



13th Annual ONTABA Conference
November 4th and 5th, 2005
Ramada Hotel and Suites, Toronto.



Featured Speakers: Dr. Brian Iwata and Dr. Philip Hineline
Find Your ONTABA Conference Brochure Inside !

the ONTABA ANALYST

A Brief Assessment of Multisensory Room Effects

Erica E. Graver and F.J. Barrera
Southwestern Regional Centre, Blenheim, Ontario

The use of multisensory stimulation rooms ("snoezelens") has become a common and popular feature in our contemporary array of services for the developmentally disabled. Snoezelen environments are designed to provide a stress-free leisurely relaxation via exposure to enriched and restorative visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory sensations (Lancini, Cuvo and O'Reilly, 2002).

Despite their widespread usage and appeal, objective behavioural evaluations of the positive benefits of the Snoezelen experience are minimal and limited (Hogg, Cavet, Lambe and Smeddle, 2001). Likewise, there is no consensus on how to screen for which diagnostic or functioning-level profiles would benefit best from multisensory exposure (Cuvo, May and Post, 2001).

In this study we conducted a preliminary assessment of how young dually diagnosed children reacted to a short (15 min.) exposure to a multisensory room, by objective monitoring of facial expressions, motor responses, vocalizations and physiological pre-post exposure status.

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Ontaba

The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis

An Affiliate Chapter of The Association for Behavior Analysis International

*Caroll Drummond
 Editor, Production Manager
 Ross Violo
 Associate Editor, Submissions*

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- 1. 13th Annual ONTABA Conference Brochure**
 - 2. ONTABA Board Nomination Ballot**
 - 3. ONTABA Bylaw Ballot**

From the President's Desk

Rosemary Condillac
RACK Consulting
ONTABA President



Summer is almost over, and the first day of school is just around the corner. I can't believe how quickly time passes these days, and how many things on the to-do list never get checked off. Once upon a time, I used to enjoy summer lulls in my clinical work, and could use the slower summer months to catch up on reports and paperwork. Many ONTABA members that I have spoken to lately have echoed this sentiment, we are all too busy. The data on this is confirmatory. In the spring, the ONTABA Board of Directors did a membership survey regarding the location of the conference, and received 1 response. In the summer, we did a membership survey about consultation for certification, and received 5 responses (5 more arrived in the weeks following the deadline) responses. We also sent out proposed by-law changes for commentary, and received 1. The call for nominations has been out for a few months, and we need many more nominations to fill board positions for next year. Thank you to those who took the time out of their busy schedules to respond. It is important to note, however, that with 283 members in the organization, our responding rate is well below expected levels.

As President of ONTABA, I need your help. It is difficult for your Board of Directors and Committees to do the work required to build and operate this non-profit corporation without input and direction from the membership. We had hoped that email communications would increase responses, but this has not been the case. If you are reading this update, please book time in your schedule to attend the **Annual General Meeting on November 3rd**. We will have several important topics to discuss, and critical decisions to be made. We have decided **not** to go ahead with the certification videoconference due to the the limited responses to our consultation survey. We did not feel that we could justify the expense of the videoconference, with less than 3% interest from our members

As the new academic year starts, let's wipe the slate clean, and start over. We need you to do 5 small things for us in the next few months, that shouldn't take up more than 1 hour of your time. First, please update your email address with the membership committee if it has changed since you renewed your membership. Second, become active in recruiting and nominating other members to the board of directors, and nominate someone *by September 20th*. Third, please vote on the by-law changes enclosed in the newsletter, and return your vote *by September 30th*. Fourth, respond to the draft Implementation Plan that will be circulated by mail and email by October 3rd. Feedback will be request *by October 17th* and will accumulated for presentation at the AGM and Summarized for our Webpage. Finally, please attend the AGM *on November 3rd*, we will be voting on many issues, including certification, that are critical to the future of ONTABA. We'll report the data in our next newsletter!

See you at the Conference!

Rosemary

ONTABA

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ONTABA Committee Updates

ONTABA COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Conference Committee:

Conference Chair: Shiri Bartman

The conference committee is pleased to announce that the annual ONTABA Conference will be held at the Ramada Hotel and Suites on Jarvis Street in Toronto on November 3rd and 4th, 2005. We are also very excited that Dr. Brian Iwata and Dr. Philip Hines will be our guest speakers.

