Who Said ABA is Not for Adults:

Busting Myths and Building Futures

Rachel Taylor, PhD, BCBA-D

Co-Founder & Owner, Center for Applied Behavior Analysis

Is everyone excited to be here?!

CABA Consulting

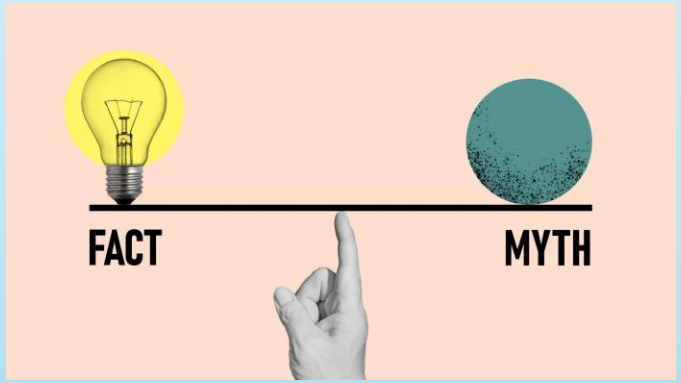
Presentation Overview

Brief Context

#1

Misconceptions

#2



The Risk-Driven Approach

#3

THE RDA

Behavior Analysis in Practice
https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-023-00812-1

ABAI

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW PAPER

Toward Socially Meaningful Case Conceptualization: The Risk-Driven Approach

Rachel S. Taylor[1] · Richard A. Colombo[1] · Michele Wallace[1] · Benjamin Heimann[1] · Ashton Benedickt[1] · Allyson Moore[1]

Accepted: 2 May 2023
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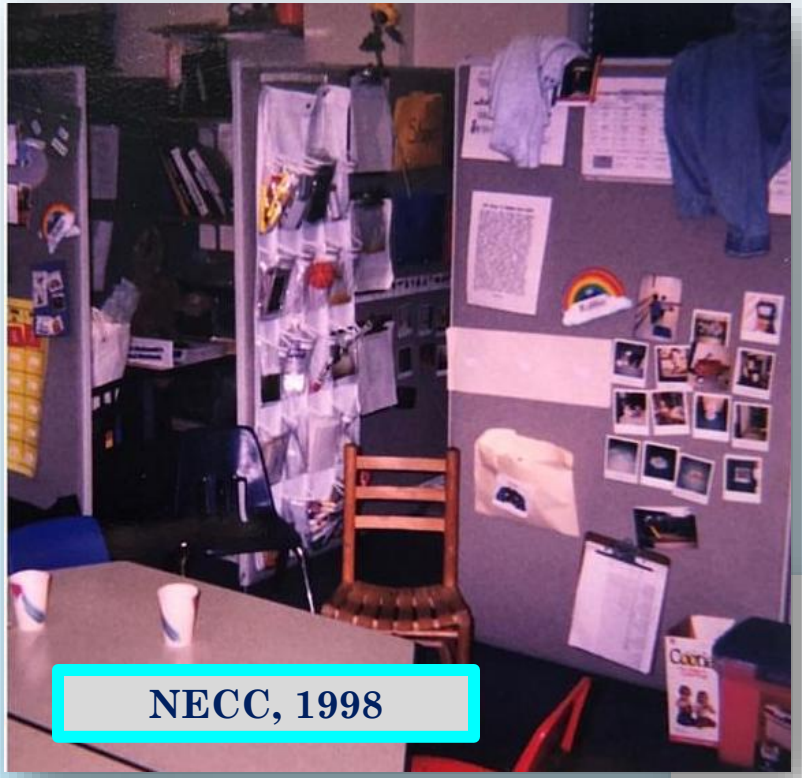
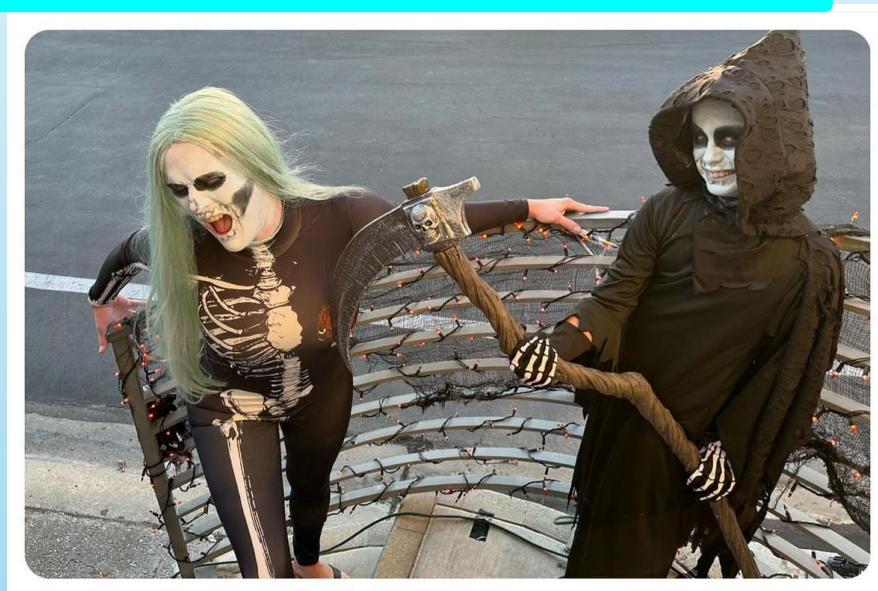


NECC, 1998

"My chosen profession has placed me in a constant state of fear."

– Me. Every. Single. Day.



