

# The ONTABA Analyst



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**ONTABA**  
The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis, Inc.

# From the President's Desk

## On the nature of momentum...

**G**reetings Members! Summer is upon us. The weather is beautiful and the behaviour analytic community in Ontario is flourishing! At this time last year, ONTABA had just over 350 members and as I write this column we have reached 623 members; 80% of which are full or sustaining. This represents a significant increase to our overall membership and to the percentage of voting members in our ranks. I anticipate continued growth over the summer and into the fall in advance of the annual conference. To put things into perspective, ONTABA is now the 5th largest ABAI affiliated chapter in North America and the 9th largest in the world; we are only going to get bigger.

We are approximately five months away from the end of the 2016 board year and already so much has been accomplished. The spring term was definitely a whirlwind, but we aren't slowing down one bit. Your Board of Directors will continue to work diligently throughout the summer months in an effort to meet the ambitious goals we set out to complete during our 2015 Annual General Meeting. As of today, 37 of the 44 recommendations (84%) identified by the Governance Improvement Project have been completed or are in progress. This work has already led to substantial improvements in board effectiveness, financial management, organizational performance, governance and stakeholder engagement. We recently initiated a collaborative strategic planning process. In addition to focus groups and semi-structured interviews with our advisers, partners, local and international stakeholders and families; many of you have participated by completing our strategic planning survey. The data we collect throughout this process will inform our strategic directions, short and long-term goals, and action items for the next three years.

'Behavioural momentum' is defined as the strength of a response when conditions are altered. Conditions in Ontario were significantly altered this year, and ONTABA's response was swift and persistent. The

announcement of changes to autism services in Ontario this spring marked a new era for ONTABA. Although a trying time for many behaviour analysts and families across the province, our efforts have strengthened the resolve of our membership, our relationship with families and advocates, and our position as a valued stakeholder to the Ontario

government. Following the announcement at the end of March 2016, ONTABA immediately launched substantial lobbying efforts to promote behaviour analysis and to advocate for the ethical and effective delivery of behaviour analytic services.

ONTABA is now the  
5th largest ABAI  
affiliated chapter in  
North America and the  
9th largest in the world.

I am happy to report that we accomplished all of the targets we set out upon: (1) the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) has taken steps towards policy that will provide services based on individual need informed by scientific evidence; (2) a behaviour analyst appointed by the

ONTABA Board of Directors will represent behaviour analysts on the Ontario Autism Program's implementation committee; (3) the Minister has committed to acting on our recommendation of including a behaviour analyst on the Clinical Expert Committee as soon as possible; and (4) the Ministry has indicated they will support our regulation efforts with urgency and tangible resources. According to MCYS, ONTABA was one of four stakeholders and the only group of behaviour analysts contacted directly by Minister Michael Coteau to provide consultation on the program's renewal and the recently released transition guidelines.

The support and encouragement of our founders, the international community, of ABAI, APBA, and the BACB during the last 6-months has been incredible. While at the ABAI Convention in Chicago in May, I was stunned by the spontaneous positive feedback from the behaviour analytic community. At one point during the conference Dr. Julie Koudys and I were approached by a handsome stranger who extended a hand shake and said





"You guys are doing an awesome job in Ontario, keep it up!" I was slightly mortified when I realized it was Dr. Greg Hanley as I'm sure I looked like a deer in headlights for the first few seconds. To be fair, he had trimmed his signature goatee and was wearing sunglasses! I left with the distinct feeling that the behaviour analytic world is watching Ontario and that we are making a good impression.

Most importantly though, the support and encouragement of our membership has enabled us to successfully work through some extremely challenging issues. With your support, we have built a media presence, expanded our membership, advocated effectively for the science, and we are emerging as a major player in Ontario's political arena. As the elected voice of behaviour analysts in Ontario we intend to use the momentum of our recent success to propel our organization into the future.

The science of applied behaviour analysis has demonstrated efficacy when applied to the treatment of autism in childhood, and although our work in this area is extremely important, our science has so much more to offer society. That is why this month, we are initiating lobbying efforts to promote the effective and ethical application of behaviour analysis in the service of adults living with developmental disabilities across the province. The Ombudsman's investigation and pending

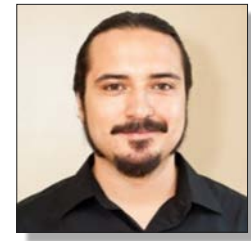
report into crisis services for adults with developmental disabilities provides us with a unique opportunity to have our voice heard once again. Your Board of Directors and our many dedicated committee volunteers have already set to work on this task and we will not stop there. We

**"You guys are doing an awesome job in Ontario, keep it up!"** -Dr. Greg Hanley

intend to make this sort of advocacy part of our organizational identity and to have the voice of our membership heard by the federal government and by the Ministers of Education, Community and Social Services, Health and Long-Term Care, Housing, Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Advanced Education and Skills Development.

ONTABA has entered a period of significant organizational transformation. On the horizon are many opportunities to foster a culture of excellence, integrity, and expertise for the advancement and promotion of the science of behaviour analysis. I am excited about what lies ahead and I am honoured to be counted amongst the membership of our growing organization during this pivotal time in ONTABA's history. Let's keep this momentum going.

