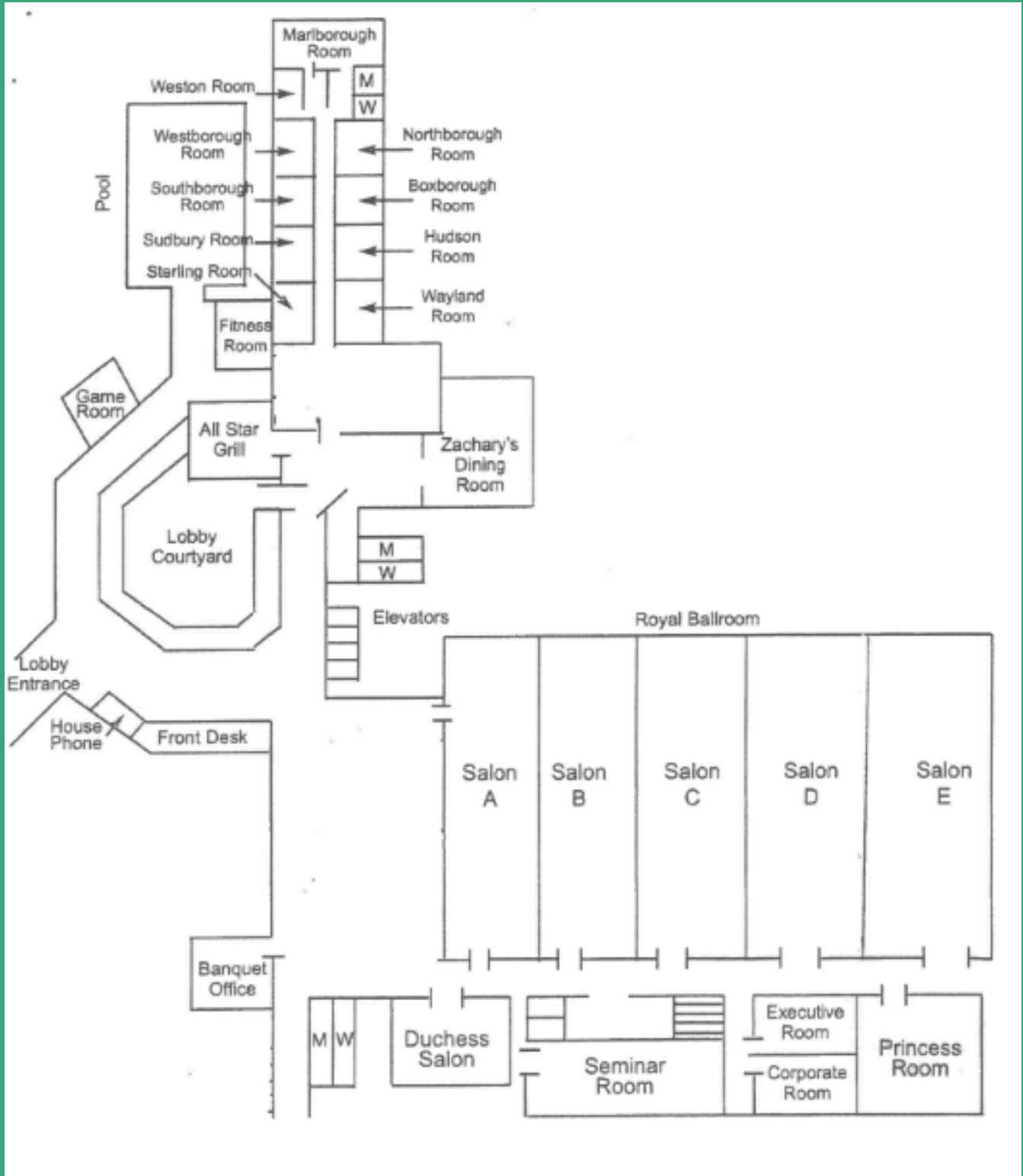


15TH ANNUAL MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS CONFERENCE



MAY 9, 2025



2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – MORNING



Time	Topic and Location
7:30–8:30	Registration/Exhibits
8:30–8:45	Presidential Address: Dr. Paulo Guilhardi Location: Ballroom
8:45–9:35 Morning Keynote (1 CEU/SUP)	Morning Keynote: Dr. Raymond G. Miltenberger: The Limits of Staff Management: How Reactivity Can Bias Research Results Location: Ballroom
9:55–11:10 Morning Breakouts (1.5 CEU)	<p>A1: Dr. Susan Rapoza–Houle, Ph.D., BCBA–D®, LABA & Dr. Dan Almeida, Ph.D., BCBA–D®, LABA: Collaborative Solutions: Behavioral Strategies for Conflict Resolution with Caregivers Location: Salon AB</p> <p>A2: Dr. Jennifer Albis Neal: From Myths to Methods: Ensuring Best Practices in AAC Through Research and Collaboration (Ethics CEU) Location: Marlborough</p> <p>A3: Lisa Gurdin, BCBA®: Our Ethical Obligation to Collaborate: Reflections on Interprofessional Collaboration (Ethics CEU) Location: Princess</p> <p>A4: Amy Weinstock, Jerome Chiu, BCBA®, Thea Davis, BCBA®, Dr. Jessica Everett, BCBA–D®, LABA & Geoffrey Wood: Insurance Fraud (and Folly) in ABA (Ethics CEU) Location: Salon DE</p>
11:10–11:25	Break
11:25–12:15 Late Morning Breakout (1 CEU)	<p>B1: Dr. Joseph Ricciardi: Clinical Interview and Behavior Analytic Practice: An Essential Skill Set for Gathering and Sharing Information and Communicating Compassion (Ethics CEU) Location: Marlborough</p> <p>B2: Dr. Anika Hoybjerg: Kindness is the Method, Not the Reward (Ethics CEU) Location: Princess</p> <p>B3: Dr. Jescah Apamo–Gannon & Beth Ann Robbins: Towards Compassionate and Empathetic Behavior Analytic Practice: What We Can Learn from other Professions (Ethics CEU) Location: Seminar</p> <p>B4: Dr. Edward Sanabria, BCBA®: The Foundational Five: A Multifaceted Approach to Monitoring Group and Individual Staff Performance Location: Westborough</p> <p>B5: Serra Langone, BCBA®, LABA & Kristen Parris, BCBA®, LABA, CBIS: Ethical and Social Considerations and Procedure When Deciding to Implement Protective Equipment in Applied Settings (Ethics CEU) Location: Southborough</p>
12:15–1:30	Plated Lunch in Ballrooms A–B–C–D

2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – AFTERNOON



