



# SUPERVISION WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES 2.0

## MODULE 4

### Ethics & Performance Feedback



**Special Learning, Inc.**  
A Global Leader in Digital Autism Solutions

# A Note. . .

- This training program is based on the BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline (2.0) but is offered independent of the BACB.

[https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/supervisor\\_curriculum.pdf](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/supervisor_curriculum.pdf)

# Ann Beirne, M.A., BCBA



Ann Beirne, M.A. BCBA is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst with over two decades of experience working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

She has provided direct services to children and families in home environments, schools, and residential programs. Her work with this population has spanned the lifespan, including toddlers, young children, adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities.

Ms. Beirne is co-author of the textbook *Understanding Ethics in Behavior Analysis: Practical Applications* available from Routledge Publishing in 2019.

# Objectives

## Participants will:

Identify and describe components of performance feedback

Describe objectives of supervision in behavioral terms

Define effective supervision with respect to supervision and oversight

Describe methods of evaluation based on client performance

Describe methods of evaluation based on staff performance

Describe methods of evaluation of supervision fidelity

Identify and describe ways of delivering feedback

Identify and describe ethical behavior as a skill set

Identify and describe ways to teach and evaluate ethical behavior

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **5.06 Providing Feedback to Supervisees.**



a) Behavior analysts design feedback and reinforcement systems in a way that improves supervisee performance.





# Feedback

---

- Feedback is judged by its effect on supervisee behavior
- Positive feedback:
  - Does the behavior continue?
  - Does it generalize?
- Corrective feedback:
  - Is the supervisee able to correct performance
- Ultimately effective feedback is about the behavior of the supervisee, not the behavior of the supervisor

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## 5.03 Supervisory Delegation..



a) Behavior analysts delegate to their supervisees only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently, ethically, and safely.





# Ethical Behavior as a Skill Set

---

Ethical decision making must be taught to supervisee if they are to engage in ethical practice independently.

- How do we teach ethical decision making?
- Fluency with the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code
- Research skills and evaluation of research
- Self-evaluation



# Active Student Response

True or false.

Ethical skill sets come naturally

***False***



# Fluency with the Code

---

Include a review of Code elements in every meeting

- Understanding the Code is necessary in order to plan treatment and implement procedures based on these requirements
- Discussion of the Code elements

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **10.06 Being Familiar With This Code**



Behavior analysts have an obligation to be familiar with this Code, other applicable ethics codes, including, but not limited to, licensure requirements for ethical conduct, and their application to behavior analysts' work. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of a conduct standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.





