

Conference 2022- Schedule

Schedule subject to change

Thursday, December 1, 2022		Friday, December 2, 2022	
8:00- 9:00 am	Registration / Coat Check (coffee & tea)	8:00- 9:00 am	Registration / Coat Check (coffee & tea)
9:00 – 9: 20 am	Opening Remarks (20min)	9:00 – 9: 20 am	Opening Remarks (20min)
9:20- 10:35 am	Invited Speaker: Dr. Patrick McGreevy	9:20- 10:35 am	Invited Speaker: Dr. Mary Jane Weiss
10:35 – 10: 50 am	Break *CEU Check-in	10:35 – 10: 50 am	Break *CEU Check-in
10: 50 – 11:50 am	Symposium 1/2	10: 50 – 11:50 am	Paper 4/5/6
11:50- 12:00 pm	*CEU Check-in/out	11:50 – 12:00pm	CEU Check-out
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Symposium 3/4	12:00 – 12: 15pm	Award Ceremony
1:00-1:10pm	CEU Check-out	12:15 – 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:10 – 2:30pm	Lunch	1:30pm – 2:30 pm	Symposium 5 /6 Paper 7
2:30 – 3:30 pm	Paper 1/2/3	2:30- 2:40 pm	CEU Check-in/out
3:30 – 3:40 pm	CEU Check-in	2:40- 3:40 pm	Symposium 7/8/9
3: 45 – 5:00 pm	Invited Speaker: Dr. Mahshid Ghaemmaghami	3:40 – 3:50 pm	CEU Check-out
5:00 – 5:10 pm	CEU Check-out	3:50 – 4:00pm	Break
5:10 – 6:30 pm	AGM	4:00– 5:15 pm	Invited Speaker: Dr. Peter Gerhardt
6:30 – 7:00 pm	Break (30 mins)	5:15 – 5:25 pm	CEU Check-in
7:00pm – 8:30pm	Poster Session/ (Wine & Cheese Night)	5:30 – 5:45 pm	Closing Remarks
8:30pm	Social Night (at the Loose Moose)		
*water stations available in each room		*water stations available in each room	

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022

Invited Speakers

(9:20- 10:35 am)

***Live Streaming**

Dr. Patrick McGreevy, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Talk 1: (1.5 CEU)

Issues and Procedures that are not Part of the Mainstream of Behavior Analysis

ABSTRACT

Dr. McGreevy will describe 18 issues or practices in Applied Behavior Analysis that are evidence-based, but are not part of mainstream practice. These issues and practices include, teaching to fluency, using non-echoic vocal-verbal prompts with nonverbal skills, and emphasizing arbitrary, rather than identical, matching.

(3: 45 – 5:00 pm)

***Live Streaming**

Dr. Mahshid Ghaemmaghami, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Talk 1: (1.5 CEU)

Towards Trauma-Informed, Compassionate Applied Behavior Analysis: Key Values & Assumptions

ABSTRACT

A contemporary and trauma-assumed version of applied behavior analysis for consideration when working with autistic persons or those with intellectual disabilities, especially when problem behavior is probable, will be described. The values at the forefront of this compassionate ABA approach and their compatibility with the core components of Trauma-Informed Care will be explained along with their implications for how to respond to both mild and severe forms of problem behavior.

Concurrent Sessions

Paper Presentations

(2:30pm - 3:30pm)

Presentation #1
(1.0 CEU)
***Live Streaming**

Paper: An Evaluation of FCPBS & CBT in the Treatment of Anxiety Related Problem Behaviour for a Child with ASD and Intellectual Disability

Authors: Monica Millar, MA, BCBA, Dr. Joe Lcushyn Ph.D., BCBA-D and Dr. Krista Johnston, Ph.D., R.Psych

Presenter: **Monica Millar, MA, BCBA**

A fair proportion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and a mild intellectual disability (ID) may experience anxiety-related problem behaviour. This study evaluated the effects of a Family Centered Positive Behavior Support (FCPBS) approach enhanced with Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) on child behaviour during the steps of an anxiety hierarchy in a valued family routine in the community. The study included an 11-year-old girl with ASD, ID and anxiety-related problem behaviour and her mother. The setting selected and defined in collaboration with the child's mother was a park routine in which the child manifested a fear of playing near or with other children in a playground at the park. Dependent variables included: (a) child problem behaviour, (b) child positive engagement, (c) parent and child ratings of child's level of anxiety; and (d) parent rating of social validity. The study employed an experimental, single case changing criterion design and a clinical case study design across two phases, baseline and intervention. Results documented a functional relation between the implementation of FCPBS enhanced with CBT and steps achieved by the child within the anxiety hierarchy. There was also showed a precipitous decrease in problem behaviour and increase in positive engagement associated with implementation of the intervention phase. Social validity results indicated that the child's mother viewed the FCPBS approach enhanced with CBT to be important and acceptable in regard to family goals, plan procedures, and child outcomes. Results are discussed in terms of their relation to the literature, unique contributions, implications, limitations and future research.

