

# 18<sup>th</sup> Annual BC-ABA Conference

*February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026*



***Day 1: Virtual keynote speakers***

***Day 2: Invited speakers, in person presentations, and President's update***

BC-ABA 18th ANNUAL  
**CONFERENCE 2026**

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## Schedule Details

### VIRTUAL KEYNOTES, FEBRUARY 27

Keynote events will be recorded and available for viewing for two weeks after the conference. **NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE PST.**

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Shanna Bahry, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, LBA (1.5 Learning CEUs) <i>Meaningful Instruction for Meaningful Adulthood: Rethinking Goals in Autism Services</i>
1:30pm – 1:45 pm	BREAK
1:45 pm – 3:15 pm	Michelle Karren, MSc, BCBA (1.5 Learning CEUs) <i>When Traditional Approaches Fall Short: Conceptual and Ethical Reflections on Pathological Demand Avoidance in ABA</i>

### LIVESTREAM AND IN-PERSON SESSIONS, February 28

**NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE PST**

Invited Speakers, Mini-Seminars and Panel Discussions

- 8:00 am – 8:50 am Registration and Coffee
- 9:00 am – 4:25 pm Conference program (details in this document)

***No Recordings will be available for the live-streamed portions of this day.***

## 2026 Registration Fees

	BC-ABA Members	Non-members	Students and Affiliate Members
Feb. 27 only	\$55 (+\$15 for CEUs)	\$95 (+\$15 for CEUs)	\$45 (+\$15 for CEUs)
Feb. 28 only	\$80 (+\$27.50 for CEUs)	\$150 (+\$27.50 for CEUs)	\$45 (+\$27.50 for CEUs)
Both days	\$115 (+\$42.50 for CEUs)	\$175 (+\$42.50 for CEUs)	\$65 (+\$42.50 for CEUs)



## BC-ABA 18th Annual Conference

### February 27, 2026: DAY AT A GLANCE

Time	Zoom
12:00 – 1:30 PM	<i>Introductory Remarks: 5 mins</i> Keynote Speaker: <i>Shanna Bahry, PhD, BCBA-D</i> Meaningful Instruction for Meaningful Adulthood: Rethinking Goals in Autism Services <b>Zoom</b> <b>1.5 Learning CEUs</b>
1:30 – 1:45 PM	<i>Break and Introductory Remarks</i>
1:45- 3:15 PM	<i>Keynote Speaker: Michelle Karren, M.Sc, BCBA</i> When Traditional Approaches Fall Short: Conceptual and Ethical Reflections on Pathological Demand Avoidance in ABA <b>Zoom</b> <b>1.5 Learning CEUs</b>

## THESE ARE VIRTUAL EVENTS

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS WILL BE RECORDED AND AVAILABLE FOR 2 WEEKS  
AFTER THE CONFERENCE

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Friday, February 27, 12:00 pm-1:30 pm*



### **SHANNA BAHRY, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, LBA**

#### ***MEANINGFUL HOPE***

Shanna Bahry is a board-certified, doctoral-level behavior analyst (BCBA-D), and a licensed behavior analyst in Massachusetts (LABA) and Rhode Island (LBA). She has been working with individuals with autism spectrum and related disorders for over 15 years in a variety of settings. Dr. Bahry received her PhD in applied behavior analysis from Endicott College, under the advisement of Peter Gerhardt. She has authored several publications and presented nationally and internationally

within the areas of adaptive behavior programming leading to optimal outcomes in adulthood, including teaching practitioners the skills needed to target meaningful goals with effective and efficient teaching methodologies. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Meaningful HOPE, an agency committed to helping practitioners and families best support individuals with disabilities in preparing for a meaningful life in adulthood. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Endicott College's Institute for Applied Behavioral Sciences.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Friday, February 27, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm*

Shanna Bahry, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, LBA

*Meaningful Hope*

### ***Meaningful Instruction for Meaningful Adulthood: Rethinking Goals in Autism Services***

***(1.5 Learning CEUS)***

Adults on the autism spectrum continue to experience significant challenges in achieving fulfilling, self-directed lives, despite decades of intervention, research, and clinical practice. This presentation reframes goal development as a central driver of long-term outcomes, emphasizing that what we choose to teach is as critical as how we teach it. The session explores the complex factors influencing adulthood success, highlights the disconnect between traditional instructional targets and meaningful life skills, and outlines essential shifts in behavior-analytic practice needed to support genuine progress into adulthood. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how intentional, context-relevant goal design can shape opportunities, independence, and quality of life for autistic individuals.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Examine current evidence demonstrating poor adult outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum and analyze the multifaceted variables contributing to these patterns;
2. Explain the importance of selecting instructional goals that are functional, relevant, and contextually meaningful, and describe how goal choice directly influences long-term adult success; and
3. Identify at least five critical changes behavior analysts must make in their assessment, goal development, and service delivery practices to improve adult outcomes in autism.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Friday, February 27, 1:45 pm – 3:15 pm*



## **MICHELLE KARREN, MSc, BCBA** ***ESPRIT LEARNING***

Michelle Karren is a behaviour analyst and the owner of Esprit Learning, a practice dedicated to neurodiversity-affirming, compassionate support for children and families. She has over 26 years of experience supporting neurodivergent children and youth across home, public school, and private school settings. Her practice focuses on Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), giftedness, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and neurodiversity-affirming approaches. As both a professional and a parent of two neurodivergent individuals, Michelle brings a multifaceted perspective to her work. In addition to direct work with learners and families, she provides parent coaching, supervision for behaviour analysts, and professional development workshops, and has presented at national and international conferences, including ABAI. She is deeply committed to fostering compassionate, flexible, and ethical practice within the field of behaviour analysis.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Friday, February 27, 1:45 pm – 3:15 pm*