Please see the Conference Brochure in this *ONTABA Analyst* (insert).

shiri.bartman@surreyplace.on.ca.

Elections Committee Update:

Board Liaison/Chair: TBA

Nominate your Board! The Elections Committee has provided you with another nomination form for Elections 2005 (insert). Nominations have been extended to September 20th, 2005.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR BALLOT.

Membership Committee:

Board Liaison: Mary McMillan

Chair: Amy Barker

As of August 26th, 2005 ONTABA Membership was 286. There are 89 new members, 173 renewals and 24 returning. Of the 286 members, there are 208 full memberships, 32 student members, 30 sustaining members, 15 affiliates and 1 member emeritus.

If you have address changes, please let us know. Membership forms are available on the website at www.sl.on.ca/ONTABA

Recruitment Committee

Board Liaison/ Chair: Carobeth Zorzos

The recruitment committee has completed the ONTABA brochure and will present it for approval at the next board meeting. In addition, we plan to include recruitment materials with the conference brochure mailings.

We're always looking for volunteers to help out with the recruitment committee. Please contact Carobeth Zorzos at carobethz@rogers.com if you are interested assisting with recruitment activities.

Transitional Certification Panel

Consultation by mail and email will be sent out on October 3rd, and Feedback is requested by October 17th, 2005.

Newsletter Committee:

Board Liaison: Betina Clancy

Editor: Caroll Drummond

I am very pleased to see that this issue has some timely articles of interest to our readers. Thanks to the authors for their contributions.

In the near future you will be able to access these articles on line. Although our issues are not on line as yet, I see that the ONTABA site is up with some areas under construction. It looks promising!

Time to send in your ballots, your articles, book reviews etc. Submit your posters or talks from the upcoming Conference! Our readers are your peers- they appreciate your contributions. Send them to Ross Violo at sifuross@rogers.com.

Webpage Task Force

Board Liaison/Chair: Janet Valcourt

The new web site is up, but still undergoing some construction. The web developer (Robert Duff) and Janet are working together to establish a members only area with rich content and we are still hoping to allow online registration and membership renewal. Stay tuned to www.ontaba.org to see the exciting changes coming soon!

Public Policy Task Force

Board Liaison/Chair: Rosemary Condillac

The public policy task force will be committee members to assist with the research and hands on work of investigating and responding to issues relating to ONTABA. We will also be recruiting local, national, and international experts to serve on an expert panel and who would be willing to comment when an issue relevant to their expertise arises. Please contact Rosemary Condillac or Carobeth Zorzos if you have interest in being on the public policy task force. It is expected that this task force will become a standing committee of ONTABA at some point in the future.

Awards and Recognition Task Force

Board Liaison/Chair: Thomas Rhee

The Board of directors announced this initiative with the goal of researching and advising the board of directors on potential awards and recognition strategies to encourage study, research, and excellence in the practice of behaviour analysis. We need a creative team to recommend ways that we can reinforce students, clinicians, policy makers and other individuals who do work related to the ethical and effective application of behaviour analysis.

(A Brief Assessment of Multisensory Room Effects, Erica E. Graver and F.J. Barrera ..Cont from Pg.1)

The sensory room used for this assessment was 3.05 x 2.13 m, and was equipped with standard sensory stimulation devices including various types of lights (black light tube, fiber optic lamp, 'disco ball' lights, glow sticks, reflective stars), sounds (taped music, bubble machine, keyboard, wind chimes, rain stick, sound tube) and numerous tactile, visual, kinesthetic and vestibular stimulation items (slinkies, sponges, kaleidoscope, toys, massage ball, etc.) (Graver, 2004).

The participants were 5 children (3 male, 2 female) aged 8.5 to 11.5 yrs (mean: 10.1 yrs) residing in a short-term provincial residential treatment centre. Their functioning levels were in the severe (2) and mild (3) ranges of intellectual disability, and were diagnosed with PDD (2), ADHD (2), and Anxiety Disorder (1). An habituation session was first conducted to measure the children's heart-rates (HR) and blood pressures (BP). These measurements were again taken immediately before and after experiencing the sensory room on the following day. Vitals were taken by a pediatric nurse, and children were accompanied into the sensory room by a familiar caretaker staff. The first author (EEG) was also present in the room for recording purposes.