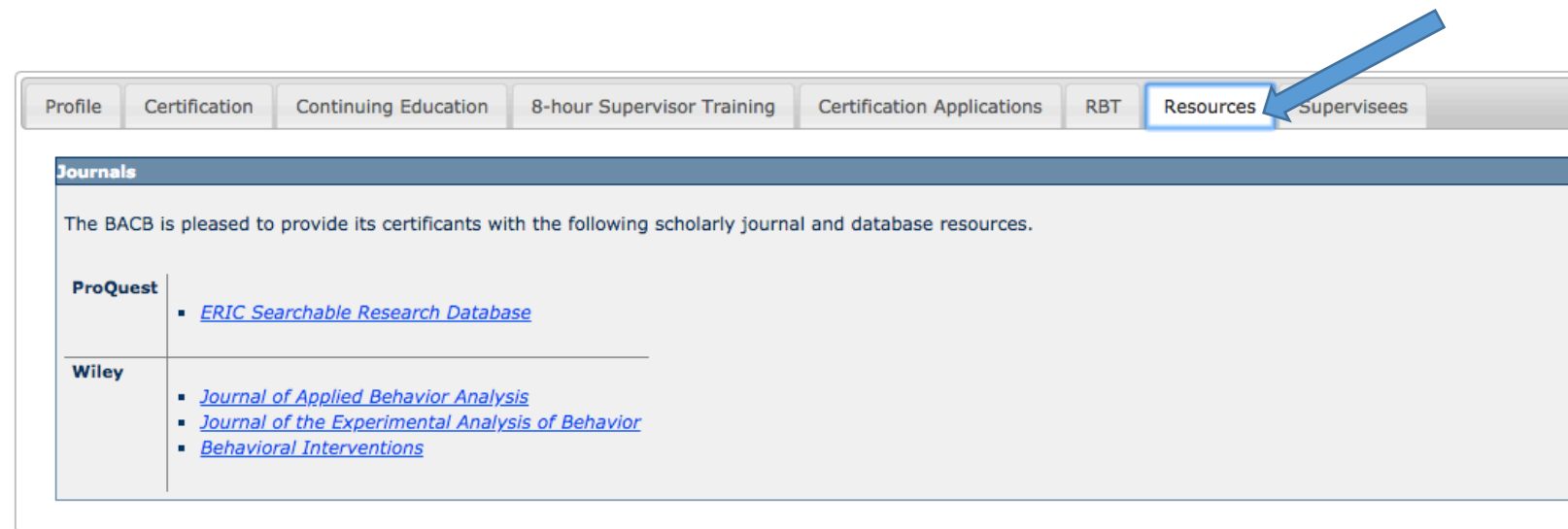
# Research Skills

---

- Behavior analysts must be capable of researching potential interventions and procedures
- Reliance on scientific knowledge means review of peer reviewed research

# Research skills

- Accessing research
- Journal articles can be access through the BACB portal



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **1.01 Reliance on Scientific Knowledge**



Behavior analysts rely on professionally derived knowledge based on science and behavior analysis when making scientific or professional judgments in human service provision, or when engaging in scholarly or professional endeavors.



# Necessary Ethical Skill Sets: RBT

RBTs are responsible for program implementation

Code elements that apply to RBTs include:

- Reliance on scientific knowledge
- Boundaries of competence
- Professional and scientific relationships
- Multiple relationships
- Maintaining confidentiality



# Finding supportive colleagues

---

- Create a collaborative environment
- Group supervision creates one opportunity for supervisees to collaborate and develop a supportive network
- Networking at professional events and conferences



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **1.03 Maintaining Competence through Professional Development**



Behavior analysts maintain knowledge of current scientific and professional information in their areas of practice and undertake ongoing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use by reading the appropriate literature, attending conferences and conventions, participating in workshops, obtaining additional coursework, and/or obtaining and maintaining appropriate professional credentials.



# Necessary ethical skill sets: BCaBA

- BCaBAs are responsible for implementation and planning of treatment but must be supervised by a BCBA
- All Code Elements are the responsibility of the BCaBA, although a BCaBA can work under the guidance of a BCBA



# Necessary ethical skill sets: BCBA

---

- All Code elements apply to BCBA practice
- BCBAs practice independently and must be knowledgeable of the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code



# Self-evaluation

---

- Supervisees must be able to analyze their own behavior and determine an ethical solution
- One helpful tactic is to ask a series of questions to determine if an action or potential action is ethical

# What is Ethical Behavior?

Ethics is often confused with morality, but in our clinical practice they are distinctly different

- Ethics:
  - Regulated by a governing body
  - In our field, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board
- Morality
  - Personally determined
  - Culturally influenced

# Essential questions to ask

- *Is this for me or is this for them?*
- *Is this socially significant and if so, to whom?*
- *We can teach this skill, but is it the best use of our time and resources to do so?*
- *Is this essential, preferable, or simply preferable to me?*
- *Is this unethical, unprofessional, or does it just make me uncomfortable?*



# Is this for me or is this for them?

---

- Encourage your supervisees to periodically ask *“Is this for me or for them?”*
- Behavior analysts must ensure that they are acting in the best interests of their clients rather than being driven by the reinforcing value of their emotional involvement.

# Active Student Response

True or false.

Ethical skill sets come naturally

***False***



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **2.0 Behavior Analysts' Responsibility to Clients.**



Behavior analysts have a responsibility to operate in the best interest of clients.



# “You care too much”

- Is there any such thing as caring “too much”?
- Emotional involvement is often the most potent reinforcer, our pride and joy in seeing our clients succeed keeps us going.
- *BUT...who is this for?*

Our emotional involvement should *inform* the work, *not overwhelm* the work

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## 1.06 Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest



(a) Due to the potentially harmful effects of multiple relationships, behavior analysts avoid multiple relationships.

(c) Behavior analysts recognize and inform clients about the potential harmful effects of multiple relationships.

(d) Behavior analysts do not accept any gifts from or give any gifts to clients because this constitutes a multiple relationship..





# Is this socially significant and if so to whom?

---

- When developing treatment plans it is essential that a behavior analyst select target behaviors responsibly.

Treatment must be *applied*, it must be socially significant to the client.

What is the value of this potential behavior change? How will it increase the client's quality of life?

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **4.02 Involving Clients in Planning and Consent**



Behavior analysts involve the client in the planning of and consent for behavior-change programs.