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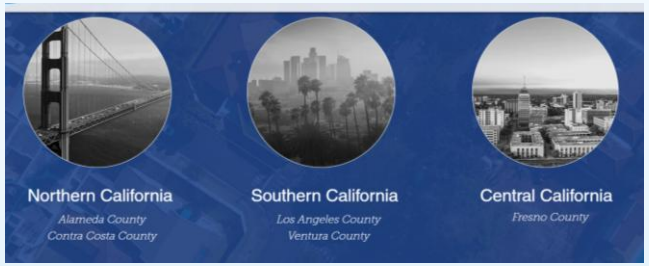
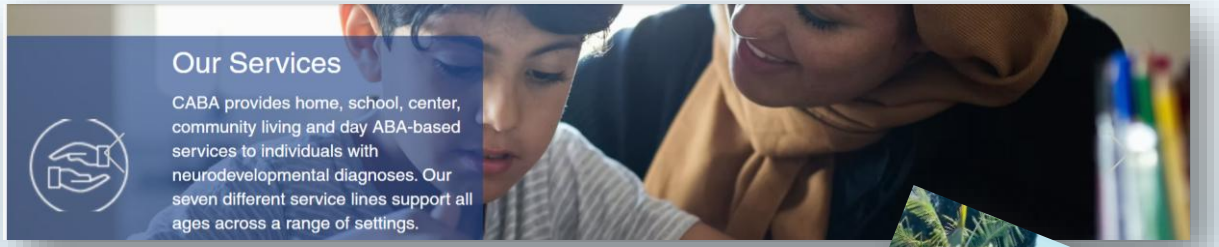




THE RDA

CABA

Center for Applied Behavior Analysis

Increasing Independence.
Improving Quality of Life.

Social Skills

EBSH (Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes)

Specialized Therapeutic Services (STS)

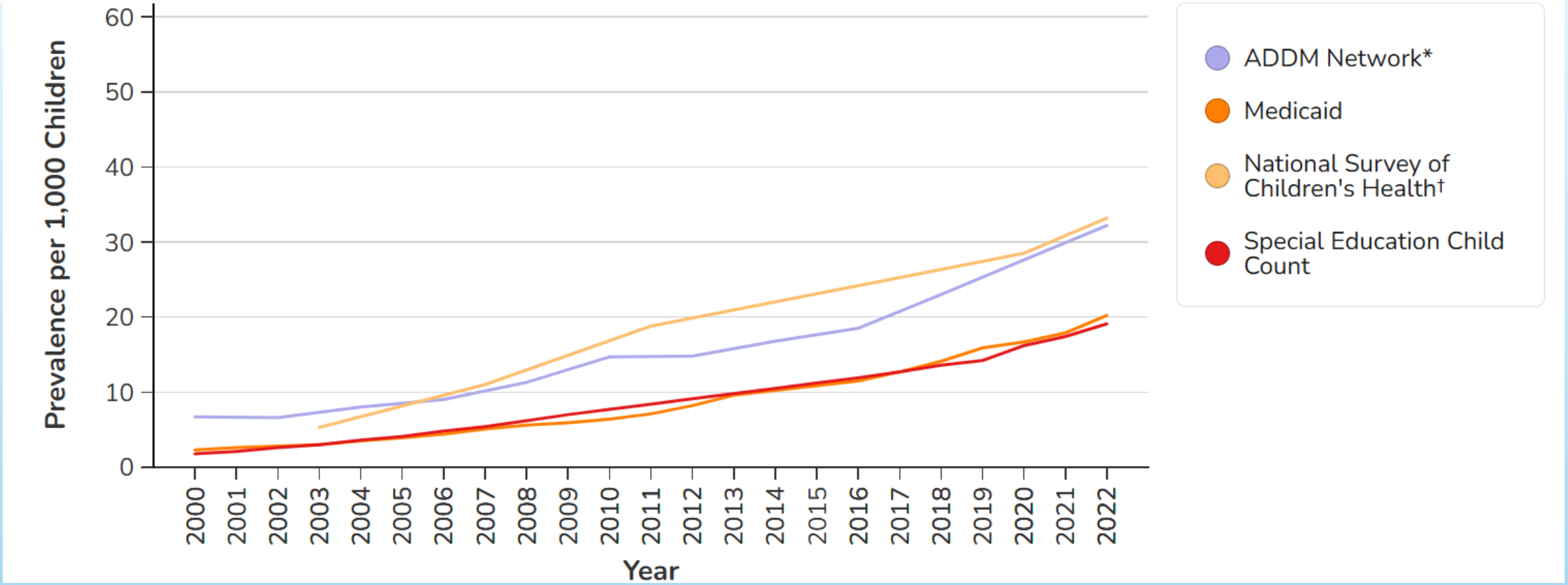
Adult Day & Individualized Services

Traditional In-Home Services

School-Based Services

	In-Home ABA	School-Based ABA	Specialized Therapeutic Services	Tailored Adult Day Services	Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes	Group Social Skills
Ages	All	3-22	3 and up	18 and up	10-18 & 19 and up	5-8 & 10-12 & 13-18
Service Setting	Home & Community	School	Home & Community	Community	Residential	Center
Service Intensity	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Low

NOTE: Recent funder policy changes = soon to be revised language (e.g., SBS vs. STS)


Prevalence per 1,000 Children
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
Year
ADDM Network*
Medicaid
National Survey of Children's Health†
Special Education Child Count