During the habituation session, the mean HR was 98.4 (range 92-104), and the mean BP was 114.8/72.4 (systolic range 102-124; diastolic range 60-80). On the room-exposure day, pre-trial measurements were very comparable, if slightly lower and more relaxed: the mean HR was 98.4 (range 88 – 104), and the mean BP was 110.8 / 67.2 (systolic range 102 – 120; diastolic range 62-70).

In comparison, the post-exposure measures varied significantly across children. As shown in Table 1, in terms of pre-post percentage change of HR or BP, the brief sensory-room exposure resulted in three types of outcomes.

In Child 1, although there was no HR change, BP dropped noticeably suggesting a very calming positive effect. The physiological findings were corroborated by visual observation of his behaviour: facial expression was happy and relaxed, and he actively interacted with the sound-generating devices, looking inspecting, and playing with other equipment with much interest. Eye contact with staff was minimal, but verbalizations included singing and asking staff to turn items on and off.

For two other children, exposure to the sensory room resulted in either no physiological changes (Child 2) or mixed results (Child 3). In both cases, however, these youngsters used all equipment items, and showed signs of being interested, smiling and physically relaxed during exposure. Child 2 often looked at her staff, while Child 3 was intently focused on the visual and auditory sources of stimulation. The third type of outcome is illustrated in the results of the last two participants. In both cases, though the HR changes were disparate, BP increased noticeably, especially in Child 5. These increased physiological arousals were substantiated by behavioural observations of pacing, agitation, increased

Table 1

Child	Sex	Dx	FL	%HR+/-	%BP+/-
1	Male	ADHD	Mild	0.0	-18.2 / -4.3
2	Female	ADHD	Mild	0.0	0.0 / 0.0
3	Female	Anx. D	Mild	+8.7	0.0 / -3.2
4	Male	PDD	Severe	-7.4	+3.3 / +8.6
5	Male	PDD	Severe	+4.0	+13.5 / +9.4

(Cont on pg.5)

(A Brief Assessment...Cont from pg.4)

body tension, clenched unsmiling jaws, yelling, and refusals to interact with any of the sensory equipment. One child (4) held tightly to staff's hand, while the other (Child 5) attempted numerous times to exit. Neither child appeared to enjoy the sensory room, and both left the area after only 3-5 minutes of exposure.

These differing outcomes suggest that brief exposure to a multisensory room did not benefit all children. Positive effects appeared to be limited to the higher-functioning ADHD or Anxiety Disorder children, while clear negative effects were seen in the lower-functioning PDD participants. For these individuals, the sensory experience was neither restorative nor stress-free.

The preliminary nature of this study, as well as the small sample size, do not allow sorting out whether functioning level or psychiatric diagnosis played a stronger role in these outcomes. Likewise, the brevity of the assessment did not allow further query of whether the negative results were occasioned by a novelty effect, or if they could be overcome by further desensitization. These are important issues in need of research, as Snoezelen use is heavily aimed at both the mentally profound / severe and the autism spectrum populations (Hogg et al., 2001).

The findings suggest that unselective application of an ostensibly benign, positive, and rewarding approach to the developmentally disabled population is not warranted. It would appear that brief exposure to noncontingent sensory and perceptual reinforcers requires some pre-determination of whether or not sensory experiences will have positive calming and stimulating effects. Such pre-screening could be done by stimulus-preference testing (Lancioni et al., 2002), by functional analysis of behaviours maintained by sensory reinforcers (Cuvo et al., 2001), or by administration of 'sensory-diet' checklists (e.g., Morton and Walford, 1994). Most of all, however, this study reiterates the need for objective empirical evaluation of the services we provide, including those approaches that seem to have a high degree of unquestioned bonafide acceptability (Greene, 2005).

Authors' Note:

We thank the assistance of TOP's program staff, especially Colleen Riggan and Joyce Edwards, RN. The authors may be contacted at f.barrera@css.gov.on.ca or ericagraver@hotmail.com.

