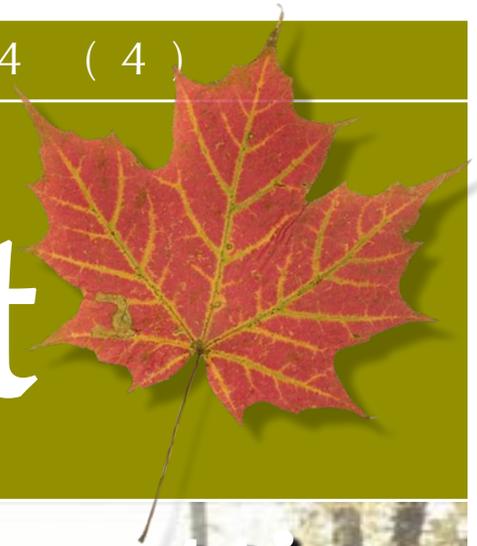


The ONTABA
Analyst



The days are getting shorter...

**and the nights are getting longer
waiting for the Annual Conference**



Meet our invited speakers

— Page 11

**Survey on behavioural data
retention practices**

Brought to you by the ASD Task Force

— Page 4



Follow us on:



IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 2 – From the President's Desk
Page 3 – Announcements
Page 6 – Committee Updates
Page 8 – Spotlight On...

Page 9 – What Would You Do?
Page 11 – The Cusp
Page 18 – Members

From the President's Desk

It's hard to believe but 2018 is indeed drawing to an end. As you read the rest of yet another great newsletter issue, I'm sure you'll notice that the past year has been and continues to be a busy one for the Board of Directors and committee volunteers.

Throughout the year the board has continued to work towards completing our strategic plan goals. Here are a few highlights:

We are in the process of completing a staffing scan and developing the timeline and job description to retain staff to support our organization as it continues to grow.

With the support of our governance consultant and volunteers, we continue to develop outstanding policies to complete our policy and procedure manual as well as a risk management plan.

We recently approved the terms of reference for the finance committee to provide the Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect with increased support for monitoring the organization's finances and fiscal responsibility of the Board of Directors.

We are now in the final stages of our mission statement revision to more clearly provide direction for our organization and to more clearly convey to the public what do we do, where do we do it, who we serve, why do we do what we do, and how we do it. Thank you to all the members who provided feedback.

Along with the revised mission, the board is working closely with our governance consultant to develop bylaws that reflect the current state of ONTABA and will provide direction for future boards and members while ensuring compliance with the new Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (expected to be in effect in 2019).

Although there is still a lot to do between now and the end of 2018, one of the events that makes the end of the year exciting for us (and we hope for you too) is the upcoming 2018 ONTABA Annual Conference! The conference committee has worked diligently to put together another educational and thought provoking conference. Based on the breadth of presentations, we

hope there will be something for everyone.

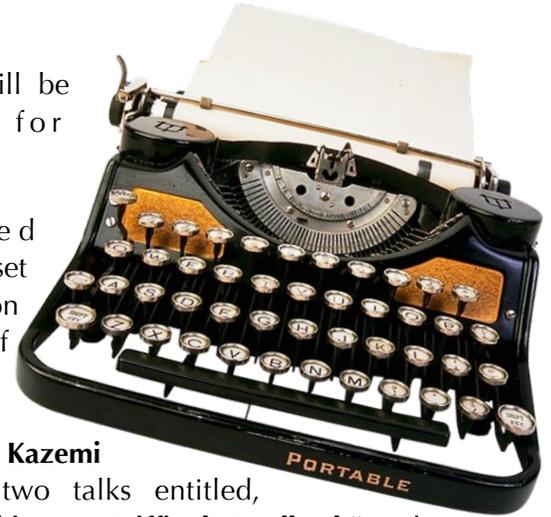
The invited speakers are set to keep you on the edge of your seat with their amazing work. **Dr. Ellie Kazemi**

will present two talks entitled, **"Steps for Dishing out Difficult Feedback"** and **"The Power of Why"**. **Dr. Adel Nadjowski** will present **"Flexible and Focused! Improving Executive Skills in Individuals with Autism"** and **"Recent Research and Strategies for Teaching Perspective Taking Skills to Individuals with Autism"**. Finally, Ontario's very own **Dr. Julie Koudys** will present **"Putting the ABA in AAC Systems: Creating Effective Augmentative Alternative Communication for Individuals with Intellectual Disability"** and **"Meaningful Parent Involvement in ABA Programming"**. Visit our website for the presentation abstracts and updated information about the concurrent sessions featuring local behaviour analysts and students. The AGM, poster session, and social are set to take place the evening of Thursday December 6. We invite all members to take part in the AGM which will be available for members to attend online or in person.

The conference is not only an opportunity to earn CEUs, it is also a great place to see colleagues you may not get to connect with very often and to network and meet new people—you never know when a chance meeting can open a new door for you. It's a time of learning and socializing for everyone. I hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cunningham
President, ONTABA



Survey about Behavioural Data Retention Practices

Submitted by: *Dr. Nancy Freeman on behalf of the ASD Task Force*

This summer ONTABA conducted a brief online survey about behavioural data retention practices in Ontario for clinicians providing ABA services to children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The purpose was to understand similarities and differences in the application of relevant standards and regulations, i.e., Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), the College of Psychologists (CPO), and the Child, Family, and Youth Services Act, as it pertains to data storage and retention.

Of the 206 respondents, 166 (81%) were ONTABA members. The majority of respondents (64%) were certified with the BACB, primarily at the BCBA level (58%). An additional 15% were in the process of becoming board certified. The remaining respondents were Psychologists (3%), Administrators (3%), or Other (17%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents worked in publicly funded agencies (64%), approximately one-third (35%) worked in private practice including the Direct Funding Option (DFO) of the Ontario Autism Program, and the remainder specified "Other".

Respondents were asked about their data retention practices based on their primary behavioural service employment setting.

