

THE ONTABA ANALYST

Newsletter of the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis

In this newsletter:

- ONTABA Sustaining Members
Page 2
- From the President's Desk
Page 3
- Private Practice SIG
Page 6
- Continuation of ABA Services
Page 7
- ONTABACON 2021
Page 9
- Committee Updates
Page 12
- What Would You Do?
Page 14

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SAVE THE DATE: VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

November

18 - 19

#ONTABAcon2021

Welcome our invited speakers:

Dr. Lina Slim

Dr. Bridget Taylor

Dr. Nicole Gravina

Dr. Alyssa Wilson

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D

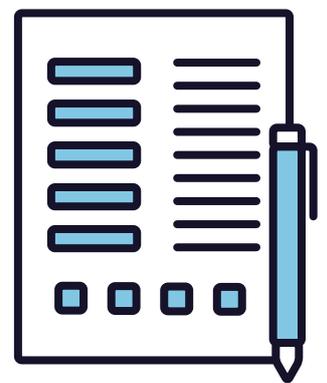
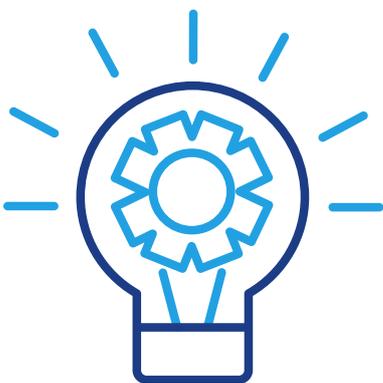
Dear Members,

Fall is a time of transition. A time to reflect on endings and prepare for new beginnings.

As this will be the last newsletter of my tenure on the board, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere thank you to all of the wonderful colleagues that I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from since starting my ONTABA journey in 2015. Serving ONTABA members and the field of behaviour analysis in the Province of Ontario has been one of the most meaningful and rewarding, yet challenging, endeavours of my career. Thank you to everyone for their advice, patience, and tireless dedication to this special community for which I am honored to be a part of. I can say with the utmost confidence that our organization is in very capable hands with Dr. Nancy Marchese, who will be stepping into the president role at the upcoming AGM.

I typically use this space to provide a detailed update about what the board has been up to since the last reporting. All of the exciting updates can be found in the subsequent pages. My sincere appreciation to all of the amazing board members, dedicated volunteers, and ONTABA members who have accomplished so much amidst their busy careers, personal lives, and other commitments, all while navigating a now 18-month global pandemic.

For this update, I would like to share a few reflections.



I have always appreciated how Skinner captured the importance of science:

*“Regard no practice as immutable. Change and be ready to change again. Accept no eternal verity. Experiment.”
(Skinner, 1979, p. 346).*

It hit home differently for me when I recently discussed it in my ABA research methods class. I think the current context has something to do with that.

The global pandemic has been dynamic to say the least with an ever-changing series of transitions. We have adopted to constantly evolving guidelines with respect to how we are able to support people accessing Applied Behaviour Analytic (ABA) services, the methods in which we are able to train students, and in how we live in general. Our membership has demonstrated flexibility and unwavering commitment to “changing and being ready to change again.”

For most, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of science. For others, however, science lacks value or is misunderstood. Unfortunately, misinformation can impact and shape society.

Within our discipline, is a shared appreciation for science, yet we need to work effectively outside of our discipline. Our field, along with other scientific disciplines, are learning that our efforts with respect to sharing scientific knowledge do not always work as intended.

Misinformation about ABA is a critical current challenge, not only in Ontario, but internationally. In other words, ABA has a public relations problem. As behaviour analysts we can use the tools in our toolbox to help shape attitudes toward science and our discipline in a compassionate way.

Applied Behaviour Analysis was largely built on compassion, on making peoples’ lives better. We need to find effective ways to translate how ABA does this and how humane the field is. ONTABA has been working on many initiatives to this end including capturing personal stories from people who have benefited from ABA. We are looking forward to sharing outcomes of these efforts with you soon. We also continue to seek guidance on these matters from self- advocates and people outside our field. Only through collaboration will we find common ground and understanding of our discipline.

