



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS

IN THIS ISSUE

# ONTABA 2012 Conference

For the fourth year in a row ONTABA was proud to host the 2012 annual conference at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on November 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>. The rooms were filled to capacity on both Thursday and Friday while everyone enjoyed great speakers, and time with colleagues. A total of 326 professionals, students, and parents attended during the two days. Board Certified members of ONTABA continued to be able to receive a CEU credits included in the price of their early bird conference registration or for a nominal fee as a part of regular registration. This year a total of 16 credits were available to be earned.

## Conference Exhibitors

This year ONTABA welcomed four exhibitors to the conference: Behavior Development Solutions, QBS Inc., Mariposa Cares, and Parentbooks. The booths were attended by many who did not go home empty handed.

## Keynote Speakers

ONTABA welcomed three keynote speakers Dr. Gina Green, BCBA-D, Dr. Mark Dixon, BCBA-D, and Dr. Wanda Smith, along with

many local professionals who spoke during the concurrent sessions.

## Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> November

On Thursday morning Dr. Green kicked off the conference with a presentation titled "Public Policies on the Practice of ABA: Status and Some Lessons Learned." The presentation discussed some emerging trends in the types of policies being adopted in the field of behaviour analysis, as well as successful and unsuccessful tactics were described. In addition, suggestions for training behavior analysts to work in the public policy arena were offered. Dr. Green then went on to discuss "Evidence-based practice" and how it has become a popular buzz-phrase. The implications of evidence-based practice definitions, the question of why the science of behavior analysis is ignored by so many guideline developers, and what behavior analysts might do to remedy the situation were topics discussed during her presentation titled "Evidence-Based Practice: Implications for Behavior Analysts."

*Continued on Page #2*

## ONTABA Conference Committee

Read about the 2012 conference.

Page #1

## Professional Regulation Committee

Learn more about how the PRC is working for you.

Page #3

## Public and Community Relations Committee

Hear all about how PCRC walked for a cause.

Page #4



## Professional Practice Bulletin

See the PPB section for tips on the use of procedural extinction.

Page #5

## Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> November con't.

The day continued with a block of concurrent sessions. Attendees were also able attend lunch and learn sessions to keep the day rolling.

The afternoon began with a talk by Dr. Wanda Smith who presented on "Behavioural Activation and PTSD". Dr. Smith described Behavioural Activation and it's relation as an established for the treatment of depression. The application of Behavioural Activation to the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and identification of the defining features of PTSD were the primary focus of the presentation. Clear and concise clinical cases were utilized though the use of client video recordings.



*Keynote speakers and concurrent sessions alike drew large, interested audiences.*

A concurrent session concluded the main portion of the day. For some this was the end of their Thursday at the 2012 conference. However, 35 people attended the evening workshop which was Dr. Dixon's first appearance at our annual conference. The workshop titled "Teaching Optimal Choice Making, Self-Control, and Reducing Impulsivity" showcased over a decade of research that has investigated how poor choice making can be reversed with basic behavioral principles.

Attendees learned about the variables responsible for impulsive behavior, how to identify triggers to such behavior and how to alter the environment to enhance more optimal responding. Attendees were also exposed to evaluating preference and response allocations which included delay discounting indices, aversive assessments, and the impact of language. In addition, Dr. Dixon his work at a school in St. Louis Missouri which uses the ACT model of treatment and how it is working to date.

## Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> November

Friday morning began with a presentation by Dr. Green titled "Autism Treatments: The Quality of the Evidence". In this presentation she discussed the most popular treatments for autism and how most of them have not been subjected to careful scientific research. Where, others have been found ineffective or harmful in scientific studies. The presentation summarized the evidence about currently available autism treatments, and gave attendees a close look at the quality of the evidence about behavioral and educational interventions.

Concurrent sessions were followed by a presentation by Dr. Smith and Stephanie Swayne who lead attendees through an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) experiential session. The presentation gave a brief overview of ACT including the identifying key processes. Experiential exercises were utilised to illustrate the points of the presentation.

