

MAY 2024

ONTABA™ ANALYST

Newsletter of the Ontario Association For
Behaviour Analysis™



Celebrating 30 Years!
Welcome Regulation!

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MAY 2024

ONTABA™ ANALYST

Newsletter of the Ontario Association For Behaviour Analysis™



Celebrating 30 Years! Welcome Regulation!

Since its founding, ONTABA™ has worked to bring certification and regulation to the province of Ontario. We are so excited that in July 2024 Behaviour Analysts in Ontario will be registered with the soon to be College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario.

As we celebrate this achievement, which will provide the protection the consumers of behaviour analytic services deserve, we want to pause and thank all the people who have worked to bring us to this exciting day. There have been so many people in the past 30 years who have worked tirelessly to advance and promote the science of behaviour analysis in Ontario. Their dedication to our field is inspiring.

We send our heartfelt thanks to those past and present who for the last 30 years have been working to make behaviour analysis in Ontario the amazing field it is. We look forward to what the next 30 years brings to our profession!

For more information on regulation check out: <https://cpo.on.ca/aba/>



MEET OUR CURRENT MEMBERS

ONTABA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: JAIME SANTANA
PRESIDENT-ELECT: JESSICA CAUCHI
TREASURER: LYNNE THIBODEAU
TREASURER-ELECT: SARAH SMITH
SECRETARY: KRISTEN COPELAND
UNDERGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE: SOLANCH SPERANZA BARO
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE: BRITTANY DAVY
DEI REPRESENTATIVE: DON TOGADE

ONTABA DIRECTORS AT LARGE

ALEXANDRA WHITE
MARILYN KINGSLEY
SARA JOHN
SYDNEY SOLOMON

ONTABA PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS: MARILYN KINGSLEY
CONFERENCE AND EVENTS: SARA JOHN AND SYDNEY SOLOMON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION: DON TOGADE
EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT: ALEXANDRA WHITE AND
FINANCE: LYNNE THIBODEAU
GOVERNANCE: SARAH SMITH
MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBER SERVICES: KRISTEN COPELAND
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SOLANCH SPERANZA BARO
PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS AND PRACTICE: BRITTANY DAVY

EEMERITUS

MAURICE FELDMAN
JOEL HUNDERT
DR. ANDREW MCNAMARA
LARRY WILLIAMSE



ONTABA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GERALD BERNICKY
LOUIS BUSCH
DR. ROSEMARY CONDILLAC
JENNIFER CUNNINGHAM
DR. MAURICE FELDMAN
DR. ALBERT MALKIN
DR. ANDREW MCNAMARA
DR. WANDA SMITH
DR. NANCY MARCHESE

SUSTAINING

AMBER FAIR
ERIC LARSSON
LISA ISRAEL
NAJILA YOUSEF
MILENA KAKO
KIEVA HRANCHUK
BRUCE LINDER
NANCY FREEMAN
PATTY PETERSEN
SANDRA SILLIKER
SOPHIA CATANIA
VICKI NIKOLAKAKOS
AM BADWALL
DAISY RYAN.
GAIL CLARKE
HASEENA SHAIKH
LINA BAVARO
MONEEK AUJLA
DENA SADEGHIPOUR
WANDA SMITH
CAROBETH ZORZOS

RACHELLE COSME
LARISSA ZWICK
JAIME SANTANA
JULIE KOUDYS
KERRIE KIRKWOOD
LEIGH GILES
MELISSA LEGREE
NANCY MARCHESE
DR. ADRIENNE PERRY
ANDRA SALEM-GUIRGIS
TOBY STAHLSCHEMIDT-KAH
ADRIENNE VAN AAKEN
MARIA RELUCIO
DANIELLE PESSAH
HANEEN SABBAGH
JOAN BROTO
MILENA DONATH
FARA OPORTO
SHARI BARTMAN
RISH DOUGLAS

From The President's Desk

BY JAIME SANTANA



Dear members,

I am excited to connect with members in my first “From the President’s Desk” entry. It is an honour to hold this position and to continue the work of past presidents before me, while also continuing to shape the future of ABA in Ontario and of ONTABA™. 2024 has already proven to be a busy year for the board. Before sharing the highlights to date, I would like to acknowledge past board members who completed their term in 2023. I would like to thank Dr. Nancy Marchese for her vision and leadership, Jane Button for ensuring that our meeting minutes and our membership services were always at their best, and Arezu Alami for ensuring that our social media, communications, and website were always up to date. With your help, we were able to continue to grow both our conference and the reach of our membership. Finally, a thank you to Dr. Keiva Hbranchuk for her support since her election, and for her grace in supporting the transition to a new president-elect.

