

THE ONTABA ANALYST

Newsletter of the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis



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December 1st & 2nd



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As we wrap up 2022 and look toward 2023, ONTABA has much to celebrate. We continue to work hard toward professional regulation of behaviour analysts in our pursuit of ethical, effective and safe behavioural services in Ontario. The College of Psychologists is currently seeking feedback from the community on professional regulation. I strongly encourage all members to contribute your thoughts [here](#). The deadline to submit feedback, December 2 2022, is fast approaching.

ONTABACon 2022 is around the corner. We are on track to making this our biggest conference to date! We have an incredible lineup of speakers that will increase your knowledge and get you excited about expanding your skills. I look forward to seeing you in-person or greeting you online. If you are planning on joining us in-person, please do say hi to me. I would love to personally meet as many members as possible and hear directly from you. If you haven't bought your ticket yet but would like to attend, [click here](#). There are limited in-person tickets still available and online tickets.

As we wrap up 2022, we will be unveiling our new year strategic plan at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, December 1st at 5:10 pm. We are thrilled to announce that members can join us both in-person and virtually. To sign up for the AGM in person, [click here](#). To sign up for the AGM virtually, [click here](#).

As previously announced, ONTABA has recently engaged Patrick Tuns of Endgame Strategies to serve as our new government relations representative. He has been working closely with the Board of Directors to help us continue to develop relationships with key government officials across multiple provincial ministries (Education, Health, Colleges and Universities). We have recently met with a number of officials at various levels in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and offered our support in terms of achieving a successful rollout of the OAP. We are hopeful that MCCSS is on track to meeting their Fall 2022 targets in terms of children with autism receiving invitations for core clinical services.

As we move into 2023, we recognize that more work needs to be done to help families and children with autism access life-changing ABA intervention. We have offered to work with MCCSS in terms of the next phases of the OAP in 2023. We are also looking for ONTABA members who are interested in helping to serve as frontline ambassadors to elected officials.

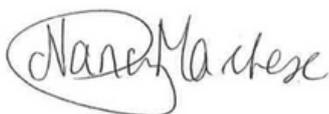
FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK - CONTINUED

Building professional relationships with local elected officials is the best way to keep our issues at the forefront of government policy. Patrick will be hosting a series of training sessions in the new year to help train ONTABA members in how to best approach and talk to their local MPP. Our efforts will include advocating for access to ABA services across all ministries and diagnoses. If you are interested in supporting our government relations endeavours, or in attending a training session, we would love to hear from you. I invite you to contact me directly at president@ontaba.org.

I realize that, at this time, there is much economic and social uncertainty in our country. Not only do we face challenging times ahead but so do our clients. The communities we serve need us now more than ever. We have much work to do in 2023 as we continue to strive toward effective, quality and accessible ABA services for all of those that we serve across this province. Working together, we can achieve this goal. At the same time, it's important to take a step back and acknowledge the incredible work that each and every one of you has accomplished this year. I also recognize these meaningful differences that were made possible by your work.

As behaviour analysts, we are by definition optimistic. We have experienced first hand the power of ABA. Simply, changes to the environment lead to endless opportunities to help individuals live their best lives. I hope to celebrate your greatness with you at our upcoming conference. If I don't get to see you in-person, please know that myself and the entire ONTABA Board of Directors sincerely thank you.

Much gratitude,



Nancy Marchese, Ph.D., C.Psych., BCBA-D

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Advocacy & Communications Committee

We're proud of the brand we've been building across our social media channels—it's modern, simple, yet very much so still us! With clear graphics that are appealing and informative (have you seen our Term of the Day posts?), we are continuing to grow our social media following and engagement. We also could not be any more thrilled to share with you our newest Personal ABA Success Stories—head over to our website to see how individuals and families have been empowered by the science we all know and love.