Michelle Karren, MSc, BCBA

*Esprit Learning*

## ***When Traditional Approaches Fall Short: Conceptual and Ethical Reflections on Pathological Demand Avoidance in ABA***

**(1.5 Learning CEUs)**

In recent years, awareness of demand avoidance, including Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), has grown within neurodiversity-affirming frameworks. PDA is increasingly recognized as a distinct profile marked by extreme avoidance of everyday demands stemming from anxiety and nervous system threat responses rather than willful noncompliance. Although interest in PDA is rapidly increasing among behaviour analysts, most have received limited formal training in this area. Consequently, conventional ABA techniques are sometimes applied in ways that are ineffective or even counterproductive for PDA learners. This presentation delves into the fundamental characteristics of demand-avoidant profiles and underscores the challenges that emerge when traditional ABA frameworks intersect with the needs of PDA learners. Drawing on research, clinical experience, and conceptual models from both within and beyond traditional ABA frameworks, this session explores how nervous system safety, autonomy, and relational attunement influence the learning environment for these individuals. Ethical considerations, including the scope of competence, consent, and treatment planning, are also addressed. Participants will be invited to explore PDA through a deeper conceptual lens and examine the unique considerations it raises for ABA practice. The session aims to encourage reflection, compassionate and flexible thinking, and thoughtful professional discernment when determining the appropriate scope of practice for this population.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Describe key characteristics of the PDA profile, with particular attention to how this presentation differs from other autistic profiles and the implications for understanding behavior.
2. Critically examine the areas of tension between conventional ABA frameworks and the needs of PDA learners, drawing on conceptual models and clinical considerations.
3. Evaluate the professional scope of practice and ethical responsibilities when working with PDA learners, including issues of consent, autonomy, and treatment planning.

## BC-ABA 18th Annual Conference

### February 28, 2026: DAY AT A GLANCE

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## JOIN US AT A POST- CONFERENCE SOCIAL!!!

A decorative bunting banner with alternating red, yellow, blue, and white triangular flags, hanging from a black curved line.

Looking for a casual opportunity to connect with your ABA-loving friends and colleagues? Join us immediately after the conference at Brown's Crafthouse on the UBC Campus to share some food, drink, and great conversations. Limited appetizers will be provided by BC-ABA, with the full menu also available (at your own cost)

A decorative bunting banner with alternating teal, pink, purple, and teal triangular flags, hanging from a black curved line.

Brown's Crafthouse  
101 - 6111 University Blvd  
(a 5-6 minute stroll from  
SCARFE)

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



*Saturday, February 28, 9:00 am - 10:50 am*

**SCARFE 100 AND LIVESTREAM**

**Welcoming Remarks, Land Acknowledgement, Territorial Welcome by  
Elder Shane Pointe**

**INVITED SPEAKER**



**Mary Penrice-Edmondson, MS, BCBA**  
Quadrant Behaviour Consultation and Richmond School District

**Using the ACT Matrix in Behaviour Analysis:  
A Practical Tool for Understanding Behaviour, Language, and What Matters**  
(1.5 Learning CEUs)

This invited presentation will explore how the ACT Matrix, grounded in the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), can be effectively integrated into behaviour analytic practice—particularly within the context of functional assessment. Designed as a flexible and user-friendly tool, the ACT Matrix supports behaviour analysts in organizing conversations about behaviour, internal experiences, and that which truly matters to the individuals they serve. The Matrix offers a behaviourally grounded method for understanding verbal behaviour and private events. We will examine how the ACT Matrix aligns with core principles of behaviour analysis and supports values-driven, socially significant change. Emphasis will be placed on the practical application of the Matrix and its usefulness as a tool in functional assessments to identify avoidance patterns and guide committed action toward meaningful outcomes.

## **Learning Objectives**

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe the theoretical foundations of the ACT Matrix, including its roots in Functional Contextualism and Relational Frame Theory (RFT);
2. Explain how the ACT Matrix can be aligned with the seven dimensions of applied behaviour analysis, with a focus on functional contextualism, analytic rigour, and social significance;
3. Identify how the ACT Matrix can be used during functional assessments to reveal patterns of experiential avoidance and clarify individual values; and
4. Describe practical strategies for using the ACT Matrix to facilitate values-based conversations and guide behaviour change in clinical, educational, or organizational settings.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## BOARD AND LICENSURE UPDATE

*Saturday, February 28, 11:00 am – 11:45 am,  
Scarf 100 AND LIVESTREAM*



Hayley Neimy, PhD, BCBA-D, BC-ABA President  
Maria Sample, MA, BCBA, President Elect

### **Looking Back, Moving Forward: Leadership & Advocacy Update**

This in-person session brings together Dr. Hayley Neimy, BCBA-D (President) and Maria Sample, BCBA (President-Elect) to reflect on a year of leadership, advocacy, and community growth within BC-ABA. The presentation will celebrate the dedication of outgoing Board members, introduce our next wave of incoming Board Members, and recognize student contributions through the BC-ABA Student Grant Awards.