Your 2024 board has hit the ground running. The directors are: Jessica Cauchi (President-Elect, newly elected), Lynne Thibodeau (Treasurer, returning), Sarah Smith (Treasurer-elect, returning), Kristen Copeland (Secretary, newly elected), Sara John (Director-At-Large, returning), Alexandra White (Director-At-Large, returning), Sydney Solomon (Director-At-Large, returning), Dr. Don Togade (Director-At-Large; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Representative, newly elected), Marilyn Kingsley (Director-At-Large, newly elected), Brittany Davy (Graduate Representative, newly elected), and Solanch Speranza Baro (Undergraduate Representative, returning). To learn more about your board, please [visit our website](#).

As a board, we have been preparing for a monumental year in ABA in Ontario. As we draw closer to July 1st, 2024, the day on which the Psychology and Behaviour Analysis Act, 2021 will be proclaimed, ONTABA™ has developed materials to help support your transition to becoming regulated health professionals, including an [Application Checklist](#) and an [informational video](#) developed in partnership with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (soon to be College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario). Furthermore, ONTABA™ has participated in various working groups within the College to support the transition to regulation. I would like to thank Dr. Tony DeBono and the team at the College for their dedication to creating a regulatory home for the Behaviour Analysts of Ontario. It is exciting to hear that [hundreds of Behaviour Analysts have already pre-registered](#). It truly is a testament to the commitment our profession has to the protection of the members of the public accessing our services.

From The President's Desk

BY JAIME SANTANA

In other news, the board has released a [Workplace Capacity Survey](#), spearheaded by Solanch Speranza Baro and the Organizational Development Committee. The survey aims to gather information about the status of ABA providers across the province in order to identify goals for our future advocacy efforts, and to influence policy accordingly. Please complete the survey and share broadly with your colleagues.

In terms of current advocacy efforts, we continue to meet with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and other groups with a vested interest within the OAP, such as Autism Ontario and the Ontario Autism Coalition. We continue to provide feedback on important OAP-related matters, such as the extension of the qualification requirements for Clinical Supervisors within the OAP. An updated [Clinical Supervisor Attestation](#) form was shared earlier this year, and can also be found on the [Ministry website](#).

Looking ahead, we are preparing for our annual conference, which will be taking place on November 7-8, 2024, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Please save the date, and keep an eye out for our early bird tickets, the conference lineup, and more.

Our work on our 2025-2027 strategic plan has also begun, which will help us establish our future direction and ensure the longevity of ONTABA™. We are excited to look ahead, and continue to provide you with high quality continuing education opportunities and up-to-date information on topics that impact you.

We are always looking for ways to expand our suite of membership benefits, if you have any suggestions please do not hesitate to reach out to us via [email](#) or through our [website](#). We are always looking to hear from you.

Enjoy the coming sunny days, best of luck with your application submission, and hope to see you at ONTABA™ events!

Regards,

Jaime Santana, M.ADS, BCBA
Board President
Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis™



Celebrating the big 30!!

ONTABA'S FIRST BOARD MEMBERS!

WANDA SMITH (PRESIDENT),
MAURICE FELDMAN (PRESIDENT-ELECT),
LARRY WILLIAMS (SECRETARY),
ANDREW MCNAMARA (TREASURER),
JOEL HUNDERT (MEMBER AT LARGE),
FRANCISCO BARREIRA (MEMBER AT LARGE),
DAVE MACKAY (MEMBER AT LARGE),
LYLE MACDONALD (EX-OFFICIO MEMBER AT LARGE),
JIM REAUME (EX-OFFICIO MEMBER AT LARGE),
MARY CHAMPAGNE (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE),
ANNEKA MORRIS (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE).

NOW AND THEN

IN FEBRUARY OF 1993 WE
HAD 60 MEMBERS – NOW WE
HAVE OVER 1600

DUES WERE \$10 A YEAR –
NOW THEY ARE \$65 FOR ONE
YEAR

93 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE
FIRST CONFERENCE - IN 2023
800 PEOPLE DID!!



Celebrating the big 30!!



INTERESTING FACTS!!

FIRST ORGANIZED MEETING OF THE GROUP THAT BECAME ONTABA™ WAS FEBRUARY 10, 1992

ONTABA™ IS THE ACRONYM TO AVOID CONFUSION WITH OABA – OHIO STATE'S AFFILIATE CHAPTER

“ONTABA™ EXISTS” – OFFICIALLY ON MAY 27, 1993 AS ABAI ACCEPTS OUR APPLICATION

THE FIRST OFFICIAL EVENT WAS HELD AUGUST 20, 1993

THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE WAS NOVEMBER 1993

THE FIRST NEWSLETTER WAS PUBLISHED IN JULY OF 1994

A CONTEST WAS HELD IN 1995 TO DETERMINE THE FIRST LOGO

IN 1999 ONTABA™ ESTABLISHED A VOICE MAIL FOR MEMBERS

FOUNDING MEMBERS

SHARE MEMORIES!