Sincerely,  
Louis Busch  
President, ONTABA



## Announcements

### Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada: Toronto 2016

The Events Committee would like to thank all those who participated in the Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada fundraising event that took place on June 5th at Nathan Phillips Square. The ONTABA Team raised \$2,238! The dark threatening clouds did nothing to hinder the 18 participants who joined us on that day. A big shout out to those who donated both their time and money to this important event.

Sincerely,  
The Events Committee  
Sub-Committee of the PCRC



Photo credit: Sarah O'Donoghue

## Membership & Recruitment

We are so thrilled that you have decided to join the unified voice of professionals advocating for the ethical and effective application of behaviour analysis in the province. On the offchance that access to the quarterly issues of the ONTABA Analyst isn't enough to convince your friends and colleagues to join (*kidding! Bad editor's joke*), here is a top 10 list from the ONTABA membership benefit package:

1. Access to member only job postings and professional development opportunities.
2. A reduced fee for ABA International membership and conferences.
3. A reduced fee for the ONTABA Annual Conference and free BACB CEUs.
4. Access to the flagship journals JABA and JEAB.
5. Access to competitively priced professional and general liability insurance through McFarlan & Rowlands Insurance Brokers.
6. Discounted rate on GoodLife Fitness gym memberships.
7. Discounted tickets to Broadway Across Canada events.
8. Discounted rates for auto, pet, and home insurance through Johnson Insurance.
9. Discounted CAA membership.
10. Access to ONTABA's organizational Perkopolis account which includes savings on a multitude of services, products, and events.

To access your benefits, please login to your account at <http://www.ontaba.org>, select 'My Ontaba' then 'Benefits'.

## Calling all conference exhibitors and vendors!

This year's conference will be held on Thursday November 10th (approximately 8:00 am – 8:30 pm) and Friday November 11th (approximately 8:00 am – 6:00 pm). If you would like to participate by having a vendor/exhibitor table to display your services/products, and meet members of the ABA community we would love to have you!

There are two packages currently available:

**Gold Package:** which includes a half-page ad in the conference brochure and a 6 ft table with 2 chairs located in the exhibitor hall. The cost is \$300 for 2 full days of the conference.

**School Package:** which includes a half-page ad in the conference brochure and a 6 ft table with 2 chairs located in the exhibitor hall. The cost is \$150 for 2 full days of the conference. This package is available for secondary institutions. Please note that depending on interest, you may have to share your table with another school exhibitor for the duration of the conference or a poster presenter during the poster session. These packages do not include entrance to the conference presentations. They do, however, include the poster session and you are more than welcome to keep your tables open during that time.

If you would like to participate in this year's ONTABA conference, please contact [vendors@ontaba.org](mailto:vendors@ontaba.org) for inquiries and to reserve your space. You can also visit our website, <http://www.ontaba.org>, for more information.

## Suggestions or feedback?

Could we really call ourselves behaviour analysts if we didn't want feedback?

[contact@ontaba.org](mailto:contact@ontaba.org) or [newsletter@ontaba.org](mailto:newsletter@ontaba.org)





# Committee Updates

## Satellite Conference

On April 29, 2016 the Centre for Applied Disability Studies at Brock University had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Keith Allen, an event made possible with support from the ONTABA Satellite Conference Committee. A total of 86 community practitioners, students, and faculty attended the full day workshop, "Behavioral Parent Training: What and How to Teach", in St.Catharines.

In the morning session, Dr. Allen discussed the importance of parent training in an interesting historical context of research and programming. Attendees were also presented with a synthesis of the underlying behavioural theory and strategies that exist in evidence-based parent training. The afternoon session covered a range of practical considerations for "how to teach" parents. Dr. Allen discussed the relevant challenges such as adherence and "buy in" and emphasized the importance of rapport building. In addition to important practical strategies, Dr. Allen challenged the traditional conceptualization of parents as "trainees" and encouraged attendees to view parents as "co-therapists."



Photo credit: Kendra Thomson

Formal evaluations were administered and included very favourable comments pertaining to the practicality, relevance, and interesting nature of the information presented. Dr. Allen accomplished all of the above with an engaging, energetic, and humorous presentation style that maintained throughout the day and generalized to less formal discussions.

*Submitted by: Dr. Kendra Thomson, BCBA-D, Assistant Professor, Centre for Applied Disability Studies*

## Joint Conference

The very first ONTABA/QcABA joint conference is fast approaching! On October 1 & 2, we will welcome Dr. Brian Iwata, Dr. Marc Lanovaz and Dr. Michelle Turan to speak at the beautiful Carleton University Campus in Ottawa. Register now while spots are still available!

If you are a member of ONTABA you must first download proof of membership by going to ONTABA and accessing your 'My ONTABA' tab where you can download a receipt and letter pdf. If you are not a member become one! OR pay full price to attend.

For more information, go to <http://www.ontaba.org>, click on 'Joint Conference' under the 'Conferences' tab. To Register, go to <http://www.qcaba.org/events.html>

Look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,  
Sarah O'Donoghue, Joint Conference Chair  
Sub-Committee of the PCRC



## Elections & Awards

### EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES: 2016 Call for Nominees

We invite you to submit nominees for ONTABA's 2016 Elections. There will be many positions that need to be filled this year so we encourage the entire membership to submit names.