JAMA Network Open

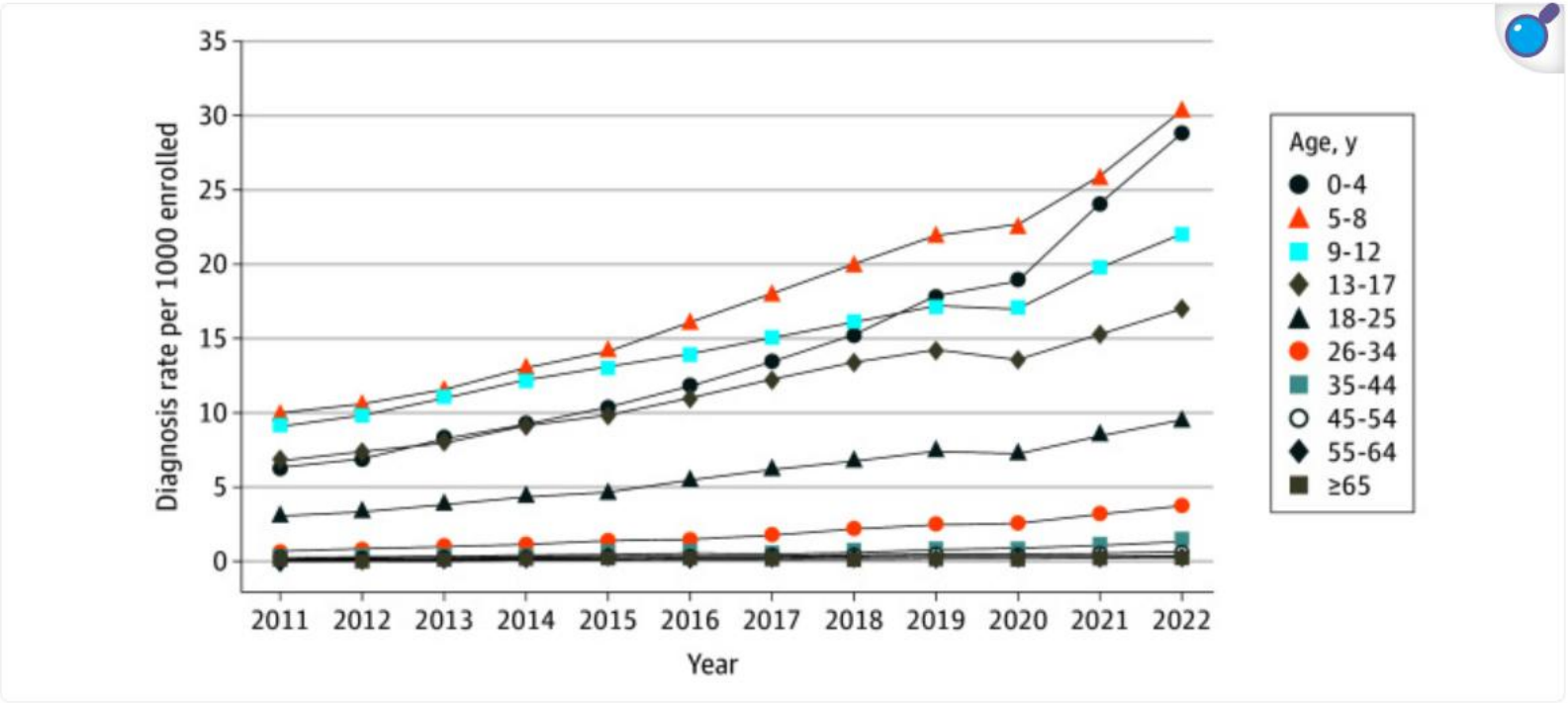
Original Investigation | Psychiatry

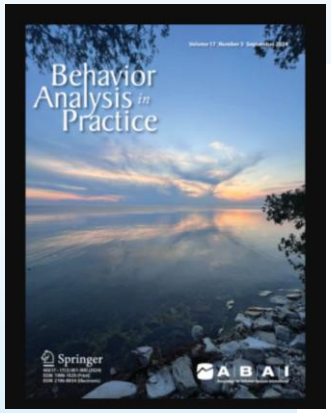
Autism Diagnosis Among US Children and Adults, 2011-2022

Luke P. Grosvenor, PhD; Lisa A. Croen, PhD; Frances L. Lynch, PhD; Ben J. Marafino, PhD; Melissa Maye, PhD; Robert B. Penfold, PhD; Gregory E. Simon, MD; Jennifer L. Ames, PhD

"…our findings indicate that the population of autistic adults in the US will continue to grow, underscoring a need for expanded health care services."

Figure 3. Annual Autism Diagnosis Rates Among Members at MHRN Sites From 2011 to 2022, Stratified by Age Group.





Behavior Analysis in Practice (2021) 14:11–19
https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-020-00424-z

ABAI
Association for Behavior Analysis International

RESEARCH ARTICLE

State of Current Training for Severe Problem Behavior: A Survey

Richard A. Colombo [1,2] · Rachel S. Taylor [1] · Jennifer L. Hammond [1]

Published online: 6 May 2020

- ✓ 43% of respondents had been assigned their first severe case without initial or ongoing support
- ✓ Only 35.2% of respondents received training on functional analyses more than one time
- ✓ Five respondents (4%) answered that most of their clients were 19 years or older.

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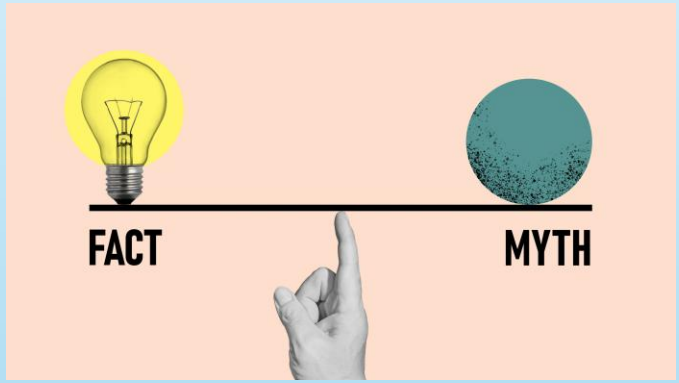

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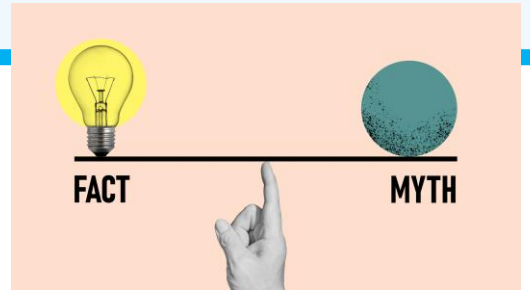

1) ABA is just for young children diagnosed with autism.

2) ABA only “works” when you stick with specific procedures.