<p>1:30 -2:45 Afternoon Breakout (1.5 CEU)</p>	<p>C1: Stephanie Reinoso, BCBA[®], Kristin Stoeke, BCBA[®] & Dr. Julie Marshall: Clinician Knowledge of Developmental Milestones as an Ethical Imperative in Guiding Caregiver Participation in Treatment (Ethics CEU) Location: Princess</p> <p>C2: Dr. Gabi Morgan: Implementation of Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed ABA Practices in School Settings (Ethics CEU) Location: Marlborough</p> <p>C3: Dr. Jessica Slaton: Long-term Effectiveness and Generality of Practical Functional Assessment and Skill-Based Treatment Location: Salon DE</p>
<p>2:45-3:00</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>3:00-3:50 <i>Closing Keynote</i> (1 CEU)</p>	<p>Dr. Jason Vladescu, LBA(NY), NCSP BCBA-D[®]: Training, Maintenance, and other Adventures in Supporting Caregivers and Medical Personnel to Adhere to Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment Location: Ballroom</p>
<p>4:00- 5:30</p>	<p>Social and Raffles Location: All-Star Bar and Grill</p>



**THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING**



MASSABA Social

Join us from 4:00-5:30 PM
All-Star Bar

Catch up with friends

Talk with speakers

Meet Board Members and other professionals

Special welcome for aspiring BCBAs
Meet student liaison, Mike Lapre

Raffle winners announced:
2 winners (BCBA, aspiring BCBA)

Other Networking Opportunities

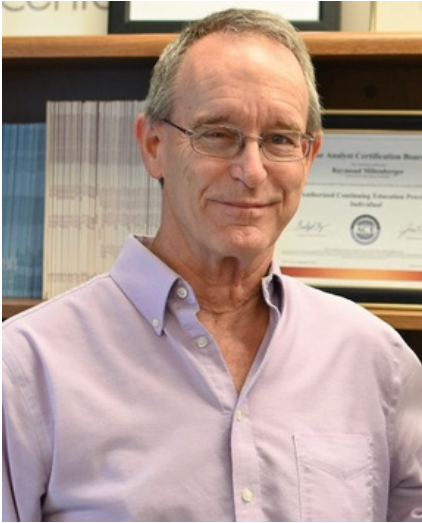
Connect during lunch

Say hello between talks

Visit the exhibitors

Introduce yourself to a board member

The Limits of Staff Management: How Reactivity Can Bias Research Results



Dr. Raymond G. Miltenberger, BCBA-D, is a Professor of Child and Family Studies and the Director of the Applied Behavior Analysis Program at the University of South Florida. He is a Fellow and Past President of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and a Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science. His current research focuses on behavioral approaches for staff training and management, teaching safety skills, increasing physical activity for health promotion, and enhancing sports performance. He has published over 280 journal articles and chapters and has written a behavior modification textbook, now in its seventh edition and published in six languages. Dr. Miltenberger has received numerous teaching, research, and mentoring awards including the APA Division 25 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Applied Behavioral Research, the ABAI Outstanding Mentorship Award, and the FABA Award for Outstanding Contributions to Behavior Analysis.