The pattern was similar across summative reports (behaviour plans, behaviour support plans), behaviour assessment protocols (ABLLS-R, VB-MAPP, PEAK, AFLS, etc.), and

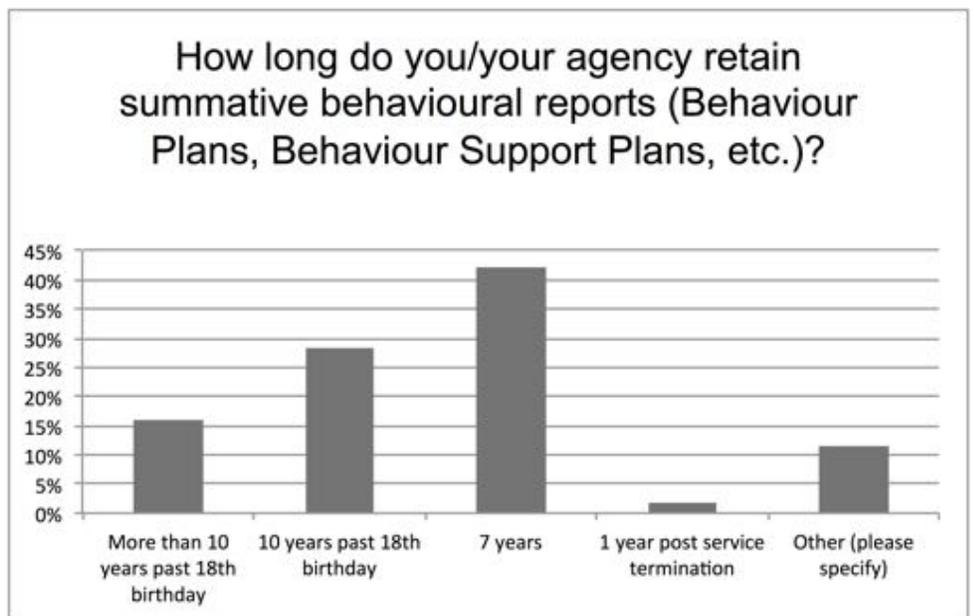


Figure 1: Question 4 of 7

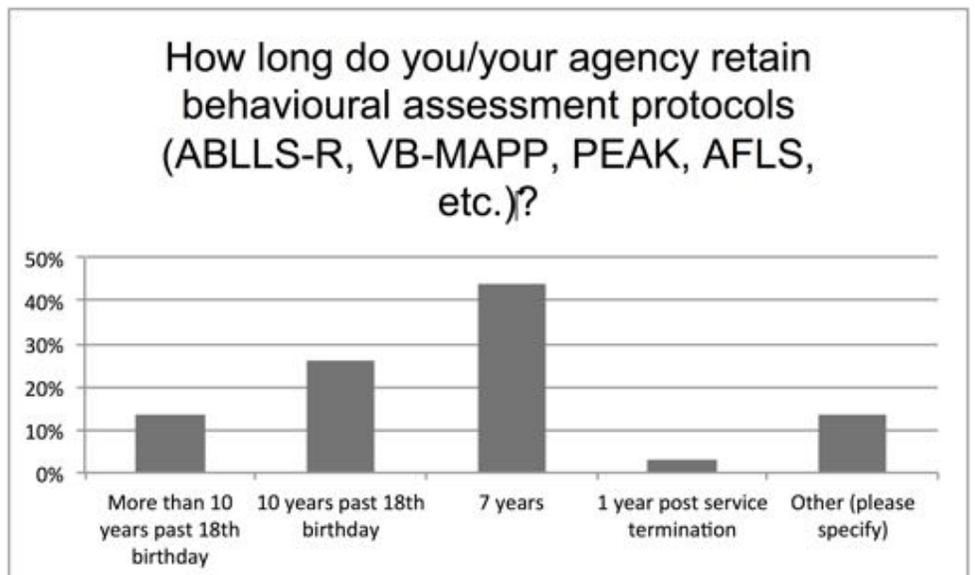


Figure 2: Question 5 of 7

behavioural graphs, with the majority retaining information for 7 years or more (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). Retention for 7 years or longer appeared somewhat more likely for information in summative form (summative reports, 87%; behaviour assessment protocols, 83%) than data in its original form (e.g., behavioural graphs, 77%).

There was greater variability (see Figure 4) and a different retention pattern for raw data (e.g., data sheets, supervision notes, communication notes), with fewer respondents (60%) retaining all data for 7 years or more.

The results of this survey are intended to provide insight into the current data retention practices and policies of professional providing behavioural services in Ontario, which may be helpful to professionals when considering their own practices. The results show that the majority of respondents retain data for a period of 7 years (BACB standards) or more (CPO standards require record retention 10 years past 18th birthday) for summative reports and summative assessment data. There was greater variability with respect to retention of raw data. It may be helpful to establish consensus guidelines regarding behavioural data retention that could be adopted across professionals and work settings.