Organizational Development Committee

The Organizational Development Committee (ODC) has been busy with a number of new initiatives to help ONTABA be better positioned for the future, 1) in meeting its obligations in collecting and analyzing data to ensure that we are aligned with our Strategic Plan, 2) by hiring our first paid staff to allow further efficiencies in our processes and to increase membership contact in a more timely manner, and 3) by bringing ONTABA up to the standards of other like associations in preparation for regulation of the field of ABA in Ontario. We have also been working on two member programs designed to elevate and highlight our members who have 'given back' to the field of ABA and the membership through ONTABA. One program will be the addition of Badge Ribbons for in-person conference attendees which will highlight the various roles that our members have taken on to make our conference a success. The second program will recognize the time and support that members have given to this association over the years. Watch for our new ONTABA pins for our members and for achievement pins to mark milestones with the association. As well, the ODC will continue to work on developing a more up-to-date and digital friendly Board and Volunteer tool for the future. Think Trello-like - to bring us firmly into the 21 st century and increase the ease of finding pertinent information and making your role as either a volunteer or board member easier, right from the first day. This work will continue through next year and we welcome any volunteers with experience in designing Trello-esque boards and consumer-friendly digital products.

Conference & Events Committee

The 2022 ONTABA Conference is right around the corner! On December 1 & 2 our annual conference will be held in hybrid format at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and through the WHOVA app. We are thrilled to announce our featured speakers; Dr. Mary Jane Weiss, Dr. Peter Gerhardt, Dr. Patrick McGreevy & Dr. Mahshid Ghaemmaghami and variety of symposia, paper and poster presenters. Check out all the details at ONTABA.org and get your tickets today! We look forward to another educational and exciting conference this year.

Membership & Member Services Committee

For the first time, the Membership and Member Services committee hosted four regional Town Hall events. This aligned with ONTABA's strategic objective to, "enhance services and supports for all ONTABA members, in all parts of the province." We engaged the ONTABA membership by meeting with ABA practitioners across Ontario to connect at the regional level where we discussed the benefits of ONTABA membership with prospective members, and heard from our current membership in each respective area to better understand each region's unique needs. Some of the emerging themes that were discussed by practitioners included an appreciation for virtual opportunities, academic journal access, and clear communication. Multiple regions voiced the need for support with clinical burnout, staff recruitment, and attrition. In Northern Ontario in particular, practitioners discussed the importance of representation, matching families to appropriate services, and dissemination of the effectiveness of ABA. Looking into 2023, these results will significantly help shape objectives to meet the committee's mandate to support ONTABA members in all parts of the province. Thank you to all members, prospective members, and board members who made this project possible! If you were unable to attend this event and would like to connect with our committee, please contact membership@ontaba.org. Our committee has also been busy preparing the 2022 Student, Teaching, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Research, Clinical Excellence, Behaviour Analytic Ally, and President's Award. Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations and ballots. We look forward to presenting the award winners at #ONTABACon2022. Lastly, we hope you enjoy this final 2022 issue of the ONTABA Analyst!

Professional Affairs/Practice Committee

With a successful Evening for Behaviour Analysis behind us, the Professional Affairs and Practice Committee began planning our second professional development event of 2022. In late October we held a virtual ethics panel: Clinical Conversations- Ethical ABA in 2022. We had a great turn out for the event, with over 100 participants registered!

Education & Advancement

The Education and Advancement Committee has focused on a few new tasks this year which was a departure from its earlier mandate of developing resources to disseminate information about ABA to the public and other professionals. While those resources are still highly relevant and are continually cited in the literature, several current developments have necessitated that we pivot from the activities of previous years to provide needed input in other areas. The E & A committee, along with other board members, have provided a detailed response to the initial report from the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, report on the National Autism Strategy. The goal for the response was to correct misinformation about ABA and to recommend more involvement from behaviour analysts who work with autistic individuals. It is also incredibly gratifying and reinforcing that ONTABA's president-elect, Jaime Santana, was asked to take part in the National Autism Conference (Public Health Agency of Canada) on Nov 16 th . This committee has also participated in meetings and provided information and questions to the College of Psychology (CPO) with respect to the regulation of behaviour analysts in Ontario and what it means for our members. The process has been open, respectful, and collaborative and the resources posted on the ABA page on the CPO website are meant to be helpful and provide ongoing updates for our members. If you haven't already checked out the information, please head over to The ABA Portal and catch-up on the regulation process. As well, CPO has been extremely generous in supporting our members during this process and have extended an invitation for all ONTABA members to register for the Barbara Wand Seminar in Professional Ethics, Standards, and Conduct happening on November 28th. The E & A Committee, in partnership with the ONTABA Board, has supported the Private Practice Special Interest Group (PP-SIG) in submitting an Innovation Stream Grant application through MCCSS (the Ontario Autism Program). Successful grant applicants will be announced in March 2023. Finally, with the easing of COVID restrictions in the workplace (fingers crossed), the E&A committee may re-examine the activity workplan for next year to determine the feasibility and interest in tackling some of the committee's former plans.