The following positions are open for the 2016 Elections:



**4 positions - Director at Large (2 year term)**

**1 position – Secretary (2 year term)**

**1 position – Treasurer-Elect (3 year term)**

The successful nominees will begin their respective terms immediately following the 2016 Annual Conference.

For further information on the 2016 Elections or for a copy of the 2016 Call for Nominees submission form, email [contact@ontaba.org](mailto:contact@ontaba.org)

## PRC

This is the third monthly membership update for 2016. The goal of these updates is to provide members with a clear understanding of the ongoing actions taken by the Professional Regulation Committee towards our long-term goal of regulation. Please see below for actions completed in May and June:

Our PRC Co-chair, along with members of the ONTABA Board of Directors, met with the Minister's office in June to discuss the recent Ontario Autism Program changes and to provide an update on our regulation efforts. ONTABA strongly encouraged the Minister to implement the SEG report recommendations for regulation of behaviour analysis in Ontario. PRC has requested a follow-up meeting with the Minister to further discuss this option.

While we are pushing for full regulation of behaviour analysis, we continue to work towards our mandate of drafting a Private Act for title protection. The PRC completed an updated draft of the Private Act and our next steps are to:

- o send the draft to Legislative Counsel for feedback;
- o send the updated draft with any suggestions from Legislative Counsel to the ONTABA Board of Directors;

- o send the updated draft to the ONTABA membership;
- o begin developing by-laws for the Private Act.

We are excited to welcome three new members to the PRC: Joan Broto, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Sarah Davis, and Kendra Thompson, Ph.D., BCBA-D. Dr. Broto and Dr. Thompson served on the British Columbia and Manitoba Associations for ABA, respectively. Their work in those provinces provides them with unique insight into the various models of regulation that exist within the province. Sarah Davis recently qualified to write the BCaBA exam, and has since decided to return to school to pursue her MA in ABA. We look forward to her input on the committee as a representative for other students and clinicians across the province. Together, we believe the expertise of the new committee members will greatly assist us in working towards our mandate of regulation of behaviour analysis in Ontario.

If you have specific questions or comments, please contact us at: [professionalregulation@ontaba.org](mailto:professionalregulation@ontaba.org)

Sincerely,  
The Professional Regulation Committee



## Conference

The ONTABA annual conference is only 5 months away! Your conference committee is diligently working to ensure the conference is a success again this year.

The conference will be held on **Thursday November 10th and Friday November 11th at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre**. We are pleased to confirm that Dr. Dorothy Lerman, Dr. Ruth-Anne Rehfeldt, and Dr. Tricia Vause will be attending as invited speakers!

Our committee is working to develop a draft schedule of events and invited speakers abstract outline which will be posted on the website in the upcoming weeks.

This year the call for papers opened four weeks earlier based on feedback provided by previous attendees. We have received a number of submissions and look forward

to receiving more! Registration is set to open mid-August so keep an eye out for the announcement.

ONTABA is pleased to announce there will be no increase in conference fees this year, however due to government requirements ONTABA is now required to charge HST. The additional 13% will be added at the time of payment so be sure to account for it.

As information becomes available members will receive an email and information will be posted on the ONTABA Facebook page. Should you have any questions please contact [conference@ontaba.org](mailto:conference@ontaba.org).

We look forward seeing you in November!

Sincerely,  
The ONTABA Conference Committee

## Events Committee

The ONTABA Events Committee is very pleased to announce the 2nd annual 'Evening of Behaviour Analysis' which will take place this year on August 20th in the beautiful 918 Bathurst St location in Toronto.

Our presenters this year are Ken Hamilton and Lesley Barreira! This event is turning into a mini-conference with student posters and an exciting late night Ignite session. With music and drinks this event is sure to be both educational and lively. The best part is that it is **FREE for all members of ONTABA!**

If you are not a member, go to the ONTABA website <http://www.ontaba.org> and fill out the application form found under the 'Membership' tab. Non-members are welcome to attend for the low fee of \$50.



*An Evening of Behaviour Analysis*

August 20th, 2016 at 918 Bathurst Street from 6pm to 12am

6:00-7:00pm Registration & Poster Session  
Guest Speakers: Lesley Barreira & Ken Hamilton  
Refreshments, appetizers, & door prizes

Members: FREE  
Non-Members: \$50  
Poster Session only: FREE  
Register at : <http://www.ontaba.org>

Pre-registration is required, go to <http://www.ontaba.org> and click on 'Evening Event' under the 'Conferences' tab. So mark your calendars; the first 100 members to register get a free drink ticket! Don't miss this exciting summer event!