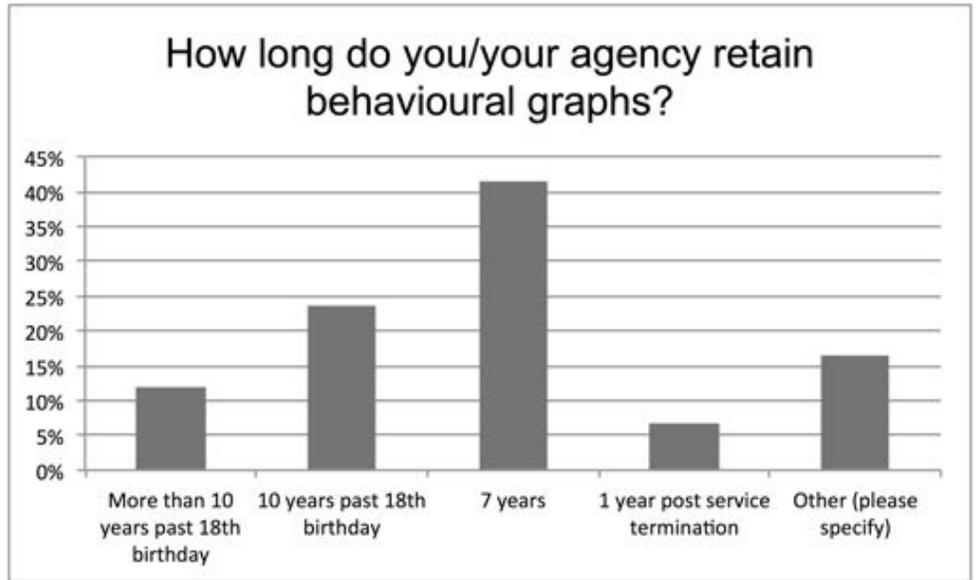


Figure 3: Question 6 of 7

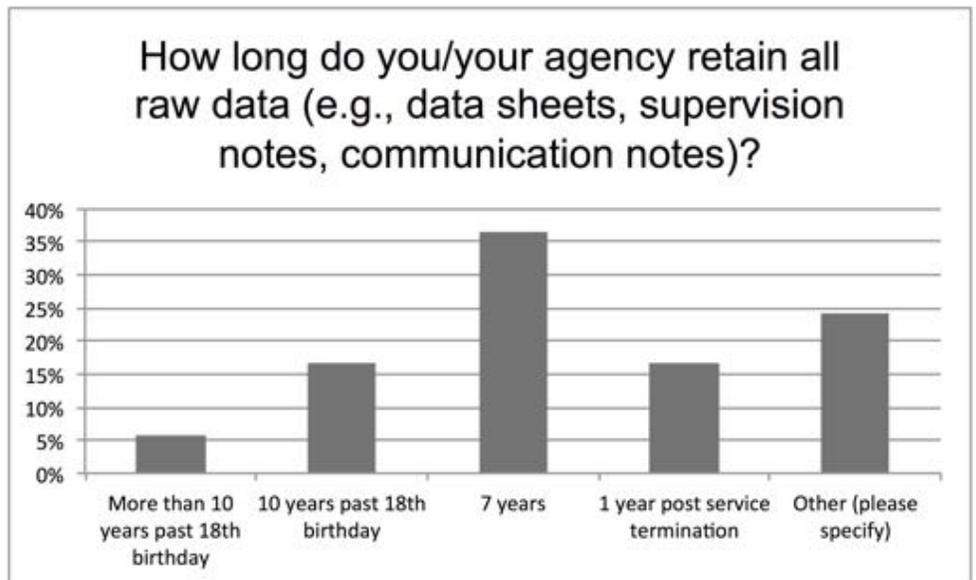


Figure 4: Question 7 of 7



Committee Updates

ASD Task Force

The task force had a very busy summer, with 5 task force and working group meetings, and 4 stakeholder meetings since July 2018. Current and completed activities include the following:

- We welcomed four new task force members who work in the Direct Service Option (DSO): Dalena Anzivino, M.ADS, BCBA, Cailin Hudson, M.Ed., BCBA, Brian Mason, M.Sc., BCBA, and Dr. Caroline Roncadin, Ph.D., C. Psych.;
- Coordination of an upcoming workshop in Kingston on ABA and interprofessional collaboration;
- Meeting with MCCSS, including MPP Amy Fee, Tim Porter (Chief of Staff to MCCSS Minister Lisa McLeod), and other MCCSS staff. We shared and discussed our recommendations for the OAP Budget Plan process and ONTABA's Ethical Billing and Business Practices document;
- Analysis of survey data regarding data retention practices across ASD ABA service providers in the province. Task force members have summarized this data for the membership in this edition of the ONTABA Analyst;
- Meetings with Autism Ontario to discuss contributing to ABA parent resource information on the ABACUS webpage, and discussion of a possible ABA demonstration projection in rural/remote areas in Ontario;
- Meeting with the Ontario Autism Coalition to share information on current projects;
- Regular meetings with MCCSS regarding clinical staffing requirements for the Ontario Autism Program;
- Continued work on the development of an ASD self-advocate and parent advisory committee.

We look forward to providing a year end summary of our activities at the ONTABA AGM in December, hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Carobeth Zorzos, M.A., C. Psych., BCBA
Chair, ASD Task Force



Professional Regulation

The Professional Regulation Committee (PRC) is in the final stages of finalizing the Private Act. As you may recall, this effort is an interim measure for title protection while we continue to advocate for public regulation of the field. There are numerous moving parts that need to be finalized before the Act can be tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, including updating the bylaws and preparing systems to manage the processes needed to manage the titles.

Recent activities include:

- Meeting with legal counsel on two separate occasions to discuss feedback on the Private Act and bylaws;
- Working closely with our governance consultant to ensure that our bylaws align with the Private Act;
- Meeting with MCCSS to brief the ministry staff about regulation, and to share our intention to table the Private Act in the upcoming months;
- Preparing for a town hall meeting to share details of the process with members (anticipated for late 2018 or early 2019).

In the upcoming weeks, the PRC will continue to work closely with our governance consultant and our legal counsel. We are hopeful that the Private Act will have political support, in order to be tabled at legislature in early 2019. We will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Sincerely,

Your Professional Regulation Committee

OSETT-CB Task Force

In the previous newsletter, we shared information regarding the ONTABA members on the OSETT-CB Task Force. At this time, we would like to briefly share ongoing progress and projected completion dates.

First, Louis Busch has been participating primarily in a leadership role throughout the project. As a direct result of this, Drs. Cox and Saini invited Louis to act as a third 'co-chair'. We are happy to announce that he has accepted this role.

Second, the OSETT-CB Task Force chairs recruited six reviewers to act as our external expert review panel. This panel represents a diverse range of experts who have (a) worked clinically with individuals who engage in challenging behaviour or (b) conducted research on challenging behaviour. The committee completed and circulated the OSETT-CB report to our review panel, who have been asked to review and return the document by early October 2018. We aim to release the final version to the public by November 2018. We are also excited to announce that we are aiming to present the guidelines at the 2018 ONTABA Annual Conference in December.

Thank you for your continued support in the project, we look forward to sharing the outcomes and advocating for best practice for individuals with challenging behaviour across Ontario.

Warmest regards,

Alison Cox, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Val Saini, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Louis Busch, M.Ed. BCBA
Co-Chairs, OSETT-CB Task Force

Adult Services Task Force

The Adult Services Task Force, co-led by Rosemary Condillac and Nicole Aliya Rahim, aims to improve behaviour analytic services for adults with developmental disabilities (DD), mental health concerns, acquired brain injuries, and neurodegenerative disorders associated with aging. Our goals include advocating for a reduction in the overuse of psychotropic medication for behaviour management,

increased consideration of the challenges with adults who have DD or mental health concerns and our correctional system, and lastly, supporting the ongoing developments of the Quality Assurance Measures. We lent our support to the final phases of the inclusion of the title, "behaviour therapists" in the Developmental Disability Housing Task Force. In addition, we have advocated for behaviour analysts to the CEO at the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), to consider the certification of Board Certified Behavior Analysts in their further planning.