This presentation will discuss the issue of reactivity in staff management research. The potential problem is that the effects of staff management interventions are evaluated when a researcher is present to collect data, thus risking reactivity to observation as a potential confounding variable in much of the research. The talk describes the issue of reactivity and the need for better assessment of staff performance that does not pose the risk of reactivity. The presentation discusses research on reactivity in staff management that illustrates the problem, discusses potential solutions to the problem, and calls for more research to address the problem.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe reactivity as it may occur in staff management
- Describe research that evaluates reactivity in staff management
- Describe why reactivity is a problem in research and practice
- Describe possible solutions to the problem of reactivity



Susan Rapoza-Houle, Ph.D., BCBA-D®, LABA & Dan Almeida, Ph.D., BCBA-D®, LABA



Collaborative Solutions: Behavioral Strategies for Conflict Resolution with Caregivers

Dr. Susan Rapoza-Houle is the Vice President of Employee Development and Recruitment at Beacon ABA Services, overseeing recruitment, training, and professional growth initiatives for over 300 staff members. She holds a Ph.D. in Applied Behavior Analysis from Cambridge College, a Master of Science in Special Education from Simmons College, and a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Bridgewater State University. She is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D) and Licensed Applied Behavior Analyst (LABA) in Massachusetts. Since joining Beacon ABA in 2003, she has held various leadership roles, including Director of Recruitment and Orientation. Her contributions include creating behaviorally based interview systems and developing comprehensive training programs. Active in professional organizations, Sue serves on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Association for Behavior Analysis (MassABA) and has contributed to the Massachusetts Autism Commission Workforce Development Subcommittee.

Dr. Daniel Almeida is the Associate Director of the Ph.D. in ABA Program at Bay Path University and Cambridge College. Previously, he was the District Supervisor of ABA Services for a major public school district in Greater Boston and held a variety of director level positions at private, ABA-based schools in Massachusetts. He received his Ph.D. in ABA from Simmons College. Dan has provided ABA services to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and related disabilities for over 30 years. He has published original research on staff training and interventions for students with autism in peer-reviewed journals and has presented research at national and regional conferences. He has also conducted professional development workshops in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). He served as adjunct faculty since 2002, teaching classes in certificate and graduate degree programs in ABA. Dan is passionate about training and supporting staff to provide culturally responsive, evidence-based ABA treatment to families.

Abstract: Workplace conflict is common in healthcare and has been linked to reduced quality of care, employee health issues, increased absenteeism, and burnout (Kazemi et al., 2022). Despite this, many BCBA's report little to no formal training in conflict management during their graduate studies or in the workplace (Kazemi et al., 2022). This workshop introduces a structured 5-step conflict resolution model, developed by Kazemi and colleagues, and incorporates Behavioral Skills Training (BST) to teach participants essential skills for managing workplace conflicts. Through role-play scenarios with a confederate caregiver, participants will practice detecting and addressing conflict effectively. By the end of the workshop, attendees will have actionable strategies for identifying and confirming conflict, determining the right time and place for resolution, actively listening to find common ground, collaborating on feasible solutions, and creating an actionable plan. Participants will leave with practical tools (printed handouts, links to additional resources, sample data sheets, copy of presentation) to navigate caregiver conflicts, which may lead to improved therapeutic relationships and better client outcomes.

From Myths to Methods: Ensuring Best Practices in AAC Through Research and Collaboration



Dr. Neal is a Speech-Language Pathologist and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She is the Director of Therapy Services for the Evergreen Center, where she helps to integrate knowledge and interventions from a variety of disciplines into the educational and residential programming for students with disabilities.

Jen earned degrees in Speech-Language Pathology from Boston University and MGH Institute of Health Professions. She studied Applied Behavior Analysis at Simmons College and completed her doctorate in Speech-Language Pathology at Northwestern University. Her research and clinical work focus on indirect service delivery models in Allied Health fields and optimizing evidence-based interventions for students.

With over two decades of experience, Jen has worked in schools and early intervention, teaching communication and life skills. She has also taught graduate-level coursework to prepare future therapists and educators. Passionate about interdisciplinary collaboration, she is dedicated to empowering families and professionals to improve services for individuals with Autism and related disorders.