## 4.06 Describing Conditions for Behavior-Change Program Success



Behavior analysts describe to the client the environmental conditions that are necessary for the behavior-change program to be effective.



# Essential, preferable, or preferable to me?

- Behavior analysts must be capable of making determinations of aspects of programming that are essential and prioritizing those things that are essential rather than simply preferable

*Making this determination allows behavior analysts to be flexible in programming while still providing high quality services*

## 4.07 Environmental Conditions that Interfere with Implementation



(a) If environmental conditions prevent implementation of a behavior-change program, behavior analysts recommend that other professional assistance (e.g., assessment, consultation or therapeutic intervention by other professionals) be sought.



(b) If environmental conditions hinder implementation of the behavior-change program, behavior analysts seek to eliminate the environmental constraints, or identify in writing the obstacles to doing so.





# Unethical, Unprofessional, or Uncomfortable?

---

- The word “unethical” can often be used to describe situations that are not actually unethical but might be described in other ways

# Unethical

- ***Unethical behavior*** violates the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code
- Depending on the nature of the violation this may also be a legal issue
  - May be unintentional even if law is being violated
- *What specific Code element is being violated?*

# Unprofessional

- ***Unprofessional behavior*** interferes with the responsible and efficient fulfillment of job responsibilities
- Often ill-defined (“I know it when I see it”)
  - This leads to behavior being labeled as “unprofessional” when it does not interfere with job responsibilities

# Uncomfortable

- Behaviors in this category do not fall into unethical or unprofessional behavior, but we may find questionable for personal reasons
- *Does this behavior violate the Code?*
- *Does this behavior interfere with job performance?*

# How to Respond

- Determine if an ethical violation has been made
  - What Code element has been violated?
  - What is the risk of harm?
- Does this put the client in jeopardy?

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **7.02 Ethical Violations by Others and Risk of Harm**



(a) If behavior analysts believe there may be a legal or ethical violation, they first determine whether there is potential for harm, a possible legal violation, a mandatory-reporting condition, or an agency, organization, or regulatory requirement addressing the violation



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **7.02 Ethical Violations by Others and Risk of Harm**



(b) If a client's legal rights are being violated, or if there is the potential for harm, behavior analysts must take the necessary action to protect the client, including, but not limited to, contacting relevant authorities, following organizational policies, and consulting with appropriate professionals, and documenting their efforts to address the matter..



# How to Train Supervisees to Respond

- Begin with self-evaluation
- Ask essential questions
  - Does this violate specific elements of the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code?
  - Does this interfere with this individual's performance of their job responsibilities?
  - Is this simply unusual or does it make me uncomfortable
    - Does my discomfort interfere with my ability to perform my job?



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **7.02 Ethical Violations by Others and Risk of Harm**



(c) If an informal resolution appears appropriate, and would not violate any confidentiality rights, behavior analysts attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual and documenting their efforts to address the matter. If the matter is not resolved, behavior analysts report the matter to the appropriate authority (e.g., employer, supervisor, regulatory authority).





# Considerations

---

- What makes an informal response “appropriate”?
  - Is it likely to be successful?
  - Will it protect the client or future clients?
  - Does this represent a long-standing problem?

# Active Student Response

Multiple-choice (select the best response).

Ethical skill sets include

- a) Fluency with the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code
- b) Self-evaluation
- c) Research skills
- d) All of the above

# Objectives of supervision

- We have discussed the purpose of supervision in Module 1 but objectives should be defined somewhat differently
- What are the *behaviors* that we hope supervisees will engage in?

*These must be defined differently for supervision and oversight*

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **4.05 Describing Behavior-Change Program Objectives.**



Behavior analysts describe, in writing, the objectives of the behavior-change program to the client before attempting to implement the program. To the extent possible, a risk-benefit analysis should be conducted on the procedures to be implemented to reach the objective. The description of program objectives and the means by which they will be accomplished is an ongoing process throughout the duration of the client-practitioner relationship.



# Supervision vs. Oversight

What are our objectives?

## Supervision

- Clinically responsible practice
  - Treatment planning
  - Data based decision making
  - Training
- Ethically responsible practice

## Oversight

- Clinically responsible practice
  - Program implementation
  - Participation in data collection and training
- Ethically responsible practice

# Fulfillment of Responsibilities



# S.M.A.R.T. Goals

## ***Goals of all interventions should be:***

- *Specific*
  - Goals of supervision must address specific skills and behaviors of the supervisee
- *Measurable*
  - Definition of the behavior should be clear enough to
- *Achievable*
  - Is this the best use of our time and resources?
- *Relevant*
  - Does this behavior or skill enhance the supervisees ability to perform their job effectively and ethically?
- *Time-bound*
  - Supervisees must accomplish goals in a timely fashion



# Active Student Response

Multiple-choice (select the best response).