Sincerely,

Your Adult Services Task Force

Conference

ONTABA's Annual Conference is fast approaching! With less than two months left, spots are filling up quickly. The conference will be held on **December 6 and 7, 2018** at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. The stellar line up of invited speakers includes:

Dr. Ellie Kazemi
Dr. Julie Koudys
Dr. Adel Najdowski

We also have many great presentations by local behaviour analysts and students. Be sure to check out www.ontaba.org under the 'conferences' tab for the draft schedule, abstracts, pricing, and registration details. Members can also register for the AGM if they wish to attend in person by clicking on the registration link for the conference. **Registration is free for the AGM.** We hope to see you at the conference!

Sincerely,

Your ONTABA Conference Committee



Professional Practice

The Professional Practice Committee (PPC) would like to invite our membership to submit professional practice questions to professionalpractice@ontaba.org. We will endeavour to answer your questions or connect you to evidence-based practice resources. We look forward to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Your Professional Practice Committee

Professional Development

Save the dates for these awesome professional development events! Look out for more information about each event through Facebook and your membership email.

Wednesday November 7, 2018, 6-8pm

Using research articles in academic pursuits:
A primer for students studying ABA

Friday November 16, 2018, 9:30-12:30pm

Sexual behaviour, functional assessment, and human rights with Sorah Stein, MA, BCBA, CSE

Sincerely,

Your Professional Development Committee

Spotlight on...



Interview with: Dr. Julie Vargas
President, B.F. Skinner Foundation

Interview by: Raluca Nuta

For those who have not had a chance to read your book, *Behavior Analysis for Effective Teaching*, please give us a brief overview of how behaviour analysis can make the classroom (and the learning process) a reinforcing environment for students. To make the classroom a reinforcing environment, students need to succeed and to see how academics relate to their lives. Behaviour analysis applies Skinner's scientific discoveries about why students do what they do. The basics of the science let teachers set

up procedures for success. Success enables students to enjoy activities like reading that require mastery before they are rewarding. Behavioural procedures require shifting from a lecture format to one based on student activity. New skills are "shaped" by providing steps tailored to individual levels of performance. With precise measures, for example those of Precision Teaching, students see their own progress from day to day and week to week. Success produces a reinforcing environment not only for students, but for their teachers.



Note from the Newsletter Committee: In *Spotlight on...* our goal is provide a brief overview of an important topic as explained by an expert in our field. If there is anyone you would like to hear from or if you have an idea for a topic, please contact us at newsletter@ontaba.org. Enjoy! *The Newsletter Committee*

In what ways can teachers most benefit from an introduction to ABA principles? Behaviour analysis shows how actions are controlled by the contingent relations between individual actions and their immediate effects. These contingencies determine what goes on in the classroom. If a teacher doesn't design contingencies for positive academic performance, other unplanned circumstances will determine what students do. Behaviour analysis helps teachers improve their teaching procedures by identifying what to change to improve their students' academic

and social performance.

To your knowledge, do teachers in the USA receive an adequate amount of ABA training (if any) prior to entering the classroom? No. Few schools of education teach behavioural principles. ABA training, though still rare, increasingly is taught in Special Education programs. Procedures using ABA principles work where other practices have failed especially for students with disabilities.

In your opinion, what would be the most important ABA principle that teachers should be aware of? To improve behaviour, focus on student

actions, not on assumed characteristics like “attitude”, or “motivation”, or other presumed features located inside students. There internal characteristics are inferred from the very actions they

are intended to explain. Instead of such circular explanations, teachers need to find the environmental contingencies responsible for the actions of interest.



Did you know...
 that **Dr. Julie Vargas** is a former third and fourth grade teacher?
 She has authored three books and numerous articles on the application of behaviour analytic principles in the classroom.
 She also happens to be the daughter of the one and only B.F. Skinner!



WHAT

Would You Do?

Professional and Ethical Issues

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

Welcome to the ‘What Would You Do?’ column on ethical and professional dilemmas in ABA. Please submit your questions, issues, dilemmas or tricky situations to newsletter@ontaba.org. My responses are my own, and are not intended to represent the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB®), ONTABA, or any other organization with whom I am affiliated. Responses should not be taken as specific legal or professional advice as it is not possible to have or provide enough information in a column of this nature.

Recently there have been many questions relating to the new [BACB® BCBA/BCaBA Experience Standards: Monthly System](#).

I have recently begun collecting hours for my BCBA so my supervisor and I have decided to start using it now, rather than switching to it in January 2019 when it is required. We are using the Monthly Supervision Record and the Experience Tracker provided from the BACB website. Would it be sufficient to record more a few more details in the comments section of the tracking form and consider that a “unique system”?

This is a great question especially given the redundancy across the various forms that need to be completed and

submitted.

According to the Monthly Supervision System [FAQs](#) on the BACB website, there must be a “unique system” to back up the information summarized on the Experience tracker in the case of an audit. One way to think about this is that the [Final Experience Verification Form](#) that is submitted with the application, is a high level summary of the Monthly Experience Verification Forms which are not routinely submitted to the BACB. The [Monthly Experience Verification Forms](#) are a summary of the more detailed information collected on the Experience Tracker. The [Experience Tracker](#) is used to keep track of specific facts relating to restricted and unrestricted hours, hours of supervision, category of supervision etc. that correspond to some of the requirements in the Experience Standard.

So with all of that information already collected what does the “unique system” add? The unique system is a more detailed account of what has taken place during the supervised experience and during supervision beyond the factual and categorical information provided. Though no specific sample document is provided by BACB, there is some information in the Experience Standards on the categories of information that should be included. Rather than considering the unique system as just another requirement, BACB is giving supervisors and supervisees the ability to create a system that is unique to their needs and the current experience. However,

considering that the unique system is your “proof” that the supervised experience and supervision provided meet the requirements set out in the [Experience Standards: Monthly System](#), and therefore meets the requirements in the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts. It is likely that you will want to collect specific details that provide proof to back up the factual and categorical information that you have already documented on the other forms. For example, it might be useful to track the specific activities (both restricted and unrestricted) completed during the experience, with reference to the BACB Task List. You might also consider keeping track of the specifics of the individual or group supervision meetings including, task list items discussed, readings, feedback given to supervisee(s), feedback given to supervisor(s), foci of supervision meetings, goals and next steps, action items, etc. To ensure that your unique system is adequate, you might go through each part of the experience standards and consider how you would prove that you have met each standard relating to the experience hours collected and the supervision requirements. In fact, this might be a great task for your supervisee(s) early in the supervision experience to ensure that they are fully aware of the experience standards. It is expected that each new supervisor/supervisee experience would have a unique system, specific to their situation. It is important to keep up with the information on the BACB website to ensure that you are aware of any changes and updates.