Presentation #2
(1 CEU)

Paper: Assess before you ACT

Authors: Kerry-Anne Robinson, M.Ed., BCBA & Judit Albitz, M.Sc., BCBA

Presenters: **Kerry-Anne Robinson, M.Ed., BCBA & Judit Albitz, M.Sc., BCBA**

The use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has gained popularity within the Applied Behaviour Analytic (ABA) community and ACT-based strategies and curricula have increasingly been integrated into ABA interventions. This presentation will discuss the importance of assessment and function-matched interventions for both direct and indirect-acting contingencies. Case study examples will be presented that demonstrate the use of the comprehensive functional assessment process, described in Szabo & McComas (in preparation)

and McComas & Szabo (in preparation) and the resulting behaviour support plans. Specific skill development programs to address indirect-acting contingencies that contribute to target behaviour will be shared and discussed. Barriers and challenges with assessment and treatment of indirect-acting contingencies with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and strategies to overcome them will also be discussed.

Presentation #3

Paper: Avoiding Ableist Language from a Neurodivergent BCBA Perspective

Author: Amanda Modrovsky

Presenter: **Amanda Modrovsky**

Ableism is a term that has been popping up in pop culture what exactly does it mean? Ableist language refers to any language that creates or demonstrates a dichotomy of superiority/interiority in regard to physical, intellectual and mental ability regardless of being intentional or not intentional. However, until we are aware of what words are potentially harmful, we are contributing to the continued marginalization of the very individuals we serve and have the collective goal of increasing their quality of life. The presentation goes into ethical considerations to consider as behavior analysts, an overview of Bottema-Beutal, et. al. (2021). Within her article the social versus the medical model are described as the author goes into further detail about the implications of the medical versus the social model. The presentation will go into the words that the author of the article identified as potentially ableist and their potential replacements. Lastly, I go into my hypothesis about why ableist language is still being used and factors to consider in terms of ableism in our practice of Behaviour Analysis

Symposiums

(10:50 - 11:50 am)

Symposium #1 ***(1 CEU)***

***Live Streaming**

Symposium: PECS(R)perts: Evaluation of Two Caregiver PECS Training Models

Chairperson: Dr. Julie Koudys

Discussant: Dr. Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA

Presentation 1: Evaluation of a Brief Telehealth PECS(R) Caregiver Training

Author: Melissa Elliott

Abstract: The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS®; Bondy & Frost, 1994) is an augmentative and alternative communication system designed to teach functional communication. Research indicates that PECS is an evidence-based communication approach for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Despite substantial PECS research, little is known about how to train caregivers to teach and support their child's PECS use. Without caregiver involvement, system abandonment is likely; reducing the opportunity for socially valid

child communication outcomes. This study explored the results of a brief (i.e., two week) telehealth PECS caregiver training involving group didactic training (i.e., PECS Level 1 Training) and individual sessions using behavioral skills training (BST) and general case training (GCT). Six caregivers of children with ASD participated. A multiple baseline across behaviors design was used to explore the impact of training on caregivers' PECS implementation accuracy for phases 1-3B. Results indicate that all caregivers' PECS implementation accuracy improved, and outcomes generally maintained at follow-up. Overall, results indicate that a relatively brief telehealth training, using BST and GCT, may enhance caregiver PECS implementation skills. An analysis of common errors, phase accuracy, and rate of mastery will be presented. Limitations, future research directions, and clinical implications will be shared.

Presentation 2: Evaluation of a Hybrid PECS(R) Caregiver Mediated Training Package

Author: Jeffrey Esteves

Abstract: For children with developmental disabilities who do not develop speech, alternative and augmentative communication systems may be helpful. Among the available systems, The Picture Exchange Communication System® (PECS®; Bondy & Frost, 1994) is one of the most commonly used and best studied. However, little is known about effective and efficient approaches to train caregivers to implement PECS. This study evaluates the effectiveness of a telehealth/in-person hybrid training model to teach caregivers of children with a developmental disability to implement PECS. Nine families participated in a 6-week hybrid training package to learn phases 1-3B of PECS. Caregivers participated in two days of group didactic training (i.e., PECS Level 1 Training), as well as two training sessions a week for four weeks (i.e., one telehealth and one in-person session weekly). Telehealth sessions used behavioral skills training and general case training. Telehealth sessions involved caregivers role playing with the trainer, while in-person sessions involved caregivers receiving live coaching with their child. Caregiver PECS teaching accuracy and child PECS performance were assessed across five time points. Results demonstrate substantial improvements in parent PECS teaching accuracy and child PECS performance. Clinical implications and future directions for PECS parent training research will be discussed.