Dr. Neimy will share both a recap and an updated overview of BC-ABA's ongoing licensure advocacy efforts, including key developments over the past year and the work still ahead. Attendees will hear how these efforts align with BC-ABA's mission to support ethical practice, strengthen professional identity, and protect the individuals and families served by behaviour analysts across British Columbia.

Designed as a space for connection and dialogue, this session invites members to engage, ask questions, and gain insight into BC-ABA's priorities and vision for the future. Participants will leave feeling informed, connected, and invested in the collective work of advancing the profession in BC.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

POSTERS, LUNCH, MATERIAL SWAP

BC  
ABA

*Feb. 28, 11:45 pm – 12:45 pm, Scarfe lobby*



## **Improving Elementary Math Instruction: A Practitioner's Guide Beyond the Package**

Samin Alighanadi, BSc; Weizhi Wu, MS, BCBA; and Victoria Knight, PhD, BCBA



Many practitioners implement multi-component math packages for autistic students in elementary grades without clear guidance on which components are truly essential or how much practice is enough. This session will teach practitioners how to streamline these complex packages for tailored interventions. We will share a framework for deconstructing these math packages, identifying the active ingredients for word problem solving, and determining efficient practice intensity. Through case examples and synthesized research, you will learn practical strategies to build more effective and individualized math programs that promote generalization and ensure your students succeed not only in sessions but also in their communities.



## **Using Behavioural Skills Training (BST) to Teach Intervention Implementation**

Nadia Gato and Richard Stock, PhD BCBA-D, Capilano University



The session will focus on a literature review of Behavioural Skills Training (BST) and will cover its effectiveness, implementation fidelity, inter-observer reliability, and social validity across diverse Applied Behaviour Analysis applications. It will outline findings from ten single-subject studies and will highlight BST's adaptability to remote formats and varied learner populations. The purpose will be to demonstrate BST's strengths and remaining challenges in sustaining long-term skill use. The session will use concise summaries, data examples, and

practical recommendations to convey how emerging technologies and ongoing support strategies will enhance training delivery and long-term implementation for improved outcomes across settings worldwide.



# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## POSTERS (CONTINUED)



### **Graduate Training in Applied Behaviour Analysis: Interprofessional Collaboration**

Gemma Graziosi, MA and Nicole Neil, PhD, RBA (ONT), BCBA, Western University

This poster will examine stakeholder perceptions of training within graduate-level ABA programs in North America as it relates to interprofessional collaboration competency development. The objective of this session will be to establish an up-to-date benchmark for ABA graduate training. Quantitative data regarding the frequency and effectiveness of training in interprofessional collaboration competencies will be displayed graphically and compared to training in core ABA competencies. Participants' beliefs regarding interprofessional collaboration training and factors that promote collaborative competence will also be described using a mixed-methods approach. Lastly, graduate training standard recommendations based on the data presented will be discussed within the session.



### **Naturalistic Teaching Interventions for Enhancing Communication in Children with ASD: A Literature Review**

Elizabeth Irving and Richard Stock, PhD, BCBA-D, Capilano University

This session will focus on the effectiveness of Naturalistic Teaching Interventions (NTIs) in promoting communication skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It will examine how NTIs improve verbal initiations, social engagement, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) use across settings and implementers. The purpose of the session will be to review findings from ten single subject research design studies and discuss implications for practice. Strategies will include summarizing evidence-based outcomes, highlighting implementation fidelity, and identifying research limitations. Participants and viewers will gain insight into how NTIs can be effectively applied to enhance communication outcomes for children with ASD.



# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## POSTERS (CONTINUED)