References

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (2016). Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts. Littleton, CO: Author. https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/170706r_compliance_code_english.pdf

BACB (2017). BACB® BCBA/BCaBA Experience Standards: Monthly System. Littleton, CO: Author. <https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/BACB-bcbabcaba-Experience-Standards.pdf>

BACB (2017). *BACB® FAQ Monthly Experience System*. Littleton, CO: Author. <https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/BACB-Experience-Form-FAQ>





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

The Cusp

"Any behavior change that brings the organism's behavior into contact with new contingencies that have even more far-reaching consequences...a cusp is a special instance of behavior 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: This is the second time in recent memory that our conference is featuring an all female line up for invited speakers and I am so excited! If you aren't yet familiar with the work of Drs. Najdowski, Koudys, and Kazemi, you should really try to get a running start before the conference. Hopefully these interviews can be your springboard. Enjoy! *Lesley*

Adel Najdowski, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Dr. Najdowski is an Associate Professor and Director of the Master of Science in Behavioral Psychology program at Pepperdine University. Dr. Najdowski has over 40 publications including her book, *Flexible and Focused! Teaching Executive Function Skills to Individuals with Autism and Attention Disorders*. She currently serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis and has previously served for Behavior Analysis in Practice and as a Guest Editor for a special issue in Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Her research interests include teaching higher-order skills to children with autism. She is a frequent speaker at conferences and on radio and web-based shows.



How did you first become interested in behaviour analysis? I was actually an undergraduate student at University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and I knew I wanted to pursue a master's degree or a PhD at some point so I was taking a variety

of psychology courses. At first I hadn't realized that there were all these branches of psychology and I wasn't really sure which branch of psychology was the right fit for me so I went to an academic advisor for guidance to find out if there were any internships that might help me figure it out and I was basically told, "No, there is nothing to help you with that." (Laughs). So I kept taking different classes and at some point I was taking a cognitive psychology course at the same time as a course in behaviour analysis. The behaviour analytic material just logically made sense to me. On the cognitive side, there were all these ideas, systems, and constructs that had been proposed that were kind of random, weird, and super interesting but I would wonder how do they actually know that's how it works? I grew more and more skeptical of these ideas and at the same time, behaviour analysis just made sense to me. In class one day a few graduate students came in looking for volunteers for an autism program so I went to observe a session. I was so blown away by what they were able to teach these children and so quickly—that was groundbreaking to me and I knew that was it.

After I finished my undergraduate degree in 1998 I moved to Los Angeles for a year and then I

decided to apply to graduate schools. At the time there were less than 15 graduate programs in behaviour analysis and there were a bunch of schools I didn't want to go to because I didn't really have any interest in living in those particular cities—you know, well I don't want to say, so I don't offend anyone who lives there (laughs)! I ended up doing all of my post-secondary education at UNR.

Is there anything you'd do different along your education or career path if you had the chance to do it again?

No, I don't think so, I'm pretty happy with the way things have gone. Back when I was applying to master's programs, Dr. Jim Carr was at UNR and I knew I wanted to study with him. So I applied and Dr. Carr was on the interview panel and I got in but before I started, Dr. Carr was leaving UNR because he had accepted a position at Western Michigan University. I thought about following Dr. Carr to Western Michigan, but it was so sudden and unexpected, so the safe bet seemed to stay at UNR. Sometimes I wonder where I'd be if I had gone to Western Michigan, did I make a mistake? But really, who knows? It's all worked out, and plus I wouldn't have my husband and kids in my life had I made that move! I'd be a different person.

You've published many interesting articles on a variety of topics and I think one of the most novel is the 2016 study about using behavioural skills teaching (BST) to teach kids with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to tell socially appropriate lies. Tell us about how that study came about. Sure so the first author on that study was Ryan Bergstrom and at that time I was his research supervisor. I told him that I wanted him to really think outside of the box and study something really cutting edge as our purpose was to do clinical treatment research—to study something that really matters—not just to see what happens for the sake of experimentation. So Ryan approached a few parents of children with ASD who were receiving services at our program and asked them what other skills would be most meaningful to teach their children. One mother was so upset and she said that every time she takes her child out she is terrified of two things, first, since he is old enough to use the restroom on his own and she can't take him into the women's restroom with her anymore, she worries that he will be abducted. Second, she worries that if he were to get lost that he wouldn't know what to do. These concerns resulted in a few studies; teaching children what to do when lost in public, teaching what to do in response to the lure of a stranger, and then this study about socially appropriate lying.

In the study about lying, parents reported that their children would say things that were really embarrassing like "Look at that fat lady, mom!" or the child would tell his grandmother that he hates the gift she gave him or say other obnoxious things or be too blatant. What the parents wanted was for the

children to just say thanks or act like they like the gift. This study stirred a lot of controversy and some people were really put off by it. When we presented the study at a conference some of the feedback we received was along the lines of we should just be teaching everyone to be honest. I understand the worry but the fact of the matter is that people tell lies! In the study we taught children how to respond in two specific conditions: receiving a gift that is unwanted and commenting on the altered appearance of another person. So we taught responses like smiling and saying, "Thank you" or "That's cool" with the right tone and expression.

Can you tell us about exciting projects that you have on the go right now? My interests right now are in two areas: teaching perspective-taking and executive function skills to children with ASD.

Regarding perspective-taking, we've got a series of studies, the first of which is about to be published very soon in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA) and it's about teaching children with ASD the sensory perspective of other people, that is, what the other person is seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, and tasting.

The follow up study to that one is about teaching children with ASD what other people know. We ask questions like, "Does your mom know the phone is ringing?" when the child responds, "Yes" or "No" then we ask, "Why?" and the child might respond with something like, "Because she can't hear it". This is where the sensory perspective-taking skill taught in the previous study is a prerequisite to the knowing study.

The next study in this line of

research includes false beliefs—things that people believe are true based on what they know, but are actually false. This study is building on the classic 1985 false belief test by Simon Baron-Cohen and colleagues. In our study, we are working on teaching children to identify when individuals hold false beliefs and what those false beliefs entail.