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Proposed New Masters Program in Applied Disability Studies With Field Specialization in Applied Behaviour Analysis at Brock University

**Maurice Feldman and Dorothy Griffiths
Brock University**

Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, has submitted a proposal to the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) to begin a new Masters Program in Applied Disability Studies, which includes specialized field study in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). This program would be the first of its kind in Ontario. The proposal is currently under review by OCGS and we hope to hear about the disposition of our application this fall. If things go well, we plan to begin accepting applications in the winter of 2006 for a start-up of the program in September 2006.

We will now fill you in about our vision of the program. Keep in mind, however, that OCGS has not as yet approved the program (although we are optimistic) and OCGS may require changes to our plans that we describe below.

The proposed new Masters program will allow for both full- and part-time studies and will allow students to take general degree in Applied Disability Studies or (of more interest to the readers of this newsletter) The same degree but with a specialization in ABA. For those choosing the ABA specialty (called a "field" by OCGS), it is our intention to offer the coursework and practicum credits necessary to be eligible for applying for certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) in the U.S. Note that we are following the new BACB criteria for course topics and course and practicum hours.

Students will have the option of applying for two types of Masters degrees. One is the traditional Masters of Arts (MA). It requires the student to complete an original research study and write a MA thesis (in addition to course work and practicum placements). Enrolment in the MA program will be limited (probably about 5 new students per year) and is geared towards students who are interested in research careers and perhaps pursuing a Ph.D. Students who are accepted into this program will be entitled to the stipends and bursaries typically awarded to Brock graduate students.

The second option is called a Masters in Applied Disability Studies (with a field specialization in Applied Behaviour Analysis for those choosing the ABA field) and is a professional Masters degree (somewhat like a MBA). This option differs from the MA in that no research thesis is required, and the student would not likely be eligible for Brock grad student stipends and bursaries.

We suspect that many of you would be interested in applying for this professional program on a part-time basis. The program is designed to be completed in 2-years on a full-time basis and could be completed in 3-years on a part-time basis. This option will be geared to students who are already working in the field (e.g., Instructor Therapists in IBI programs; Behaviour Consultants/Therapists in Community Behavioural Programs). *We plan to offer evening, weekend and summer courses to accommodate working students.* It is likely that one could use their work experience to fulfil the practicum requirements (provided that the required supervision could be arranged). This option will

(Cont on pg.7)

(Proposed new Masters Program...Cont from pg.6)

offer students the opportunity to earn a Masters degree as well as the necessary course work and practicum hours to apply to BACB to take the exam for BCBA (for those students taking the ABA field). We recognize that many potential students for this option reside and work in the GTA. Therefore, it is likely that we will have sufficient numbers to justify offering classes in the GTA. We would consider offering courses in other Ontario metropolitan areas (e.g., Hamilton, Ottawa, London, Thunder Bay), if the numbers warrant. Note that this option is offered on a cost-recovery basis, so that we should be able to accommodate large numbers of students. The eligibility requirements for admission to the Masters program include a 3 or 4 year Bachelors degree.

We have presented a lot of information to digest. We will try to summarize by using a Q and A format. The questions have come from the countless queries that we have received over the last year or so.

Q1. Why couldn't you start this program sooner?

Answer: Oh how we wish we could snap our fingers and make it so. The process of starting a new grad program in Ontario requires going through numerous channels within the university and then submitting an application to OCGS, who review and approve graduate programs. We were very pleased with the ongoing enthusiastic support that we have received from Brock, especially from the faculty who helped prepare the proposal and the Deans of Graduate Studies and Social Sciences. The proposal passed the Brock Senate unanimously, and we are hoping for a positive response from OCGS soon.

Q2. How much will it cost?

For those full-time students accepted into the MA program, the tuition is set by Brock University in accordance with provincial government stipulations. Currently, MA student tuition is offset by stipends and bursaries offered routinely to all full-time Brock MA students. The professional option is on a cost-recovery basis and the tuition needs to cover the expenses of running the program. We have estimated that we can offer the program at a tuition that is lower than comparable U.S. programs (and, of course, students would be paying in Canadian currency).

Q3. I work full-time as an IT in an IBI program in the GTA. I do not have time to travel to St. Catharines to take courses.

Based on our knowledge of where most potential students live and work, we are prepared to offer courses in the GTA. We even may be able to offer a course at an agency (or two agencies sharing) if there are sufficient students (probably at least 30 per class).