3) The goal of ABA is to bridge the gap between chronological & functional age.

Meaning of **misconception** in English

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noun [C]

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Add to word list

an idea that is wrong because it has been based on a failure to understand a situation:

Colombo, R. & Taylor, R. (In Press) On the Status and Knowledge of Adult Services in Applied Behavior Analysis

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Who Said ABA is Not for Adults: Busting Myths & Building Futures

Psychology		ABA		Domains of Behavior Analysis	
1879	**1913**	**1968**	**1983**	**2003**	**2007-22**
	Behavioral Psychology		ABA Certification		Ryan's Law – Nationwide Insurance Reform

A Historical Perspective of ABA for Adult Learners

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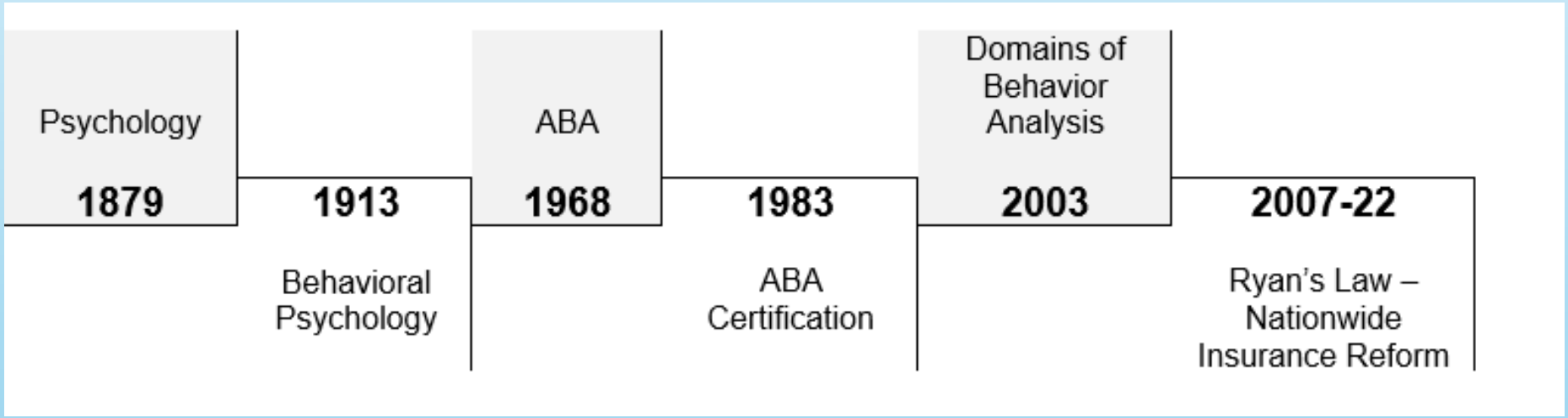
1st study applying the science of behavior analysis to improving human behavior?



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e.g., **hoarding, self-injury, inconsistent eating, skipping meals, stealing food & wearing excessive clothing** (Ayllon, 1963; Ayllon & Haughton, 1962; Ayllon & Michael, 1959).

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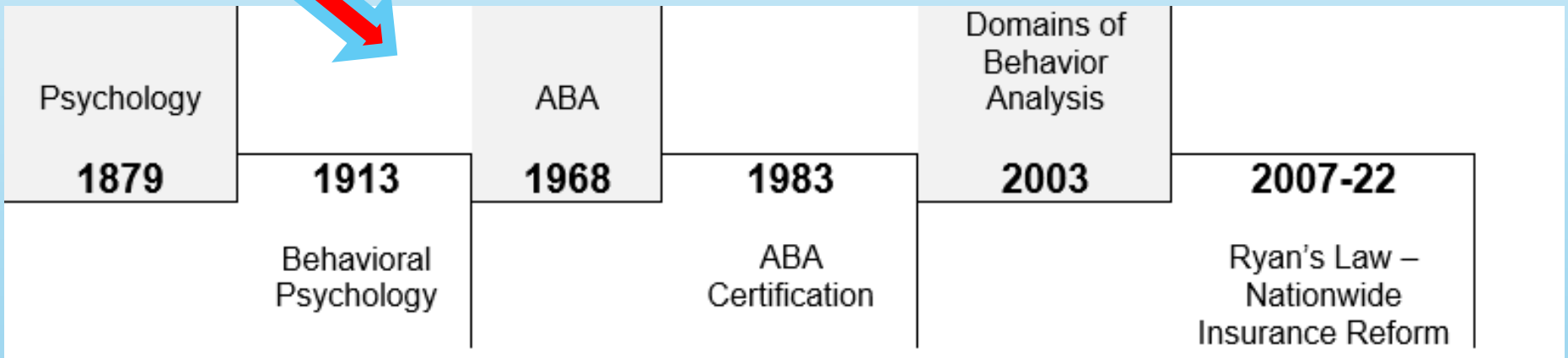

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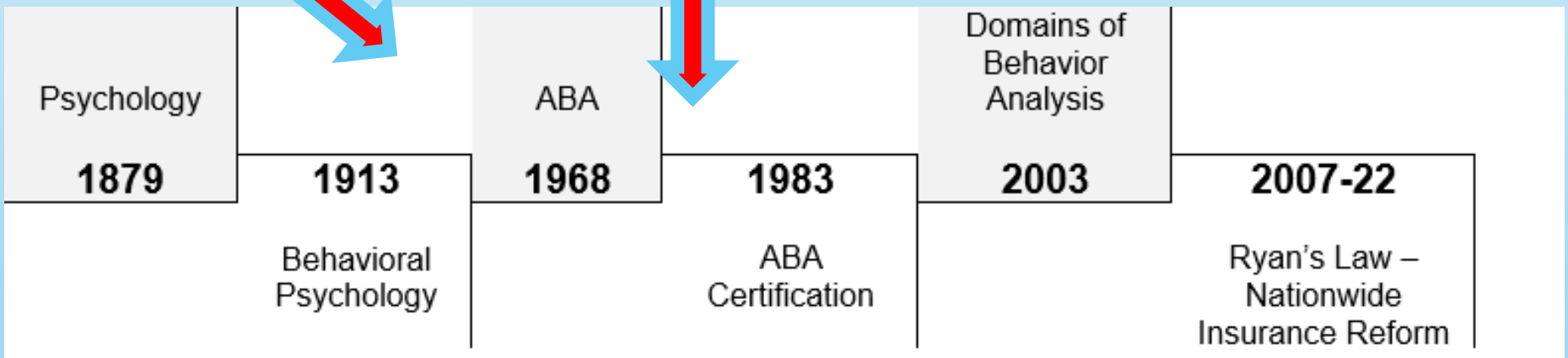

