

The ONTABA Analyst



In this issue

From the President's Desk
Page 2

Committee Updates
Page 3

The Cusp
Page 8

Announcements
Page 13

ONTABA Members
Page 14

It's almost here...

**ONTABA
Conference 2015
p. 4**

Oh what a night!
**An Evening of Behaviour
Analysis
p. 5**

**From the Membership
featured article**

by Hayley Sedgwick &
Dr. Gary Bernfeld
p. 6

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From the President's Desk

Editor's note: Since this is Albert's last entry for this column, we figured it would be more fun to get him in the hot seat for a good ol' fashioned interview. Apparently once you get started, interviewing behaviour is difficult to satiate. *Lesley*



Interview with ONTABA's outgoing President: Albert Malkin, MA, BCBA

You've been involved with the ONTABA board now for four years; two as President-Elect and two as President. What made you want to get involved?



I went to grad school in the US and my department faculty seemed to encourage a great sense of fun and community in behaviour analysis. I made some lasting friendships and connections through attending school and religiously attending local conferences and ABAI. When I finished my Master's degree and I came back to Toronto; I wanted to get that sense of community again, so I joined ONTABA. Through events like the ONTABA conference and the ABAI convention, I met some board members, past and present, and things seemed to fall in place; I was excited to learn more about the local scene, its history, and current status. I specifically remember a conversation I had with the ONTABA President at the time, Jen Porter, about how it would be great to try to emulate the ABAI convention experience at the ONTABA conference. I really wanted to be a part of making fun changes like that, and also wanted to help out with important tasks like raising the profile of ONTABA in Ontario, so I

didn't hesitate when I was nominated for President-Elect.

Any highlights during your term? Yes, many highlights in fact. Probably the most exciting is that the ONTABA membership has pretty much doubled from when I first came on board. I'm not saying that I'm responsible for the increase in membership (laughs); there are actually a lot of factors at play, especially the hard work of our volunteers and board members. But I have to say that seems like a good indicator of a thriving organization. There is an excitement about our events and initiatives, and I definitely feel a sense of community in behaviour analysis in Ontario these days. It's going strong both online and in person.

Any advice for the incoming President? Louis Busch has got to be one of the most dedicated and hard-working people in our field and I think he is totally prepared for the work that comes with being the President of ONTABA...so no advice really (laughs), he's going to be great! Perhaps only that he needs to be prepared to read and answer a LOT of email (laughs).

Any advice for ONTABA members who haven't yet been actively involved? Yes, now don't get me wrong, it is wonderful to have the support of members who pay their dues every year, but passive membership isn't enough. We are in the middle of a very long process in terms of the regulation of our profession. This isn't the time to sit back; we need a large number of members to raise awareness about the issues we as a field are facing. It's

important to stay on top of what is happening and make sure you have your say about the future of behaviour analysis in our province. Come to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the conference, get involved, volunteer. It's important to know that you don't have to have a PhD in behaviour analysis to contribute to ONTABA. Many of us are very passionate about our field and chances are that some have arrived in the field through an indirect path. So anyone who acquired professional skills from your "other life" should know that those skills may be incredibly valuable to ONTABA and our shared goals. Simply reaching out would be a great first step; send ONTABA an email and let us know what skills you could lend; even if your skill set can't be used immediately. It is important for the board to know who is out there and what unique abilities you can bring to the table. If your degree happened to be a double major that included public policy then we want to know! In the past, people have stepped forward who had public relations, bartending, retail, book keeping, and promotion experience; and this breadth of knowledge has helped us in planning and in carrying out events and running the board more smoothly.

With your current term coming to a close, what do you and the First Lady plan to do with all your new found free time? (Laughs.) Well, definitely just spending more time with my wife! Also clicker training our new puppy! I do hope to be more productive as a researcher. I'm about two years into my PhD now, so I still have some more coursework and then the small task of a dissertation to complete. I

seem to have no trouble keeping myself busy!

Dr. Jon Bailey refers to behaviour analysis as the “science that can change your life” and I think anyone in our field can endorse this, on a related note, how has ONTABA changed your life? So many crazy things have happened to me as a direct result of being involved with ONTABA—crazy but good! (Laughs). First, I’ve met a lot of amazing people in our field—learning about the history of behaviour analysis in Ontario from the old guard and learning from their work has given me perspective and an appreciation for all the contributors who have come

before me. Being a part of ONTABA has opened up many opportunities for me. Not just being a part of the board, but I landed my first job out of graduate school through connecting with someone at an agency booth at the ONTABA conference—I really had a leg up just by having that chance to meet an employee face to face. Also, a few years ago, one of my heroes in behavior analysis, Dr. Mark Dixon, was invited to speak at the annual ONTABA conference and through meeting him here, he later became my PhD advisor!

On a personal level, I’ve also made some lifelong friends, and in fact one year at the annual conference, a

group of us went out for drinks after the conference and a mutual friend spent the evening ensuring that I got to know Kelly; my now wife!