Q3. If I go through the Brock program with the ABA specialty, will I be able to get the course work and practicum credits I need to be eligible to apply for BCBA certification offered by the BACB?

Yes, if you take and pass all the required courses and obtain your degree, you will have the necessary degree, course work and supervised practicum credits to meet the new BACB criteria for applying to be a BCBA. Keep in mind that there are other BACB requirements beside a Masters degrees, ABA course work and supervised ABA practicum experience (e.g., BACB eligibility exam).

Q4. Will the program be approved by ABA and/or BACB?

Once OCGS gives us the go-ahead, we will endeavour to seek approval as both an ABA and BACB approved program, so that these credentials are in place by the time the program starts.

(Cont on pg.8)

Q5. When will I be able to apply?

We hope to have final approval this fall (2005) and begin advertising. We will then accept applications over the winter and spring of 2006.

Q6. When will the first class start?

If all goes well, we plan to start our first class in September 2006.

Q7. How long will it take me to complete the program full-time? Part-time?

We have designed the program so that all the requirements could be completed in 2-years for a full-time student and 3-years for a part-time student. Students may take longer, if desired.

Q8. I already have a Masters degree in another field, but I would like to take more graduate courses in ABA. Can I do that in this program?

Indeed, you may. We will plan to offer a (non-degree) graduate diploma in Applied Disabilities Studies (which, if you choose, can include ABA courses). To obtain the graduate diploma, a student must take a minimum of 3 credits (one credit is equal to one full-year course or 2-one semester courses).

Q9. I've already started a U.S. ABA grad program, but I would prefer getting a degree from a Canadian university. Would I be able to transfer and get credit for my courses that I have taken in the other program?

Such a request would be handled on a case-by-case basis. We certainly would keep an open-mind about credit transfers, depending on the extent to which the university, program and courses are equivalent to Brock.

Q10. I have a 3-year Behavioural Science Technology Diploma and I have been working as a Behaviour Analyst. Would I be eligible for the Masters program?

A Bachelors degree is required to enter a Masters program. At this time, we do not have a mechanism to directly admit students without a Bachelors degree (e.g., someone with a 3-year BST) to a Masters program. Currently, community college courses can be used as credits towards a Bachelors degree, but additional courses will be needed to fulfil the BA degree requirements. Once we get approval we will look into how we may be able to accommodate students who have a community college diploma in a related field.

Q11. I am interested in attending a university to get a bachelors degree that will allow me to be eligible to apply to be a Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst (BCABA) with the BACB. Does Brock offer ABA courses at the undergraduate level?

Yes. The Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock offers a sequence of three, 3rd and 4th courses in ABA, which is the current BACB course load for eligibility for BCABA.

Q12. What about a Ph.D. program in Applied Disability Studies and ABA?

If the Masters program is a success over several years, we will certainly consider the possibility of adding a Ph.D. program.

If you have any questions or comments about the proposed Brock Masters program in Applied Disability Study/ABA, please email Maurice at mfeldman@brocku.ca

*This is the third article in a series featuring Educational Opportunities in ABA in Ontario
If you have a contribution for this series please contact the Editor.*

Getting connected

ABA International Information

ABA website:
<http://www.abainternational.org>
 ABA Email:
mail@abainternational.org
 Phone: (269) 492-9310
 Fax: (269) 492-9316
 Address: 1219 South Park Street,
 Kalamazoo, MI 49001

ONTABA HOME PAGE

Internet address:
<http://www/sl.on.ca/ontaba/>
 Coming soon : www.ontaba.org

CONTACTING ONTABA

ONTABA
 564 Yonge Street, Box 43
 Toronto, Ontario
 M4Y 1Y8
 Phone #: (416) 410-6141
 (voice mail)
 E-mail: ontaba@sl.on.ca
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www.ontaba.org

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ONTABA Analyst Submissions

Your newsletter is only as good as your contributions.
 The *ONTABA Analyst* is a forum for us to stay connected in many ways. All members are encouraged to submit articles on topics related to behaviour analysis; theoretical, practical or topical issues, perspectives from different regions of the province, jobs or schools, research accounts, news, announcements, your biography, reviews, student practicum, etc.