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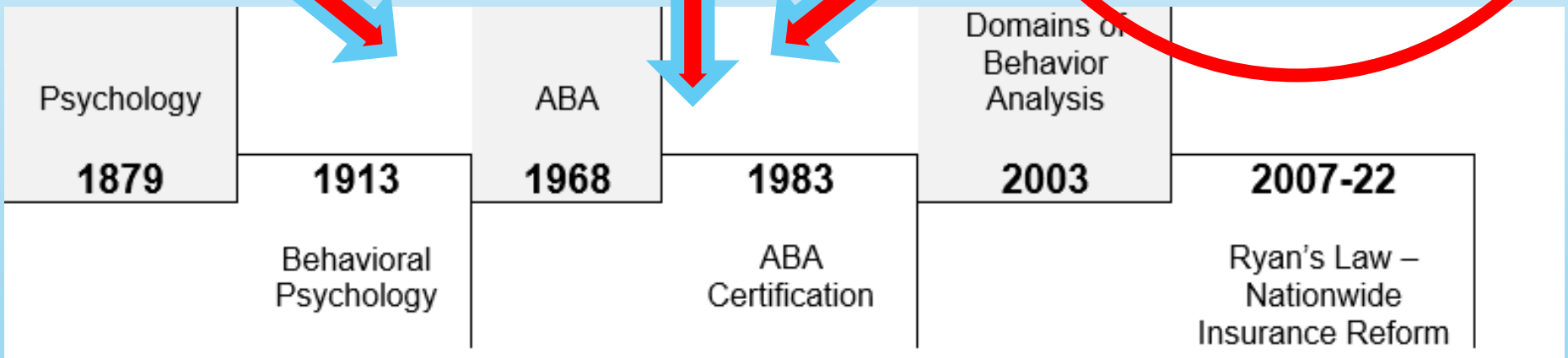

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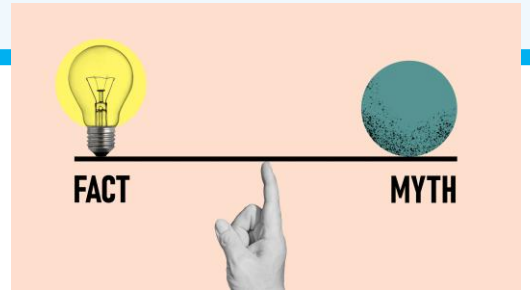

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"My child got too old for ABA services, but we loved it."

"Don't do ABA! It's all about drills, rewards & punishers."

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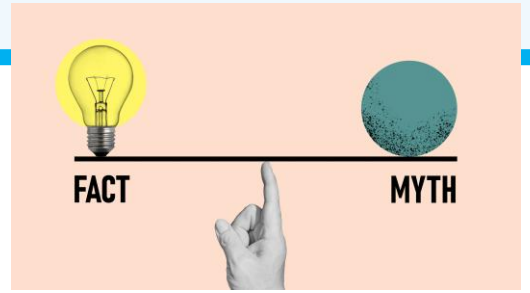
The question is NOT *"how many hours of ABA…"*

How can we ensure 24/7 improved QoL?



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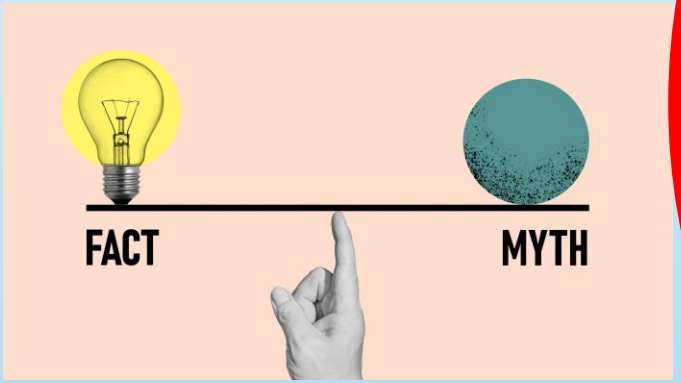

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to attend to its specific wording and function, as well as the core principles. Additionally, sta… …ied to a situation using a functional, contextualized approach that accounts for factors relevant to that situation, … variables related to diversity (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) and possible imbalances in power. In all instances of interpreting and applying the Code, behavior analysts should put compliance with the law and clients' interests first by actively working to maximize desired outcomes and minimize risk.

BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts

The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (Code) replaces the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts (2014). All BCBA and BCaBA applicants and certificants are required to adhere to the Code effective January 1, 2022.

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<u>GOAL</u> →

"X behavior will decrease & X functionally equivalent replacement behavior will increase (by X amount over X time/settings/people)"

→Will achieving this goal improve QoL?

→How are we minimizing (& identifying!) all ***<u>risks</u>*** to maximizing desired outcomes?!