Sincerely,  
The Events Committee  
Sub-Committee of the PCRC



The ONTABA  
Analyst

# On Assignment

in Chicago: ABAI 2016

**Note from the Newsletter Committee:** Since one of our very own Newsletter Committee members, Raluca Nuta, was jetset and off to her very first ABAI convention this past May, we thought it would be fun to have her “on assignment”. We tasked her with writing a piece to reflect on her experience, to offer advice to others considering making the pilgrimage to ABAI in the future, and to take as many (shameless) selfies with her ABA heroes as humanly possible! We are sure that you will agree with us that she met all criteria 100%. Enjoy! *The Newsletter Committee*

## On the behaviour of “going to ABAI”

by: Raluca Nuta

**A**tending ABAI Chicago 2016 was kind of like attending my favourite rock concert. I found myself star struck and very excited to be under the same roof as some of the leading researchers in the field of behaviour analysis. As a newcomer to the field (I completed my very first field placement in ABA in 2013) I have eagerly attended the ONTABA conference and other speaker events for the past two years, excited to learn from the very individuals whose research I was reading about in my college and grad school classes. I finally decided to attend ABAI after much deliberation, and with some encouragement from my grad school classmates and professors. Could I afford the conference cost AND the transportation/hotel stay? Would it be worth attending?

The resounding conclusion at the end of my stay in Chicago is YES! I have jumped onto the ABAI wagon and I see myself starting a very space-consuming collection of 300-page books that constitute the ABAI speaker programs. More than 6,000 ABA professionals from all over the world attended this year’s convention, and the three-day schedule consisted of more than 500 talks. Luckily, there is also an app that attendees can use to

search topics and speakers, and to place everything neatly into one very crammed schedule. Each time slot was guaranteed to have at least 6 favoured talks, following which came the very difficult task of actually selecting one to go to. The decision process went something like this: “Hmm, should I see Dr. Brian Iwata, one of the most influential researchers in the field of ABA, discuss and draw conclusions on a series of graduate student presentations, or Dr. Linda Leblanc, whose extensive research I had just referenced in my most recent school papers?” As you can imagine, the decisions were quite difficult.

Alas, one talk per time slot had to be chosen, and I think that I did a pretty good job. Imagine my nerdy joy when I entered a medium-sized event room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel at 7am on a Sunday morning, to listen to Dr. Timothy Vollmer address the future directions and plans for the Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis. Now imagine attending a 2-hour-long seminar on various functional analysis formats led by none other than Dr. Gregory Hanley and Dr. Wayne Fisher, in a room full beyond capacity of excited ABA professionals. Each and every talk that I attended was inspiring and full of very useful information for both my clinical work as a therapist, and also for my future research in the field of ABA. Below I will list some of the main lessons I learned from this year’s conference.

**1. Fill up your schedule and attend as many talks as possible.** Chicago is a wonderful city and it was great exploring it at night, but make sure to really soak up all of the amazing ABA information offered at ABAI. That being said...

**2. Don’t be afraid to explore facets of ABA that you are not already familiar with.** My research interests involve parent training, so I attended as many talks as I could on this topic. However, it was also interesting to attend other presentations such as Dr. Timothy Vollmer’s “Treating Problem Behaviour Without Extinction” and Dr. Marc Lanovaz’ talk on confidence intervals and single subject research designs. Feel free to expand your horizons and learn something new. The roster offered myriad choices, from animal behaviour, to ABA for the treatment of deviant sexual behaviours, to the use of ABA for typically developing individuals. So much to learn in such a short time!

**3. Go meet your favourite researchers!** Everyone was extremely welcoming, and all of the researchers that I spoke with were more than happy to discuss their research and partake of a selfie or two. The field of ABA is still growing, and the purpose of conventions such as ABAI is to disseminate information and to spark new research and directions. Go and ask all of your burning questions in person!



#### 4. Also approach other professionals in the field.

Don't forget your business cards! It is amazing to be in the presence of so many like-minded individuals. One of the coolest things I experienced in Chicago was going to the coffee shop down the street in the morning (the one at the hotel was always jam packed) and to hear "behavioural speak" being excitedly exchanged over breakfast. Going out to a Blues Club in the evening for some Chicago entertainment? Turns out, the people sitting beside you might be BCBAs! (True story!) Be sure to speak with at least a few people from a different country, or who have very different experiences of ABA. There is a lot to learn!

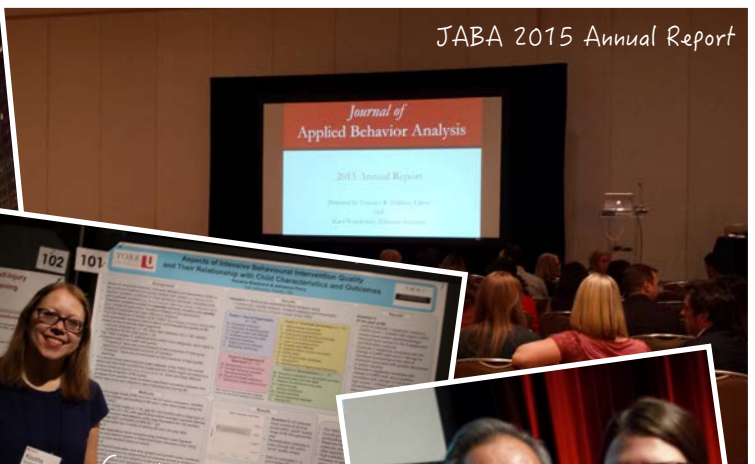
#### 5. Finally, be sure to check out the poster sessions and the giant job fair.

You might just find out about some amazing current research, or be offered an exciting career opportunity.