Governance Committee

As mentioned in the Summer 2022 newsletter, ONTABA's 2020-2022 strategic plan is expiring at the end of the year. The governance committee is happy to announce that, through consultation with our membership, the ONTABA 2023-2025 strategic plan has been finalized and will be unveiled at ONTABA's annual general meeting held at the 2022 ONTABA conference! The new plan will describe ONTABA's priorities and actions over the coming years and is designed to promote the interests of behaviour analysts across Ontario. The new strategic plan will certainly kickstart the next chapter in ONTABA's evolution. In addition to working on strategic planning, the governance committee has been supporting ONTABA's 2022 general election, in which the new board of directors is voted in. Nominations closed on October 17th, 2022 and the general election began on November 1st, 2022. We hope all of our members will consider voting as we want to ensure your voice is represented.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Since our last update, the DEI committee has continued to work hard to bring forth meaningful changes that we hope will better serve our membership. We have finalized our land acknowledgement statement, which will be used in all internal and external ONTABA meetings and gatherings, including on our website and at our annual conference. We have also finalized our accompanying action plan, that will guide the association in advancing reconciliation, indigenization, and decolonization efforts. Our accessibility checklists are also ready for use by all ONTABA chairs when planning in-person and online events, to ensure the meetings are as accessible as possible for our membership's varying needs. We're also happy to share our list of DEI resources on the ONTABA website, which we hope is a helpful starting point for members and organizations.

Special interest groups

SIGS

We are very pleased to announce the debut of three new ONTABA SIGs! Please see the contact information below and stay tuned for SIG features in the next issue of the ONTABA Analyst.



CONTEXTUAL BEHAVIOUR SCIENCE SIG

Sadie Lovett
slovett@brocku.ca

HEALTH, SPORT & FITNESS SIG

Sarah Davis
hsfsigcanada@gmail.com



MENTAL HEALTH SIG

Jason Bosett
jbosett@gmail.com

#ONTABACon 2022

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The invited keynote speakers are...



Dr. Mary Jane Weiss

Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA is the Associate Dean of Applied Behavior Analysis and Director of the Ph.D. Program in ABA at Endicott College, where she has been for 11 years. She also works with the research and training teams at Melmark. She has worked in the field of ABA and Autism for over 35 years. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Rutgers University in 1990 and she became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in 2000. She previously worked for 16 years at the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center at Rutgers University. Her clinical and research interests center on defining best practice ABA techniques, integrating compassionate care and cultural responsiveness into ABA service delivery, exploring ways to enhance the ethical conduct of practitioners, training staff to be optimally effective at instruction and at collaboration, and maximizing family members' expertise and adaptation. She serves on the Scientific Council of the Organization for Autism Research, is on the board of Association for Science in Autism Treatment, is a regular contributor to the ABA Ethics Hotline, is on the editorial board of Behavior Analysis in practice, and is an advisor to the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. She is a regular presenter at national and international conferences and is a frequent member of service committees for a variety of organizations.

Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D., is the Executive Director of the EPIC School in Paramus, NJ. Dr. Gerhardt has over 40 years of experience utilizing the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis in support of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders in educational, employment, residential and community-based settings. He is the author or co-author on a number of articles and book chapters on the needs of adolescents and adults with ASD and has presented nationally and internationally on this topic. Dr. Gerhardt serves as Co-Chairman of the Scientific Council for the Organization for Autism Research and is on numerous professional advisory boards including the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. He currently serves as adjunct faculty in the Institute for Behavioral Studies at Endicott College. Dr. Gerhardt received his doctorate from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey's Graduate School of Education.



Dr. Peter Gerhardt

#ONTABACon 2022

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The invited keynote speakers are...



Dr. Pat McGreevy

Dr. Pat McGreevy received B.S. and M.A. degrees in Psychology and Special Education, respectively, from the University of Iowa. He was a special education teacher for eight years, working with children and young adults with moderate-to-severe developmental disabilities. He received the Ph.D. degree in Education from Kansas University under the guidance of Ogden R. Lindsley. Dr. McGreevy served on the Special Education faculties of the University of Missouri Kansas City, and Louisiana State University. He also served on the faculty of the Behavior Analysis Program at the Florida Institute of Technology. He is the author of *Teaching and Learning in Plain English*, an introduction to *Precision Teaching*, and the founder of the *Journal of Precision Teaching and Standard Celeration Charting*. He is also the author of ten journal articles and a book chapter on teaching verbal behavior. He is the first author of *Essential for Living*, a new functional skills curriculum, assessment, and professional practitioner's handbook for children and adults with moderate-to-severe disabilities. For the past 30 years, Dr. McGreevy has provided consultations for children and adults with developmental disabilities in school districts, residential programs, and hospitals, specializing in the treatment of aggressive and self-injurious behavior in individuals with limited communication or language skills. Under the guidance of Dr. Jack Michael, Dr. McGreevy has also conducted workshops on teaching communication skills and language in the context of severe problem behavior, which are based on B. F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior.

#ONTABACon 2022

ONTABA's first hybrid conference

The invited keynote speakers are...

Dr. Ghaemmaghani has been applying the principles of behavior analysis to produce meaningful changes in the lives of children and adults with and without developmental disabilities in both home-based and center-based settings for over 10 years. She received a Master of Applied Disability Studies with an ABA specialization from Brock University, Canada (2011) and a Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis from Western New England University (2016) under the supervision of Dr. Hanley. Dr. Ghaemmaghani served as an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Pacific (2016-2019), advising master's level student in ABA, before joining FTF Behavioral Consulting as the Clinical Director and Senior Consultant (2020 to present) to a range of organizations and professionals, including schools, in-home and outpatient clinic providers, and residential programs on issues related to severe problem behavior, sleep-related problem behavior, and selective eating. Dr. Ghaemmaghani has published articles in peer-reviewed journals related to assessment and treatment of problem behavior and has presented in various national and international conferences on ways to design and enhance the effectiveness of behavior analytic assessment and treatment procedures. In particular, Dr. Ghaemmaghani's research has focused on effective ways to build a repertoire of tolerance for interruptions to reinforcement that rely on differential reinforcement of skills including appropriate and functional communication, toleration, and cooperation in complex social contexts. Prior to starting her studies at Western New England, Dr. Ghaemmaghani was the Clinical Supervisor in charge of the implementation and evaluation of the Provincial Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention Program for children with autism in Northern Ontario, Canada. This experience provided her with an appreciation for issues surrounding successful transition of treatment across settings and has inspired her interest in maximizing practicality, social acceptability, and generality of treatment procedures and effects in order to enhance their real-life implementation and effectiveness.



Dr. Mahshid Ghaemmaghani



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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

DR. ROSEMARY CONDILLAC, C. PSYCH, BCBA-D

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, APPLIED DISABILITY STUDIES, BROCK UNIVERSITY

Welcome to the “What Would You Do?” column on ethical and professional dilemmas in ABA. Please submit your questions, issues, dilemmas, or tricky situations to 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.

Thanks to all of the ONTABA members and guests who attended the Ethics Panel on November 2, I am sorry that I couldn't be there, but am grateful that Dr. Koudys was able to participate in my place. In this column, I will provide some high-level responses to a first set of questions that were posed by registrants. I have combined and reworded a number of questions into two themes, in the interest of space. The remaining questions will be answered in my next column.