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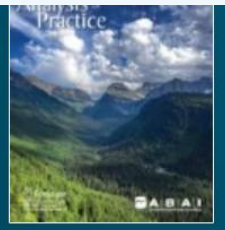
Toward Socially Meaningful Case Conceptualization: The Risk-Driven Approach



Discussion and Review Paper | Open access | Published: 24 May 2023 | (2023)

Behavior Analysis in Practice

Rachel S. Taylor, Richard A. Colombo, Michele Wallace, Benjamin Heimann, Ashton Benedickt & Allyson Moore

THE RDA

Domains, Levels & Framework

Content Contributors

- ✓ Dozen+ credentialed practitioners
- ✓ 6 doctoral-level
- ✓ Full & part-time professors
- ✓ Elected representatives
- ✓ 2 autistic practitioners & 2 parents

Abstract

The Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) *Ethics Code* states that "behavior analysts should put compliance with the law and clients' interests first by actively working to *maximize desired outcomes and minimize risk*" (emphasis added; BACB, 2020, p. 5). In turn, board certified practitioners must approach the case conceptualization process in applied behavior analysis (ABA) with respect to minimizing risks to an improved quality of life (QoL). As such, ABA services must be based on an understanding of *risk*—risk to ensuring *desired outcomes*. The purpose of the current article is two-fold (1) revisit social validity and propose features of socially meaningful case conceptualization, and (2) introduce a corresponding structured risk-driven approach to ABA service delivery. A primary aim is to equip all stakeholders with readily accessible practice-related supports—ensuring clients' rights to effective services towards an improved QoL.

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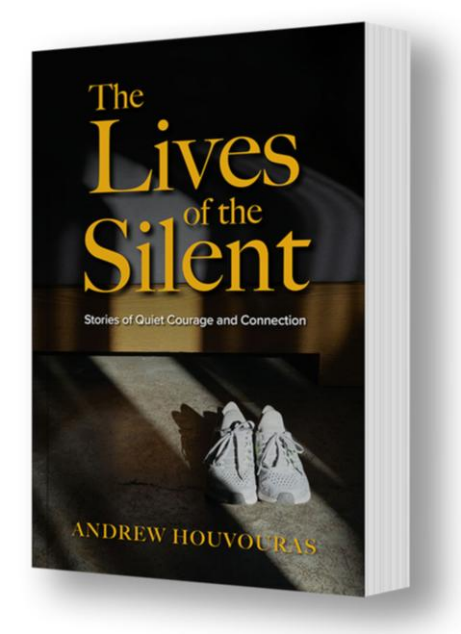
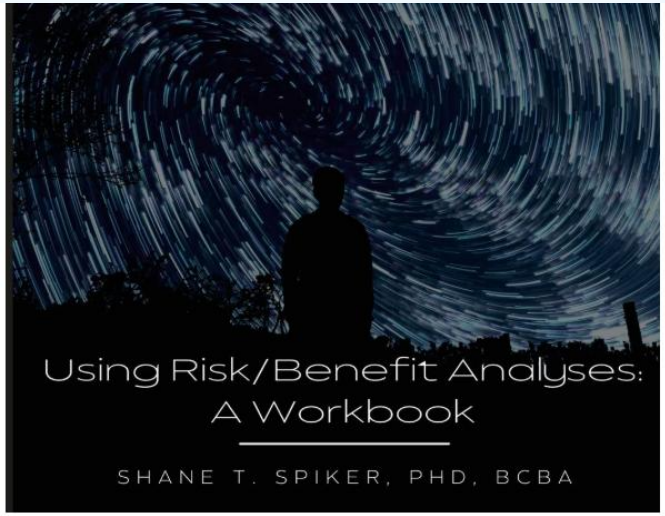
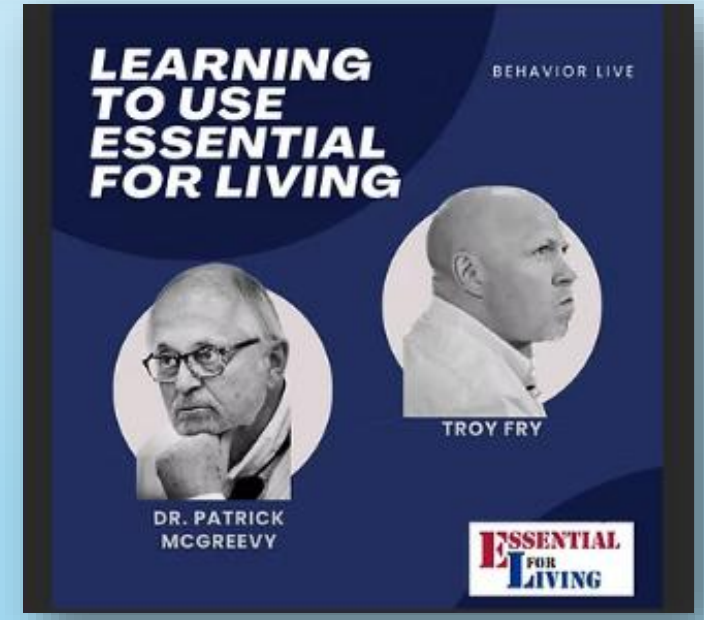
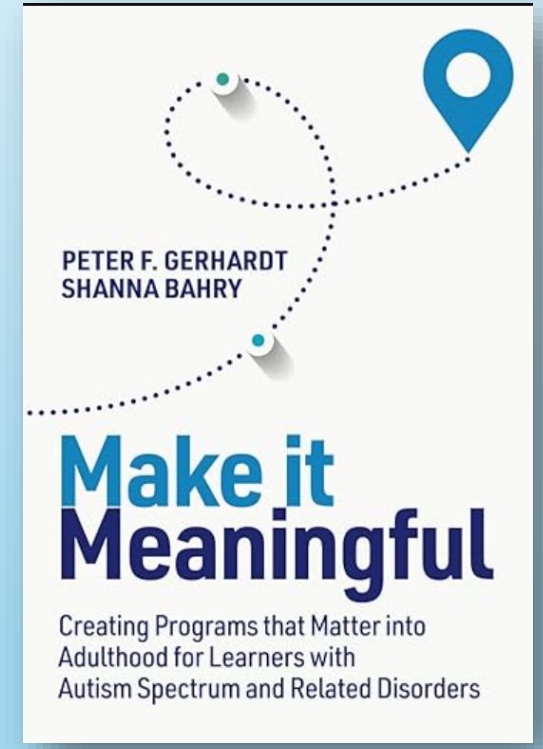