THERE WERE ONLY A HANDFUL OF TRAINED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS IN ONTARIO AT THE TIME AND MOST PEOPLE HAD TO LEARN ABA ON-THE-JOB. ALMOST EVERYONE KNEW EVERYONE ELSE IN THE FIELD. A FEW WERE CONDUCTING RESEARCH. THERE WAS A NEED TO HAVE A LOCAL ORGANIZATION TO PROMOTE QUALITY ABA IN ONTARIO, EDUCATION AND PROVIDE COLLEGIAL SUPPORT. THE ABAI PROVIDED THE STRUCTURE FOR THE FORMATION OF A CHAPTER.

WE WERE A COMMUNITY OF LIKE MINDED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS AND WE WANTED TO FORMALISE BA. AND HAVE FUN DOING IT!!

THE CONFERENCES WERE GREAT! ESPECIALLY HAVING DON BAER AS OUR KEYNOTE. AND HOSTING APA'S DIV 25 FOR A BBQ AT SURREY PLACE.

"HUGE INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP. ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

NEWSLETTER.

DEVELOPING

STUDENTS

ACHIEVE

PROFESSIONAL STATUS FOR

ANALYSIS IN ONTARIO."

PROGRAMMES

TO QUALIFY

WITH BACB.

REGULATED

HEALTH

BEHAVIOUR

FOR

FOR

HEALTH

BEHAVIOUR

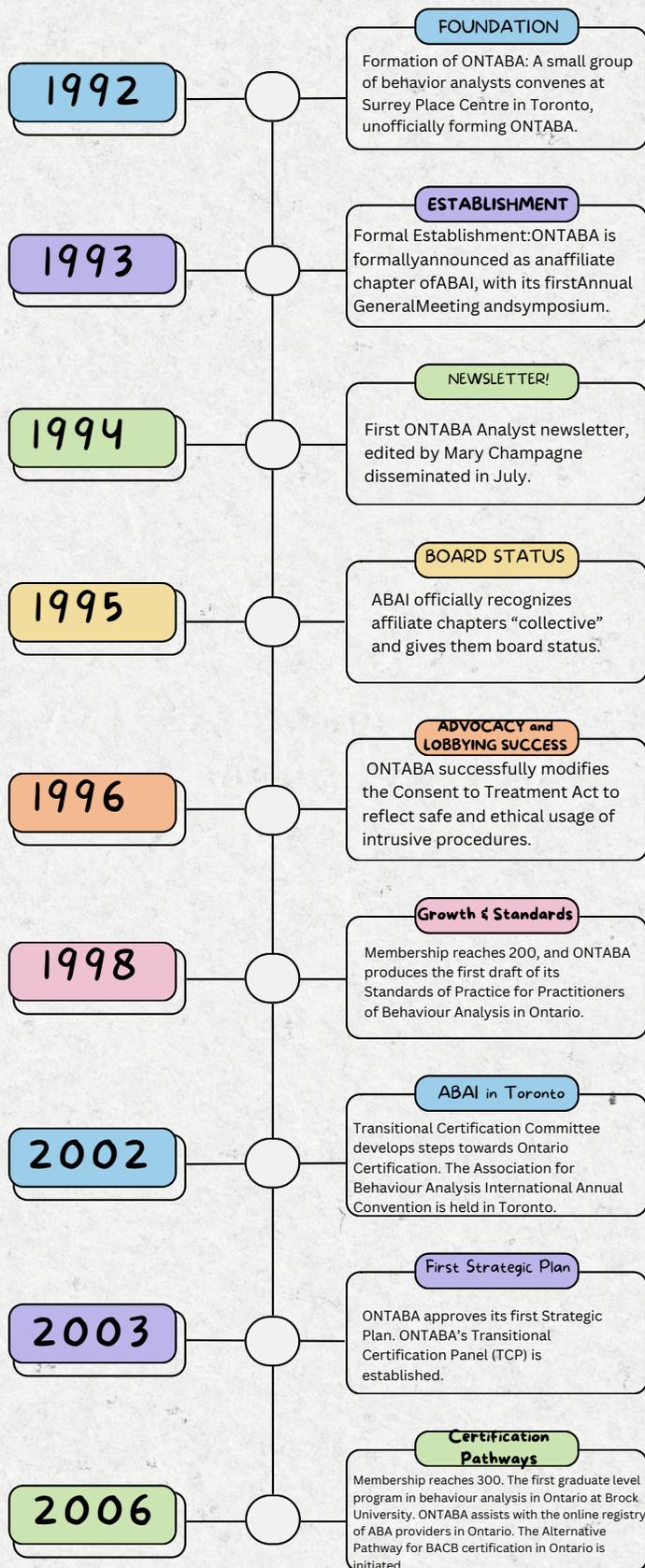
I THINK THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE THE MASSIVE INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP, THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONTABA AS THE VOICE OF PROFESSIONAL ABA BY GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ABA ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRODUCTION OF QUALITY REPORTS, AND THE SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION OF LICENSING.