Managing with inadequate funding: Participants asked about ways to provide clinically appropriate and ethical services consistent with best practices when funding and/or service durations are limited. Related to this, there were concerns about discontinuation of services in this context.

There are many ways to approach this situation. First, we have to recognize that service mandates, program guidelines, and funding are outside of our control. We can do our best to advocate and educate policy makers to effect change, but in the interim each behaviour analyst must determine their own comfort level with practicing with these constraints and make an informed decision on the services that they are willing to offer. Second, behaviour analysts only work within a service agreement. In addition to other important information that agreement must clearly describe the nature of services, costs (where applicable), reasonable expectations of what can be achieved within the duration of service or available funding, what might interfere with meeting those expectations, and what comes next. Risks and benefits of entering a short-term service or a less intensive service than needed should be clearly explained, and potential targets should be discussed. Ensuring that services are within the scope of competence of the behaviour analyst is also an important consideration when setting parameters for time-limited services.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? CONTINUED

DR. ROSEMARY CONDILLAC, C. PSYCH, BCBA-D

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, APPLIED DISABILITY STUDIES, BROCK UNIVERSITY

Referring to a behaviour analyst or organization more fluent in treating a particular issue might be the most prudent option for time-limited services. It is essential that clients understand what can realistically be achieved within the service parameters, to allow them to make an informed decision. Third, behaviour analysts need to become familiar with the broader service system and make appropriate referrals to other organizations and disciplines. I have been known to say that transition out of service starts from day one, when the service agreement is reviewed, and informed consent is obtained. Simply put, our clients should have a clear understanding from the outset of when services are likely to end and what needs to be done to help support a successful transition to their next environment. This may include connecting our clients to other professionals (case managers, school boards, respite, or residential services) that may be a necessary part of their transition. Finally, it is important to note that we can provide ethical and effective services despite the frustration and guilt we may feel about the limits and funding models that we are faced with.

Managing client expectations: Participants asked about working through situations in which parents' goals for their child do not align with the child's current repertoire or skill level, or perhaps don't align with the values of the behavior analyst or organization. Related to this, is how and when to say "no" to client requests without violating the ethical code.

When it comes to managing client expectations, an important consideration is how clearly we set expectations at the outset of service. This takes us back to the service agreement. How you describe your services, and how clearly the expectations on which decisions are the organization's (e.g., staffing, fees) and how you will engage the family in collaborative decision making around goals, intervention planning, understanding data-based decision making, etc. Having them clearly understand their role in the consent process is also important. Family expectations may also be highly influenced by culture and learning history, so understanding the meaning they attach to the goals they would like their family member to achieve is important information to help you determine how best to support them. An example I often use is reading. Parents from many cultures place importance on reading, but some clients are not ready for that. Depending on the client's skills, some intermediary goals might be reasonable.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

DR. ROSEMARY CONDILLAC, C. PSYCH, BCBA-D

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, APPLIED DISABILITY STUDIES, BROCK UNIVERSITY

Consider receptive and expressive letters, letter sounds, or even visual discrimination (picking their written name out from other frequently encountered names at your centre). Some other issues can arise when families want us to target repetitive behaviour (that might serve a self-soothing function for some clients) or direct eye contact (which might be quite aversive for some clients). In the interest of being mindful about ableism, educating families on these issues and suggesting alternative goals would be appropriate. For repetitive behaviour, approaches that allow this behaviour at times, while providing functional replacement skills (e.g. an enhanced repertoire) for times when repetitive behaviour interferes with learning can reduce harm. Where eye contact is aversive, teaching joint attention (e.g. look at where I am looking), fleeting eye contact (when needed), and other ways of demonstrating attention (e.g. leaning toward the speaker, looking at the task materials), may provide the desired outcomes while putting the client's needs first. These approaches are consistent with the Ethics Code and best practices.

Reference

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2020). Ethics code for behavior analysts. Littleton, CO: Author.

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