Wow, that’s incredible! So basically what we should tell prospective ONTABA members is that if you join, you will land your next job, further your education, and meet your future life partner. Well right, exactly! (Laughs). I’ve been really lucky, and I’m definitely thankful for ONTABA—it has been life changing. I think this ties back to your previous question of advice for our members, and I guess the bottom line is: it can happen to you!



Committee Updates

members (4.8%), and an Emeritus member (0.15%)

Membership & Recruitment

The Membership & Recruitment Committee continue their work with respect to the following initiatives:

- Increasing general membership
- Increasing student membership
- Increasing the number of sustaining members
- Increasing membership early in the association year (January) so that members gain the full benefit of their membership
- Increasing member benefits

ONTABA membership fluctuates between ~400 – 700 members annually, with the largest influx in new members and renewals seen during the fall when individuals register as an ONTABA member in order to obtain lower registration fees for the annual conference.

Currently, ONTABA has the following membership numbers recorded:

- Total Members = 687 with 408 of those as new members (59%) and 279 as returning members (41%)
- Full Members currently comprise 67% of the membership and students account for an additional 26% of the membership. The remaining 7% of members are sustaining members (1.75%), affiliate

New members continue to be recruited through a variety of means:

- Direct recruitment presentations at college programs, university programs, agency/businesses that employ behaviour analysts, during sponsored events
- Social media including the Facebook group and Twitter posts

Currently the following member benefits are in place:

- One year subscription to The ONTABA Analyst
- Receive information about job postings and training opportunities
- Inclusion in the ONTABA membership directory
- Access to members only list Serv
- Access to professional development opportunities sponsored by ONTABA that serve to enhance knowledge and skills in the field of behaviour analysis
- A reduced fee for ABAI annual membership
- A reduced fee to the ONTABA Annual Conference
- Access to the JABA and JEAB

The Membership & Recruitment Committee is always working to expand membership benefits. We are currently exploring:

- Preferential rate for Professional Liability Insurance
- Group rates for extended health benefits
- Access to Perkopolis
- Corporate membership rates for: roadside assistance, gym memberships, computers, and home, auto, and

- pet insurance
- Car rental and hotel discounts

Full details of the new ONTABA membership benefits program for 2016 will be unveiled at the AGM.

Tracie Lindblad
Chair — Membership & Recruitment Committee

Conference

Good grief! I missed the ONTABA conference early bird.



Don't worry—you can still register, but you should seriously get on it!

ONTABA's annual conference is only a few weeks away! The last day to register is October 31st and spaces are filling up quickly.

There are four invited speakers: Drs. John Rapp, Anthony Biglan, James MacKillop and Richard Malott. A wide variety of topics and applications of behaviour analysis will be discussed. From how behaviour analysis can improve our lives and our world to increasing eye contact in children with autism; from applying behavioural economics to understanding addictive behaviour to needing Jewish mothers! Thanks to your feedback, the length of the keynote presentations have been shortened by 20 minutes each.

There are three concurrent sessions with nine different talks to choose from! Up to 17 CEUs will be available over the two days—the most offered at an ONTABA conference ever.

This year's poster session will host 36 posters from service providers and students from Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick! Full time students will also be eligible for an award for the best student poster.

We received many excellent paper and poster submissions this year (which made the decision process extra difficult!). Thank you to all those who submitted a paper or poster.

Following Dr. Biglan's talk on Monday evening, he will be available for book signing, so bring your copies of *The Nurture Effect: How the Science of Human Behavior Can Improve Our Lives & Our World*.

We are excited to announce that you no longer have to wait in the long Second Cup line for your afternoon caffeine! Coffee and tea will be available in the exhibit hall during morning and afternoon breaks this year!

Join us at the ONTABA Social at Fionn MacCool's (310 Front Street West)! Even if you can't make it to the conference this year, you can still come to the Social!

There's a couple more spots for vendors. Please contact conference@ontaba.org for information about setting up a booth for your agency or academic institution. Our exhibit hall will be a great place to network!

For more information, please see the conference schedule here: <http://www.ontaba.org/pdf/Schedule%20of%20Events.pdf>

We look forward to seeing you at this year's conference!

Kerry-Anne Robinson
Chair — Conference Committee

PRC

The Professional Regulation Committee (PRC) continues to work towards regulation and has been involved with continuing to gather information about the feasibility of pursuing the same or a similar regulation model to the one being developed in British Columbia. The PRC has solicited feedback from relevant stakeholders regarding this model and is now in the process of determining next steps. The PRC will be requesting meetings with relevant colleges to initiate some basic exploratory conversations with these organizations.

The PRC has also reached out to one other professional association to inquire about their own possible plans towards regulation. Other next steps include organizing a meeting between PRC and various provincial ministries to introduce ourselves as a committee and professional association and to keep the conversations around regulation active and perhaps at the forefront of ministry initiatives. The PRC continues to work with Pathway Group to assist with these plans.