GOOD QUALITY PLANNING DID OCCUR BY MANY OF THOSE WHO WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING ONTABA INCLUDING, NOT LIMITED TO LARRY WILLIAMS, WANDA SMITH, MAURICE FELDMAN, ROSEMARY CONDILLAC, PONCHO BARRERA, GERRY BERNICKY COMPLETING MUCH OF THE WORK TOGETHER WHILE INGESTING A SOCIAL BEVERAGE AT A LOCAL ESTABLISHMENT.

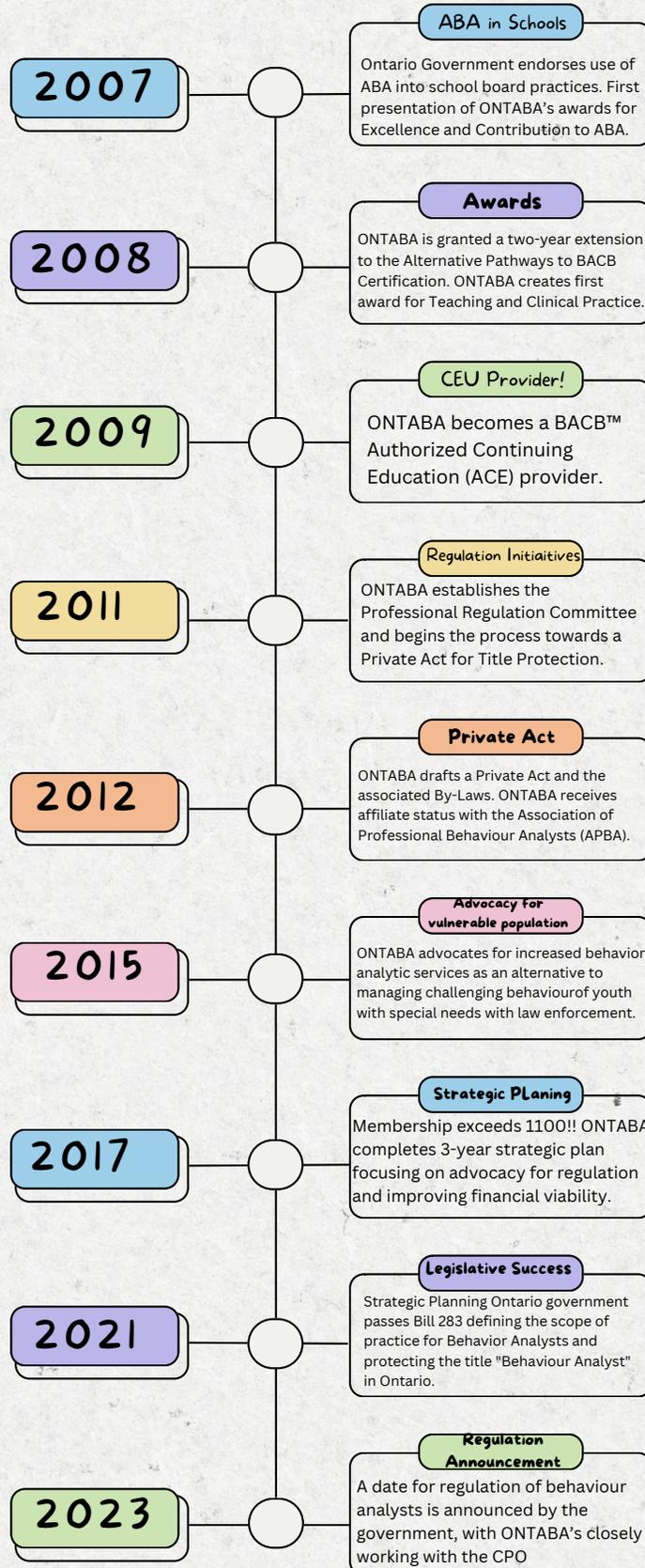
"STAY THE COURSE, I.E., CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR BA IN ONTARIO AND SUPPORT ONTABA MEMBERS."