Symposium #2 (1 CEU)

Symposium: **Is #ABA being Ratioed? Follow us to find out**

Chairperson: Dr. Albert Malkin

Discussant: Dr. Kendra Thomson

Presentation 1: # Exploratory AnalysisOf Sentiment TowardABAon Twitter

Author: Dr. Albert Malkin, Dr. Priscilla Burnham Riosa, Dr. Laura Mullins, Kristi Thompson, Allison Kretschmer, Chee Wan

Abstract: Naturalistic observation of verbal behaviour on social media is a novel method of gathering data on the acceptability of topics of social interest. In other words, online social opinion is a modern-day measure of social validity. We sought to gain an objective understanding of online discourse related to the field of applied behaviour analysis. We conducted an analysis of Twitter posts related to Applied Behavior Analysis (e.g., #ABA, #BehaviorAnalysis, #appliedbehaviouranalysis). Our initial sample consisted of 110,008 Tweets from the past ten years (2012 – 2022). We selected a random subset (n = 12,000) for further analysis using a stratified sampling procedure to ensure that Tweets across years were adequately represented. Two observers were trained to code Tweets for relevance and sentiment toward the field. We will discuss trends regarding the valence (i.e., positive, negative, neutral) of relevant ABA Tweets toward the field in the broad context of observed Tweets. We will suggest some potential paths forward.

Presentation 2: **Vibe check on TikTok #ABA: Voices, themes, and sentiments**

Author: Dr. Rosemary A. Condillac, PhD., C.Psych., BCBA-D and Emily Bulten, BA(Hons)

Abstract: The field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is gaining attention on social media, but the kinds of attention are quite variable. In this study we explored videos with #ABA and related hashtags (e.g. #abatherapy, #appliedbehavioranalysis etc.) to objectively record the sentiments, the speakers, and the common themes being expressed about our science. Videos not specifically related to ABA were excluded from analysis. Using a 3-point scale to measure valence (Negative, Neutral, Positive), two coders analyzed a random sample of 1000 relevant videos, and grouped these data by speaker (ABA professional, Autistic person, Parent/family member of ABA recipient, and other professionals) to identify trends. The video content was reviewed and coded into emerging themes. To examine potential maintaining variables the number of comments for each post were recorded and a randomly selected, representative number of comments were coded for valence. Finally, the number of likes for each video were recorded. We will provide an overview of our results and recommendations for behaviour analysts and allies to change the vibe on TikTok.

(12:00 - 1:00pm)

Symposium #3
(1 Supervision CEU)
***Live Streaming**

Symposium: **Not your average research symposium: A collection of recommendations as informed by recent experimental and meta-analytic work**

Chairperson: Nazurah Khokhar

Discussant: Dr. Kendra Thomson

Presentation 1: Training program for community service providers who support adults with intellectual disabilities: Meta-analysis of single-case research

Author: Dr. Laura E. Mullins, *Victoria Scott (presenting author)* & Dr. Alison D. Cox

Abstract: Many adults with intellectual disabilities supported in residential services engage in challenging behaviour that interferes with their quality of life and can negatively affect their support systems. Research on training direct support professionals to address challenging behaviour is essential in generating efficacious and effective training approaches. The current meta-analysis uncovered 16 single-case design studies that evaluated staff training effects in the context of community agency personnel supporting adults with intellectual disabilities who engage in challenging behaviour. We endeavoured to investigate the relationship between specific training delivery type (e.g., active support, behavioural-based, and mindfulness) and service provider performance, as well as service user outcomes. This review also aimed to explore which training components (i.e., in-situ and feedback) coincided with the largest change in service provider performance.

Descriptive analysis outcomes suggested that active support, behavioural-based, and mindfulness training may be associated with improved service provider performance and service user improvements. Regression analysis outcomes suggested that in-situ training (training in the natural environment where the skills will be used) may be associated with improved service provider performance (i.e., larger effect sizes), indicating that training location may be an important consideration. Interestingly, feedback was associated with poorer service provider performance (i.e., smaller effect sizes). We provide possible explanations for this surprising outcome, discuss clinical implications, and propose recommendations for future research.

Presentation 2 Title: Exploring characteristics of interventionist training associated with improved learner outcomes: A meta-analysis

Author: *Brianna M. Anderson (presenting author)*, Autumn Kozluk, Marie-Chanel M. Morgan, Melissa MacDonald, Dr. Jonathan E. Friedel and Dr. Alison D. Cox

Abstract: Previous research evaluating behavior skills training and performance feedback has largely examined factors influencing interventionist performance outcomes. However, to our knowledge, researchers have yet to compile existing literature to specifically explore characteristics associated with improved learner outcomes in the context of interventionist training research. After compiling and coding all relevant research, we conducted a regression analysis to examine the relationships between improved interventionist performance, interventionist training approach (behavioral skills training versus performance feedback in isolation), behavior domain (skill acquisition, behavior reduction, or both used in combination), and interventionist type on outcomes for learners. Results suggested that, while interventionist performance was significantly correlated with improved learner outcomes, the training approach used was not. Behavior domain reliably predicted learner outcomes. Namely, training interventionists on protocols featuring both skill acquisition and behavior reduction was associated with better outcomes for learners. Finally, interventionist type reliably predicted learner outcomes. That is, behavior therapists were positively correlated with better learner outcomes, as evidenced by larger effect sizes. By contrast, post-secondary students were correlated with the poorest learner outcomes (i.e., smaller effect sizes). We discuss potential clinical implications, including how these results may inform agency training decisions; as well as make recommendations for future research.