This leads into a fourth study I'm working on with the first author, Megan St. Clair, on teaching how false beliefs relate to deception. In this study, we are teaching children to create false beliefs in others using fun gags that the children can carry out—we are keeping it light and humorous. This is a fun way to teach about what might not be considered a fun topic—deception.

Regarding executive function, we're working on studies centered on teaching sustained attention and time management skills.

What is your advice to your younger self—straight out of grad school? Be humble and realize that you still have a lot to learn. In behaviour analysis I think we get this message that the way we think is right and everyone else is wrong. Admittedly, I was a little arrogant and thought I was a major expert when I finished school but I quickly realized that you can never truly be a master—there is always something more to learn. Going into every situation try to be humble, be collaborative, and be willing to learn from others.

Tell us something about you that we wouldn't find on your curriculum vitae (CV)? I'm super into fitness and health—I love working out but I wouldn't call myself a workout

queen (laughs). Staying fit and learning about being healthy, you know, what I put into my body and what I bring into my house are really important to me. Another area of personal growth for me is lessening my environmental footprint and finding ways to do that every day.

Julie Koudys, Ph.D., C.Psych., BCBA-D

Dr. Koudys is an Assistant Professor, and Clinical Coordinator, at Brock University in the Department of Applied Disability Studies. She



completed her Ph. D. in Clinical Developmental Psychology at York University, with a focus on research and practice with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Her clinical experience includes work within educational and residential services, children's mental health, and hospital settings (e.g., McMaster Children's Hospital, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario). She has completed research related to the active ingredients in Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) and the long-term outcomes of youth who previously received IBI, as well as the impact of treatment fidelity and instructional strategies on the communicative behaviour of children with ASD who use augmentative / alternative communication systems. She is currently conducting applied research involving behavioural

parent training. Dr. Koudys is an appointed member of the Government of Ontario's Clinical Expert Committee for ASD. She was Chair of the Ontario Scientific Expert Task Force for the Treatment of ASD, for which she received the 2017 Research Award from the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis (ONTABA).

You grew up on a farm and went to Western for Kinesiology, how did you end up in the field of behaviour analysis? It's a long story! (Laughs).

In high school I had a part-time job working as a Counsellor Aide for Community Living. I worked with adults with developmental disabilities and I supported them in completing activities of daily living as they had very limited self-help skills. For example, I had to learn how to catheterize a middle-aged woman who was never properly toilet trained. In my undergrad, I had a job as an Activity Coordinator at a residential facility for adults with physical disabilities. The residents were complex and had neurodegenerative conditions or acquired brain injuries. These positions really helped me to develop an appreciation for the importance of providing everybody with the skills they require to be as independent as possible—even if that looks very different for each person.

After high school I knew I wanted to work with children with special needs in some capacity. I thought perhaps as a child psychiatrist, so I had medical school on my radar. Human kinetics seemed like a good stepping stone to that. At that time, I had never even heard of applied behaviour analysis (ABA)! For my Master's thesis I conducted qualitative research at the Children's

Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) exploring strategies children with cancer could use to tolerate invasive or painful but medical procedures. The program was skills focused, it taught breathing techniques, muscle relaxation, imagery, and related strategies. I was really attracted to that aspect—the fact that the children I was working with were learning skills that they could then apply during these really difficult procedures. I think this was when I started to fall in love with teaching observable, measurable behaviours that made meaningful changes in children's lives. I spent about three years training professionals and parents around the province in the use of these strategies.

While I was at CHEO, the provincially funded early intensive behavioural intervention (EIBI) program for children with autism was just starting up. I had experience working with people with developmental disabilities and young children, some exposure to behaviour modification, and experience with parent and staff training. So when a position opened up in the EIBI program, I was fortunate enough to get in and that was really my entry into the field. There was this one case that really crystalized my trajectory to a career in behaviour analysis—there was a child whose parent was asking us to incorporate an unsubstantiated biomedical treatment into the child's current treatment program. I understood their desire to leave no stone unturned in their attempts to help their child. But had some serious reservations given the associated costs and risks of the treatment. I worked closely with the supervising psychologist and with the Ethics Council for guidance on how to respond to this parent's

request but there really wasn't any clear guidance on how we should proceed. We ended up carrying out a reversal treatment design, we blinded the staff and we collected data. We determined that there was no measurable positive benefit from the addition of the biomedical treatment and it was at that point that we—and most importantly, the parent—could confidently let that treatment go. So the science really hooked me, we had a way to approach individual complex cases. I decided to go back to school to complete my doctoral degree in psychology with Dr. Adrienne Perry who is both a psychologist and a behaviour analyst. I completed research exploring different behaviour analytic interventions, while completing my certification as a behaviour analyst through the alternate pathways for training and eligibility for examination.

What will you be talking about at the conference? My first talk will be about incorporating ABA into augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems, it's definitely an area that I am passionate about. My very first exposure to AAC was at my part-time job in high school, unfortunately I was given little guidance on how to implement the system and was basically told to just "use these pictures" with the clients who had limited communication skills. As I'm sure you can guess, the programs had little success. Later on when I had my first exposure to a behaviour analytic approach, namely, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), I was blown away. The ability to communicate is such an important area of everyone's life—something we tend to take for granted—without effective communication abilities even the

simplest things like being able to request a drink when you are thirsty are unattainable. Behaviour analysts have a lot to offer in this area, and much of what is considered best practice in teaching AAC systems to people with intellectual disabilities is drawn from the behaviour analytic literature. However, it is all too common to see AAC systems that are really unhelpful to the speaker—either they were taught using ineffective strategies, there isn't a "match" between the system requirements and the speaker's skills, or strategies to ensure the system meets the long-term communication needs of the speaker are not implemented. I have a chapter (in press) about the role of ABA in AAC and I review the research that supports the use of ABA when teaching AAC systems for people with intellectual disabilities.

My second talk is about parent training. My first job within the provincially funded EIBI program for children with autism was actually as a Parent Trainer. It was so clear to me how important parent involvement was in children's programming. However, I didn't know how to meaningfully engage parents! We did a lot of didactic training, then we did a lot of parent coaching in clinic, then we moved to a model involving education, demonstration, and parent implementation with coaching (what we now commonly refer to as behaviour skills training). We had some successes, but the results weren't always what I hoped for in terms of meaningful behaviour change for parents that resulted in generalized and maintained improvements in child behaviour. The variability in outcomes motivated me to explore ways to support parents. We know a lot

about the things that work, like behavioural skills training (BST). But we know less about treatment integrity and maintenance of programming over time in natural environments. There are so many contextual variables that impact parent success, yet these are rarely addressed in the behaviour analytic literature. In the talk, I'll review some of the highlights from the literature and share some of the results from the research I'm conducting with my colleagues which is still in very early stages.