Ongoing efforts by the ONTABA board and members are needed to continue disseminating the life-changing science of behaviour analysis in relatable ways. I am confident that together, we can accomplish this proactively and positively. We need our field to keep growing strong so that people can continue to benefit from it.

Here are a few doable steps to support these efforts and I encourage you to add to the list:

1. Get involved in our professional association – become a volunteer or run for a board position and be the change you want to see. Remember to nominate your colleagues for the board by **October 4, 2021**.
2. Attend the 2nd virtual conference on **November 18 and 19, 2021** – learn from four strong leaders: Dr. Nicole Gravina, Dr. Lina Slim, Dr. Bridget Taylor, and Dr. Alyssa Wilson and many local presenters. Note that the call for papers deadline has been extended to **October 8, 2021**.
3. Work collaboratively with other disciplines. Learn from colleagues outside behaviour analysis. Share in common goals and celebrate successes together.
4. Empower people you are supporting to share their stories and successes (and listen to their stories with empathy).
5. Share information about ABA in digestible ways. Use common language with the people you support and the people you work with (save the jargon for geek out sessions).
6. Be proud of your field and what you do, but never too proud to learn from others.
7. YOUR IDEAS...

I wish the new board and all members a successful year ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this great organization. Thanks also to those who founded it, grew it, and will continue to see it prosper.

All the best,



ONTABA 2021 ELECTIONS

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

President-Elect

(1 position – 2-year term followed by 2-year term as President)

Secretary

(1 position – 2-year term)

Treasurer-Elect

(1 position – 1-year term followed by 2-year term as Treasurer)

Director-at-Large

(2 positions – 2-year term)

Graduate Representative

(1 position – 1-year term)

Undergraduate Representative

(1 position – 1-year term)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) WORKING GROUP BECOMES A COMMITTEE!

ONTABA recognizes that marginalized communities have been and continue to be subjected to harm related to attitudes and systems rooted in oppression. These issues impact ONTABA members, consumers of behaviour-analytic services, our colleagues, our affiliated organizations, and our broader communities.

ONTABA has always strived to foster a culture of excellence, integrity, and expertise for the advancement and promotion of the science of behaviour analysis. To accomplish this, ONTABA has aimed to demonstrate leadership, knowledge, and innovation in education, training, and research for the ethical and effective application of behaviour analysis. To build upon the work that we have done thus far, ONTABA is committed to promoting cultural competence and understanding, and assisting behaviour analysts in making these values an integral part of their practice.

Currently, ONTABA is working towards increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the practice of behaviour analysis through the accumulation of and promotion of resources related to DEI issues within the practice of behaviour analysis.

The mandate for the DEI working group includes the following areas:

- Advocating for inclusive practices (informing and educating)
- Informing messaging and communication in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Building capacity with members and stakeholders in relation to culturally competent and equitable delivery of ABA.

ONTABA's DEI Working Group has been meeting regularly and creating resources that will move ONTABA toward the mentioned goals. We are also excited to report to members that ONTABA's Board of Directors recently voted to make the DEI Working Group (formed in spring 2020) an official ONTABA Committee beginning in January 2022. Prior to this Board approval, the DEI Working Group was functioning as an extension of ONTABA's Advocacy and Communications Committee. With the DEI Working Group becoming a standing committee, its members will be able to more readily assist the ONTABA Board of Directors to include a DEI lens directly at the board level. Operating as an official committee will expedite the process of creating and disseminating materials. We are hopeful that this change will ensure that, as an organization, DEI issues are given even more consideration. The DEI working group members and the ONTABA board directors are confident that this decision will bring positive change. .

If you are interested in volunteering for this committee, and assisting with effecting change, please keep an eye out for our call for volunteers in January!