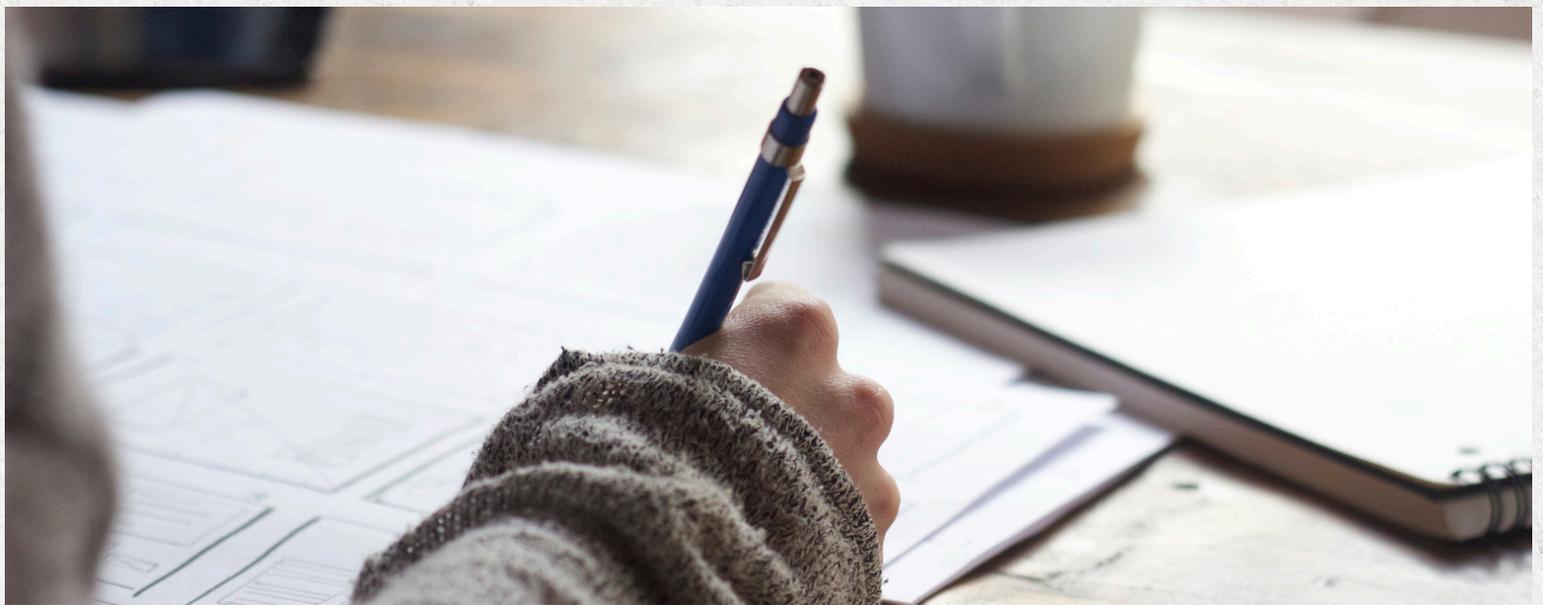
NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED TO HAVE A PROFESSIONAL BODY TO ADVOCATE FOR QUALITY ABA TO GOVERNMENT, CONSUMERS AND THE PUBLIC. I SEE THE NEED FOR ONTABA TO CONTINUE AS A CHAPTER OF ABAI, BUT AS AN INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION TO WORK WITH BUT WHEN NEEDED, TO LOBBY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING ITS ABA REGULATORY BODY, TO COLLABORATE WITH CONSUMER GROUPS AND TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE QUALITY CONTINUING EDUCATION IN THE FIELD.

Remembering 30 Eventful Years From Vision to Success!



Remembering 30 Eventful Years From Vision to Success!





WE THANK OUR PAST PRESIDENTS AND OUR CURRENT PRESIDENT:

WANDA SMITH
MAURICE FELDMAN
JOEL HUNDERT
BILL KIRBY
GERRY BERNICKY
ROSEMARY CONDILLAC
JAMES PORTER
PETER WYNGAARDEN
DARYL NURSE
JEN PORTER
ALBERT MALKIN
LOUIS BUSCH
JENNIFER CUNNINGHAM
KENDRA THOMSON
NANCY MARCHESE
JAIME SANTANA

Why Regulation is Important?

AS BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS, WE HAVE COME TO LEARN THAT CHANGE CAN BE HARD, AND THAT CHANGE OFTEN REQUIRES ONGOING MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS. HOWEVER, MOVING TOWARDS BEING A REGISTERED HEALTH CARE PROFESSION IS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE OFTEN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THAT ACCESS BEHAVIOUR ANALYTIC SERVICES. THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS OF ONTARIO WILL BE THE ENTITY MAINTAINING THAT RESPONSIBILITY, OF PROTECTING THE PUBLIC, IN ONTARIO.

AS COMPASSIONATE, QUALIFIED, AND ETHICAL PRACTITIONERS, MOST OF US CRINGE WHEN WE HEAR THE STORIES OF ALLEGED ABUSE PERPETRATED BY INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO PRACTICE ABA. HOWEVER, WE KNOW THAT UNFORTUNATELY, A SMALL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS HAVE HARMED CLIENTS. THEREFORE, TO PREVENT THE CONTINUATION OF SUCH INSTANCES, WE FULLY SUPPORT THE REGULATION OF BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS IN ONTARIO.

THE REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ACT EXISTS TO PROTECT OUR CLIENTS. IT ALLOWS AN EQUITABLE SYSTEM FOR COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS REGARDING INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS. ANYONE CAN REACH OUT TO THE COLLEGE, FREE OF CHARGE, TO MAKE A COMPLAINT. CURRENTLY, ONLY THOSE WITH THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO HIRE LAWYERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS HAVE ANY COURSE OF ACTION IF MISCONDUCT FROM A PROVIDER HAS OCCURRED. REGULATION PROTECTS THE CONSUMER AND OUR CLIENTS.