Commonly used standardized tools for assessing a client's well-being and quality of life include, but are not limited to:

- *Child Family Quality of Life* (CFQL-2) Second Edition
- Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory™ (The PedsQL™)
- The Patient Reported Outcomes Measurement System
  - (PROMIS; Autism Battery–Lifespan)
- World Health Organization Quality of Life Instruments (WHOQOL-BREF)
  - Autism Module
- Parenting Stress Index (PSI-4), Fourth Edition





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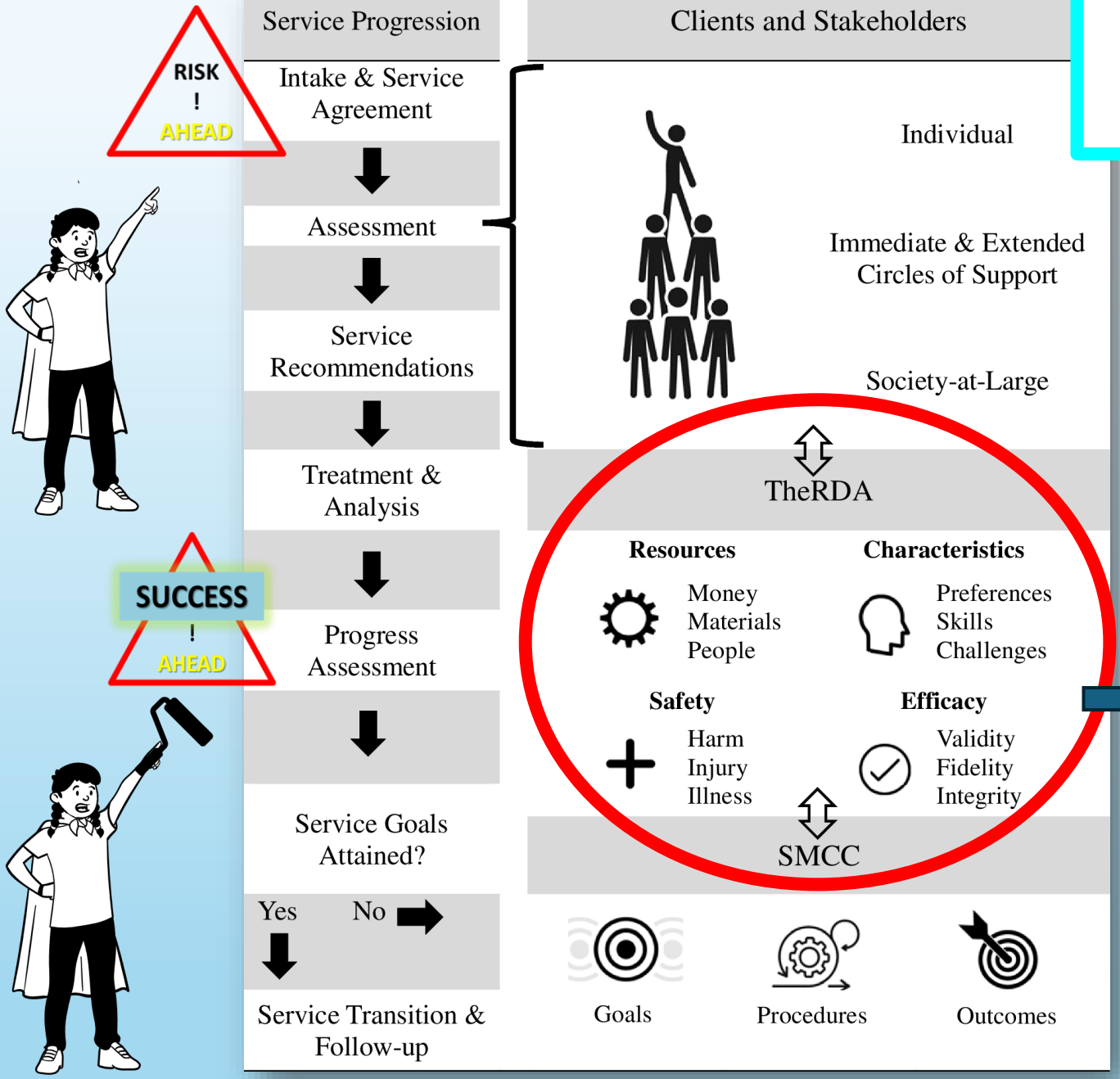

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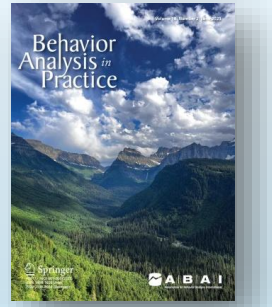

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Domains, Levels & Framework

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Table 2 TheRDA © Framework

Dimensions	Domains			
	Safety	Resources	Characteristic	Efficacy
				
Purpose	How do SAFETY concerns influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do RESOURCE deficiencies influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do presenting CHARACTERISTICS influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do threats to EFFICACY influence risk to optimal outcomes?
Definition	The condition of being protected from, or unlikely to cause, danger.	Assets necessary for a persons or organization to function effectively.	A distinguishing trait belonging to a person in context.	The propensity to produce a desired result.
Descriptors	Harm Injury Health Illness Hazards	Materials Activities Time Money People	Thoughts Actions Skills Challenges Preferences	Integrity Fidelity Validity Propensity Reliability
Measures	Safety Hazards & Injury/Illness to Self/Others – e.g., Ecological, Severity/ Physiological Effect(s) & Session Setting(s) Analyses	Session Requirements & Service Delivery Needs – e.g., Client/Staff Availability, Technology, PPE, Additional Costs (e.g., materials & activities) Analyses	Behavioral, Developmental, Psychological & Educational – e.g., Functional Behavioral, Preference, Skills & personal Wellbeing Assessments & Analyses	Implementation, Sustainability, Progress & Satisfaction Procedures – e.g., Treatment Integrity & Interobserver Agreement Measures