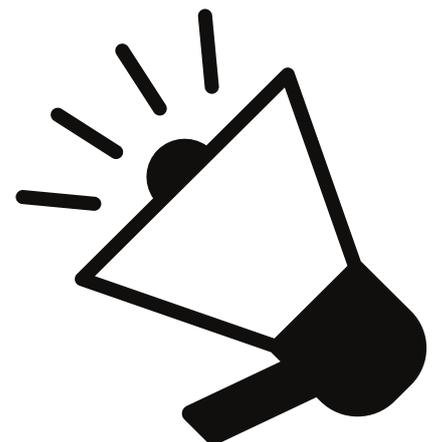
SPOTLIGHT: NEW Private Practice SIG !

Happy Fall! We are very pleased to announce the debut of ONTABA's first special interest group (SIG). The Private Practice Special Interest Group (PPSIG) is thanks to the joint effort of many in our ONTABA community. Co-chaired by Lisa Israel and Shiri Bartman, the focus of this group will be to:

- a. Serve as a scientific and professional reference.
- b. Serve as a networking group amongst members.
- c. Disseminate information to promote its mission to a wider audience.
- d. Provide education in business, marketing strategies and business operation guidelines.
- e. Explore opportunities for funding resources.
- f. Strengthen recognition within the public and community systems.
- g. Influencing political agenda for needed social and health care reform.
- h. Organize an annual meeting to provide a forum for discussion of the affairs of the SIG.

We look forward to establishing the SIG bylaws and announcing when membership will be open.

Lisa and Shiri



Continuation of ABA Services During COVID-19 Restrictions: One Year Later

Originally published in the Summer, 2021 issue of Autism Matters, the quarterly publication of Autism Ontario.

by Jessica Bethel, Director OAP Provider List, Autism Ontario

THEN: MARCH 2020 — Schools were closed; ABA programs were no longer allowed in person; parents and caregivers were forced to work from home where possible and everyone had to adapt to change that occurred suddenly and without any warning. Change is never easy and for many—if not all of us—this kind of unprecedented change to our daily routines was completely unimaginable.

A preference for routines is one of the defining characteristics of autism. For families and caregivers of children and youth on the spectrum, keeping these routines or providing warning early in advance of changes is imperative to maintaining the optimal environment in home, clinical settings and at school. We were all forced to adapt in so many ways!

In June 2020, The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis (ONTABA) partnered with Autism Ontario to present an ONTABA Professional Series which included Putting Clients and Families First: Compassionate Care and High-Quality Supervision During COVID-19 and Employment and Human Resources Issues During COVID (1). Dr. Kendra Thomson and Dr. Nancy Marchese discussed the quick shift to telehealth services and what had been learned so far. At the time, it was unlikely that they had any idea we would still need to be having these conversations one year later!

NOW: On May 20, 2021 Autism Ontario and ONTABA collaborated again, and this time welcomed seven panelists back to the “stage” (translation: the comfort of their own homes) to discuss the main takeaways from the past year.

The panel was moderated by Matt Ley, a familiar face in Autism Ontario webinars, and included self-advocates, parents, front-line therapists, university/ college students, professors and clinic directors. This group couldn’t be more diverse, but the message was refreshingly unified.

Panelists were honest, open and real about how hard some things have been, but the overwhelming message included lessons learned so far, silver linings and ultimately the importance of empathy, community and teamwork.

It is important to acknowledge that the ABA landscape has changed a lot since the pandemic began. Some ABA programs remain online only (by family or provider choice); some are in-person at home or a clinic; others are a hybrid. In many families, the shift to telehealth ABA services has required varying levels of parental support.

Self advocate Alec Pemberton said that telehealth has required increased parental involvement in most children’s therapy programs. Many parents are now simultaneously trying to juggle the needs of other children and online school support/supervision along with their own concerns, which includes employment.

Continuation of ABA Services During COVID-19 Restrictions: One Year Later, Continued...