Kim Trudeau-Craig
Chair — Professional Regulation Committee

Public & Community Relations Committee: Membership Event



An Evening of Behaviour Analysis

On August 21st 2015, ONTABA held its first annual summer event, “An Evening of Behaviour Analysis”. The event was organized as a professional development opportunity that would allow members to network with other behaviour analysts and obtain continuing education credits while learning from local experts in the field.

Dr. Kimberley Zonneveld started the evening off with a presentation on the Assessment and Treatment of Feeding Problems in Young Children. Dr. Zonneveld has published research in the area of increasing compliance among young children, assessment and treatment of problem behaviour, and increasing staff performance. Complete with convincing data and video examples, Dr. Zonneveld’s talk demonstrated the challenges associated with assessing and treating paediatric feeding disorders such as food refusal or age inappropriate feeding behaviours. The effectiveness of behaviour analytic treatment approaches were reviewed.

Following a brief break for beverages and hors d’oeuvres, the evening continued with Nancy Marchese presenting her talk entitled, “Spreading our Wings: A Model for the Clinical Application of Strategies Derived from Current Behaviour Analytic Research”. Nancy has published in JABA and she has presented at provincial and international conferences. Nancy has made several public appearances in the media while disseminating behaviour

analytic technologies. Her talk described approaches for translating empirical findings into socially meaningful programming. Case examples, data and videos were presented to demonstrate how approaches from current literature were adapted for use in a community setting.

Following the talks, members had the chance to ask the presenters questions which stimulated an engaging discussion about all things behaviour analytic.

With over 80 ONTABA members in attendance and CEUs offered for free, the evening was a smashing success! Based on the positive feedback from the membership, the ONTABA Board of Directors plans to continue to offer similar events for 2016.

Submitted by: John “Willie” Thorman



Photo credits: Pereira Pixels

From the Membership



Featured article

Using Differential Reinforcement and Prompting to Increase Showering Skills of a Girl with Multiple Diagnoses

Hayley Sedgwick¹ and Gary Bernfeld²
St. Lawrence College

What follows is a brief summary of a behaviour program developed by the senior author, a 3rd year student in the Bachelor's degree in Behavioural Psychology program, while on placement.

Method

Participant: The participant was a 14 year old girl in a residential treatment program diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Global Developmental Delay, and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Her problem behaviours in school and the foster home included aggressive behaviour, tantrums, noncompliance, hyperactivity, and sudden negative mood changes.

Target Behaviour: After reviewing the results of three indirect assessments and direct observation, the target behaviour was defined as shower hygiene routine, which included key components of appropriate showering: removal of underwear and bra, soap and towel use. Based on the results of the indirect and direct assessments used, it was hypothesized that the function of the improper hygiene skill was attention from staff, with escape from an undesirable, low probability behaviour as a secondary function.

Methodology and Procedures: A changing criterion design was utilized and differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour (DRA), verbal prompts, token economy, and preventative teaching were used. A chart was placed in a proximal location to the shower room and occurrences of the four components of the target behaviour were recorded daily. Preventative teaching and prompting were also recorded. The participant gained

¹The senior author is currently a 4th year student in the Bachelor's degree in Behavioural Psychology at St. Lawrence College, but was a 3rd year student at the time of the study.

²The college supervisor of the senior author is a professor in the Bachelor's degree in Behavioural Psychology, and can be contacted at GBernfeld@sl.on.ca

immediate points in the residential program's existing token economy and earned a community outing each week if she achieved the required criterion for that week. Criterion levels were set at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% for three consecutive days.

Results

The intervention was implemented each morning over a 17 day period, during the scheduled time for a shower. The participant was successful in meeting the objectives throughout the intervention period and achieved the final goal of 100% of the behaviour's components being completed by the end of the intervention. During baseline, the participant averaged 25.00% of the components of the shower hygiene skills being completed. However, during interventions the average increased to 67.65%.

The increase from baseline to intervention was found to be 170.60%. The percentage of nonoverlapping data (PND) was calculated using the formula outlined by Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Casto (1987), which designates a PND score between 70.00% and 90.00% as effective. As the PND was 82.35% the intervention was deemed effective.

During the intervention, progress through the objectives was made at a steady rate, and staff noted that throughout, the use of preventative teaching and prompting decreased naturally as alternative, effective behaviour was demonstrated.

Discussion

Strengths: Social reinforcement proved to be highly motivating for the participant to meet the goals outlined in the DRA procedure. The use of the token economy already in place in the residential program, allowed for immediate reinforcement to be accessed after engaging in the target behaviour. Staff noted it was a good way to incorporate the intervention into the already existing behaviour programming in the residential setting. In addition, health complications that resulted from the problem hygiene decreased since intervention began. These findings support the social validity of the intervention.