You've been on the ONTABA board, on countless committees for ONTABA, and a longstanding ONTABA member, any advice to someone considering throwing their hat in for a board position? It's a really exciting time for behaviour analysis in Ontario and ONTABA has established itself as a strong professional association that is committed to supporting and promoting the science and promoting education and professional development for its members. These are all things that any behaviour analyst should be excited about so if you're thinking about getting involved, talk to current or past board members, or committee members. Whatever you do, don't talk yourself out of it by thinking, "Well there's probably someone else who is more qualified than me" or "I don't really have anything to offer", we all started somewhere! If you're excited about the future of behaviour analysis in Ontario and you're willing to get involved—it's actually a great opportunity to build your network, develop new skills, and learn about resources and what is going on out there. If the idea of being on the Board of Directors isn't really your thing, there's still a spot for you—

there are so many committees, sub-committees, and working groups doing really important work behind the scenes and fresh faces are always welcomed. Believe me, there is no shortage of work!

Is there an application of behaviour analysis that you haven't yet explored but would like to?

Yes for sure, my educational background—two Kinesiology degrees and one Psychology degree—really blends health and wellbeing and I'm still very passionate about both. My graduate research really focused on the behavioural part of a cognitive behavioural model and I think that there are important elements that are really underused outside of intellectual disabilities and autism. I would love to explore the application of behaviour analysis in more traditional children's mental health settings. We could be doing so much more for children who receive internalizing and externalizing diagnoses, who aren't usually referred to a behaviour analyst.

A second area of application is more related to my background in human kinetics—I would love to see how ABA can be used to help people meet their individual health and wellness goals. This topic comes up a lot when I'm in class—at the beginning of the year I like to ask my students why I get more trail runs in during any given week as compared to someone else. The answers are usually pretty mentalistic in the beginning, things such as because I have more willpower or other personality traits that make trail running more likely. As the semester goes on, the behaviourally-based rationales start coming up. For the record, I live 100 metres away from a trail so the response effort to get

my feet to a trail is pretty low. Why trails and not road running? Well I have a history of sustaining injuries in road running but not trail running. I would also identify time in nature as a pretty powerful reinforcer. In terms of competing contingencies, I don't have kids so those responsibilities involved in raising children are absent for me. On the flip side, the ONTABA committee work seems to interfere with my trail running (laughs) but I also have two big dogs who need to be run so it's got to happen for them—otherwise punishment (for me) is available in the form of chewed shoes and household objects. All this to say, there are really clear environmental factors that account for the increased likelihood of trail running in my life. I like when students start to see the world through this lens and I'd love to someday explore greater applications of ABA in this area.

The last few years have been incredibly busy for you with so many accomplishments, what is your advice to fellow "multi-taskers"? (Laughs). Use the science in your own life! I work in antecedent strategies in every day, of every week, for every aspect of my life and of course it is totally necessary to build in reinforcement. I also analyze whether these things are working—I love apps that collect data on my behaviour! I really don't know how I'd function without ABA. Having said that, you've got to schedule in time to not multi-task—there's something to be said about just being present and focusing on one thing—I think it makes me more efficient in the long run.

At various points in my career I felt the need to say yes to every opportunity—I didn't want to miss out on anything and that can be a

very appropriate thing to do but not all the time—not at the expense of good health and mental wellbeing.

Any advice to students about to start graduate program in behaviour analysis?

For sure, once you're in the program you've got to remember that what you are doing is a luxury and a privilege that is not available to everyone so commit to your education and get everything you can out of the experience. This means more than just doing the assigned readings and showing up to class—meet other people, get involved in discussions and debates, and be open to learning about the perspectives of others. Get involved with a variety of research projects and work with supervisors other than your own. It's easy to stay in your comfort zone especially if you already have a practicum lined up or if you have a job in which you can complete your hours—that's great because it's convenient, but what you may not get is the chance to gain skills necessary to be an excellent behaviour analyst.



Ellie Kazemi, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Dr. Kazemi is a Professor at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) where she has developed and teaches undergraduate and graduate coursework in

behavior analysis for the past 10 years. She founded the Masters of Science Program in Applied Behavior Analysis in



2010 and has collaborated with the CSUN community to provide graduate students high quality supervision experiences. She currently has two different primary lines of research. Her applied research interests involve identification of efficient, effective strategies for practical training and supervision. Her laboratory research involves leveraging technology (e.g., robotics, virtual or augmented reality) for optimal simulation-based training. She is currently working on several nationwide large projects (e.g., with FEMA and NASA) with a focus on effective training and behavioural outcomes. She has received several mentorship awards including the ABAI Best Mentor Award, the Outstanding Faculty Award, the Outstanding Teaching Award, and the Outstanding Service Award. She has published articles and book chapters on a variety of topics including training, staff turnover, and the use of technology in behaviour analysis. She is the leading author of a handbook for supervision titled, *Supervision and Practicum in Behavior Analysis: A Handbook for Supervisees*.

How did you first become interested in behaviour analysis? I was working on my doctoral dissertation at UCLA and I had a mentee, Grace Cho, who had studied under Michelle Wallace and she kept telling me that my work was very behaviour analytic. Initially, I just dismissed it because my only knowledge of behaviour analysis up to that point was limited to Ivar Lovaas' work and my supervisors really didn't have favourable views about behaviourism. My research at the time was influenced by the work of people like Allen Kazdin and Russell Barkley. Grace really encouraged me to look into some of the primary sources cited in their work, so I did and I came across several seminal research articles in JABA that were very interesting. Then I found Skinner. I read *Science and Human Behavior* and I literally cried realizing the answers to my questions had been there since 1951—I knew I had to shift careers.

You've got a book coming out really soon entitled, *Fieldwork and Supervision for Behavior Analysts: A Handbook*, would you say it's more for trainees or is it also instructive for people already in supervisory roles? The book is really intended to make the life of the supervisor easier. It's basically written to the trainee to provide guidance and structure at the outset—before starting a practicum so that the trainee has a better idea of the responsibilities for both sides. We wrote this book knowing that supervisors out there need help—there are so many people coming out in need of supervision and this can be really overwhelming for the supervisors receiving them.