Presentation 3: A pyramidal approach for training parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Rapport Building Skills

Author: Dr. Alison Cox, *Nazurah Khokhar (presenting author)*, *Samantha Wallbank (presenting author)*, Dr. Kendra Thomson, & Dr. Priscilla Burnham-Riosa

Abstract: Applied behaviour analysis is a helping profession often relying on implementers (e.g., parents, caregivers, direct care staff) to deliver treatment. Presently, an impressive corpus of evidence exists suggesting behavioural skills training (BST) is an effective teaching approach in the context of developing caregiver skills (Brock et al., 2017). By contrast, employing BST to teach rapport building skills to caregivers supporting young learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has not been amply investigated (Lugo et al., 2017) even though quickly establishing rapport may improve learner outcomes in the context of an intensive behavioral treatment settings (Shillingsburg et al., 2019). The current study employed a pyramidal training approach. First, we taught a group of instructor therapists (ITs) rapport building skills (using BST). Then, we taught them how to enact BST to train another person. Finally, we assessed whether these ITs could effectively enact BST to teach parents rapport building skills (using BST). We also monitored child behaviour across study phases to monitor for collateral behavioural changes observed (e.g., approach responses). Preliminary results suggest ITs demonstrated mastery after training across all targeted skills. Parent-participants also demonstrated mastery after completing training. The results from both groups also suggest skills were maintained one month after the final training session had been completed.

Symposium #4
(1 CEU)

Symposium: Acceptance and Commitment Theory – Caregiver Coping Skills and Effects on Implementation of Behavioural Interventions

Chairperson: Paul Szikszai, MA, BCBA and Dr. Kenneth Fung MD FRCPC MSc FAPA DF CPA
Discussant: Tina Gandhi, MSW, RSW

Presentation 1: Acceptance and Commitment Theory – Caregiver Coping Skills and Effects on Implementation of Behavioural Interventions

Author: Tina Gandhi, MSW, RSW, Paul Szikszai, MA, BCBA, Dr. Johanna Lake, PhD, C.Psych.

Abstract: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Magnacca, Thompson and Marcinkiewicz, 2022) is an evidence-based intervention that has been more routinely used in recent years as a means of supporting caregivers in the implementation of behavioural interventions, as well as in shaping caregivers' abilities to cope with challenging behaviour. Surrey Place collaborated with CAMH to implement a caregiver ACT group in 2019. Additionally, Surrey Place's TREADD program has been piloting the use of pre and post measures to measure the use of ACT in the context of parent and family counselling. Across

these initiatives, we looked at pre and post measures of caregiver perceptions of their ability to cope in relation to the challenging behaviour displayed by children with autism. Our findings (from F-COPES and QRS) indicated a significant reduction in caregiver stress and an increase in the ability to cope across the caregivers.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2022

Invited Speakers

(9:20- 10:35 am)

Live Streaming

Dr. Mary Jane Weiss Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA

Talk 1: (1.5 CEU)

Effective Collaboration: Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers, and Enhancing Outcomes

ABSTRACT

Autism is a complex disorder, necessitating comprehensive care. To meet the complex needs of individuals with ASD, multiple professions must work collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary framework. Working with individuals from other disciplines involves addressing differences in worldview, in the definition of evidence, and in the concept of evidence-based practice. This can make decisions about assessment and intervention discrepant, and the gulfs in view can be difficult to close. The successful navigation of these challenges leads to more effective team processes and thus improved outcomes for clients. Some flexibility and interpersonal skills are needed, and clinicians need to appreciate the expertise of allied professions. Understanding differences of perspective and treatment requires openness to the process and recognition of the improved outcomes that stem from successfully integrated treatment. Resources that can assist in collaboration include position statements on interventions, evidence-based categorizations of treatments, and decision making tools and trees. This presentation will highlight the resources and skill development that can prepare behavior analysts for successful interprofessional collaboration that will maximize outcomes for individuals served, for practitioners, for organizations, and for the field.

(4:00– 5:15 pm)

Live Streaming

Dr. Peter Gerhardt, Ed. D.

Talk 1: (1.5 CEU)

Changing the Behavior of Behavior Analysts to Improve Outcomes in Autistic Adults

ABSTRACT

Baer, Wolf and Risley (1968), noted that competently applied behavior analytic interventions should result in strong, socially important, and generalizable outcomes which, in this case, should mean positive adult outcomes in ASD. Unfortunately, despite an emphasis on evidence-based intervention in ASD, adult outcomes remain poor “for almost any outcome you choose.” (Roux, et al, 2015, p. 8). While there may be several reasons for such continued poor outcomes, the potential of applied behavior analysis to support more positive adult outcomes has yet to be fully explored or realized. This presentation will provide an overview of a set of recommended behavior changes for behavior analysts working with learners with ASD. Central to this is the better understanding and application of the process by which meaningful skills can be identified and targeted for acquisition.