In this session, we will explore the wide range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) options that are available to meet the diverse needs of learners. We will emphasize evidence-based practices, address gaps in the existing literature, and discuss emerging research that informs AAC selection and implementation. The session will also examine the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in AAC decision-making, with a focus on communication partner training and strategies for supporting communication across environments. Additionally, we will discuss how to critically evaluate AAC-related trends and recommendations—including those promoted by traditional and social media—to distinguish between evidence-based practices and unsupported claims. Dispelling myths and highlighting the importance of ethical, evidence-based interventions, this session aims to empower attendees with practical knowledge, tools, and resources to enhance communication access and participation for all learners.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify key factors in AAC selection and implementation based on evidence-based practices, emerging research, and ethical considerations.
- Describe the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in AAC decision-making and implementation.
- Evaluate AAC-related recommendations and information to distinguish between evidence-based practices and unsupported claims.

Lisa Gurdin, MS, BCBA[®], LABA

Our Ethical Obligation to Collaborate: Reflections on Interprofessional Collaboration



For over 20 years, Lisa has been working with students, families, and school-based professionals with students from preschool to age 22 with a range of special needs and complex profiles. She works collaboratively with parents and school professionals to facilitate integrated interventions across settings to maximize behavior change and skill development through consultation, student evaluations, and staff training. She helps parents implement behavioral strategies to improve behavior, encourage independence, and build stronger family relationships. Ms. Gurdin is also a part-time lecturer in the master's in ABA program and College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University. She supervises ABA students and coordinates an online continuing education program for behavior analysts that is designed to enhance practitioner skills while promoting conversations about important topics in the field. Most recently, she has launched a consultation service to help school districts and organizations hire talented staff who are passionate about helping children in schools. Ms. Gurdin speaks at conferences on various topics including interprofessional collaboration, ethics, and supervision. She is an in-service trainer for the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth and provides virtual, live, and on-demand staff training for school teams.

All behavior analysts have an ethical responsibility to work with professionals of all disciplines to implement compassionate, effective interventions that positively impact a person's life. Working as a team is especially critical for a child to learn meaningful skills and behaviors at home, at school, and in the community. This requires behavior analysts to collaborate on a regular basis with educators, specialists, medical professionals, and parents. Collaboration on this level poses challenges that behavior analysts are not always trained for and/or confident to handle. For example, what do we do when a member of the team recommends a non-behavioral treatment of which we know nothing about? During this presentation, we will explore current research on interprofessional collaboration for behavior analysts, discuss different types of collaboration, review our ethical code as it relates to collaboration, and share ideas for how to maintain positive professional relationships with members of our teams, including parents, while effectively working together to help students reach their goals.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Outline the differences between multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and interprofessional collaboration.
- Explain why interprofessional collaboration optimizes behavior change and skill development for children across settings.
- List collaborative behaviors that promote positive relationships among all team members, and ultimately, lead to socially significant behavior change.

**Amy Weinstock, Jerome Chiu, BCBA®, Thea Davis, BCBA®,
Jessica Everett, BCBA-D®, LABA, Ph.D. & Geoffrey Wood**

Insurance Fraud (and Folly) in ABA



Amy Weinstock is the Director of the Insurance Resource Center for Autism and Behavioral Health at the UMass Chan Medical School's Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center, and an instructor in the medical school's Department of Psychiatry. She has an extensive background on insurance issues related to autism and behavioral health and has played a key role in passing several significant pieces of autism insurance legislation in Massachusetts, including the groundbreaking 2010 law requiring health insurance to cover medically necessary treatment for autism. Amy also serves as a trustee of the Riverview School, and as a Commissioner on the State's Autism Commission.

Abstract: A diagnosis of Autism is required to obtain insurance-funded ABA. This presentation will discuss the actual requirements, what changes after a child turns 3, and barriers to obtaining a diagnosis. There will also be a discussion of some misconceptions around diagnostic requirements, mitigants to barriers, and initiatives to expand access to diagnostic resources.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify the source document for ASD diagnostic criteria
- List at least two professional(s) can give a diagnosis of ASD
- Name at least one common barrier to obtaining a diagnosis of ASD
- List two strategies to expand access to diagnostic resources



**Amy Weinstock, Jerome Chiu, BCBA[®], Thea Davis,
BCBA[®], Jessica Everett, Ph.D., Geoffrey Wood**

Insurance Fraud (and Folly) in ABA

Jerome Chiu, MA MPA, LABA (MA), BCBA is a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst and Licensed Behavior Analyst in the state of Massachusetts. He has experience as both a provider, as well as administering ABA benefits for a large Medicaid managed care entity. Jerome is owner of RadBx, an ABA Management consultant company in Boston Massachusetts, and an associate at the Autism Insurance Resource Center where he works to resolve issues with insurance coverage and support families as they navigate the health insurance landscape. He has dedicated his professional career to ensuring access to quality applied behavioral analysis services, with a current focus on enhancing the quality of clinical documentation and establishing systems to ensure the quality of treatment.

