable to support your clients under extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergency, travel).

10. If my staff or I were diagnosed with COVID-19 and had contact with clients before being symptomatic is it a breach of confidentiality that we had to provide Public Health with information about our contacts?

Unfortunately, this question does not have a clear answer in Ontario law for behaviour analysts. Reporting the people you had contact with, in order for Public Health officials to complete contact tracing and notify them, might be considered similar to exercising a "duty to warn" of a potential imminent risk of client (PHIPA, 2004). Though it is not a mandatory reporting requirement, it may be the prudent thing to do. Many clinicians include the duty to warn in their limits of confidentiality at the outset of treatment. If you are ordered to report the information, it is possible that this type of reporting by order of the Medical Officer of Health would be considered similar to a court order or legal requirement.

This newsletter contains a list of other resources available to behaviour analysts at this time, so these have not been repeated in this column. Please see information on www.BACB.com about other ethical issues related to COVID-19.

As this situation continues to unfold, please send your questions to contact@ontaba.org

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