All in all, my first ABAI experience was highly reinforcing, and I expect my "going to ABAI" behaviour to at least stay constant, if not increase (have you heard about all of their other yearly conventions?). Go forth, learn as much as possible from the brilliant minds that are all gathered in one convenient location, and make ONTABA proud!



Chicago River by night



JABA 2015 Annual Report



Great poster presented by Ksusha Blacklock



Selfie with Sturmev



Dr. Jon Bailey



Iwata!



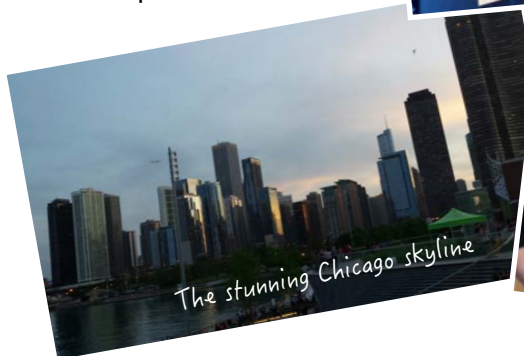
Where there is ABA, there is Marc Lanovaz!



Louis, Sarah, and Jen P on point at the ABAI Expo



Dr. Timothy Vollmer



The stunning Chicago skyline



Dr. Raymond Miltenberger



The ABAI Social





## Featuring: Dr. Josh Pritchard

*Josh Pritchard, PhD, BCBA-D is an Assistant Professor in the School of Behavior Analysis at the Florida Institute of Technology.*

*Interview by: Raluca Nuta*

**Please tell us a bit about your upcoming course that you will be offering this fall at Florida Tech.** With the recent goings on in our world, I'm offering a course called "Saving the World?" for our grad students (since offering it, I've had some faculty and even community members ask to join). One of the course goals is to get the students thinking on a much larger level about our science. For instance, when they are reading and studying for our other courses, I want them to think big. Many times when being taught our principles, students might first think about how it fits within their line of work. This will be successful if immediately after, they begin to also think along the lines of big impact projects. Things like tackling homelessness, reducing racial tension...or increasing compassion and love throughout all. The secondary goal is to get them

**Note from the Newsletter Committee:** In case you missed the first ever "Spotlight on..." in the last issue, this is our newest interview column. Our goal is provide a brief overview of an important topic as explained by an expert in our field. If there is anyone you would like to hear from or if you have an idea for a topic, please contact us at [newsletter@ontaba.org](mailto:newsletter@ontaba.org). Enjoy! *The Newsletter Committee*

thinking of ways in which they can integrate behaviour analysis into new areas they are interested in, such as personal training. One of the course projects will be to generate a business pitch for a service that uses behavior analysis and that is

self-sustaining in the sense that there will be demand for it. I'd love to plant the seed to even a small number of students who then actually start a business in new areas.

**How can an individual behaviour analyst take steps towards making the world a better place with ABA?** A lot of people say things like "Changing the world one behaviour at a time". Unfortunately, this is not enough to have a great impact on the world as a whole. You have to do it in a way that's going to scale up if you want any impact. An individual is unlikely to accomplish this alone. Rather – they should find like-minded people in an organization which can leverage its size to increase the scope of what they want to do. Also be mindful of the fact that sacrifices are necessary along the way such as putting in extra volunteer hours, taking low-paying jobs while proving value, or even investing personal money into a greater cause. While I'm not sure that an individual is going to be very impactful on the world by themselves – I do think they will impact someone's world every day. That, alone, is an extremely important role for behaviour analysts to fill.

**In reaction to the recent tragic massacre in Orlando, you posted a heart-felt call to action to fellow behaviour analysts. For those not on Facebook, can you briefly summarize your thoughts and intentions on this?**

My actual intent was to express what I was thinking and feeling about the events. I had to get it out: catharsis. Some side effects include a demonstration to any readers of a human side from a behaviour scientist. We *do* feel things. In this case, I felt hopeless to do anything to help with the suffering of a few people who were directly impacted by this tragedy and very important to me. I concluded it with a bit of a rant about how we need to either put up or shut up, as a field. I didn't really plan to write the piece to end like that, but rather it just showed up as I thought about how we continue to say we have a PR problem but blame it on external factors. If we claim to be able to save the world, we have to actually focus on something larger. I'm hoping this motivated people to do so. It has motivated some verbal behaviour from people telling me "I want to do something", and it has also motivated a paper by my colleagues and I...a love manifesto for behaviour analysts. This will outline some actionable things that practitioners can do that can lead to a bigger impact. I'm hoping that in five or ten years, I can look back at this and reflect on it being a catalyst to things that really do help the world.