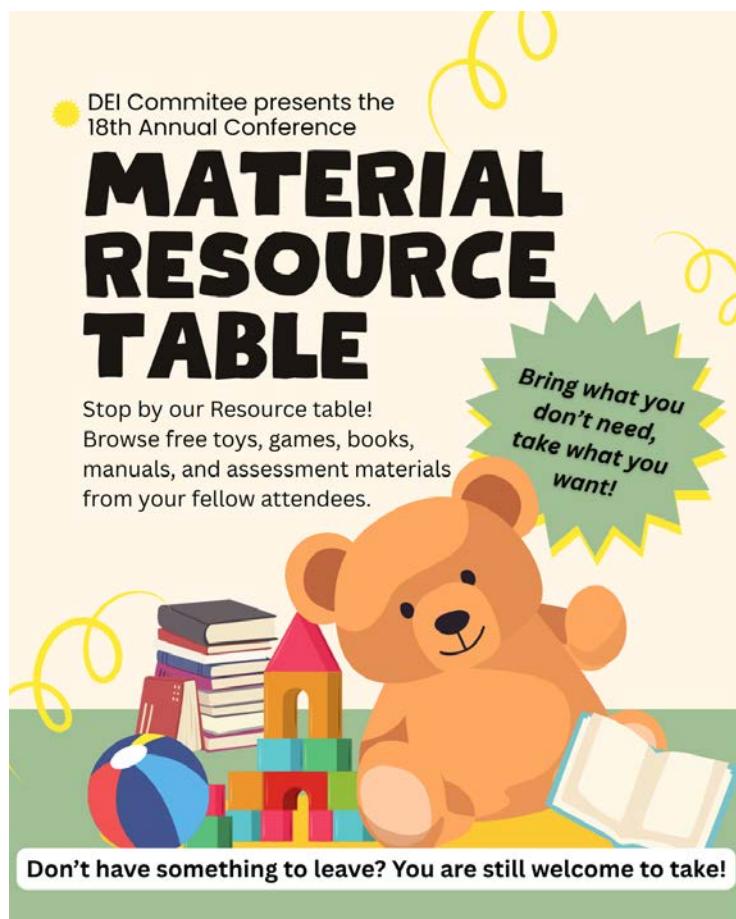


### SBT for a Child with a PDA Profile

Leila Meyer, MSc, BCBA and Caroline Pudsey, RBT, Shuswap Children's Association



This poster presentation will describe the PFA and SBT process for a 6-year-old boy diagnosed with ASD who has been identified as fitting a PDA profile. Prior to starting this process, the learner engaged in high rates of disruptive and dangerous behaviours. Since starting SBT, his rates of those behaviours have reduced significantly. The client has mastered all of the foundational steps of SBT, including FCR, tolerance response, relinquishing reinforcers, and transitioning, and he is working on cooperation with adult-led activities across three branches of contextually appropriate behaviours (work, leisure skills, and preferred activities following somebody else's lead).



# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

*Saturday, February 28, 12:45pm – 2:25pm*

### MINI-SEMINAR, SCARFE 100 AND LIVESTREAM (2 Ethics CEUs)



#### **Think Before You Prompt: AI, Ethics, and Accountability**

Ateeq Awan, MA, BCBA

posAbilities Association of BC

As generative AI tools become more accessible, behaviour analysts are increasingly exploring their potential in clinical and organizational contexts. This presentation explores the emerging need for clear, thoughtful AI policies within behaviour-analytic agencies, including both private and non-profit settings. The session will outline key elements to consider when

developing an internal AI policy. It will also examine how AI can influence user behaviour and decision-making, raising important ethical considerations related to bias, over-reliance, and professional judgement. Participants will reflect on how to integrate AI in a way that supports, rather than replaces, sound clinical reasoning and ethical service delivery.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Attendees will walk away with a clear understanding of key ethical considerations when using generative AI in behaviour-analytic practice;
2. Attendees will be able to explain how AI can influence decision-making and why maintaining professional judgement is essential; and
3. Attendees will explore strategies for supporting responsible AI use through thoughtful policy development within behaviour-analytic settings.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## TRADITIONAL PAPERS, Room 203 (2 Learning CEUs)



### Bridging Research and Stakeholder Needs: An iKT Study

Chloe Wang, PhD, BCBA and Joseph Lucyshyn, PhD, BCBA-D, University of British Columbia

This session will discuss the use of an integrated knowledge translation (iKT) study to improve the clarity, acceptability, feasibility, potential effectiveness and cultural responsiveness of a group parent training model of family-centred positive behaviour support (FCPBS) prior to its implementation with new immigrant Chinese families. Feedback provided by the families and professionals who participated in the iKT study were used to inform adaptions and revisions to the group parent training model of FCPBS in regard to its clarity, acceptability, feasibility, potential effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness.

### Learning Objectives

1. Evaluate personal biases and cultural responsiveness skills in addressing diverse client needs
2. Engage in professional development activities to enhance knowledge of cultural diversity and inclusive behavior-analytic practices
3. Assess supervisees' and trainees' biases and competence in serving individuals from diverse backgrounds



### Cultural Competence in ABA: A Systematic Review

Sumaia Agha, BCBA, Kidz Venture Club

Cultural competency has become a critical focus within ABA due to its significance in providing equitable and effective services for diverse populations. This meta-analysis reviews 47 studies examining the integration of cultural considerations, the impact of culturally adapted interventions, and perceptions of competency among clients and practitioners. Findings show that culturally responsive practices improve outcomes, increase satisfaction, and strengthen therapeutic relationships. Adapted interventions also enhance adherence and engagement. However, gaps in training and assessment tools limit broad implementation. Continued research and clearer competency frameworks are needed to support inclusive, effective ABA services for individuals across cultural contexts.

### Learning Objectives

1. Define cultural competency
2. Identify the prevalence and impact of cultural competency in ABA research
3. Identify existing barriers to reaching cultural competence and the steps to take to remove those barriers

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINI-SEMINAR, Room 204 (2 Learning CEUs)



### Bridging ABA and Harm Reduction in Substance Use Support

Becky Molly, MPEd, BCBA, Doctoral Student (Western University), Pacific Coast Community Resources

Substance use remains a critical factor impacting quality of life for persons receiving community-based support. Behaviour analysts are increasingly called to consult in contexts involving substance use, trauma, and mental health. This presentation demonstrates how core behaviour analytic principles can be applied within a harm reduction framework to promote safety, autonomy, and well-being. Attendees will learn to integrate strategies such as contingency management, Motivational Interviewing, and preventative behaviour supports into trauma-informed, person-centred care. Through real-world examples and data-driven discussion, participants will gain practical tools to apply ABA compassionately and effectively within harm reduction-oriented community systems.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify how core behaviour analytic principles can be integrated within a harm reduction framework to support individuals who are substance impacted.
2. Describe practical behaviour analytic strategies that align with harm reduction and trauma-informed care in community-based settings.
3. Analyze real-world case examples to explore ethical decision-making, interdisciplinary collaboration, and quality of life outcomes for individuals who use substances.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## TRADITIONAL PAPERS, Room 205 (2 Learning CEUs)



### Balancing Clinical Integrity and Financial Sustainability: The Core Ethical Dilemma in Owner-Operator ABA Clinics

Judy Bui, MA, BCBA, Western University

This session will examine the unique ethical dilemma BCBAs face when serving as both owners and operators of ABA clinics—balancing clinical integrity with financial sustainability. It will explore how competing contingencies create ethical tension in everyday practice and highlight how existing ABA decision-making models can guide the resolution of these conflicts. Lessons drawn from medical ethics literature on “dual agency” will broaden perspective, while a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens will deepen reflection on individual biases. Participants will engage in an applied ethical decision-making activity and identify strategies to strengthen ethical consistency, transparency, and equity within ABA organizations.

#### Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate awareness of the core ethical dilemma in owner-operator ABA clinics.
2. Describe how individual factors interact with business and clinical contingencies to create and sustain the core ethical dilemma.
3. Identify and describe ethical decision-making models within and outside of behaviour analysis that can be applied to address these dilemmas.



### The Behaviour Analyst's Business Toolkit: Turning Vision into Viability

Laura Campbell, MA, BCBA, RBA (ONT), Meaghan Shaver, MSc, BCBA, RBA (ONT), and Kim Trudeau-Craig, MSc, BCBA, RBA (ONT), Stride Academy and St. Lawrence College



This session will empower behaviour analysts with the essential knowledge and tools needed to launch, grow, and sustain a thriving ABA private practice. Drawing on resources from the ABA Business Toolkit ([www.ababusiness toolkit.ca](http://www.ababusiness toolkit.ca)), attendees will gain practical, step-by-step strategies to transform a clinical vision into a fully operational and sustainable business. The session will also highlight behaviour-analytic approaches to effective supervision and management, ensuring clinical integrity aligns with business success. To bring these concepts to life, attendees will be guided through a dynamic case study following the evolution of a clinic—from an initial dream to five years of successful, ethical, and scalable operations.



#### Learning Objectives

1. Identify and apply foundational business planning and start-up components essential for launching a sustainable ABA private practice.
2. Describe and implement key operational systems in accordance with professional and legal obligations—including financial management, marketing, workflow organization, and ethical service delivery—to support long-term practice viability.
3. Analyze a real-world case study to evaluate how behaviour-analytic principles can be integrated into business operations, supervision, and management to achieve sustained growth over a 5-year period.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINI-SEMINAR, Room 206 (2 Learning CEUs)

### Compassion in Action: A Values-Based Approach to Community Living

Sharon Baxter, MA, BCBA; Jolin Dhami, MSc, BCBA; and Mackenzie Tremblay, MSc, BCBA, Semiahmoo Behaviour Analysts, Inc.



This session will explore how compassionate care, trauma-informed practice, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be integrated into behaviour support for individuals in community living settings. It highlights common challenges and how they shaped improved training and implementation. The first section covers core principles of compassionate and trauma-informed care, and how support workers can learn to apply them in daily interactions. The second section demonstrates how ACT helps staff focus on values over procedures using the choice-point tool to support clear, more intentional decision-making.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify practical ways to apply compassionate care and trauma-informed strategies
2. Learn and practice using the choice point tool, a strategy from ACT, to make values-based decisions and to coach others in real-time decision-making
3. Recognize the outcomes and impacts of implementing a compassionate care approach

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINISEMINAR, Room 207 (2 Learning CEUs)

### Addressing Contextually Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour in School Settings

Landa Fox, MA, MACP, BCBA, RCC, Positive Connections

Katrina McGee, MEd, BCBA, Greater Victoria School District



Contextually inappropriate sexual behaviour (CISB) presents unique challenges, no matter where or when it occurs. However, when it happens in a school setting, there are more specific complexities that make working with this category of behaviour unique. This mini-seminar will present a definition of CISB with specific reference to variables that are vital to consider in a school setting. Participants will build an understanding of some essential features of a school-based behaviour support plan, including prevention, teaching, and responding when the behaviour is determined to be CISB.

### Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish between function, topography, and perception in reference to CISB
2. Practice utilizing a risk-benefit framework when selecting components of a school-based behaviour support plan for CISB
3. Recognize scopes of competence within behaviour analysis that are relevant when working with CISB

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINISEMINAR, Room 208 (2 Learning CEUs)



### **Differentiating ODD and PDA: ABA-Based Strategies for Effective Intervention**

Soha Sarraf, BCBA, Indigo Sky Therapy

This session will elucidate the critical distinctions between Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), conditions that often exhibit overlapping surface behaviors. Through the lens of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), it will explore how functional assessments can guide the development of individualized intervention plans. Key

areas of focus will include differentiating reinforcement strategies, modifying demand presentation, and implementing environmental adjustments. The session will aim to enhance practitioners' ability to mitigate challenging behaviors and foster emotional regulation and compliance within an evidence-based and ethical ABA framework, promoting effective and compassionate support for children and their families.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Identify key behavioral and functional differences between Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) through the lens of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).
2. Analyze how individualized functional assessments inform the selection of reinforcement strategies, demand presentation methods, and environmental modifications for each diagnosis.
3. Develop ABA-based intervention strategies that ethically and effectively reduce challenging behaviors while promoting compliance, self-regulation, and adaptive functioning in children with ODD or PDA profiles.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINISEMINAR, Room 209 (2 Learning CEUs)