Concurrent Sessions

Paper Presentations

(10: 50 – 11:50 am)

Presentation #4
(1 Ethics CEU)
***Live Streaming**

Paper: Recognizing Bias

Author: Shayna Gaunt, MA, BCBA and Shira Karpel, MEd, BCBA

Presenter: Shayna Gaunt, MA, BCBA and Shira Karpel, MEd, BCBA

The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts, 2022 Edition, states that we need to be aware of our personal biases that may interfere with the effectiveness of our professional work (1.10). However, many biases are unconscious, operating at a level that we don’t even know we hold, so how do we recognize these biases? This webinar will teach us various types of biases, how to recognize them, and most importantly, how to conquer them. Real-life examples will be discussed.

Presentation #5
(1 CEU)

Paper: Teaching Interprofessional Collaboration through Experiential Learning with Behavioural Psychology, Business and Engineering Students

Authors: Pamela Shea, M.ADS., BCBA, Dr. Kaela Shea, PhD. Biomedical Engineering, Dr. Ragni Dogra, Ph.D economics

Presenter: Pamela Shea, M.ADS., BCBA, Dr. Kaela Shea, PhD. Biomedical Engineering, Dr. Ragni Dogra, Ph.D economics

Research has indicated that interprofessional collaboration improves client outcomes, enhances work life, optimizes costs, and allows professionals to tackle complex situations with increased knowledge and creativity. The inherent barriers and challenges of developing effective interprofessional teams has been documented in literature. Interprofessional education (IPE),

focusing on teaching future clinicians with the capacity to effectively work collaboratively, requires a more defined pedagogy supported by quantitative research. This research provides two experiential learning projects to teach interprofessional collaboration within behavioural psychology, engineering, and business students. Within study one interprofessional teams were presented with complex cases and teams created a functional assessment and developed a function-based treatment using technology developed by the engineering students. Within study two, community stakeholders, provided interprofessional teams with community-based challenges. Students worked collaboratively to analyze the reason why the challenge existed, and created innovative solutions based on behavioural economics. Significant increases in the Interprofessional Collaborative Competency Attainment Scale were found. Student reflections were analyzed.

Presentation #6
(0.5 CEU TBD)

Paper: Intervening to Prevent Unwanted Touching of Museum Displays

Author: Reilly Fullerton, Dr. Thomas Zane, Dr. Vincent Francisco, Dr. E. Scott Geller

Presenter: **Reilly Fullerton**

Museums struggle with visitors touching artworks, sometimes causing extensive damage. No known empirical study counted the frequency of visitors touching art displays, nor tested strategies for preventing such damaging behavior. This field study employed an alternating treatments design to evaluate the behavioral impact of three sign conditions designed to alleviate this problem: a Directive sign that specified the behavior to avoid, a Rationale sign that informed visitors why they should not touch the display, and a Rationale plus Graphic sign that added an attractive supporting visual. The signs were double-sided, thereby applying an observing response component that directed visitors to move around the sign to see the message on the back, which presumably increased the probability of visitors reading and complying with the prompt. Systematic behavioral observations indicated that the three signs were equivalently effective in decreasing display touching. None of the visitors who emitted the observing response touched the exhibit.

Presentation #7

Paper: Functional Analysis and Treatment of Hoarding in a Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Author: Heather Sheen, Dr. Tricia Vause, Nicole Neil, Brianna M. Anderson, and Dr. Maurice Feldman

Presenter: **Brianna M. Anderson**

Excessive collecting and hoarding behaviors are frequently reported in youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but studies have not used behavior analytic interventions based on functional analysis. In the current study, a functional analysis was implemented and results were used to inform a multicomponent treatment package for a 12-year-old girl with ASD who engaged in interfering hoarding behavior. Based on the results of the functional analysis which confirmed that the hoarding behavior was maintained by automatic reinforcement and access to attention, response interruption and redirection (RIRD) plus differential reinforcement of other

(DRO) and alternative (DRA) behavior were implemented using a multiple baseline across behaviors design. Results showed that the multicomponent treatment package was successful in reducing hoarding behavior. Social validity measures of treatment efficacy indicated reduction in symptom severity, improvements in family quality of life, and high consumer satisfaction. Additionally, treatment outcomes were maintained over a two-month period. This study shows the potential utility of using functional analysis-based treatments for interfering hoarding behavior in youth with ASD.

Symposiums

(1:30 - 2:30pm)

Symposium #5

(1 CEU)

***Live Streaming**

Symposium: The Development of Meaningful Skills in Applied Behaviour Analysis

Chairperson: Dr. Peter Gerhardt

Discussant: Brian Mason

Presentation 1: The Effects of a Treatment Package to Writing Meaningful Goals

Author: Shanna Bahry, PhD., BCBA-D, LABA, SLPA

Abstract: While the field of applied behavior analysis is in a position to affect meaningful change in the outcomes of clients on the autism spectrum, it is currently coming short of doing so. This presentation will provide a brief overview of currently available tools that may be used to guide the development of skill acquisition goals and curricula and a discussion on why these tools alone are insufficient. Initial data will be presented from a treatment package aimed at guiding the goal writing of practitioners and students of behavior analysis to help increase the inclusion of goals that are meaningful, socially valid, and highly individualized in order to positively impact the trajectory of a client with autism.