Thea Davis, MS Ed, LABA (MA), BCBA is a leader in applied behavior analysis (ABA) and autism care, with over 20 years of experience. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) since 2007, she's inspired by her 24-year-old daughter's autism journey and champions quality ABA services. Currently, as an Accreditation Reviewer for the Autism Commission on Quality (ACQ), she steadfastly advances the field by conducting thorough evaluations and refining the accreditation process to ensure quality autism services nationwide. She previously served as Chief Clinical Officer at a leading autism organization. Before that, she founded Autism Bridges in Bedford, New Hampshire, scaling it into a four-clinic, insurance-funded provider across three states, delivering medically necessary healthcare services to children with autism, pioneering ABA-based classrooms in schools, and speaking at national conferences like ABAI and CASP. A Board Member for the Unumb Center for Neurodevelopment and a founding member of MassCAP and the founder and president of NHABA, her family's autism journey continually drives her transformative impact.

Jessica Everett is a licensed psychologist and board-certified, licensed behavior analyst in Massachusetts. Her doctorate is in Applied Developmental Psychology from Fordham University where her doctoral training included a LEND Fellowship. Dr. Everett has over thirty years of experience working with individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families in a variety of capacities. Her clinical expertise includes neuropsychological and diagnostic assessment, program evaluation, educational consultation and applied behavior analysis. Dr. Everett is the Clinical Director of Autism, Applied Behavior Analysis and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and is the founder of CollabAby, LLC, a therapeutic and consultative practice with a focus on collaborative evaluation and consultative services for individuals with differing capabilities and the systems designed to support them. Dr. Everett has a master's in public health from Boston University with a health equity focus.

Geoffrey Wood is a Senior Associate General Counsel and the Senior Director of the Fraud Investigation Prevention Unit at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Prior to joining Blue Cross, he was Deputy General Counsel at the Massachusetts Division of Insurance. Before that, he was a prosecutor at the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office for ten years and led their Insurance and Unemployment Fraud Division from 2019 to 2023. He first got the bug for prosecuting insurance fraud as an Assistant District Attorney in the Essex County (Massachusetts) District Attorney's Office, while working on the Massachusetts Insurance Fraud Bureau's Community Insurance Fraud Initiative in Lynn, Massachusetts. Prior to becoming a prosecutor, Geoff was a director at a marketing firm for several years in Miami, Florida. It was here where he saw firsthand the costs and consequences of fraudulent claims and the need for reasonable insurance regulations. He earned his undergraduate degree at Georgetown and his law degree at Suffolk University. Geoff has an authentic passion for fighting insurance fraud, seeks fairness in the execution of his legal responsibilities and recognizes that collaboration is the key to any successful venture.

Dr. Joseph Ricciardi, PsyD, BCBA-D®, CBIST

Clinical Interview and Behavior Analytic Practice: An Essential Skill Set for Gathering and Sharing Information and Communicating Compassion



Dr. Joseph Ricciardi is Vice President of Professional Development and Training, at May Institute. Ricciardi is a licensed psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and Certified Brain Injury Specialist.

He has over 30 years of experience serving adults and children with brain injuries, neurodevelopmental disorders, and co-occurring psychiatric disorders in a variety of settings: outpatient consultation, community residences, private schools, and hospitals. Dr. Ricciardi has authored/co-authored book chapters and peer-reviewed research articles on psychopathology, behavioral intervention, and psychopharmacology. He has served editorial board assignments for several journals in the field. Dr. Ricciardi speaks regularly at local and national conferences.

Dr. Ricciardi earned his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at William James College (Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology) and completed his internship and post-doctoral fellowship (residency) at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School.

Behavior analysts have always used clinical interviewing as part of an intake for a new client, a behavioral assessment, and when sharing information such as intervention strategies. Recent developments in ABA practice require strong clinical interviewing skills. These developments include a commitment to compassionate care, trauma informed care, responsiveness to culture and ethnicity, collaborating with other disciplines, and assent-based intervention. Each of these developments require the application of a host of behavior-analytic soft-skills and additional techniques to foster rapport throughout practice. This session will provide behavior analysts with an overview of an analysis of the clinical interview process, its aims, and objectives framed as “gathering, sharing, and rapport”. Participants will learn core communication skills that support effective gathering and sharing of clinical information. Specifics will include strategies and techniques for developing rapport and “bond” with informants, active listening, conveying empathy, and interrupting/redirecting unfocused exchanges sensitively. Participants will learn how these are applied in the context of assessment and intervention.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe and list behavioral components the active listening skill set.
- List three tactics for communicating empathy, concern, and compassion.
- List the sequence the steps of a functional behavior assessment interview.
- Identify 3 other clinical practice tasks where clinical interview skills should be employed.