### **“Don’t Throw the Dog Off the Balcony!”: Echolalia, Re-Visited**

Pat Mirenda, PhD, BCBA-D, University of British Columbia

Historically, echolalia (the repetition of words or phrases) was considered to be “meaningless,” “non-functional,” and “without communicative value.” Accordingly, the goal of intervention was to reduce or eliminate echolalic utterances. However, in the 1980s, this view began to change and, since then, research has reinforced an alternative understanding of echolalia and how to support individuals who engage in it. This mini-seminar will summarize what we now know about the developmental nature and functions of echolalic speech. Neuro-diversity affirming strategies for responding to and supporting individuals with echolalia will also be included.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Identify at least five functions of immediate echolalia and delayed echolalia, with examples of each
2. Describe at least five antecedent events that are likely to result in echolalic speech
3. Describe at least three neuro-diversity affirming strategies to support individuals who engage in echolalic speech

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

*Saturday, February 28, 2:45pm – 4:25pm*

### **MINI-SEMINAR, Room 100 AND LIVESTREAM (2 LEARNING CEUs)**

#### **Integrating Behavior Analysis into Psychiatric Care: Lessons Learned**

Allison Worrin, MEd, BCBA, posAbilities Association of BC

Alison D Cox, PhD, BCBA-D, RBA (ONT), Brock University



This presentation will demonstrate how behavior analysts are uniquely positioned to support and inform psychiatric care. It will feature a case study conducted in collaboration with Dr. Cox and the research team at Brock University, involving an individual diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, and co-occurring psychiatric disorders. The behavioural impact of psychotropic medication was monitored across four psychotropic medication phases using functional analyses and preference assessments within a community setting. Outcomes illustrate how these assessments enhance treatment insights and staff implementation. Clinical implications emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration and integrating behavior-analytic tools into psychiatric treatment planning.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Develop skills to interpret data from functional analyses and preference assessments for individuals on psychotropic medications and apply these insights to make informed clinical recommendations.
2. Learn how they could bridge disciplinary perspectives and promote collaborative approaches to psychiatric and behaviour analytic care.
3. Learn practical strategies for using behavior analytic tools to track changes, improve treatment outcomes, and support team communication.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINI-SEMINAR, Room 204 (2 Learning CEUs)

### Context Matters: Integrating Social Determinants of Health in ABA Practice

Yasmeen Mezban, MPH, MA, and Jamila Aleaf, MA, BCBA, Monarch House



This session will focus on integrating the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and intersectionality frameworks within Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) practice. The presentation will examine how socioeconomic status, culture, gender, and access to care influence behavioural outcomes and intervention success. Participants will learn how traditional ABA models may overlook systemic barriers and explore strategies for embedding equity-oriented, contextually sensitive approaches into assessment, goal setting, and service delivery. Attendees will reflect on their own positionality and apply a broader, health-informed lens to behaviour analysis, enhancing ethical practice and promoting equitable outcomes across diverse communities.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify at least three Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and describe how each can influence behavioural outcomes, intervention feasibility, and service engagement in ABA practice.
2. Analyze clinical case examples using an intersectionality lens by detecting systemic barriers (e.g., cultural, socioeconomic, gender-related) that may affect assessment, goal setting, or family participation.
3. Design at least one equity-oriented modification to an assessment, goal-setting process, or intervention plan by integrating SDOH-informed and culturally responsive strategies.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## TRADITIONAL PAPERS, Room 205 (2 Learning CEUs)



### Impact of Antecedent Exercise on Attending and Stereotypic Behaviours

Daisy Wang, MEd, BCBA, Social Collaborative; Emilie Kovalik, ALM, University of Toronto; and Linda Heitzman-Powell, PhD, MPH, BCBA-D, University of Kansas



Stereotypy and reduced attention to salient cues can limit learning opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Exercise has been studied as an antecedent intervention, though findings remain inconclusive, partly due to limited measurement of exertion. This study addresses this gap by using wearable technology to assess the effects of moderate-intensity exercise on stereotypy, attending, and peer interactions. Implemented briefly in group settings without specialized equipment or extensive training, the intervention is efficient, cost-effective, and health-promoting. Findings support antecedent exercise as a practical, low-barrier strategy that can be readily integrated into inclusive educational and therapeutic environments.



### Learning Objectives

1. Summarize our understanding of the effects of antecedent exercise based on existing literature.
2. Identify potential "core elements" of what makes antecedent exercise an effective strategy.
3. Identify the challenges of implementing group-based strategies.



### Behaviour Analysis at Scale: Examining Access, Resources, and Workforce Capacity in Canadian Contexts

Nicole Neil, PhD, RBA (ONT), BCBA-D, Western University

Behaviour analysis in Canada is evolving rapidly with growing public demand and workforce challenges. This presentation examines systems-level factors shaping access and capacity, with a focus on Ontario. This session will present data on the distribution of credentialed practitioners relative to population, revealing regional disparities in access, and analyze school board financial reports to explore how educational systems allocate resources to ABA supports. Emerging national data on ABA policy and education are discussed to contextualize these findings. Together, these analyses highlight how data-driven approaches can inform equitable service access and sustainable growth in Behaviour Analysis.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify trends and regional disparities in Behaviour Analyst workforce capacity and access to ABA services across Ontario
2. Describe how publicly available data and policy analyses can be used to evaluate system-level factors in Behaviour Analysis
3. Discuss implications of national and provincial data for advancing access, workforce planning, and policy development in Applied Behaviour Analysis