Andrea, a panelist and parent, urged clinicians “to ask families how they would like to receive services depending on their own situation and tailor programming to meet their specific needs to make it successful and to work with their home life.” She stressed the importance of “letting go of the expectations you had of yourself before the pandemic.”

Shiri Bartman, Director of Shining Through Centre added, “We should all give ourselves permission to not have it perfect right away.”

Remote-everything experience has been positive for some. Philip Lerner, a self advocate and college student, found that “It has been nice to do less masking (2) over the past year since I have been in the safety of my own home.”

So where do we go from here?

When asked about her thoughts on an eventual full return to in-person ABA services, Dr. Rosemary Condillac said, “Just because we have always done it that way doesn’t mean we have to return to exactly the way we were doing things before the pandemic.” One of the silver linings of this past year, she said, is that there are lots of people doing research now to identify what is and isn’t working, what we should keep the same and what we should change.

“Many clinicians had never done sessions online or remotely prior to the pandemic,” she said. “Now we are seeing the ability to reach clients outside of the areas we have served in the past. While a clinician should always decide on the treatment modality that will result in the optimal outcomes for their client, there is a strong likelihood that telehealth services will allow clinicians to reach clients in communities that previously had little to no access to professionals.”

As we navigate the return to a new “normal,” panelists discussed tricky situations around vaccine disclosure. Many families want to know if the therapists working with their child(ren) have been vaccinated, and therapists want to know if the families have been as well. Dr. Condillac noted that these disclosures are complicated and although policies may differ depending on the workplace, in general vaccination status is considered “personal health information” and should be treated no differently from any other personal health information.(3)

Although this year has brought with it many challenges, the message was clear: working together as a team with families, caregivers, teachers and clinicians, and listening to each other and having empathy have made all the difference.

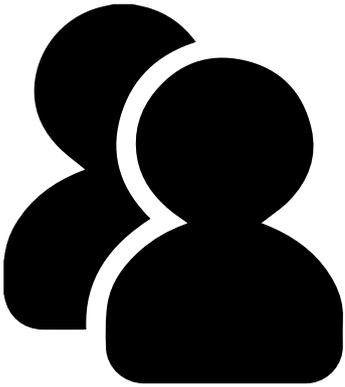
This webinar was jam-packed with helpful hints, real emotions, questions to ask, things to consider and some important takeaways. If you are a clinician, parent or self-advocate, why not have a watch? The webinar can be found on Autism Ontario’s Community Connect at <https://www.autismontario.com/node/716>

1. ONTABA Members can access the webinar on demand here: <https://www.autismontario.com/node/597>

2. Masking or camouflaging is an autistic trying to hide their autism from the general public by mimicking or artificially performing behaviours considered more socially acceptable (neurotypical).

3. At the time of writing.

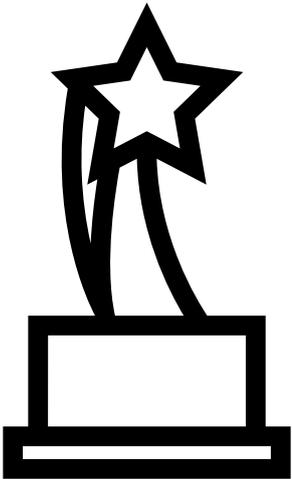
ONTABACON 2021



Did you know that you need to become a member of ONTABA to present a poster at the conference?



[Renew your membership](#)



[Awards Nominations](#)

Purchase your ticket before the
Early Bird pricing ends on
October 28, 2021



ONTABACON 2021

The virtual conference invited speakers are...