## Annual General Meeting

Lunch and learn sessions began the lunch time hour and were followed by the Annual General Meeting which was attended by members of ONTABA. During this time the achievements and progress during the 2012 year were highlighted by the board. ONTABA was proud to welcome the new members of the board, Dr. Nicole Luke (member at large); Kim Trudeau-Craig (member at large); Kerry-Anne Robinson (member at large); Deanna Strazzella (Undergraduate Representative). They also welcomed back Jennifer Cunningham as the secretary and Carmela Campanella-Borraccia as treasurer. The board said their goodbyes to Shiri Bartman (former member at large); Kelly Alves (former member at large); Charlene Stogren (former member at large), and David Phillips (former undergraduate representative). They were all recognized for all their hard work and support throughout their time on the board.

## Final Presentations

The afternoon began with concurrent sessions which were followed by the final presentations of the conference given by Dr. Dixon. In his presentation "The Challenges Facing the Field of Organizational Behavior Management", he discussed the progress OBM has made in isolated single-variable challenges in organizations. He suggests that OBM needs to use the tools found within the contemporary behavior analytic research base to drive systemic change when it comes

to large-scale multivariable interventions. In part B titled "Can Behavior Analysis Solve the Gambling Epidemic in our Culture?" Dr. Dixon outlined the rising prevalence of pathological gambling in both Canada and the United States. Discussion about how recent advances within the behavioral sciences have shown promise took place. Data was presented that suggests the role of language is more critical than programmed contingencies. An outline for research on the emerging addictive characteristics of modern casino games was also presented.

## Poster Session



The day came to an end with a fantastic poster session which of course included wine and cheese... It should be noted the lady handing out the drink tickets to all who attended might have received the most reinforcement out of everyone! 33 impressive professional posters were displayed and presenters spent their evening in deep discussion with those who took interest. *Continued on Pg #3*

## ONTABA 2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ONTABA is pleased to announce that the 2013 conference will take place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on November 28th and 29th. We expect to welcome renowned speakers such as Wayne Fischer, Cathleen Piazza, and Bud Mace. Further details regarding speakers and the conference schedule will be announced as they become available. We look forward to seeing you there.

ONTABA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND  
ONTABA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Conference Inquiries:

[conference@ontaba.org](mailto:conference@ontaba.org)

## Behaviouroke

The party continued at the Up Front Bar and Grill at Behaviouroke! Thanks to the Public and Community Relations Committee behaviour analysts were able to let down their hair and enjoy some very impressive karaoke and air guitar. Over \$400 dollars was raised during this event which will go towards holding a behaviour analysis parent conference. Thanks to the PCRC for all their hard work and to the Up Front Bar and Grill for donating the use of their pub!

The ONTABA Conference Committee and the Board of Directors are working diligently to develop another successful conference for 2013. Stay tuned for future announcements regarding the location, dates, times, and speakers. We hope to see you there!

### CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



## Behaviouroke

Behaviour analysts raised money towards funding a parent conference in applied behaviour analysis.



## Keynote Speakers

Dr. Green and Dr. Dixon shared their expertise and experience with attendees at the Annual Conference.

### ONTABA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PROFESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES

- Albert Malkin
- Jennifer Porter
- Jennifer Cunningham
- Carmela Campanella-Borraccia
- Carobeth Zorzos
- Louis Busch
- Deanna Strazella
- Kerry-Anne Robinson
- Kim Trudeau-Craig
- Nicole Luke

### COMMITTEES

- Recruitment and Fundraising Chair: Deanna Strazella
- Public and Community Relations Committee Chair: Louis Busch
- Conference 2013 Chair: Jennifer Cunningham
- Membership Chair: Jennifer Cunningham
- Newsletter Chair: Nicole Luke
- Website Chair: Jen Porter
- BACB CEU Chair: Nicole Luke
- Professional Regulation Committee Chair: Kim Trudeau-Craig

### CONTACTS

General Inquiries:  
[contact@ontaba.org](mailto:contact@ontaba.org)

# Professional Regulation Committee

Chair: Carobeth Zorzos; Board Liaison: Jennifer Porter

The Professional Regulation Committee has recently restarted our efforts to move forward with the Private Act which would enable title protection for ONTABA members. As you may recall, in April 2012 the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) put out a request for proposals for a feasibility study to look into certification/regulation of ABA practitioners within Ontario. The contract for the feasibility study was awarded to SEG Consultants in January 2013 and ONTABA Board and PRC members met with MCYS representatives shortly after this time. We explained to MCYS that we plan to continue development of the Private Act while the Feasibility Study was being conducted, given that the completion and review of study recommendations could take a considerable amount of time. PRC will be spending the next couple of months completing a working draft of the Private Act and by-laws. We plan on sharing these with membership for input as soon as possible.