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINISEMINAR, Room 206 (2 Learning CEUs)

### ACTing Like an Adult: Leveraging Mindfulness and Values to Build Independence

Jaime Santana, M.ADS, BCBA, RBA (ONT) and Lisa Zariwny, M.ADS, BCBA, RBA (ONT), Santana Behavioural Services



Working with youth and adults can be challenging, especially when trying to develop skills in areas that are needed, but assent is removed due to discomfort, frustration, or aversion. Luckily, the framework of Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTr) provides an opportunity to support the client as they navigate what is important to them, leading to self-directed goal planning. It also builds the skills needed for self-regulation and management of emotions that cause task completion to be difficult. By leveraging Values and Mindfulness, mixed in with the rest of the six ACTr processes, your client may be more willing to try hard things and stay on task when things get hard, independently.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify values for self-directed program planning
2. Develop mindfulness skills in clients to support with the completion of challenging tasks.
3. Use ACTr to support the development of independence

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



**MINISEMINAR, Room 207 (2 Ethics CEUs)**

## **Creating Space for Other Ways of Knowing and Doing: How Indigenous Knowledge Enhances Behaviour Analytic Practice**

Laurel Rankin, MSc, BCBA, Concentric Assessment & Consultation

Jen Ashlee, MEd, BCBA, Raven Winged Consulting



Busch and Levasseur (2022) recommend that we actively engage in reconciliation. To do this meaningfully, we must move beyond reconciliation and decolonization toward indigenizing our systems and practices. This shift creates space for Indigenous knowledge to exist and thrive within our field. The framework of Two-Eyed Seeing offers a path forward by weaving together Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and doing. This presentation will explore the principles of Two-Eyed Seeing and demonstrate how this approach can guide behaviour analysts in developing more inclusive, culturally responsive, and ethically grounded practices and research.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Define the principles of Two-Eyed Seeing and explain the relevance to ethical practice, reconciliation, and indigenization within behaviour analysis.
2. Identify ways for integrating Indigenous and Western ways of knowing supports culturally responsive and equitable assessment, intervention, and supervision practices.
3. Apply the Two-Eyed Seeing framework to enhance ethical decision-making, promote respect for Indigenous knowledge systems, and strengthen inclusive behaviour analytic research and practice.

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## TRADITIONAL PAPERS, Room 208 (2 Learning CEUs)



### Effects of Activity Condition on Caregiver-Child Synchrony

Kaitlin Brunt, MA, BCBA

This study used a multielement design to conduct a descriptive assessment comparing the effects of four daily routines on synchronous engagement and caregiver use of Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Intervention (NDBI) strategies. Some connections were found between activity condition and NDBI strategies. Relationships between synchronous engagement and activity condition were harder to identify. Ecological variables within and across conditions were also reviewed for their effects on target behaviors, and some emerging patterns were seen. The purpose of assessing different forms of caregiver-child synchrony and caregiver use of NDBI strategies across activity conditions will be discussed.

### Learning Objectives

1. Describe application of multi-element design for assessment of caregiver-child interactions
2. Describe four types of synchronous engagement measures in caregiver-child interactions
3. Develop basic familiarity with NDBI-Fi assessment for the purposes of this research study



### When Helping isn't Helping: Remixing Your Approach to Caregiver Support

Rebecca Van Der Hilde, MA, MAMFT, BCBA, Resonance Autism + Family Therapy

BCBAs face a variety of challenges when trying to support caregivers, particularly in navigating the complex realities of family dynamics. This presentation will focus on evaluating what kind of help is helpful to caregivers, clinician self-regulation, and the interpretation of caregiver behavior. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging BCBAs to reflect on their own emotional responses and how these may shape interactions and decision-making. Using visuals, instruction, and storytelling to convey the information, participants also will be invited to contribute their thoughts and experiences. The goal is to promote compassionate and differentiated caregiver support, enhancing clinicians' confidence in this domain.

### Learning Objectives

1. Evaluate what kind of help is actually helpful to caregivers
2. To better understand caregiver responses to our attempts at supporting them
3. Reflect on our own emotional states and thoughts that are evoked by caregiver responses

# BC-ABA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



## MINISEMINAR, Room 209 (2 Ethics CEUs)

### **Growing Pains: Our Journey Toward Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices**

Thea Brain, MA, BCBA, Empowering. All. People. Consulting (EAP), Inc. and UBC

Kimberly Kirsch, MEd, BCBA and Bahar Moussavi, MEd, BCBA, EAP, Inc.

Natalia Modzelik, BA, EAP, Inc. and Kubo Family Learning Centre



Join four clinicians at various stages of their careers—from a first-year graduate student to professionals with over 20 years of experience—as they engage in a candid discussion about neurodiversity-affirming behaviour-analytic supports. They will share their evolving understanding of what neurodiversity-affirming service means, and whether it is truly possible within the field of applied behaviour analysis. In addition to their professional roles, all speakers are neurodivergent and/or parents of autistic children. Through personal stories, current research, and clinical case studies, they'll explore the history and evidence base of this movement. From intake to goal setting, they'll offer practical examples and specific changes made in their own clinical practice, alongside honest reflections on challenges, successes, and failures. Acknowledging that they are still learning, they hope that by sharing their imperfect journeys, they might inspire others to engage in ongoing dialogue and collaboration during this pivotal time in the practice of behaviour analysis.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Define neurodiversity, neurodiversity-affirming/supports, ableism, and assent/assent-based services and provide applied examples of each.
2. Understand the current research reflecting autistic perspectives on the potential harm of specific practices and the supports that are currently supported by autistic advocates.
3. Reflect on practical changes behaviour analysts might make to their own clinical practice from a neurodiversity-affirming perspective in alignment with our professional ethical code for behaviour analysts.