Anika Hoybjerg, Ph.D., BCBA-D®

Kindness is the Method, Not the Reward How to Create Meaningful Outcomes in Treatment Delivery and Services While Implementing Kindness and Utilizing the Meaningful Outcomes Treatment and Assessment Scale



Dr. Hoybjerg is the founder, owner, and CEO of Autism & Behavioral Intervention (ABI) (a clinic-based ABA center in Draper, UT), ABA Education Center, and Integrity Billing. In addition to founding and leading these companies, Anika has worked in public schools and in private sectors with children and families for over 20 years. Anika has a Bachelor's degree in Human Development, a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an Emphasis in Autism, a Master's degree in Human Exceptionality, an Ed.S in School Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Applied Behavior Analysis. Anika is a Doctoral level Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D) and a Licensed School Psychologist. Anika is currently working towards a master's degree in Neuroscience and Trauma. Anika has presented at regional, national, and international conferences on a variety of topics relating to autism, collaboration, and assessments. Anika has done research, including her dissertation, on the importance of implementing kindness into every single interaction and treatment approach with staff, clients, and families. Anika is the author of the Meaningful Outcomes Treatment and Assessment Scale (MOTAS).

In this presentation, participants will learn how to foster meaningful outcomes in treatment and service delivery by integrating kindness and utilizing the Meaningful Outcomes Treatment and Assessment Scale (MOTAS). Kindness—often described as compassion, empathy, and genuine concern for others—is widely recognized as valuable, yet it is rarely operationalized in clinical practice. Rather than viewing kindness as a vague concept, we will explore how it can be broken down into measurable soft skills that enhance client outcomes.

This session will introduce the Kindness Method, a structured approach that defines clear, actionable goals for providers to implement when working with clients, families, and colleagues. The presenter will discuss the research behind this method and highlight its benefits in promoting skill acquisition, behavior change, overall well-being, and happiness. Additionally, participants will gain insight into the MOTAS, a criterion-referenced assessment designed to prioritize client independence and quality of life while embedding kindness into every interaction. By the end of this session, attendees will have practical strategies to create compassionate, client-centered care that leads to lasting, meaningful improvements in the lives of those they serve.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe, identify, and operationally define components of kindness and compassionate care in therapeutic ABA settings.
- Select, identify, and describe individualized goals for clients based on kindness and meaningful outcomes for increased future independence, employment, and social interactions.
- Describe recent research-based extensions to the use of compassionate care in ABA and how it impacts client skill acquisition, on-task behavior, happiness indices, and problem behavior.
- Be able to identify and describe more ways to include autistic voices in treatment, therapy, and ABA practice.



Jescah Apamo-Gannon, Ph.D., BCBA-D®, LABA & Beth Ann Robbins

Towards Compassionate and Empathetic Behavior Analytic Practice: What We Can Learn from other Professions



Dr. Jescah Apamo-Gannon is an innovative educator and behavior analyst who has built a reputation as a practitioner committed to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion. Jescah's journey began with a passion for teaching, understanding human behavior, and a commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of others. Jescah currently serves as an assistant professor at Fitchburg State University. Over the years, she has worked in various settings such as, elementary and secondary school, private, public, community, and clinical practice. Her dedication and determination to continuously improve have led to an accomplished career in education and behavior analysis, resulting in several recognitions, including an award for teaching excellence. Jescah attributes her improved client outcomes to her commitment to exploring culturally appropriate and relevant interventions, creating inclusive and empowering environments, challenging systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality, and engaging with clients and communities collaboratively. Jescah is especially inspired to share practical and implementable strategies to increase client success while prioritizing and valuing their culture and addressing disparities in access to services and resources.



Beth Ann Robbins, Founder and CEO of Kindness Leads LLC, has worked for most of her professional life to foster cultures of belonging within organizations where kindness and empathy are integral. Through targeted outreach and partnerships with the academic community, nonprofit organizations and small minority businesses, corporate and thought leaders. With evidence-based lectures, keynote speeches, and immersive training programs that focus on leadership through the authentic practice of kindness.