Presentation 2: Examining Ways to Improve the Writing of Meaningful Goals to Improve Outcomes for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Author: Dr. Natalie Driscoll Ph.D., BCBA, LABA

Abstract: Safety is an important consideration for determining placement and level of supervision for people with disabilities who are recipients of adult services. The importance of safety for the population of adults with disabilities will be discussed. This presentation will provide a brief review of existing safety literature, qualitative findings from a series of semi structured interviews with content experts, and an overview of safety interview training materials. Additionally, quantitative findings from the behavioral skills training will be shared including the results of the study and measures of social validity.

Presentation 3: Teaching Component Skills Related to Sexuality Safety to Individuals with Autism

Author: Dr. Jessica Cauchi, Ph.D., BCBA-D., CPBA-AP

Abstract: Sexuality education is extremely important for persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). While there is much research supporting the need for sexuality education for people with autism, there is little experimental demonstration of teaching about sexuality for this population. This presentation will review a study which used an adapted alternating treatment design with control to evaluate two teaching methods (discrete trial teaching and behavioural skills training) to teach three children with autism two component skills related to sexuality safety. An in-situ probe was used to assess demonstration of skill in a natural environment setting. While all participants acquired both skills in teaching settings, in either teaching modality, in-situ probes of skill were demonstrated with variability and inconsistency for all participants. Future directions related to in-situ responding, as well as teaching component sexuality skills are suggested.

Symposium # 6
(1 CEU)

Symposium: **ACT at Work and School: Outcomes of on-line interventions**

Chairperson: Allison Kretschmer

Discussant: Dr. Rosemary Condillac

Presentation 1: ACTing in Higher Education: A Comparison of Personalized and All ACT Process Online Modules

Author: Dr. Albert Malkin, Jina Kum, Emily Erb, Eli Cwinn, and Sarah Caimano

Abstract: Graduate students face pressure to maintain academic performance and manage distress in the face of both demanding educational programs and their day-to-day lives. This study evaluated the effectiveness of variations of Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTr) protocols delivered asynchronously in increasing psychological flexibility and academic outcomes. Variations of ACTr were based on a pre-test of psychological flexibility for the purpose of matching intervention components to student characteristics during a portion of the academic semester. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: 1) active treatment control group (study tips); 2) an experimental group (typical ACTr - 6 processes); and 3) a second experimental group (personalized ACTr - a focus on either open, aware, or engaged components). Differences in group outcomes on the CompACT, the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II; Bond et al., 2011), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, et al., 1983), and a 6-item social validity questionnaire will be presented. Additionally, we evaluated the influence of the above variations by examining student artifacts (e.g., quiz scores, assignment scores, etc.), and the acceptability of their experience in the study. The current work extends the research on both typical and personalized approaches to ACTr with respect to the measures above. Further, we evaluated the feasibility of conducting ACT via a process-based approach online. Such

findings will allow future ACT researchers to make the best use of the limited time students have to engage with much needed support services.

Presentation 2: Effects of Prosocial to Improve Group Functioning among Developmental Support Agencies Management Teams During the Pandemic

Author: Dr. Laura Mullins, Sabrina Palmer, Dr. Priscilla Burnham

Abstract: The Coronavirus pandemic presented agencies supporting adults with developmental disabilities with additional challenges in safely providing quality support, leading to increased stress among management teams. Prosocial is a process-based group intervention that uses Acceptance and Commitment Training to promote effective group functioning and psychological flexibility. Using a quasi-experimental (waitlist-control) design, we aimed to evaluate the effects of a 4-session virtually-delivered Prosocial intervention on the group functioning of two management teams (n1=12, n2=7). Direct observations of goals and engagement were conducted during weekly management meetings. Survey data on well-being and group functioning were collected before and after Prosocial. Direct observations and content analysis of open-ended survey questions indicated progress toward the goals and improved group functioning and collaboration. However, the team's group functioning ratings showed no significant improvements. Social validity data on participants' experiences suggested that Prosocial was beneficial and feasible. Given that this study is one of the first formal empirical evaluations of Prosocial, we will describe the successes, challenges, and recommendations for future administrations of Prosocial.