Limitations: Two of the components of the shower routine and hygiene behaviour, soap use and towel use, were

difficult to accurately monitor without direct supervision. Because of the policies surrounding privacy of the youth in the residential program, complete supervision of these behavioural components was not possible. Accuracy was reliant on the end product of these components occurring. Furthermore, this program was implemented in a residential setting, which could have impacted the results, as there were many staff involved in the implementation of this program and the accuracy of completion criteria may have been interpreted differently.

Summary: The intervention designed to accelerate the participant's completion of all components of the shower hygiene routine was effective. The data show that all objectives were achieved and the final goal of

completing all four components of the shower routine and hygiene behaviour was met by the end of intervention. Completion of the components of the shower routine and hygiene behaviour increased from an average of 25.00% during baseline to an average of 67.65% during intervention, though it reached 100% for the last four days of the intervention. PND analysis demonstrated that the intervention was effective. Staff planned in the immediate future, to continue to provide reinforcement and use the intervention procedure as part of the participant's morning routine, which had good social validity.

For more information, a list of references and/or a copy of the full report, contact the senior author at HSedgwickPinn08@sl.on.ca

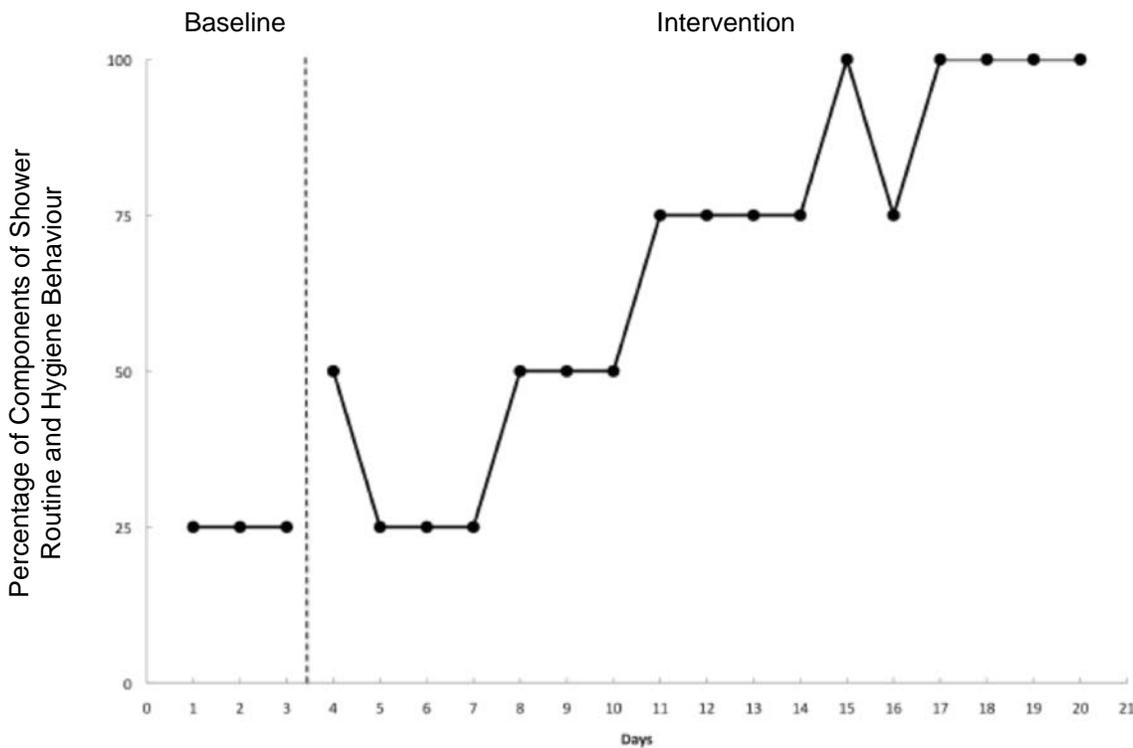


Figure 1. The percentage of the components of the shower hygiene routine behaviour completed during baseline and intervention

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Behavioural cusp · n. 1 | be.hav.iour cusp | /br'hei.vjər 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)

(and beyond)

Behaviour Analysis in Ontario: The people behind the work

Editor’s note: With the conference right around the corner, I wanted this issue to be extra special... and by George, I think we’ve got it! Enjoy! *Lesley*

Anthony Biglan, Ph.D.

Dr. Biglan is a Senior Scientist at Oregon Research Institute. His research over the past 30 years has helped to identify effective family, school, and community interventions to prevent the most common and costly problems of childhood and adolescence. Dr. Biglan is a former president of the Society for Prevention Research. He was a member of the Institute of Medicine Committee on Prevention, which released its report in 2009 documenting numerous evidence-based preventive interventions that can prevent multiple problems. His recent review of preventive interventions concluded that diverse psychological, behavioural, and health problems can be prevented through the promotion of nurturing families, schools, and communities.