Given that we're entering into a more active phase of the Private Act development, I, Carobeth Zorzos, will be stepping down as Chair due to other time commitments, although I will continue to remain on PRC as a committee member. I am pleased to announce that Kim Trudeau-Craig will be taking over as Chair of PRC. She has been a member of the Transitional Certification Committee, is a current PRC member, and sits on the Board of Directors as Member at Large. Kim will be providing ongoing updates to the membership regarding PRC's progress over the next several months.



# The Public & Community Relations Committee Walks Again!



Since the 2012 annual conference, the Public and Community Relations Committee (PCRC) has been working hard to strengthen ONTABA's brand by making behaviour analysis accessible to consumers, families, other disciplines and the population as a whole.

With the help of the ONTABA Board of Directors and the ONTABA Advisory Committee, the PCRC and its sub-committees have engaged in the following actions:

- Produced and disseminated a formal position statement on the use of restraint and seclusion.
- Wrote a letter to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to request an explanation for the lack of the representation of a behaviour analyst on the newly formed clinical expertise committee that will advise the government on issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Wrote a letter to members notifying them of the Ombudsman's investigation into services for adults with developmental disabilities urging them to advocate for improved access to evidence based practices such as those provided by behaviour analysts.
- Produced a draft of a media package to make the board of directors accessible to media outlets so that the values and mission of ONTABA can be communicated on issues relevant to behaviour analysts in Ontario.

- The ONTABA Facebook and Twitter accounts have nearly doubled in size from last year, with a staggering 587 Facebook members and 226 Twitter followers as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.
- Prepared a proposal for a parent workshop in partnership with Autism Ontario.
- Organized ONTABA's presence at the Walk Now for AutismSpeaks event in Toronto on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2013. Over 10 ONTABA representatives walked, raising over \$3,500 in donations; almost doubling our participation and funds raised from the event in 2012.



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# Professional Practice Bulletin

*Public & Community Relations Committee*



## CASE STUDY

### Billy

Billy is a 25-year-old male with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a mild intellectual disability. He lives at home with his parents and was recently referred for a Functional Behaviour Assessment to address preservative requests for items, low rates of aggression towards his parents, and moderate intensity hand-to-head self-injurious behaviour. In a typical crisis situation Billy would begin by asking his parents to go to a store to get a magazine, to which his parents would often respond with "yes we will go if you don't repeat yourself and are nice to people". If Billy repeated himself, asking to go to the store, his parents would say "no, now you don't get a magazine", which would result in an emotional response from Billy including yelling, more frequent requesting, and sometimes aggressive behaviour towards his parents and self-injurious behaviour. In an effort to avoid these situations, his parents would take Billy almost every day to purchase a magazine. Although this parent-developed support prevented major crises, it impacted the families schedule and the cost of magazines was becoming problematic.

A non-credentialed behaviour consultant concluded that Billy's aggression, self-injury, and preservative requesting was maintained by the parents "attention" and access to the magazines. This conclusion was based on the outcome of a rating scale, two 30-min observations, and a handful of A-B-C forms produced by the parents. The consultant stressed the importance of "parent consistency" and recommended removing access to attention and magazines when Billy repeated requests or engaged in challenging behaviour (procedural extinction) and providing access to the magazine once a week when Billy did not repeat. Additionally, Billy was to be given a sticker each day to indicate that he was working towards a goal.

The family committed to trying this approach and within 48-hours Billy lacerated his hands and forehead, destroyed two lamps, broke a table and significantly injured his father when he attempted to prevent Billy from throwing an object. The parents were forced to call the police who arrived and were unable to de-escalate him. Billy was put into hand-cuffs, admitted to a local emergency room, promptly put into 5-point mechanical restraints, and administered a high dosage of sedating antipsychotic medication.

# Professional Practice

## Issue: To Use Procedural Extinction or Not to Use Procedural Extinction

Familiarity with the side effects of extinction is important for practitioners in general and practitioners consulting to families and service providers that do not employ behaviourally trained direct care providers such as Behaviour Technicians. The use of procedural extinction when treating risky behaviour such as aggression, property destruction and self-injury can often create ethical dilemmas for practitioners who may not be familiar with existing practice standards.