(2:40 - 3:40 pm)

Symposium # 7

(1 CEU)

***Live Streaming**

Symposium: **Applied Research in Action**

Chairperson: Thurka Thillainathan

Discussant: Dr. Alison D. Cox

Presentation 1: Treating Severe Problem Behaviour: A Description of Individualized Outcomes and Systematic Fading of Intensive Supports

Author: Angeline Savard and Meghan Dunne

Abstract: Demographic research suggests up to 14% of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who engage in challenging behaviour enact more intense and dangerous behaviours (i.e., severe). For this subset of the clinical population, service delivery and access to social

supports may be negatively affected, while the use of only antecedent and reinforcement-based interventions may not be sufficient to produce sustained, near-zero rates of challenging behaviour. Further, prolonged application of interventions that do not reduce severe challenging behaviour immediately may increase the risk of potential injury for clients and their caregivers. To mitigate this risk in these instances, the application of restrictive programming (e.g., punishment, therapeutic restraint) may need to be considered. Unfortunately, research on the topic of fading intensive support is limited. Thus, our objectives were three-fold. First, to describe the results of a combination intervention featuring differential reinforcement with escape extinction afforded by the application of therapeutic restraints and decelerative strategies for a large adolescent male with high-risk, frequent challenging behaviour. Second, to describe the systematic process employed to fade intensive supports and thus, address the relative dearth in literature on the topic of effectively fading restrictive programming. Finally, to emphasize the participant's impressive improvements in academic engagement and skill acquisition across the intervention.

Presentation 2: Program Evaluation of a Specialized Treatment Home for Adults with Severe Challenging Behaviour

Author: Thurka Thillainathan and James Padua

Abstract: High-risk problem behaviours can preclude the individuals who engage in them from meaningfully participating in everyday activities due to associated risks (e.g., substantial injury to self and others, extreme property destruction, outward physical aggression targeting others). These behaviours also often necessitate repeated, frequent support from emergency response personnel. Unfortunately, research featuring adult participants who engage in severe problem behaviour is relatively scarce compared to research featuring child participants (Cox et al., 2021). In addition, problem behaviour literature tends to emphasize efficacy (e.g., does the intervention work) more often than effectiveness (e.g., does it work in 'real world' settings, for whom and under which parameters).

The current project is a systematic program evaluation conducted to explore the effectiveness of a comprehensive behavioural treatment package at reducing severe challenging behaviour and generating adaptive skills. By employing a retrospective consecutive controlled case series design, the participating service agency and researchers (i.e., the current study) demonstrate applied research in action. That is, this project exemplifies a successful partnership resulting in the execution of important, and sometimes hard to study phenomenon. Finally, a discussion featuring preliminary study results provide an opportunity to disseminate clinical outcomes adding much needed content to a relatively understudied area (i.e., adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who engage in severe challenging behaviour).

Symposium # 8 ***(1 CEU)***

Symposium: **Pediatric Feeding Disorders**

Chairperson: Dr. Kimberley Zonneveld

Presentation 1: On the Efficacy of Treating Escape-Maintained Inappropriate Mealtime Behavior

Author: Victoria Scott, Dr. Valdeep Saini, Micaela Totino

Abstract: Inappropriate mealtime behavior (IMB) is a type of feeding challenge within the broader class of food refusal behavior. Although there have been some single-case studies examining the extent to which behavioural interventions can aide in reducing IMB, the relative efficacy and generality of these studies is unclear. The purpose of this systematic review was to critically analyze the efficacy of interventions for the treatment of IMB through a meta-analysis of single-subject experimental designs. We identified 38 studies involving 307 cases in which IMB was treated with a behavioral intervention. Results indicated that combined escape extinction and non-escape extinction interventions had greater effect sizes than escape extinction alone or non-escape extinction alone. Escape extinction alone had greater effects sizes compared to non-escape extinction alone. However, escape extinction alone resulted in a higher percentage of negative side effects compared to non-escape extinction alone and combined interventions. We discuss the implications of these findings and provide recommendations for future research.

Presentation 2: Evaluation of Sequential Presentation plus Nonremoval of the Spoon to Treat Food Refusal in a Young Child

Author: Christina Medeiros, Fumi Kashiwado, Madeline Ban, Mark Scopazzi, & Dr. Kimberley Zonneveld

Abstract: Feeding treatments based on applied behavior analysis have extensive empirical support. One such treatment, called sequential presentation, is a type of differential reinforcement of alternative behavior procedure that involves providing a preferred food contingent on consumption of a nonpreferred food. When paired with an extinction procedure, such as nonremoval of the spoon in which the feeder prevents escape or avoidance of food by placing the spoon on or close to the child's lips until they safely accept the food into the mouth, consumption increased. We used a reversal design to evaluate the effects of sequential presentation plus nonremoval of the spoon on the acceptance and consumption of nonpreferred food in a young child with feeding difficulties. Following success with this treatment, we implemented demand fading and taught the child to feed himself with age-appropriate utensils. Results will be discussed within the context of treatment implications, limitations, and lessons learned.