First, congratulations on your recent book, [The Nurture Effect: How the Science of Human Behavior Can Improve Our Lives & Our World](#). It’s really a fantastic read. For those who haven’t yet read it, can you give us a quick summary of the book? Well, here is what I said in the first chapter that pretty well summarizes what the book is about.

We can boil down what we have learned in the last fifty years to a simple principle: we need to ensure that everyone lives in a nurturing environment. At every level and in

every interaction, we must ask ourselves whether we are contributing to the safety and supportiveness of our environment, both for us and for those around us. Nurturance becomes a standard and a value for our interpersonal interactions and by which to judge our public policies. Do they contribute to safety, comfort, and positive development, or do they stress and threaten people? Imagine what such a standard might imply for policies about incarcerating youth, cutting unemployment insurance, or decreasing subsidies for low-cost housing.

What this doesn’t say is that the foundation for building nurturing environments was the behavioural paradigm that Skinner did so much to establish. I think one of the reasons that so many behaviour analysts like the book is that it explains how an evolutionary/contextual approach to the behaviour of individuals, groups, and organizations can help us to evolve more nurturing societies.

How did you make the shift from working directly with adults, families and children to addressing large-scale societal issues and affecting policy change? It was the tobacco control movement that taught me about public health. Initially I worked with youth to try to prevent smoking. I did some work at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, California. I came to realize that adolescents who smoke usually engage in other risky behaviours but it is the same

environment that produces these problematic behaviours; where there is one problem, there are lots of problems. Tobacco control is a population-based problem so the shift in focus from individuals to entire populations was natural. Just as we can focus on preventing the aggressive behaviour of a single child, we can turn to the task of reducing the prevalence of aggressive behavior in the population. And the fundamentals of the analysis are the same whether we are addressing problems in a child’s behaviour or problems with a corporation or a culture, we look to the context to find the influences.

Early in your career you were a social psychologist and in your book you described yourself as a “civil libertarian” who was “ardently opposed to behaviour science”. We’re collectively happy that something changed, so what happened? What changed? For my doctoral dissertation in social/organizational psychology, I needed to do an analysis of tasks that scholars were engaged within their graduate departments. I derived three dimensions of academic areas. On the first dimension, all of the “hard” sciences, like physics and chemistry, as well as science-based applied areas, such as engineering were at one end and fields like History, English, and Philosophy were at the other end. I had been reading Thomas Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* at the time and I realized that my analysis was consistent with it; this first dimension involved whether the field had an agreed-upon paradigm

that was guiding the work of all of the people in the field.

Psychology was on the non-paradigmatic end of the dimension. When Bob Kohlenberg got me to start reading Skinner's work, I realized that he was proposing a comprehensive paradigm for the study of human behaviour. I found that compelling both because it organized the study of human behaviour and because it held the promise that we could use the scientific study of behavior to change the world.

What is the best career advice you that you received? One year at a panel discussion at the American Psychological Association (APA) convention, Hans Eysenck spoke alongside Skinner and he said: "Read widely and not deeply". I think this has influenced me a lot; I read a lot of stuff not in the areas in which I am directly working. That is what got me into the study of things like the evolution of capitalism.

What career advice do you have for behaviour analysts? One idea that came out of the counter-culture in the 60s and 70s that really resonated with me is: don't take anything too seriously—especially in academia. Whenever I work with grad students I really encourage this. For my doctoral dissertation I completed the work at the University of Washington but my review committee was back at University of Illinois. On the day of my defense, the committee was stewing for some time and grudgingly said they would grant me my degrees, but they told me that I needed to go and speak with the methodologist who they had put on the committee, after the one I had left the University. He told me that my methodology was inappropriate and flawed. I was so distressed and I remember so vividly being there on the 9th floor of this new department building and the thought of jumping out the window

actually crossed my mind. I went back and I was determined to test my work empirically to show that I used appropriate methods—and I did. Interestingly, years later, my work was picked up and a paper was published; I was given credit by the author who coined the eponym the "Biglan Model", you can google it (laughs)! It is strange to become famous in a field that I ended up leaving after a year.

Whenever I am on a doctoral committee I tell this story to the candidate. I think academia could be a lot more nurturing and a lot less aversive to students.

How do you respond to people who are adamantly opposed to the use of behavioural principles to affect change in behaviour? Like the argument that reinforcement is equivalent to bribing and it undermines the intrinsic value of learning or people who feel that using a little coercion is how to get things done? You know, I have read most of the criticism of Skinner's work over the years. I find most of it does not accurately describe what Skinner was saying. But I think that the resistance to the use of reinforcement has died down considerably in the last thirty years. I published a paper in *Prevention Science*, where I showed that effective preventive interventions invariably make use of reinforcement. Although few prevention scientists would class themselves as behaviourists, I didn't get any negative reactions to the paper.