The book is coming out in November 2018 and the ONTABA conference will be my first speaking

engagement following the release of the book. Some people have told me that they've pre-ordered the book and they're excited about it, which is great. I'd be really interested to hear any feedback from people after they've had a chance to go through it. It is important to me that the book is helpful.

I've been impressed with the use of technology in creating apps for behaviour analysis but you've taken it to a whole new level in using humanoid robots for training staff and caregivers to work and interact with children. Tell us about the impetus for this research. Obviously the gold standard for staff and caregiver training is behaviour skills training (BST) but we actually have a hard time conducting experimental analyses in applied settings about BST. Additionally, BST can get expensive and it's no wonder that it's not widely adopted. The tricky thing is that what we are trying to study is the interaction between two individuals so it's hard to control all the variables at play. The more I thought about it, the more I was inspired by my father, he is an engineer and he looked at technology as something you leverage for what you need to do next. So I started to think about what I would need to be able to have experimental control in my research and to provide personalized hands-on training. Virtual reality (VR) and robotics emerged as potential options. We decided to go with robotics, but that's not because it's inherently better than VR, these two technologies have similar origins and will continue to grow together so which medium we use isn't as important to me as doing it well and disseminating. We're at the beginning here on how we can leverage technology in behaviour

analysis, but I think we can look to pioneering applications in simulation technology in medicine and in flight simulator training for pilots to help us map out what we need for what we want to do next.

I'm guessing that one of your talks at the conference is going to be about supervision and/or giving feedback. I think most people would agree that giving feedback is really important but why does it continue to be such a hard thing to do well? I think giving feedback, particularly corrective feedback, is difficult to do well because culturally we want to be liked by each other and there is an implicit social agreement that we won't criticize each other. It's implied that we will only give each other compliments, which makes it really tough to give honest and transparent feedback. The research suggests that supervisees actually want the feedback—they want to know what and how to improve, but supervisors avoid it. Supervisors are afraid to give feedback that might hurt someone's feelings. So it's really about finding a way to strike a balance so that the supervisor can be liked or admired and let the supervisees know that he or she cares, but can also provide corrective feedback when needed. The best managers and supervisors, in leadership positions, are those who hold high standards for performance and are deemed engaging and caring at the same time.

What does "good" corrective feedback mean to you? Feedback that is very specific in nature so that the person hearing it knows exactly what to change. The feedback comes with care and the person receiving it feels that the person delivering it will be there to support the person in

making that change.

Tell us your thoughts on the classic "sandwich" approach for giving feedback. (Laughs). Well I know there's some newer research coming out about this so we'll have to see about that. I guess it depends how exactly the messaging is delivered, it seems that people know what is coming and they are just waiting for the important stuff—the meat of the sandwich. But if it's done correctly, I feel like the sandwich approach could essentially be like differential reinforcement. We know that a lot of times people are not getting enough praise and acknowledgement for what they do well or areas in which they have made improvements. The sandwich method might be a way to really help supervisors give consideration and really think about what skills the person has—which skills should be kept and acknowledged and which ones need work and corrective feedback. We know differential reinforcement works so I think this might be a useful way of approaching giving feedback.

Tell us something about you that we wouldn't find on your CV. I'm a mom of a 19 year old. I actually raised three kids—one biological and two for whom I was their legal guardian. They're all in their 20s now essentially, so they're adults! I am dealing with an empty nest now; I love kids. My house was always filled with 5+ kids and I did not teach in the summers because I had "summer camp at Ellie's".

That's great! Have you influenced any of them to get into behaviour analysis? Yes actually, our girl recently got a job as a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) and my son is interested in disseminating

behaviour analysis, he's got some ideas on how he's going to do that—he's not so much into the applied part but he definitely has an interest in robotics, machine learning, and the tech side of things.

As a supervisor, what's the toughest feedback you've had to give? Letting someone know that they're not liked by others. I had to tell them that the way they speak to others and their demeanour in that setting has resulted in others not wanting to be around them. This is really difficult stuff to change and to be honest the first time I gave that kind of feedback I was really afraid of how that person was going to feel about it. Turns out, it actually went well, the person had already recognized that people didn't want them around and wasn't invited to parties and things like that. The person felt lonely, but didn't understand why exactly. In the end, it was actually super cool to see that the person saw that there was an answer and something could be done about it. I've since given this kind of feedback more times and yeah, it's hard to do but it gets easier because you can see that this is actually feedback that someone needs and can use to make positive change.



Have someone in
mind for the Cusp?

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

ONTABA Members

Emeritus

Maurice Feldman
Joel Hundert
Larry Williams

Sustaining

Chaza Attar	Milena Kako	Tara Ouellette
Louis Busch	Julie Koudys	Sheela Rajaram
Heather Church	Kelly Letros	Jaime Santana
Rosemary Condillac	Tracie Lindblad	Wanda Smith
Ediana Cox	Bruce Linder	Toby Stahlschmidt-Kah
Paola Egusquiza	Gopika Menon	Benj Wu
Bob Ferguson	Kelly Miller	Carobeth Zorzos
Nancy Freeman	Kathryn (Kate) Misale	
Kieva Hranchuk	Kim Moore	
Ilse Joubert	Kay Narula	

ONTABA Board of Directors

President:

Jennifer Cunningham

Directors at Large:

Shiri Bartman
Jason Bosett
Joan Broto
Stefanie Cali

President-Elect:

Kendra Thomson

Secretary:

Milena Kako

Graduate Student Rep:

Jeffrey Esteves

Treasurer:

Sarah O'Donoghue

Undergraduate Student Rep:

Cheryl Dore

Treasurer-Elect:

Raluca Nuta

ONTABA Professional Committees

Conference Chairs:

Milena Kako
Jeffrey Esteves

Membership, Awards, and Recruitment Chair:

Jeffrey Esteves

Newsletter Chair:

Jason Bosett
(Editor-in-Chief: Lesley Barreira)

Professional Practice Chairs:

Shiri Bartman
Jason Bosett

Professional Development Chair:

Stefanie Cali

Professional Regulation Chairs:

Joan Broto
Kendra Thomson

Public and Community Relations Chair:

Cheryl Dore

Webpage Chair:

Shiri Bartman

Stay Connected



Join us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/248167828616496/>



Follow us on Twitter @ONTABA1