Lina M. Slim, Ph.D., BCBA-D, CCC-SLP, Dr. Lina Slim, is a dually certified SLP & BCBA-D with over 30 years-experience, specializing in the diagnosis and management of children with autism, neurodevelopmental and behavioral disorders, and apraxia. She is Founding Executive Director of ASAP – A Step Ahead Program, LLC, and Adjunct Assistant Professor at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, ABA Online Program. Her clinical and research interests focus on disseminating best practices in the application of the science of behavior analysis in the treatment of individuals with autism and promoting interprofessional collaborative practices that embrace cultural linguistic sensitivity and responsiveness while maintaining patient/client/family at the centered. Dr. Slim presents and consults nationally and internationally and has published peer-reviewed research. Dr. Slim is the recipient of the 2005 Children Empowerment Award and the 2014 New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NJSHA) Distinguished Clinical Achievement Award. She is Chair of NJSHA Interprofessional Autism Conference, Board of Directors Member of the Association for Science in Autism Treatment, Co-Chair of the NJSHA-NJABA Collaborative Practice Group, Chief Communication Officer Liaison of Behavior Analysis SIG on Supervision to the ABAI, Board Member of ABAC, Inc., Internal Continuing Education Committee, Executive Member of the SPABA ABAI SIG, and BACB® Subject Matter Expert on the Item Review Committee.



Dr. Bridget A. Taylor is co-founder and CEO of Alpine Learning Group and is Senior Clinical Advisor for Rethink. Dr. Taylor has specialized in the education and treatment of children with autism for over 30 years. She holds a Doctor of Psychology from Rutgers University, and received her Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Columbia University. She is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Licensed Psychologist. She is currently President of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board and serves on the Autism Advisory Group for the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. Active in the autism research community, Dr. Taylor has published numerous peer reviewed articles and book chapters on effective interventions for autism. She is an international presenter and serves in an advisory capacity for autism education and treatment programs both locally and abroad. Dr. Taylor was recently recognized by the Association for Applied Behavior Analysis International for her outstanding contributions and was given ABAI's Fellow designation.



ONTABACON 2021, Continued

The virtual conference invited speakers continued...

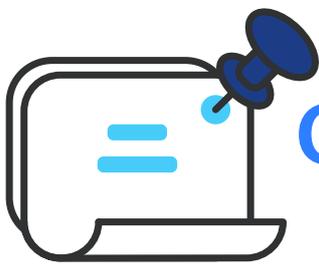


Dr. Nicole Gravina is an Assistant Professor of Behavior Analysis in the Department of Psychology at the University of Florida. Nicole earned her Master's in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and her Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis from Western Michigan University. She has published over 40 articles and book chapters and delivered over 100 presentations and workshops. She serves on the editorial boards of Behavior Analysis in Practice and Occupational Health Science, as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, and as a Trustee for the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. In 2019, Nicole was honored with the APA Early Career Impact Award in Consulting Psychology. Nicole specializes in designing behaviorally-based workplace interventions that improve employee safety, healthcare delivery, and leadership and consulting skills. In addition to her faculty appointment, Nicole has consulted in a variety of industries, including healthcare, human services, manufacturing, public utilities, insurance, and construction.



Alyssa N. Wilson, PhD., BCBA-D, LBA is an Associate Professor and Department Chair of Applied Behavior Analysis Programs at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Southern California. She received her Ph.D in Rehabilitation with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis and Therapy from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. She is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral (BCBA-D) and is a Licensed Behavior Analyst in the state of Missouri. She is the co-author of The Gambling Disorder Treatment Handbook: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals and chapter in the Social Work Desk Reference v 4 on Gambling Disorders. She is also the co-author of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Gambling Disorders, a guide for clinicians. Dr. Wilson has delivered over fifty national and international presentations related to gambling assessment and treatment, and her research has been showcased on Netflix's Bill Nye Saves the World. She is currently an Associate Editor for the journal Behavior Analysis in Practice and serves on the editorial boards for a range of journals including the Journal of Contextual Behavior Science and Perspectives of Behavior Science. When she is not working, you can find her spending time with family, painting, or cooking a vegetarian friendly meal.