The overarching interest of each behavior analytic practitioner is to improve client outcomes and quality of life. However, increasing concerns about the problematic application of behavioral principles suggest that due to the rapid growth of our field, many practitioners have lost sight of client-centered interventions. Specifically, the demand for applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy is currently very high for several reasons, including the growing recognition of ABA as an effective evidence-based intervention. According to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, there was a 5800% increase in the demand for certified ABA practitioners between 2010 and 2021. Certification can't keep up with the growing demand, resulting in delays in access to treatment and pressure on the limited number of certified professionals. Consequently, most Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) report high levels of burnout, which have compromised the individualization of treatment, and, in some extreme cases, harm was done to clients (Neumeier & Brown, 2020; Summers, 2022). As burnout progresses, BCBAs may feel disconnected from their purpose. Cultivating compassion and empathy in ABA services can significantly reduce burnout among practitioners, allowing them to approach their work with a more balanced perspective, manage stress effectively, and maintain a positive connection with clients and their families, thereby mitigating the emotional strain that can lead to burnout. Additionally, practicing compassion can act as a protective factor against compassion fatigue, a common contributor to burnout in the field of ABA. Furthermore, adding compassion and empathy to ABA services is a critical starting point towards actualizing client-centered services articulated in one of the core principles of the ABA code of ethics that requires practitioners to treat others with compassion, dignity, and respect.

This presentation is a call to action for behavior analysts to consistently reflect on their practices and evaluate whether they are living up to the values they promote- centered services (Skinner, 1948). Strategies for including compassion and empathy in behavior analytic practice will be discussed while highlighting strategies we can learn from other health professions.



The Foundational Five: A Multifaceted Approach to Monitoring Group and Individual Staff Performance

Maintaining a strong organizational culture aligned with key performance indicators is crucial for delivering quality services (Silbaugh; El Fattal, 2021). While universal intervention plans can be implemented organization-wide, additional training and systems may be needed to facilitate staff adoption (Horner & Kittelman, 2022). At the group level, a clinic engagement sampling procedure was developed to assess staff engagement in targeted behaviors aligned with organizational values and practices to indicate the degree of cultural adoption across the clinic (Sturmey & Crisp, 1994). At the individual level, a procedural integrity checklist was used to identify performance deficits or gaps requiring targeted training. By analyzing supplemental individual performance data alongside group data, a comprehensive view of overall performance can be obtained, and areas for improvement can be pinpointed. Supporting organizational culture through data-driven performance monitoring is imperative for consistent, high-quality service delivery. This presents a multifaceted approach to monitoring both group and individual staff performance to drive shifts in organizational culture.



**Serra Langone, M.S. Ed., BCBA[®], LABA &
Kristen Parris M.S. Ed., BCBA[®], LABA, CBIS**

Ethical and Social Considerations and Procedure When Deciding to Implement Protective Equipment in Applied Settings

Carefully executed behavioral assessment and intervention can result in decreases in challenging behavior in a wide range of populations. In some extreme cases, however, challenging behavior can pose imminent risk of injury, including death, to the individual or associated people. In these cases the use of protective equipment can be an option to ensure safety for all. When exploring the use of protective equipment as an option for safety there are a range of ethical and social practices that need to be considered. A protocol that will guide practitioners through the evaluation process will be introduced and reviewed.

The protocol involves assessing function, consideration of less restrictive procedures, consideration of less restrictive procedures and “features” that might lead a clinician to conclude that protective equipment is the only viable option. In addition, discussion and suggestions on how to best introduce protective equipment to parents/ guardians and how to thoughtfully discuss the implementation. Data from 3 individuals will be presented, and social validity data from an individual as well as parents will be discussed. The ethics code will be referenced (2.09, 2.14, 2.15).



**Stephanie Reinoso BCBA[®], LBA,
Kristin Stoeke, BCBA[®], LBA &
Dr. Julie Marshall, BCBA[®], LBA**

Clinician Knowledge of Developmental Milestones as an Ethical Imperative in Guiding Caregiver Participation in Treatment

Core deficits seen in children with autism and other developmental delays are manifested in atypical developmental trajectories that can be seen early in life. Clinicians working in early intervention should have a strong working knowledge in typical developmental milestone ranges across cognitive, motor, social, emotional, and communication domains, at various ages. Clinicians should also understand the ways in which assessment can help identify types and degrees of skills deficits within these domains so as to better support caregivers and guide interventions. This presentation will help participants identify and explain early developmental milestones to caregivers. Participants will also learn to use a coaching model rooted in behavioral skills training to help caregivers better understand developmental milestones and to carry out targeted interventions that prioritize appropriate sequenced skills. We will provide the participants with printed materials for information on milestones, mock development of program sheets, and printed documents. Ethical implications related to effective treatment and scope of competence will be discussed throughout the presentation.

Implementation of Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed ABA Practices in School Settings



Dr. Gabi Morgan, BCBA is currently an Assistant Professor in Applied Behavior Analysis at Bay Path University. She received her Doctorate in ABA from Endicott College where her research focused on using time-based schedules to prevent challenging behavior in preschoolers with backgrounds of traumatic events. Over the last 25 years she has sought to expand her knowledge and practice of ABA in her work with children of all ages and skill levels, their families, and in the training of others in ABA. She is dedicated to the dissemination of ABA and in guiding students of behavior analysis toward meaningful careers and a deeper understanding of the science of behavior.