What can the average behaviour analyst do to contribute to the movement of improving the human condition through behaviour science—especially if their work is limited to working with children with Autism or developmental disabilities and they don't have the access or agency to make large scale change? I have talked to a lot of behaviour analysts

who want to see behaviour analysis expand to address a wide range of societal problems. I think one aspect of the problem is that behaviour analysts have tended to ignore work, such as that of the prevention scientists I just mentioned, if it wasn't explicitly classed as behaviour analytic. I think the principles of behaviour analysis are thoroughly embedded in most of the interventions we have developed.

There is nothing to stop behaviour analysts from offering their services to the solution of other problems. The contextual behavioral science movement and the prevention science movement are two examples of how behavioural principles are being used for other problems.

I think it is also valuable to study the use of social media to bring about the changes we want. With technology we can now connect, build support, mobilize, and change the direction of society. Building a coalition of people goes beyond the contribution of one individual. Check out the Nurture Network: <http://www.nurtureeffect.com/nurture-network/>. You can join the group on Facebook. And we will not solve our most pressing problems if we do not create broad and effective coalitions. There are societal issues that we are facing today that need to be addressed otherwise the results will be disastrous. Take for example industrialization and its impact on climate change, Neil deGrasse Tyson, an American astrophysicist predicts that if the Arctic glaciers continue to rapidly melt, the sea levels will rise to the elbow of the Statue of Liberty. We need to affect change on a societal level. It sounds like a lofty goal, but I'm a realist and I think it can be done.

Tell us about a career highlight. Well I think publishing the book is the most important thing I have done. I

have tried to summarize just how much we have learned in the past fifty years and how we have the potential to bring about bigger changes in society than any of the technological and industrial changes that the physical sciences have brought about.

I have to admit that as I read through your book, it was making me reflect a lot on my own relationships—specifically how easy it is to become enraged when I open the cupboard under the sink and realize that my husband hasn't taken out the recycling in spite of my pleading. It is humbling to realize that I need to be very mindful of my own behaviour.

For the record I just took out my recycling bin. Pick up isn't until tomorrow morning, but I am going away and I didn't want my wife to have to do it. (laughs). In my book, I tell how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which represents an important advance in behaviour analysis of complex human behavior has changed my life. It changed my relationship with my wife and my family for the better. When I first became a behaviourist, I thought that thoughts and feelings could largely be ignored, but now I see that the same contextual analysis that we have applied to observable behaviour is relevant to every aspect of human functioning—a point that Skinner made in his paper The Operational Analysis of Psychological Terms.

Tell us something about you that we wouldn't find on your CV. I have a cat named Charlie who likes to drape himself over my left arm as I type at my desk. I've written many grant applications, proposals, papers, and even my book with Charlie on my lap.



Jonathan Gillman

Jonathan is in his third year in the Behavioural Science Technology (BST) Program at George Brown College. Before diving into the field of behaviour science, Jonathan was a musician; in fact, you may recognize him as Jonathan made it to the third round in the last season of Canadian Idol! In addition to his studies, Jonathan works part time at a local publicly funded agency as a support worker and also as a behaviour intervention specialist with a private agency.



How did you become interested in ABA? For most of my 20s, I performed music which afforded me many great opportunities but as that chapter in my life rounded out, I wanted to find another career path that I could be just as passionate about. I have always been fascinated with human behaviour and the mind, a few years ago, my girlfriend at the time was completing an undergrad in psychology and she helped me hone in on behaviour science as a possible avenue. I came across the BST program, so I pursued it.

What has been your favourite course so far? The one that really stands out for me was the first year introduction to ABA because this course really set the tone for how I perceived subsequent courses.

Was there a moment when you knew that ABA was for you? Yeah, lots of these moments—even when I read the BST program description, I knew ABA was a good match for me. Another moment in particular was in the introductory course, as we were learning about some of the dense principles of ABA, we also learned about its application to so many

populations and it was really inspiring and rewarding to hear that ABA can offer effective solutions. The whole point of trying to address behaviour is to make positive and meaningful change and I feel like with ABA the answer, that change, is right in front of you—and that's really powerful. As I started to adopt a behaviour analytic framework, it changed my mindset; ABA isn't just something you take to work, it influences your daily life. It's kind of like that moment in the Matrix—when everything becomes clear (laughs).

Who is your ABA hero? Well, I gotta give it up to B.F. Skinner.

I think I need to start changing this question to evoke some variability in responding! Who are your mentors in the field—either in the research or locally? I'm really interested in Miltenberger's work especially his work on group-based interventions. Locally, I'd have to say that Louis Busch is inspirational to me. I really admire and appreciate the way he breaks down tough behaviour analytic concepts to make them accessible and less intimidating. I also appreciate his honesty when he describes what worked and didn't work in his own clinical anecdotes.

What are your clinical interests?

Right now I am making an effort to stay open to broad applications of ABA. Before starting the program, I had this preconceived notion that I didn't really want to work with children. My first placement was in an IBI setting and it was life changing—I really enjoyed the experience. I've also had a placement in a group home with adults with developmental disabilities that focused on teaching fundamental life skills and that was amazing too. Looking forward, I am really interested in the dual diagnosis population and in forensics; working with people who have come into contact with the law.