The British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis (BC-ABA) is deeply grateful and truly humbled by the sponsorship we have received for our annual conference. It is with your support that we are able to dedicate resources, provide advocacy, and offer opportunities for learning and engagement for our community of behavior analytic practitioners.

**On the pages that follow, we recognize the sponsors of BC-ABA's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.**

## Gold Level Sponsorship



Nurture Society for Learning and Development is a non-profit provider of early developmental supports for autistic children and their families. Founded in 2015, our mission is to provide outstanding, neurodiversity affirming, evidence-based developmental and behavioural support for children and families, as well as to support professional development for clinicians. We are passionate about promoting the science of development alongside the science of behaviour & learning. Our SLPs, OTs, BCBAs, and therapy assistants provide a range of supports for children, including JASPER (Joint Attention, Symbolic Play, Engagement and Regulation) and ESDM (Early Start Denver Model), and we are proud to have the first certified JASPER therapists west of Ontario. We applaud the work the BC-ABA is doing to promote inclusive, neurodiversity affirming practices, and are grateful to be part of this learning experience on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) People.



First Connections (formerly the Kindergarten Readiness Program) offers personalized, 1:1 support for preschool-aged autistic children in a caring, play-based environment. We focus on building essential skills—like communication, independence, early academics, social connection, and emotional regulation—so your child can step into the world feeling confident and supported.

Rooted in the principles of ABA, our approach is compassionate, respectful, and centred on each child's unique strengths, needs, and joy for learning. Our programs run out of three different schools throughout Surrey and, as part of our partnership with the Surrey School District, we can provide transition support as your child begins kindergarten in their own catchment school. Other programs through First Connections include Social Connections – a social skills group for elementary ages, Parent Connections – an infant/toddler parent play and learning group, and Summer Connections – our summer camp for program graduates. Visit [www.firstconnections.ca](http://www.firstconnections.ca) to find out more. You can also find us on Instagram @sbai\_firstconnections or our First Connections Facebook page.

# Silver Level Sponsorship



posAbilities -- Laurel Behaviour Support Services provides behaviour consultation to children, youth, and adults diagnosed with autism and/or intellectual disability. Through the framework of Positive Behaviour Support, we offer services across Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, the Sunshine Coast, North and South Okanagan, and many communities on Vancouver Island. Our certified clinicians also offer workshops on a range of topics: the evidence-based Triple P® positive parenting program; PEERS® social skills training for Teens and Young Adults; and Link! – Safety, Relationships and Sexuality – sexual health education. For more information, visit [www.laurel.ca](http://www.laurel.ca)



Symbiosis Pediatric Therapy is a multi-disciplinary Therapy clinic which aims to advance its vision of building an inclusive community where "every neurodivergent child is a part, not apart". Our therapy clinics are a well-respected "one-stop therapy center" with a state-of-the-art facility, setting a benchmark for evidence-based and trauma-informed services for children in the Greater Vancouver area. Symbiosis offers Centre-based, Home-Based (Therapy@Home), Online therapy (Telehealth), and Community-based therapy sessions for all the therapies, respecting the needs of the families and their other family commitments.



Welcome to Bridge Kids Behaviour Consulting, where we bridge the gap between our kids and the community! Our innovative programs, tailored for early childhood through teenage years, foster holistic development. Embracing evidence-based practices, we focus on enhancing social skills to empower learners and families. Our services are accessible seven days a week, ensuring flexibility and support when needed. We prioritize inclusivity with offerings in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese, Punjabi, and Hindi. Join Bridge Kids BC in building a foundation for brighter futures - where every child thrives and connects seamlessly with their community.



## Western Education

Western University invites you to advance your career in Applied Behaviour Analysis in two outstanding programs. Our MPEd program, accredited by ABAI, offers a flexible, online curriculum. It prepares students to apply behavior analytic principles across various domains and populations. For those seeking to elevate their expertise further, our Doctor of Education program integrates professional experience with academic rigor over three years of online study and a Dissertation-in-Practice. This program stands out with its cohort model, promoting a close-knit learning community that fosters collaboration, enriches learning, and broadens your professional network. Graduates are poised for leadership roles in academia, consultation, and program direction, qualifying for the BCBA-D credential. Join us at Western University to shape the future of ABA and make a real impact.



ABA Learning Centre has been supporting children, youth, and families since 2004. We provide evidence-based services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other complex developmental needs, including psychological assessments, behaviour consultation, social skills groups, and counselling delivered in home, centre, school, and community settings. Our multidisciplinary team is guided by a philosophy that every child is unique, every child is valued, and every child can learn. We prioritize trauma-assumed and family-centred practices, fostering an environment built on trust and respect, and are committed to a compassionate, neurodiversity-affirming approach that centres each child's voice, choice, and well-being.

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# Bronze Level Sponsorship

- Autism Support Network
- East Van Behaviour Analysis, Ltd.
- Family Centred Practices Group
- UBC Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in Autism (CIRCA)



CENTRE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH  
AND COLLABORATION IN AUTISM

Your organization  
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— BC  
— ABA  
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