Many entities including healthcare settings, companies, and schools have implemented frameworks supporting both culturally responsive practices and trauma-informed care. These are guiding principles that inform how those entities arrange the environment to be more supportive and to acknowledge the diverse experiences of both the employees and on those served by the organizations. Behavior analytic research is beginning to investigate the efficacy of proven tools such as checklists, goal setting, behavior skills training, and functional assessment in advancing both culturally responsive and trauma-informed frameworks in school settings. This presentation will review the behavior analytic research on various tools to support culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches in the school setting and how to practically and effectively incorporate those methods into work in schools.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify relevant research related to trauma-informed and culturally responsive behavior analytic practices in schools.
- Learn to utilize at least three research supported tools to implement trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices in the school setting.
- Be able to connect trauma-informed and culturally responsive frameworks to conceptually systematic behavior analytic approaches.

Long-term Effectiveness and Generality of Practical Functional Assessment and Skill-Based Treatment



Dr. Slaton has worked in the fields of applied behavior analysis and special education for 20 years, serving children and young adults with significant support needs. She is the Director of Applied Research at Nashoba Learning Group, and also serves as adjunct faculty in the Applied Behavior Analysis master's program at Regis College. She received an M.S.Ed. in Behavioral Education at Simmons University in 2006, and a Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis from Western New England University in 2016. She specializes in assessment and treatment with autistic children who engage in severe problem behavior. Dr. Slaton has published her work in multiple peer-reviewed journals, has presented at local, national, and international conferences, and currently serves on the Board of Editors for the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Many individuals with autism may engage in dangerous behaviors such as aggression or self-injury. A starting point of any treatment for these behaviors should be an assessment to determine why these behaviors are occurring, followed by a functional communication training (FCT) and schedule thinning. However, many published FCT applications occur under dense schedules of reinforcement without data on generalization and maintenance, and may not be conducted in a natural setting or with the individual's natural caregivers. To address these gaps in the literature, we conducted practical functional assessments with six children with autism in a specialized school setting, and implemented skill-based treatment described by Hanley et al. (2014). Treatment was conducted in students classrooms, and continued until dangerous behavior was eliminated and skills were generalized across all staff and goal areas of students' IEPs. Crisis procedures (e.g., restraint) were also eliminated, and effects were maintained at 1-year: post treatment.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe the reinforcement schedule thinning steps conducted during treatment
- Explain the rationale for the contingencies arranged in each phase of treatment
- Describe strategies for adjusting treatment procedures in each phase if progress is not occurring at the desired rate

Jason C. Vladescu, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA(NY), NCSP



Training, Maintenance, and Other Adventures in Supporting Caregivers and Medical Personnel to Adhere to Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment



Dr. Jason C. Vladescu, BCBA-D, NSCP, LBA (NY), is the Founding Chair & Professor of the Applied Behavior Analysis Program at SUNY Downstate and is a Founding Partner at The Capstone Center. Jason completed his pre-doctoral internship and post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute. He is the co-author of the book *Statistics for Applied Behavior Analysis Practitioners and Researchers* and has published 95+ peer-reviewed articles and book chapters spanning his research interests in early behavioral intervention for children with autism spectrum and related disorders, increasing the efficiency of academic instruction, staff and caregiver training, equivalence-class formation, and mainstream applications of behavior analysis. Jason is on the Science Board of the Association for Behavior Analysis International and is a current or former Associate Editor for *Behavior Analysis in Practice* and the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. He currently or previously served on the editorial board for *Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice*, *Behavioral Interventions*, *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, *The Psychological Record*, *School Psychology*, *Behavioral Development*, and the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. He was the 2020 recipient of the B.F. Skinner Foundation New Researcher Award. Outside of his professional endeavors, Jason enjoys traveling, diving into biographies and science fiction, playing pickleball, and indulging in his passion for pizza.

An individual's potential may only be fully realized if they survive childhood. Substantial public health efforts have decreased childhood deaths due to diseases; however, unintentional injuries continue to be the leading cause of death for children in the United States. Although the specific causes of these deaths vary, a substantial proportion appear to be preventable. The focus of this talk is on sleep-related infant deaths. A discussion of recommended infant sleep practices, a description of and data supporting our efforts to support caregivers and medical personnel, and examples of collaborative opportunities and future directions will be included.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify recommended infant sleep practices
- Identify the potential effectiveness of behavioral skills training for supporting caregivers and medical personnel to adhere to recommended practices
- Identify the potential effectiveness of video-based instruction for supporting caregivers to adhere to recommended practices
- Identify how contingency management might provide an opportunity to promote adherence to recommended practices