**Behavioural cusp · n. 1** | be.hav'our.al cusp | /bɪ'hervjər(ə)l kʌsp/

"any behaviour change that brings the organism's behaviour into contact with new contingencies that have even more far-reaching consequences...a cusp is a special instance of behaviour change, a change crucial to what can come next." (Rosales-Ruiz & Baer, 1997, p.533)

# The Cusp

## Behaviour Analysis in Ontario: The people behind the work

**Editor's note:** It has been a seriously busy and stressful time for so many of the families we serve... and for us too! I'm not sure when this effect is going to wear off (hopefully never) but these interviews help me recalibrate, pause for a moment, and remind myself of how fascinating our field really is *and* how lucky we are to work with amazing kids, adults, parents, caregivers, and other professionals. It is always a pleasure to hear about excellent behaviour analytic work throughout our province. Enjoy! *Lesley*

### Dr. Bruce Linder, C.Psych, BCBA-D

Dr. Linder received his Ph.D. in 1985 from McMaster University in Experimental Psychology (Developmental). He interned at the Behavioural Medicine Unit at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, Ontario and at the Hamilton Board of Education in 1984-1986. He registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 1986, is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctoral level and is a member of the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology (CRHSPP). He co-founded the private practice of Pryor, Linder and Associates in Oakville with Dr. Colin Pryor in 1985. Dr. Linder is a Vice-President with Safe Management Group Inc. and President of Autism Behaviour Habilitation Services.



Dr. Linder's designated area of specialization is rehabilitation and counselling psychology. He is currently Clinical Director at Brain Injury Services of Hamilton, consulting behavioural psychologist to the Central West Specialized Developmental Services in Oakville and consulting psychologist to a

number of school boards. He has in the past provided behaviour psychological consultation to the Acquired Brain Injury Program at CMHS of St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton and the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital. He is also Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, Neurosciences and Behaviour at McMaster University.

Current and past research interests have included program evaluations of school-based violence prevention programs, individualized and group remedial educational programs with learning disabled children, conflict resolution training with adults with acquired brain injury, cognitive behavioural therapy groups in anger management, depression and substance abuse for adults with acquired brain injuries, determinants of quality of life for community-integrated adults with acquired brain injuries, caregiver styles among service providers for developmentally disabled adults, managing daily activity schedule design and implementation for adults with cognitive impairments, and behavioural programming assessment for severe behavioural disorders.

**You are the co-founder of Pryor, Linder and Associates and you are the Co-Director at two other agencies. I**

**think some people may shudder at thought of launching a private practice. How did you do it?** It was actually easy for me; when I was under supervised practice with the College of Psychologists, I interned in two settings - in a chronic pain program at a hospital and in a school board. It was at the school board internship that I met Dr. Colin Pryor who is a Clinical Psychologist by training. He asked for me to join him in establishing a private practice and initially it was just the two of us and we built it together. Colin was my mentor and although he is not a board certified behaviour analyst he had a lot of experience and interest in behavioural programming. In fact he established one of the first behavioural skills parent training programs for children in Britain before being recruited to join the clinical team at Surrey Place Centre. I think the fact that we had one senior person, Colin, and one junior person, me, really increased the probability of my success.

**What is the secret to creating a well-respected and long-lasting private practice?** Number one, a lot of hard work and number two, long hours. Number three, you need an enormous amount of passion to sustain your motivation because the low rates of reinforcement can be discouraging. I know as behaviourists we don't like to



use this term, but you have to have that 'internal drive' to persevere and this is where passion comes in. When you are starting out in private practice, you need to be passionate about the work that you are doing. Commit yourself to it, study it, and immerse yourself in it. That's how you become good at what you do but then add on top of that the business component, that's basically the marketing, networking, billing, and report writing. It really is hard work especially in the beginning.

### How did you enter the realm of

**behaviour analysis?** I guess there were really three points of entry, first on a philosophical level, I always had an interest in the philosophy of science and epistemology. I studied Psychology and Philosophy at the University of Minnesota which at the time had one of best philosophy of science departments. I was drawn to logical positivism and also the work of Herbert Feigl who was at Minnesota at that time, he basically said that to be a competent philosopher of science you had to be a competent scientist. Fortunately at University of Minnesota the departments of Philosophy and Psychology were closely connected. I think my studies in philosophy were advantageous in that it gave me a greater appreciation for Skinner's primary texts and set me up to engage readings in behaviourism on a different level.

My second point of entry was 4 years post-graduate during which I worked as a research assistant in several animal learning labs. That is where I really fell in love with the behavioural underpinnings of learning theory and the psychology of animal learning. I was a research assistant for Travis Thompson. I was also a research assistant for Bruce Overmier who was

involved in some of the early studies in learned helplessness. And I had the opportunity to work with Gail Peterson who was studying the phenomenon of autoshaping or sign-tracking. At McMaster University I was a graduate student of Herb Jenkins a student of Skinner's at Harvard; Francisco (Pancho) Barrera was there too!

I really had no intention of doing clinical work until I interned with Colin Pryor and it was Colin who introduced me to ABA and its applications in working with children and adults with disabilities; that was basically my third point of entry into the field. I was not involved in ONTABA in the early years, we were doing behaviour analytic work but the field was so different back then before the advent of the regional programs. I definitely see the value in getting involved and in the last 10 years I have made an effort to get more connected and to disseminate my work at the annual ONTABA conferences. You know I didn't get board certified until about four years ago. It was actually Richard Foxx who I worked with for several years that told me that I really needed to get certified; he said you're already doing this stuff but you need the certification, so I did it (laughs).