What goals do you have in your five year career plan? I want to further my education and get board certified. I really want to gain as much experience as possible so I'd like to work while pursuing a degree. My dream job would be on a very dynamic team within an organization that services people with dual diagnosis or perhaps one more on forensics side. With my team I want to be a part of designing and implementing behaviour programs that help people achieve their goals. That would be my dream job.

Wanda L. Smith, Ph.D

Dr. Smith is a registered psychologist with a private practice in Clinical Psychology providing empirically-based treatments to adults and the elderly with mental health disorders with a specialty in trauma. Dr. Smith received her training in the experimental analysis of behaviour at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. Dr. Smith has worked in psychiatric hospitals, residential settings and community outreach for more than 20 years. Her trauma practice has spanned over 10 years and includes military, veterans, law enforcement and first responders. She has published articles on assessment and pharmacological interventions in Alzheimer's disease and treatment of PTSD. She has presented at professional conferences in Canada and internationally on behavioural treatments related to dementia and more recently, on her clinical work related to trauma. Throughout her career Dr. Smith taught select courses in Behaviour Analysis and Psychology. Currently Dr. Smith has an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University and coordinates



and teaches courses on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and PTSD.

What were the events that led to establishing ONTABA? Why was it necessary at that time? I can't say that there was one catalyst, we had a critical mass of behaviour analysts and establishing an affiliation with ABAI (which was known as just ABA at the time) was the best way to give us some credibility and secure the position of behaviour analysis in Ontario. Many of us were already registered with the College of Psychologists and trying to establish a college for behaviour analysis was just not possible back then. We had the vision of creating a professional organization with the long-term goal of certification in mind.

The process was really just driven by a handful of people; Dr. Larry Williams played a big role. We had our first meeting in the Zarfes room at Surrey Place Centre, there were about 20-25 of the usual suspects present, we talked about what we could do, we thought we needed money to start the process so we all threw in \$20.

How did this small group of people get ONTABA off the ground?

ONTABA was formalized in May 1993 when we received affiliate status with ABAI. We had such great camaraderie and it was really fun, really, it was such a good time! (Laughs). The process itself was easy; there was no competition or posturing, or vying for power, we just came together, figured out what to do and who could do what and it all got done, it was amazing. Even myself becoming ONTABA's first president, there wasn't a fight for it; we all just contributed and took on roles and responsibilities. Larry Williams and Gerry Bernicky were critical in drafting the by-laws. In fact, our by-laws were so comprehensive that ABAI adopted our document to use as a template for other affiliate chapters.

It is so great to see that some of the founding members are still around.

Tell us about some early coups for ONTABA. Early on in the summer American Psychological Association (APA) held its annual convention in Toronto and as a means to start connecting ONTABA professionally with other interested parties, we invited members of Division 25 (Experimental Analysis of Behavior) and of Division 33 (Developmental Disabilities) from APA to come to a BBQ. We hosted it in the yard of Surrey Place Centre (and spent nearly our entire budget!). It really was a success and even now at the ABAI convention, people still talk about that "cook out in Toronto"!

Another fantastic accomplishment early on was having Dr. Don Baer come and speak at our 2nd annual symposium/conference. When we were planning the symposium I had suggested Don Baer but who would believe that a giant in our field would come to our little symposium? Back when I was a student at University of Manitoba, Don Baer was a visiting professor and I had taken a course with him so I figured I'd just call him. Turns out he remembered me, and I just asked whether he'd be willing to make the trip to Toronto, and he agreed!

How did you become involved in ABA? In my undergraduate studies at the University of Winnipeg, I took a primer course in behaviour analysis. It was just so intriguing to me; up to that point I really had no idea what I wanted to do. As an undergraduate, opportunities arose for me to do summer projects: One summer I worked on a language program with a young girl with autism in Dr. Joe Pear's lab at St Amant. Another summer, I worked in Dr. Garry Martin's lab at the Manitoba Developmental Centre where I pretty much spent the whole time in a large

washroom working on toilet training. Teaching kids to talk and to use the toilet was incredibly reinforcing. I completed my graduate studies at the University of Manitoba and I was so fortunate to have learning opportunities and to work with amazing people; in addition to Joe and Garry, Dr. Trevor Stokes was on faculty for one year too. In their labs, we had the chance to work on what we wanted to do; I did a lot of work with children with autism but I also did some work in group homes with aboriginal children, in a clinic with children who were obese, individuals with Alzheimer's, and of course I did lab work with rats and pigeons too.