MANY OF US WORK WITH THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN THE PROVINCE. REGULATION CREATES SYSTEMS TO ENSURE CLINICIANS ARE PRACTICING WITHIN THEIR SCOPE, THERE ARE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AT THE HANDS OF A REGISTERED CLINICIAN, ENFORCEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL (INCLUDING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE), AND PROTECTION OF TITLE, JUST TO NAME A FEW. THESE CHANGES WILL RESULT IN GREATER CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY FOR THE PUBLIC, WHICH WILL HOPEFULLY PREVENT CONFUSION. REGULATION WILL OUTLINE THE MINIMUM STANDARD OF CARE. FURTHER, IT WILL PROVIDE RECOURSE FOR UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE. THIS WILL ACT TO PROTECT THE FIELD, AS WELL AS THE CONSUMER, BY PREVENTING THOSE WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO PRACTICE DUE TO A LACK OF TRAINING OR EDUCATION FROM PRACTICING.

THERE HAVE BEEN QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW THE THREE-TIERED MODEL OF SUPERVISION WILL CONTINUE UNDER REGULATION. THE CHANGE HERE IS THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF "SUPERVISOR". THE INDIVIDUAL REGISTERED WITH THE COLLEGE WILL BE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WORK DONE BY THE TEAM THEY SUPERVISE. THE REGISTERED PRACTITIONER WILL BE THE ONE HELD LEGALLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY POTENTIAL HARM THAT OCCURS DURING THE SERVICE DELIVERY. BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE, ONTABA™ ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT THE THREE-TIERED DELIVERY MODEL WILL BECOME A TWO TIERED MODEL, WITH REGISTERED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS BEING ABLE TO DELEGATE TASKS TO MEMBERS OF THE TEAM AS APPROPRIATE, WHILE MAINTAINING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORK COMPLETED. FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF THE TIERED MODEL OF ABA IN ONTARIO AFTER REGULATION, YOU CAN LOOK AT THE CPO WEBSITE.

IT IS THE HOPE OF MANY THAT WITH REGULATION AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC IT BRINGS, ABA CAN BECOME THE RESPECTED AND RELIABLE SCIENCE IT WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE. WHILE ALL PARTIES INVOLVED EXPECT A CONTINUED EVOLUTION OF REGISTRATION OF BEHAVIOUR ANALYSTS IN ONTARIO, WE ARE EXCITED TO BE EMBARKING ON THE FIRST STEP THAT WILL ENSURE A GREATER PROTECTION TO THE PUBLIC.

Please regularly check the CPO's website to look for the latest news updates.





QUICK LINKS FOR REGISTRATION TO CPO

CPO WEBSITE LINK FOR
MORE INFORMATION ON
REGISTRATION:

<https://cpo.on.ca/aba/>

HOW TO APPLY?

<https://cpo.on.ca/aba/how-to-apply-aba/>

CONTACT COLLEGE FOR ANY
REGISTRATION QUESTIONS

aba@cpo.on.ca

Please regularly check the CPO's website to look for the latest news updates.



Upcoming Events

Free CEU Announcement - More details to follow soon!

Upcoming free, 1.5 CEU Webinar Event Evaluating Treatment Options for Inappropriate Sexual Behavior , to be presented by our dynamic presenter, Dr. Shane Spiker from Positive Behaviour Supports!

July 24, 2024, from 7 - 8.30 pm EST

EVENTS 2024

June 2024:

“Important Considerations when Selecting a ABA Supervisor: An Event for Supervisees/students and Supervisors in the Field of Applied Behaviour Analysis”

September 2024:

An Evening for Behaviour Analysis goes digital - -pour your favourite drink, grab your favourite snacks and join us for Special Topics

October 2024:

Our DEI committee helps us learn more about Indigenous culture

IN-PERSON
(AT MTCC)
& ONLINE

2024

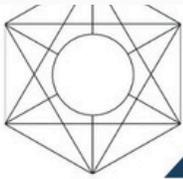
ONTABACon

SAVE THE DATE

NOV. 7 - 8, 2024

STAY TUNED





WE ARE RECRUITING!

Who Are We?

Ontario Contextual Behavioral Science (O-CBS) is a Special Interest Group (SIG) with the goal to create a community that fosters exploration and dissemination of concepts and interventions related to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Relational Frame Theory.

Membership Open To:

Professionals
Researchers
Students

We Offer

Journal Club
Lunch & Learns
Student Engagement
Networking

INTERESTED?

Connect with us at:
ontariobssig@gmail.com



Unlocking Minds: The Intersection of ABA and Forensic Psychiatry

June 27, 2024

7:00-8:00pm EST

Presented By: Vanessa Setter, MPED ABA, BCBA & Michelle Mephram, MSc, BCBA



REGISTER NOW





AN UPDATE FROM THE ONTARIO BEHAVIOURISTS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The O-BFSR SIG Planning Board is excited to share an update on our recent endeavors and plans for the upcoming months!