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Descriptors	Harm Injury Health Illness Hazard	Materials Activities Time Money People	Thoughts Actions Skills Challenges Preferences	Integrity Fidelity Validity Propensity Reliability
Measures	...ware & ...ss to ...g., Ecological, Severity/ Physiological Effect(s) & Session Setting(s) Analyses	Session Requirements & Service Delivery Needs – e.g., Client/Staff Availability, Technology, PPE, Additional Costs (e.g., materials & activities) Analyses	Behavioral, Developmental, Psychological & Educational – e.g., Functional Behavioral, Preference, Skills & personal Wellbeing Assessments & Analyses	Implementation, Sustainability, Progress & Satisfaction Procedures – e.g., Treatment Integrity & Interobserver Agreement Measures

✓ Telehealth Feasibility
✓ Reinforcing Stimuli/Activities
✓ Available Care Providers

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Table 2 TheRDA © Framework

Dimensions	Domains			
	Safety	Resources	Characteristic	Efficacy
				
Purpose	How do SAFETY concerns influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do RESOURCE deficiencies influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do presenting CHARACTERISTICS influence risk to optimal outcomes?	How do threats to EFFICACY influence risk to optimal outcomes?
Definition	The condition of being protected from, or unlikely to cause, danger.	Assets necessary for a persons or organization to function effectively.	A distinguishing trait belonging to a person in context.	The propensity to produce a desired result.
Descriptors	Harm Injury Health Illness Hazards	Materials Activities Time Money	Thoughts Actions Skills Challenges Preferences	Integrity Fidelity Validity Propensity Reliability
Measures	Effect(s) & Session Setting(s) Analyses	Client/Staff Availability, Technology, PPE, Additional Costs (e.g., materials & activities) Analyses	Behavioral, Developmental, Psychological & Educational – e.g., Functional Behavioral, Preference, Skills & personal Wellbeing Assessments & Analyses	Implementation, Sustainability, Progress & Satisfaction Procedures – e.g., Treatment Integrity & Interobserver Agreement Measures

- ✓ Functional Behavioral Assessment & Analysis
- ✓ Preference & Reinforcer
- ✓ Skills-Based & Curricular
- ✓ Psychological Wellbeing

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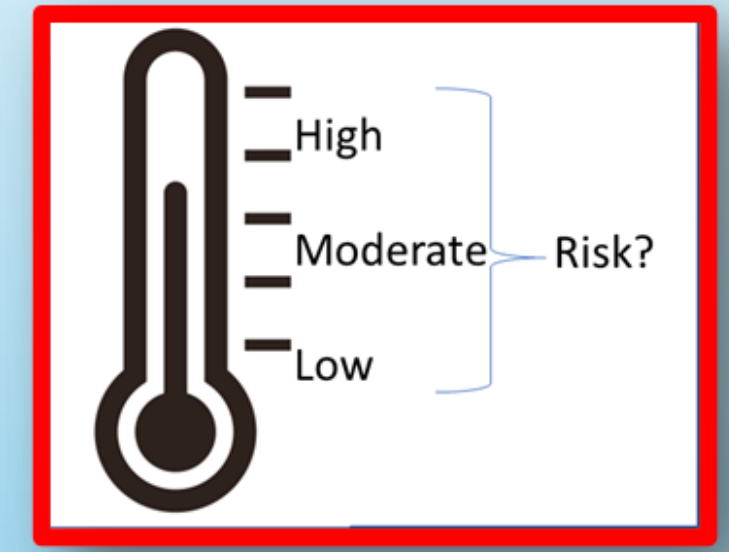
Domains Levels & Framework



TheRDA© Risk Levels

	Risk Levels		
	High	Moderate	Low
Definition	**Significant** risk concerns Risk(s)/risk indicators cannot be completely ameliorated; reliable risk mitigation strategies are extremely impeded.	**Some** risk concerns Risk(s)/risk indicators can likely be ameliorated; reliable risk mitigation strategies somewhat impeded.	**Minimal** risk concerns Risk(s)/risk indicators can likely be ameliorated; reliable risk mitigation strategies can be implemented with no barriers

Note. TheRDA definitions for high, moderate, and low levels of risk.

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On the Status and Knowledge of Adult Services in Applied Behavior Analysis

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Keywords: adults, disability, applied behavior analysis, quality of life, risk-driven

(In press) Clinical Handbook of ABA interventions for autistic learners: Research, Training, & Practice.

Misconception ***– The goal of ABA is to bridge the chronological to functional age gap.***

Practitioners are ethically obligated to engage in socially meaningful case conceptualization to improve QoL for each unique individual within their own personal context. Doing so may or may not involve focusing on reducing diagnostic symptoms and/or targeting more “age appropriate” goals.

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"….concerns the infrastructure for adult support—specifically, the number of competent and confident behavior analysts prepared to work with adults. As policies around insurance coverage and other funding sources expand to include adult services, ABA practitioners must be ready to enter this space. However, such preparation should not wait for changes in reimbursement structures. While the field does need more practitioners trained to work directly with adults, it is equally—if not more—important to have practitioners who prepare children, adolescents, and young adults for the realities of adulthood. Skills such as self-control, choice-making, self-management, flexibility with routines, and other adaptive behaviors can and should be targeted early. These skills are critical for adult success and should inform the development of socially meaningful goals in collaboration with the team. To this end, all ABA service providers should approach the case conceptualization process with respect to one guiding question:

What does this individual – child, adolescent or adult – need right now to thrive in the future?"

Colombo, R. & Taylor, R. (In Press) On the Status and Knowledge of Adult Services in Applied Behavior Analysis

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Increasing Independence. Improving Quality of Life.

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