**The field has evolved over the past few decades especially as a result of board certification and local education opportunities with direct lines into behaviour analytic jobs.**

**What is your advice for the modern day behaviour analyst?** I think one of the biggest challenges that we all face relates to the philosophical shifts that are politically motivated and are shaping the landscape of our field, for example, the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and earlier anti-intrusive

movement and their impact on service delivery since the 90s. What I want to do is remind the younger generation of behaviour analysts of the early intrusive work that was effective in treatment of the more severe and intractable problem behaviours. I recommend be flexible, open-minded, and willing to integrate this body of work into a model like PBS. We need to remember that at the root of different treatment approaches there are important philosophical differences that are worth consideration.

In terms of mapping out a career in behaviour analysis, I think one of the worst things you can do is get locked into the same job doing the same thing too early and for too long. If you stay too long and get bored and perhaps a little too comfortable then you feel like you can't move and that's when the work itself loses its reinforcement value and you essentially become career depressed. Find out what you are passionate about and strive toward it. It's not just about the money, the money will come if you commit to your passion; doing that will always serve you well. When you have passion for what you do, it ignites passion in others—they can feel it. As a supervisor, I think that anyone in a supervisory position has a responsibility to provide mentorship that helps people get reinvigorated by exploring and expanding their skills set beyond what they are currently doing. The direction should be guided by each individual's interests that is what ensures the passion. It's an investment but it is better in the long run as it creates clinicians with stronger more robust clinical repertoires.

As a field, I think we need to make concerted efforts to diversify our

practice areas, not just for professional growth but for the future of our field. There is a danger in being dependent on a single funding source. If the funding dries up where does that leave our field?

**Are there any areas of research or practice that you feel a new behaviour analyst could really break ground and make an impact?**

Definitely. In our field much of the published research is in autism and IBI; however, there is an enormous amount of money spent on adults with developmental disabilities in behavioural crisis. There is a gap in practice in how these crises points can be systemically averted and there is a gap in current high quality research with adults with severe behaviour disorders. If you have the interest and you think that this could be a passion for you, good research here would be a major contribution to the field in terms of providing much needed evidence-based treatment and in balancing the literature.

Another area is relates to the importance of the longevity and generalizability of treatment effects, instead of doing 20 minute sessions twice a day and getting effects what about the bigger picture? You can put a dollar amount on the financial savings of effective treatment; Louis Hagopian often talks about this. Studying big effects on vitally important issues also help balance the research.

**Looking back on your career is there anything that you'd do differently?**

Well if you are asking that question more broadly about what I'd do differently in my life in general then the answer is yes and my response would be very long due to my own psychological foibles (laughs). But, I

can honestly say that in my career I wouldn't change a thing. Let me put it this way, just look at my week: Monday, I'm in Hamilton in my director role with adults with acquired brain injuries, Tuesday, I'm providing direct supervision to a clinical team servicing adults with developmental disabilities, Thursday, I'm consulting to a school board, and Friday I'm providing supervision in settings for children or adults. On top of that I have research opportunities with Brain Injury Services Hamilton (BISH); who could ask for more? (Laughs). I feel like I have exceeded any thought of potential in terms of my career aspirations. It could have gone any number of different ways but I consider myself lucky that it has worked out the way it did.

**Shannon Borch, M.ADS, BCBA**

Shannon is a board certified behaviour analyst and a graduate of the Master of Applied Disability Studies Program at Brock University. For

the past four years, she has been a Clinical Supervisor within the School Support Program at Kinark Child and Family Services. Within this role, she supervises a team of ASD consultants with the aim of facilitating seamless transitions from provincially-funded IBI into full-time school settings. Her professional interests include mediator training, functional analysis in natural settings, and inter-professional collaboration.

**You've devoted much of your career to working with children with ASD, what was the initial draw to the field**

**for you?** During my undergrad at McMaster University, I took a few courses that covered autism and I think it really whet my appetite and I wanted to learn more. I also completed an independent study at Hamilton Health Sciences within a unit for adults with acquired brain injury and I learned about applications of ABA there.

After completing my undergraduate degree, I was fortunate enough to get a job immediately in the field; I was an instructor therapist within an IBI program and, shortly after, became a Behaviour Therapist in a residential care setting. It wasn't until later that I went back to school and "got my letters", so in that way I feel like my path was a little atypical. However, going this route provided me with amazing clinical experience that allowed me to engage with the material during my graduate studies in a different and more meaningful way than if I had just moved straight into a Master's program after undergrad.

**Looking ahead to the next 5-10 years, where do you want to focus your clinical energy?**

I am very interested in working with mediators and I am also very interested in what happens after the therapy is complete. Very early on in my career I had the opportunity to work privately with a 3-year old boy with autism and this was probably one of the greatest success stories that I had ever witnessed. I can't take credit for the child's success; it wasn't solely the result of any one person's contributions, it was the result of this amazing partnership between his parents and the professionals on the clinical team. His mother was not a direct line therapist, but she knew every detail of every one of his programs and she always found novel ways to generalize all of these



target skills into other aspects of his life. Thinking of this little boy reminds me of the impact that parents and other mediators can have and how important it is to ensure they are involved for both immediate success within a program and for generalization of the skills into the real world.

My work with adults in a group home setting was eye opening as well. Prior to this experience, my clinical work was limited to preschoolers in IBI settings. Working with individuals across the lifespan showed me that we have to be very thoughtful in choosing the skills to target in programming—we want our clients to acquire skills that they can use lifelong.