We are excited to announce that we will present our *third annual* poster competition at the annual ONTABA Conference! We encourage students and colleagues in behavior analysis to begin thinking about poster ideas that display how behavior analysis can impact social responsibility topics. Details coming soon.

Also, please keep a close eye on our social media platforms for information about the *first annual* O-BFSR SIG Mixer to be held during ONTABACON2024!

Find us on Instagram: [Ontariobfsr](#)
Find us on X: [@OntarioBFSR](#)
Email us anytime: BFSR.sig@gmail.com

To keep up-to-date with all our activities, see our website here: obfsr.org

Finally, if you are interested in joining the O-BFSR SIG, please fill out our membership form: <https://forms.gle/SsoxyGMs9MAZM7qP8> . Membership fees are by donation of any amount this year.

Sincerely,

The O-BFSR SIG Board of Planners





Health, Sport, & Fitness Canada Special Interest Group

What is our purpose?

To educate, coordinate, disseminate, and provide resources to Canadian behaviour analysts and other members of society seeking to address human challenges in health, sport, and fitness through the application of the science of behaviour analysis.

Who is eligible to join?

Anyone interested in the application of behaviour analysis to the areas of health, sport and fitness, agrees with the purpose of the SIG, and pays their membership dues.

What are the potential benefits to being a member?

- Access to HSF information from a uniquely Canadian perspective
- Access to a member's only directory
- Discounted BACB continuing education (CE) opportunities
- Access to quarterly newsletters
- Opportunity to publish guest posts on our website blog
- Access to monthly HSF practitioner collaboration meetings
- Low membership dues

What are the prospective activities?

- Webinars and workshops opportunities
- Networking events
- Mentorship directory
- Training resources
- Annual meetings
- Newsletter
- Spotlight blog

Want to join?

1. Complete the contact form here: [Join HSF Canada SIG](#)
2. An officer of the HSF Canada SIG, will contact you to confirm your registration

Want more information?

- Visit our website here: [HSF Canada SIG Website](#)
- Email us at hsfcanadasig@gmail.com



WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR OUR PRIVATE PRACTICE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (PP-SIG) – THE RELEASE OF THE ABA BUSINESS TOOLKIT! THIS COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE MARKS THE CULMINATION OF AN EXTENSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OVER THE PAST YEAR AIMED AT EMPOWERING OUR PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS WITH THE TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO EXCEL IN THEIR BUSINESS OPERATIONS.

WITH THE TOOLKIT NOW AVAILABLE, OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM IS EXCITED TO SHIFT OUR FOCUS TOWARDS ENHANCING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE STRENGTH OF OUR COMMUNITY LIES IN THE CONNECTIONS WE BUILD AND THE SHARED EXPERIENCES WE FOSTER. TO THIS END, WE ARE ROLLING OUT A SERIES OF REGULAR MEET AND GREETs DESIGNED TO BRING MEMBERS TOGETHER AND CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ON BEST PRACTICES IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS.

THESE MEET AND GREETs WILL PROVIDE AN INFORMAL, YET INFORMATIVE PLATFORM FOR MEMBERS TO NETWORK, SHARE INSIGHTS, AND DISCUSS CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN THIS EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE. WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ON BUSINESS STRATEGIES, SEEK ADVICE FROM PEERS, OR SIMPLY CONNECT WITH FELLOW PROFESSIONALS, THESE SESSIONS ARE FOR YOU. STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING DATES– WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS AND WELCOME NEW MEMBERS TO STAY CONNECTED WITH THE PP-SIG COMMUNITY VIA OUR FACEBOOK GROUP. TOGETHER, WE CAN CONTINUE TO GROW, LEARN, AND ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN OUR PRIVATE PRACTICES.



**FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
ABA BUSINESS TOOLKIT ON THE NEXT
PAGE**

ARE YOU AN **ABA CLINICIAN** IN ONTARIO?

Are you an ABA clinician in Ontario looking to start or enhance your private practice in autism services? Whether you're just setting up or seeking to refine your existing operations, our ABA Business Toolkit is here to guide you every step of the way – completely free of charge.

Kickstart Your Practice: Just starting out? Start on the right foot with our comprehensive framework. Find everything you need to launch your practice, from business templates to detailed training, all curated by successful private practice owners who started just like you.

Boost Your Confidence: Already running your practice but want to improve? Our toolkit offers specialized content and proven strategies to help you streamline processes, increase revenue, and achieve your business goals. Connect with industry experts and peers who understand your challenges.

Free Access, Anytime, Anywhere: Our toolkit is available 24/7 with no logins required. Get the help you need, whenever you need it, at no cost.

Make a Lasting Impact: With demand for ABA services on the rise, now is the time to take your practice to the next level and make a significant difference in the autism community.

Get free, unlimited access now: ababusiness toolkit.ca

Launch your **ABA practice**



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 secretary@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. Consider emailing your ethics questions to contact@ontaba.org or reach out to the aba ethics hotline.



I receive frequent questions from students and seasoned practitioners related to assent. What is assent? Why is assent necessary? When is assent required? What are some ways to get assent? What to do if a person does not assent?