Your clinical work now is largely with adults with PTSD. How did you make this shift in focus? For my dissertation I studied discrimination learning in people with Alzheimer's Disease. My grandfather had Alzheimer's so it was of personal interest to me as well. After this, I was invited by Dr. Arthur Dalton to do a post doctoral research fellowship at Surrey Place Centre. I was fortunate to be involved in groundbreaking research looking at pharmacological treatments of Alzheimer's. For my post-doc research I focused on behaviour problems in patients with Alzheimer's so naturally I worked mostly with the elderly and in nursing home environments. One thing I became very observant of was the behaviour of the spouses and family members, they were often so distressed and in order to implement behaviour programs, I needed their cooperation. Up until this point all my work was very behaviour analytic. I became interested in treating anxiety and depression and applying behavioural models so I studied CBT; a little dark secret of mine, at the Beck Institute. I actually learned to do CBT really well but I was never all that comfortable with it, but it was a vehicle to get people to start talking about what was going on

inside. Then came along Dr. Steven Hayes and ACT which was an incredible and welcomed diversion away from CBT. To this day, my behaviour analytic colleagues still give me a hard time about my CBT work, but you know what, I got really good at it! (Laughs). I worked for many years in hospital settings; I was at CAMH for some time working with elderly psychiatric patients in locked wards and then I was involved in community outpatient programs for the elderly at Chedoke McMaster Hospital.

Eventually I left the hospitals for private practice. So now, yes, most of my clients are veterans and military or survivors of sexual abuse. If you can believe it, my oldest client right now is a 93 year old World War II veteran. There wasn't a time that I decided that this was going to be my niche, it was just there, kind of like when I initially got into behaviour analysis, I was pulled in that direction and I just went with it. I always seem to get the tough cases but I have a hard time saying no! (Laughs). Thankfully this has afforded me with the chance to move around and work with different populations. I know some people have devoted entire careers to one population, which is so amazing and I admire the dedication, but since graduate school, change has pretty much been the theme in my career. And I must add that my graduate training in behavior analysis has served me well throughout my career.

Your work must be so intense—hearing so many lived experiences of horrific pain and suffering. How do you manage being immersed in traumatic stories all the time? Well, I engage in my greatest joy at high frequencies: long hikes in the woods with my dog, Rudy. I do this about four times a week—I have to. There is something about the solitude and peacefulness of being in nature. I

think it gives me a break and I think it also grounds me.

Tell us about some exciting projects that you have on the go right now.

There is this one project, we're in the very early stages right now but we're interested in getting ACT incorporated into basic training for first responders (police, fire fighters, EMS). I'm working on this with Stephanie Swayne, a clinical Social Worker who is well versed in ACT. It is a grandiose plan; we want to see if we can prevent PTSD or minimize lasting effects of trauma exposure for these first responders, but first we just need to get the project off the ground.

Another project is with Sarah Kupferschmidt. She is teaching behaviour analytic courses at the undergraduate level at McMaster University. As you know, there has been more attention and a growing interest in the stress and increasing anxiety levels of students. Initiatives like introducing a reading week in the fall term have been put in place to address it. For our project, we are looking at bringing ACT into the classroom.

Why do you think many behaviour analysts shy away from or outright avoid addressing things like emotions and cognition? Is it a fear of being seen as a “cognitivist” or a “mentalistic”? You know, it's funny because when people are having these reactions to talk about emotions, they are having emotions! (Laughs). Behaviour analysts may feel uncomfortable talking about it but emotions are a part of our life. What's been going on in the world lately, all the news about the refugees, instances of shootings, deaths of innocent children caused by careless drivers, when I hear this news, I feel incredibly sad—emotions emerge. In clinical work, the emotions are in the room with you, you have to deal with it. Here is a quote from a 35 year old

veteran: "I don't know why I am alive and at times I know I shouldn't be and I don't know why I am and other people aren't and I feel guilty that I lived and they didn't." These feelings are private events and to experience them feels awful. People will engage in behaviours to avoid these feelings; maybe abusing drugs or alcohol. Emotions are not straight up causes of behaviour but they are a part of the whole package of what we need to address.

Any advice for behaviour analysts who are secretly interested in getting into therapeutic counselling? I would recommend looking at some accounts of behaviour and emotions such as ACT. ACT is not about giving up behaviour analysis or discounting Skinner, we can move beyond Skinner and still be behaviour analytic in our work. If you are interested in learning more, start reading up on Relational Frame Theory and ACT, dip your toes into ACT; just go for it! ACT has really

attracted a diverse group of people for example psychoanalysts who don't know that they are embracing a behaviour analytic framework but they are doing ACT! Behaviour analysts are well poised to do ACT and to do it very well.



Announcements



2015 ONTABA Board of Directors Election Now Open!

To vote, go to www.ontaba.org, log into your account and click on 'my ONTABA'. Scroll down to make your selections.

The poll closes at 9pm on Sunday November 15, 2015.
Best of luck to all the candidates!

Want to post an ad in an upcoming issue?

For 2016, the issues will be released quarterly:
January, April, July, October

Interested? Contact us! contact@ontaba.org

Have an ONTABA member in mind for the Cusp?

Let us know, we love suggestions!
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



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