**Are there any recent talks, studies, or advancements in our technology that have really inspired you?** I'm definitely enthused about modifications to functional analyses (FAs) for implementation in natural settings. I'm thinking of Sarah's Bloom's work in trial-based FAs in particular and how it has helped break down barriers in trying to do FAs within a classroom setting and also Gregory Hanley's work on including combinatorial contingencies and idiosyncratic variables within FAs.

Every time we can modify our assessments or treatments to make them practical for educators to implement we get more buy in and increase the ecological validity of our work. When we can actually show the purpose of certain procedures and make real change it is helping create a broader understanding of the behaviour analytic principles. Creating behaviour change in the environment where it happens is so powerful.

**You've been working with the education system for several years now. Tell us about changes that you have seen.** Well within the SSP, we have evolved from a capacity building service to student specific programming, which is a very welcome evolution to me. Through the Connections for Students (CFS) program we have the incredible opportunity to work collaboratively with educators and other school board staff to support successful transition from IBI to school for our learners. We follow their progress into the settings they will remain in for years to come and work with the school teams to support the generalization and maintenance of their hard earned skills.

Our work with the schools is truly an evolution and as with any huge system, change isn't fast but is occurring and successes are celebrated in classrooms everyday. Every little success in training, sharing and collaborating and every successful student transition into a classroom has a ripple effect. We, in partnership with a growing team of behavioural professionals in the school boards, are arming educators with behaviour tools that benefit classrooms, beyond the student that we are supporting at any given time.

**Tell us about a mentor who has influenced you the most.** I'd have to say that Sarah Dunkel-Jackson, who is an Associate Clinical Director at Kinark is definitely a huge influence. She has taught me how to be a scientist-practitioner and to maintain scientific rigor even if you aren't planning on publishing your work. She has also taught me to keep a behaviour analytic lens even when not directly working with a child or family, the science of behaviour

analysis has utility in providing clinical supervision too. There is always a function for a behaviour!

**Who is your ABA hero?** I know this is a little cliché but I'm an Iwata girl, well Iwata and Hanley! (laughs). I have seen both speak in the past but honestly, I could go and see them talk everyday and I wouldn't get bored. I think you can always get some new insight out of hearing Iwata or Hanley talk about their work.



Have someone in  
mind for the Cusp?

Let us know, we love suggestions!  
[newsletter@ontaba.org](mailto:newsletter@ontaba.org)





# Caption Contest



Do you tell really hilarious behaviour analytic jokes all the time but your friends and family never understand? Well here is your chance to shine!

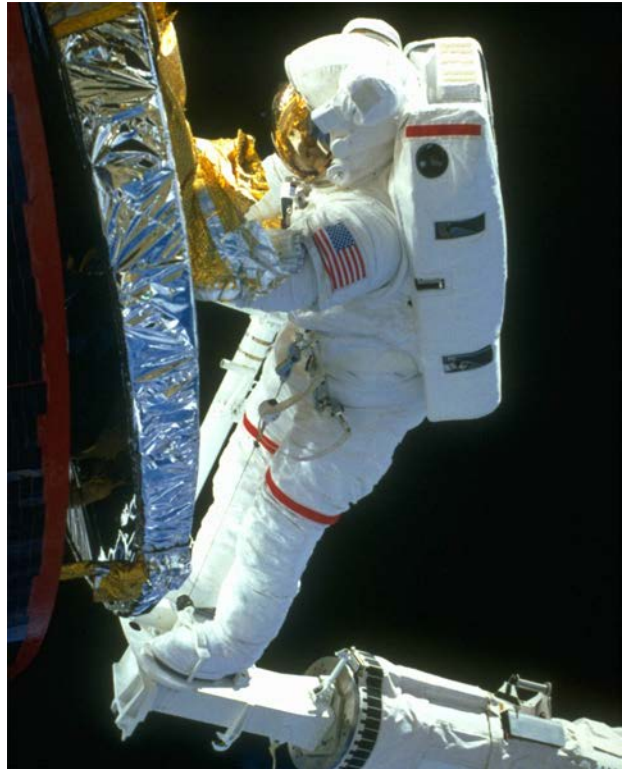
For this picture to the right, come up with a caption that has a behaviour analytic spin on it. Submit your entry to [newsletter@ontaba.org](mailto:newsletter@ontaba.org) by October 8th, 2016 for your chance to **win \$100!**



## Contest Rules:

You must be a current ONTABA member to enter a submission. Only one submission per member will be accepted. Word limit = 40 words. The caption can be a "comment bubble" or just a descriptive statement. No additional text/graphics or alterations to the original picture are permitted. All submissions must be received before 11:59pm on October 8th, 2016. Late submissions will not be considered. The winner will be determined by the Newsletter Committee. Only one winner will be selected.

The winning caption and the author's name will be published in the Fall 2016 issue of the ONTABA Analyst. The winner will be contacted in advance of the release of the Fall 2016 issue.



*And to think that, in the beginning,  
I could do no more than press a  
lever for food.*

...AND THE  
WINNER IS...

**Congratulations Reg Reynolds!** Winner of the ONTABA Analyst's first ever Caption Contest. Although we were laughing, choosing a winner was a difficult and serious matter. A big shout out and thank you to all the brave souls who submitted an entry!

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