COMMITTEE UPDATES

Advocacy & Communications Committee

The advocacy and communications team is SO excited to announce that ONTABA will have its very own Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee as of 2022! Our DEI working group has worked tirelessly to achieve this, and is working even harder to make sure the committee is able to "hit the ground running." We have also started the process of modernizing our website, and it is almost ready for release. Due to the updates, there may be some functionality difficulties, and some of our projects have been delayed, but the ONTABA Analyst Podcast is on its way, as is an exciting campaign we have planned. Follow us on twitter and instagram (@ONTABA1), join our facebook group (ONTABA) and follow us on LinkedIn (Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis) to stay up to date on everything we are doing!

Membership & Member Services Committee

The Membership Committee is currently accepting nominations for our annual awards including the Teaching Award, Student Award, Research Award, Clinical Excellence Award, DEI Award and Behaviour Analytic Ally Award. You can submit a nomination here [Each](#) nomination should include a brief bio of the nominee outlining why the nominee should win the award.

Organizational Development Committee

The organizational development committee has worked alongside other committees to outline areas of need for capacity growth over the last few months. Specifically focusing on tasks that may be delegated in order to better prioritize committee chair's time and resources. Additionally, ODC has sent out its annual survey to committee chairs to collect ongoing data on areas of progress and need. Finally, volunteers within the ODC have begun putting together resources to create a database for other committee volunteers. This will be an ongoing project within this committee.

Conference & Events Committee

The Conference and Events Committee is well on its way to delivering another educational and exciting virtual conference this year on November 18th and 19th! We are excited to announce our incredible line-up of speakers, Dr. Nicole Gravina, Dr. Lina Slim, Dr. Bridget Taylor, and Dr. Alyssa Wilson. The call for papers has been posted, please check our website for further details. Make sure to check our website for Early Bird Registration details which will be released shortly! We are looking forward to another great year!

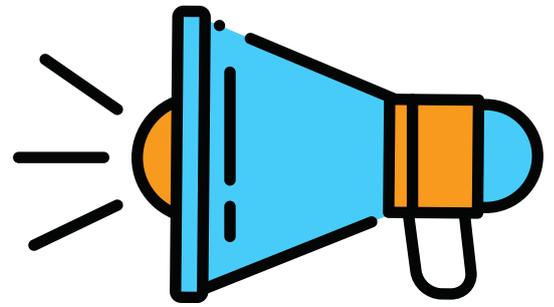
Education & Advancement Committee

The Education and Advancement Committee continues to work with representatives from both the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) on regulation. Early July, Dr. Rosemary Condillac (regulation lead) and Dr. Rick Morris (CPO) participated in a recorded Q & A session answering questions from the membership about regulation. The recording has since been distributed to membership. The education working group is preparing to disseminate additional resources in the coming months that will build upon the ABA in Schools paper released last year.



Professional Affairs/Practice Committee

Our committee has been hard at work over the summer! We were able to provide 3 Clinical Conversation webinars over the summer, covering topics such as how to have difficult conversations, what experienced clinicians wished they knew when they were new, and working effectively in multidisciplinary teams. We are also in the middle of preparing to introduce ABA as a career to highschool students and first year university students. Do you have any connections with highschools or universities in Ontario that can help us set these presentations up? Connect with us and help us! Lastly, as always, we are working on developing resources for Ontario clinicians. Excited to share all of this with you!



Governance Committee

The Governance Committee has been working with KDP Consulting to develop measures designed to evaluate ONTABA's progress toward, and adherence with, the 2020 - 2022 Strategic Plan. These metrics will also assist with framing future discussions around the 2023 - 2025 Strategic Plan (to be developed). Additionally, the committee is working with HR Atlantic to self-assess our board's efficiency and effectiveness. The outcome of this consultation will guide ONTABA's future workplans, policies, and terms of reference.

Finance Committee

The finance committee has worked with the Associate Management Company to organize budgets in order to monitor committee spending more accurately and provide more feedback to the board on how well we are keeping up with our budgeting goals. The committee will meet again in the next month for its quarterly review of the organizational budget.