Article submissions:
 We reserve the right to edit without changing the intent of an article, request further editing by the author, publish articles relative to the content of the current Analyst, publish them at a later date with due respect to the timeliness of a given article, or refuse an article. You will be informed of acceptance, rewrite or refusal of an article. Announcements will be published at the discretion of the editor. *ONTABA* will not be held responsible for the views and opinions of *ONTABA Analyst* contributors.

Advertising in the *ONTABA Analyst* is available for a fee payable to *ONTABA* (\$100.00 1/4 pg., \$200.00 1/2 pg., \$300.00 full pg.). Job ads may be posted on the *ONTABA* website for up to 30 days.

Submissions for the next ONTABA ANALYST, Issue must arrive to
Caroll Drummond at carolld@sympatico.ca or
Ross Violo at sifuross@rogers.com
by December 1st for the December 15th issue.

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

- International Conferences**
- 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibit Show. NADD, October 26-29, 2005, St.Louis, MO
 - 3rd International ABA Conference: November 25-27, 2005. Beijing, China

- Upcoming ABA Chapter Conferences (See ABA Website for more...)**
- Berkshire ABA and Therapy, Oct 13,14 University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA. Contact Alan Harchik at Harchik@psych.umass.edu
 - New York ABA; Staten Island, NY Applied Behavior Analysis: Promoting Quality Outcomes Nov.11-12 Prime Hotel and Conference Center Saratoga Springs. Contact: Joanne Geresener at jgerenser@eden2.org

- Ontario Conferences/Workshops/ Events**
- ONTABA November 3 and 4th Ramada Inn, Downtown Toronto

DON'T FORGET TO SEND YOUR
ONTABA Board Nomination Ballot and
ONTABA Bylaw Ballot
HAVE YOUR SAY!



Contact: ONTABA Board Members, Committee and Task Force Chairs

ONTABA Board Members:

President: Rosemary Condillac
p. (416) 769-2910
f. (416) 769-6127
e. rackconsulting@sympatico.ca

President-Elect: James Porter
p. (905) 841-6611 ext. 301
e. jporter@kerrysplace.org

Treasurer: Michelle Turan
p. (905) 315-6597
f. (905) 331-5627
e. mtomson@cogeco.ca

Secretary: Shiri Bartman
p. (416) 925-5141 ext.410
f. (416) 925-5301
e. shiri.bartman@surreyplace.on.ca

Student Representatives:
Betina Clancy
e. betclancy@hotmail.com

Thomas Rhee
e. trhee@yorku.ca

Members at Large:

Mary McMillan
p. (416) 925-5141 ext.990
f. (416) 925-5301
e. mandjathome@sympatico.ca

Andrew McNamara
p. (416) 415-5000 ext.2978
f. (416) 415-2646
e. amcnamar@gbrownc.on.ca

Janet Valcourt
p. (416) 925-5141
f. (416) 923-8476
e. janet.valcourt@surreyplace.on.ca

Carobeth Zorzos
p. (416) 240-1111 ext.332
f. (416) 240-7999
e. carobethz@etobicokechildren.com

Committees

Membership:
Liaison: Mary McMillan*
Chair: Amy Barker
p. (416) 243-3600, ext. 2605
f. (416) 243-0832
e. Amy.Barker@westpark.org

Recruitment :

Liaison/Chair: Carobeth Zorzos*

The ONTABA ANALYST:

Board Liaison: Betina Clancy*
Editor/Production: Carol Drummond
p. (416) 925-5141
f. (416) 923-8476
e. carolld@sympatico.ca
Associate Editor/Submissions:
Ross Violo
e. sifuross@rogers.com

Conference 2005:

Chair/Liaison: Shiri Bartman*

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is an affiliate Chapter of the Association for Behavior Analysis International.
ONTABA currently has members from professions such as
education, nursing, health care, and psychology.

ONTABA's Vision: *Fostering a culture of excellence, integrity, and expertise for the advancement and promotion of the science of behaviour analysis.*

ONTABA's Mission: *To demonstrate leadership, knowledge, and innovation in education, training, and research for the ethical and effective application of behaviour analysis.*

ONTABA
564 Yonge Street, Box 43
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 1Y8

Phone: (416) 410-6141 (voice mail)

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