What is assent?

According to the very helpful index at the front of the BACB code, “Assent is vocal or nonvocal verbal behavior that can be taken to indicate willingness to participate in research or behavioral services by individuals who cannot provide informed consent”. (p. 7). Assent can take many forms, depending on the person’s mode of communication and behaviour. Assent can also be demonstrated by willing participation in the absence of dissent.

There are many other definitions of assent, as well. Breaux and Smith (2023) reviewed several definitions of assent and found that the common themes included, that assent is an addition to legal consent, that it demonstrated agreement to participate, and included a willingness or voluntariness to participate.

When it is assent required?

Assent is not formally required in Ontario’s Health Care Consent Act (HCCA, 1996), so there are no guidelines regarding assent for Health Care in Ontario. (note: Consent and capacity for consent are clearly described in the HCCA. More details on this can be found in the ONTABA Professional Practice in ABA series tip sheet on consent and capacity listed in the reference section).

What Would You Do?

Continued

However, from an ethical perspective considering a service-recipient's comfort and acceptance of the interventions being provided, should be a strong consideration, and is consistent with feedback that the field of ABA has received from some former service recipients who feel that they were harmed and that their dissent during aspects of treatment was not respected. In Standard 2.11 in the BACB Code, which focuses on obtaining informed consent for clinical services or research, it states that "They are responsible for obtaining assent from clients when applicable." (P.11) So, if you are a BCBA practicing in Ontario, you would still be responsible to follow the Code, and obtain assent for clinical services when applicable.

In most situations, in Canada, assent is required for research, the process for which is typically agreed upon during the Research Ethics Review process. The TriCouncil Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2; 2022) states, "Many individuals who lack legal capacity to make decisions may still be able to express their wishes in a meaningful way, even if such expression may not fulfill all the requirements for consent. Prospective participants may be capable of verbally or physically assenting to, or dissenting from, participation in research... While their assent would not be sufficient to permit them to participate in the absence of consent by an authorized third party, their expression of dissent or signs suggesting they do not wish to participate must be respected."(p.57)

Why is seeking assent necessary?



Assent, in this case, is a demonstration of voluntariness to participate in clinical services or research. Many professions, including behaviour analysts, have an ethical obligation to seek assent when applicable (Flowers & Dawes, 2023). I would argue that we should want to seek assent as well. Assent is an indicator that the focus and the approach we are using to support a service recipient has social validity. Further, research regarding choice-based interventions provides some suggestions on ways that practitioners can support autonomy and self-determination in treatment selection (Kestner, Finch, and Kolb, 2023).

Flowers and Dawes (2023) suggest that one of the reasons that behaviour analysts should carefully consider assent is that we often target behaviours, such as escape-motivated behaviours and avoidance behaviours that can be indicative of dissent. In these situations, it is important to differentiate between the occurrence of the target behaviours and specific dissent for the treatment strategies being used. Choice and control, as mentioned above, can be helpful, as can using an alternating treatment design to allow the service recipient to choose between approaches.

What Would You Do?

Continued

The TriCouncil Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2; 2022) states, “Many individuals who lack legal capacity to make decisions may still be able to express their wishes in a meaningful way, even if such expression may not fulfill all the requirements for consent. Prospective participants may be capable of verbally or physically assenting to, or dissenting from, participation in research... While their assent would not be sufficient to permit them to participate in the absence of consent by an authorized third party, their expression of dissent or signs suggesting they do not wish to participate must be respected.”(p.57)

What are some ways to seek and confirm assent?

As suggested above the assent procedure used must be customized for the service recipient, taking into account their strengths and needs. There is increasing support to distinguish assent procedures for research purposes from those used for clinical services (e.g., Breaux and Smith, 2023), mostly due to the different functions of those activities, with client services focused on individual gain and research typically focused on scientific gain, though for some ABA research there may be less difference.

There is an emerging interest in “assent-based intervention” in the ABA literature. Breaux and Smith (2023) describe this approach as one in which the service recipient’s voluntary assent is foundational to all treatment decisions, throughout the period of service delivery. Some fundamental aspects of this include (a) defining a consistent set behaviours indicating assent, and assent withdrawal that is respected, evaluated, and updated; (b) explicit teaching of skills related to assent, autonomy, and self-advocacy; and (c) data collection on both assent and assent-withdrawal behaviours, their effectiveness in directing intervention.

A great summary on ways to enhance choice making that are consistent with offering assent-based services that promote autonomy and self-determination, was provided by Rajaram et al., 2023. In that article, the authors describe choice making from a behaviour analytic perspective, review choice making literature, suggest situations and contexts in which choice making opportunities can enhance practice, and consider barriers to choice making.

Like consent, assent is a process not a singular event. Assent should be assessed and re-assessed.

In summary, I think the fundamental underlying principle here, is that we want consider the perspective of the person being supported, when they are not the legal consent source for the behavioural services that we are providing

What Would You Do?



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