Presentation 3: Effects of Choice, Reinforcement, and Shaping without Reinforcement on the Consumption of Nonpreferred Foods in a Young Child with Feeding Difficulties

Authors: Samanta Kuno & Dr. Kimberley Zonneveld

Previous researchers have found that upward of 90% of inappropriate mealtime behavior (e.g., refusal in the form of head turning; batting the spoon; gagging) is maintained, at least in part, by escape from food or drink presentation. As such, it is not surprising that escape extinction

procedures (e.g., nonremoval of the spoon, re-presentation, physical guidance) are often used in conjunction with antecedent-based procedures and/or positive reinforcement-based procedures. However, escape extinction procedures may be associated with increases in the frequency of inappropriate mealtime behavior (i.e., extinction burst). To mitigate these possible extinction-induced behaviors, we evaluated the effects of a procedure consisting of choice, reinforcement, and shaping without escape extinction with one child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This treatment package produced an increase in consumption of all targeted nonpreferred foods. Results will be discussed within the context of limitations and treatment implications.

Symposium # 9
(1 CEU)

Symposium: Development of the Group Living Compatibility Assessment Tool: Identifying Factors Predicting Autistic Roommates Compatibility from Literature, Experts, Adults on the Spectrum and Caregivers

Discussant: Dr. Laura Mullins

Presentation 1: Exploring Factors Influencing Compatibility of Roommates on the Autism Spectrum: A Scoping Review

Author: Amanda Bailey, Dr. Laura Mullins

Abstract: Many adults on the autism spectrum live in group-based settings. While the person should be central to the decision regarding placements, there are limited resources to aid in determining potential roommate compatibility. Challenging behaviours and placement breakdowns can often occur when social and environmental factors are not considered. This scoping review explores the current research on the factors that influence the compatibility of roommates on the autism spectrum. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for Scoping Review (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines, 41 resources were reviewed to identify issues that influenced roommate compatibility and living arrangements. A deductive content analysis was used to identify areas within six subdomains: general house details, health needs, sensory, lifestyle, social interaction, and behavioural profile. Initial results suggest the highest supported subdomain was social interaction and the least represented subdomains include health needs and lifestyle. The literature also suggested additional subdomains to consider, including the importance of one's culture and balancing the right to make choices while considering safety. This scoping review will be used to inform an assessment to guide the placement decisions of prospective housemates and improve the transition process.

Presentation 2: Exploring Factors Influencing Compatibility of Roommates on the Autism Spectrum: Consensus Among Expert Clinicians and Senior Leaders

Authors: Emily Wykes, Amanda Bailey, Dr Laura E Mullins, Carmela Campanella-Borraccia, Dr. Sue VanDeVelde-Coke & Dr. Jan Frijters

Abstract: Evidence-based practice calls for integrating clinical judgment, the best available evidence, and client values and characteristics in professional decision-making (Slocum et al., 2014). Since there is no standardized measure to assess compatibility and inform supportive living placements for adults on the autism spectrum, experts often rely heavily on their clinical and professional experiences. To capture these relevant experiences, a virtual questionnaire was sent to experts in the developmental field, including Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) at a Master or Doctoral level, psychologists, researchers, and persons in senior leadership positions (e.g., Managers and Directors). Experts were asked to evaluate and provide feedback on the GCAT items, scoring, and administration and suggest additional areas of compatibility. To establish consensus, a Content Validity Ratio (CVR; Lawshe, 1975) was conducted on all expert responses (n = 56) and compared across groups of experts (leadership vs. clinical groups; less or more than ten years of experience). Overall, several items of the GCAT exceeded the Lawshe minimum values (Ayre & Scally, 2013) for experienced clinicians and leaders (representing five of the six subdomains, including general house details (e.g., access to a yard), sensory profile (e.g., sensitivity to noise and smells), health and safety (e.g., restriction around furniture and kitchen), social (e.g., others touching personal items), and behavioural profile (e.g., the likelihood of verbal and physical aggression). Interestingly, the leadership group agreed with each other the most and years of experience in the field also appeared to be a relevant factor in establishing consensus.

Presentation 3: Exploring Factors Influencing Compatibility of Roommates on the Autism Spectrum: Perspectives of Self-Advocates and Families

Authors: Carmela Campanella-Borraccia, Amanda Bailey, Dr Laura E Mullins, Carmela Campanella-Borraccia, Dr. Sue VanDeVelde-Coke & Dr. Jan Frijters

Abstract: Adults should have a say in their homes and where they live (Autistic Self Advocacy Network, 2016). When the person cannot directly communicate their preferences, others may act as an informant in this decision-making process. Ideally, these individuals should know the person well, like their family members (Browning & Jones, 2002; McCoy et al., 2020). Self-advocates and families have the essential knowledge about a person's daily life patterns, preferences, behaviours, and physical needs. These perspectives are valuable to collect when supporting the housing transition of autistic adults. Therefore, the perspectives of 14 self-advocates and 17 family members of adults on the spectrum were obtained through virtual focus groups (7 per focus groups participant group). Participants were given the option to respond using the chat function or with their microphone to semi-structured questions about what is important about where autistic adults live and what they look for in a roommate. We also asked about the importance of each domain and subdomain. Examples, prompts, and alternative phrasing of subdomains were provided when necessary to increase accessibility and generate conversation. Preliminary deductive content analysis of the focus group transcripts suggested that each subdomain of the GCAT is essential to consider when transitioning adults on the spectrum into group living. They also provided additional examples related to this unique population.