Procedural extinction requires a fairly high degree of treatment integrity in order to impact rates of responding while maintaining a safe and therapeutic environment for skill acquisition. Within many settings in Ontario the resources required to support this procedure are often not available (i.e., behaviorally trained direct care staff, ongoing BCBA® or BCaBA® oversight, and system supports for managers of direct care staff).

One of the well known side effects of procedural extinction is the extinction burst. In practice this side effect can significantly increase the risk of harm to self or others and lead to staff/family burnout, a situation which often outweighs the benefits. Another practice issue pertains to poor treatment integrity. In settings where the supports to staff and managers to ensure high treatment fidelity are low; variability in its application may shape more persistent, more intense forms of problem behaviour, and even motivate new forms of problem behaviour (Lerman, Iwata, & Wallace 1999). This is especially problematic with potentially dangerous behaviour.

The strength and variety of interventions that can be found in the literature is significant and can be extremely useful for behaviour analysts that are delivering services to families and agencies for challenging behaviour in a safe and effective manner. The primary objective when determining appropriate treatment approaches must be the accurate identification of functional relationships between behaviour and their controlling variables, in addition to environmental events that significantly contribute. Function based procedures that strengthen adaptive, socially valid, and functionally equivalent skills are efficacious strategies demonstrated in the literature. They provide the client with an alternative method of obtaining reinforcement, which may help alleviate some of the unwanted side effects of extinction (Geiger, Carr & LeBlanc, 2010). Providing choice rather than saying no or ignoring may also reduce the likelihood of an emotional response when a specific reinforcer is withheld. Differential reinforcement procedures have a long history of success in treating challenging behaviour (Chowdhury & Benson, 2011) and although this technology typically depends on extinction as a core component, recent applied research has demonstrated the effectiveness of differential reinforcement procedures in the absence of extinction (Athens & Vollmer, 2010; Carter, 2010). Additionally, the intensity of an individual's response to extinction may be abridged by manipulating the schedule or reinforcement. Research on interpolated reinforcement suggests that by moving schedules of reinforcement from intermittent to dense continuous schedules prior to implementation of extinction based procedures, the intensity, duration, variability and persistence of behaviours commonly associated with a burst may be reduced (Carr, Miguel & Sidener, 2012).

By working within a framework that accounts for systemic, environmental, and technological strengths and barriers, behaviour analysts can provide effective treatment while reducing risk and providing recommendations that are realistic for stakeholders.

### PRACTICE TIPS

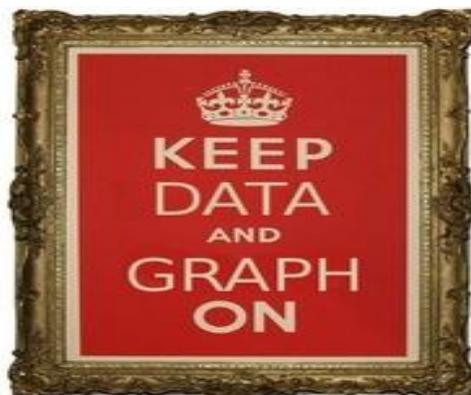
- Before recommending extinction based procedures, consider both the risks that will come from low fidelity implementation and high fidelity implementation, in addition to how to mitigate or lessen the risk, while considering the capacity of the direct care providers.
- Consider differential reinforcement without extinction, non-contingent reinforcement, or interpolated reinforcement to help mitigate risk.
- When accepting referrals from prospective clients determine first if you have the skill, experience, resources, and confidence with providing the service. If not, consult with an expert, or refer to another service provider.
- All recommendations for behavioural interventions must be conceptually systematic, informed by the most recent research, and based on the most objective and accurate assessment data.
- Consider the relevant contributions of other disciplines (medicine, psychiatry, social work, etc.) when designing assessment and treatment procedures.

# Professional Practice

## Issue: To Use Procedural Extinction or Not to Use Procedural Extinction

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# ONTABA MEMBERS

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## Emeritus

**Francisco J Barrera**  
**Nancy Warren**  
**Larry Williams**

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## Sustaining

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**Tammy Frazer**  
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## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It's time to nominate your board representatives again. Please consider nominating a fellow ONTABA member for any of the available board positions. This year we are looking for nominations for President - Elect (1 position), Member at Large (2 positions), Undergraduate Representative (1 position), and Graduate Representative (1 position). The election nomination forms will be emailed to members and available on the web in the near future. We look forward to your nominations!

# ONTABA Newsletter