Goals must be

- a) Specific
- b) Measurable
- c) Achievable
- d) Relevant
- e) Time-bound
- f) All of the above

# Active Student Response

Multiple-choice (select the best response).

Goals must be

- a) Specific
- b) Measurable
- c) Achievable
- d) Relevant
- e) Time-bound
- f) All of the above

# Supervision of BCBAs<sup>®</sup> and BCaBAs<sup>®</sup>

## *Clinically responsible practice*

- Can be aligned with BCBA<sup>®</sup> coursework as well as job responsibilities
- Must include the necessary tasks of behavior analysts
- Fourth/ Fifth Edition Task Lists<sup>®</sup>
  - Philosophical underpinnings
  - Behavioral concepts and principles
  - Measurement and data display
  - Experimental design
  - Assessment
  - Behavior-change procedures
  - Selecting interventions
  - Program implementation
  - Supervision and management of personnel

# Being S.M.A.R.T. About Clinical Responsibility

- *Specific*

There should be objective descriptions of all Task List items, as well as a task analysis for each job responsibility

- *Measurable*

Task analysis should include objective and measurable description of job responsibilities

- *Achievable*

Supervisees must have the necessary prerequisite skill and the time and resources necessary

- *Relevant*

Supervision goals should be relevant to the current Task List as well as the supervisee's personal and professional goals

- *Time-bound*

Supervisees must develop skills within a certain time frame



# Being S.M.A.R.T. About Ethical Responsibility

---

- Ethical behavior can also be operationalized
- Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts<sup>®</sup>
  - This is a list of behavior that behavior analysts engage in or avoid engaging in

# Supervision of RBTs

## ***Clinically responsible practice***

- Aligned with job responsibilities
- Registered Behavior Technician Task List<sup>®</sup>
  - Measurement of behavior
  - Assessment of behavior (data collection)
  - Implementation of skill acquisition programs with clients
  - Implementation of behavior reduction programs with clients
  - Documentation and reporting
  - Professional conduct



# Being S.M.A.R.T. About Clinical Responsibility

---

## Competency Assessment

- The successful completion of this assessment ensures that RBTs® can complete the job responsibilities generally expected of them

# Being S.M.A.R.T. About Ethical Responsibility

- Ethical responsibilities for RBTs<sup>®</sup> are less extensive than those for BCBAs<sup>®</sup> and BCaBAs<sup>®</sup> but they are not necessarily intuitive
- Because there is no specific coursework required, this can still be somewhat complicated
- Here we highlight some of the most challenging aspects of the Code for those outside the field and how to present them
  - *Responsible conduct*
    - Includes multiple relationships
  - *Responsibility to clients*
    - Includes gifts, confidentiality
  - *Competence and service delivery*



# Levels of “Goodness” (Beirne & Sadavoy 2019)

## Legal

Behavior follows the laws and legal requirements of the workplace

## Ethical

Behavior follows the elements of the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts<sup>®</sup>

## Moral

Behavior follows an individual’s sense of right and wrong; influenced by culture and learning history

## Professional

Behavior allows for the efficient and effective fulfillment of job responsibilities

# Active Student Response

True or false.

Ethics and morality are interchangeable terms

***False***

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## 9.01 Conforming with Laws and Regulations.



Behavior analysts plan and conduct research in a manner consistent with all applicable laws and regulations, as well as professional standards governing the conduct of research. Behavior analysts also comply with other applicable laws and regulations relating to mandated-reporting requirements.



# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **10.06 Being Familiar with This Code.**



Behavior analysts have an obligation to be familiar with this Code, other applicable ethics codes, including, but not limited to, licensure requirements for ethical conduct, and their application to behavior analysts' work. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of a conduct standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct



# The Challenge With Ethics

- Because “ethical behavior” refers to our Code, what is considered “ethical” may differ from what a supervisee considers “moral”
- Be sure to teach not only doing the right thing but doing the right thing *according to the Ethics Code*

# Essential Questions

- In order to address this supervisees should be taught to ask themselves:
  - *Is this for me or is this for them?*
  - *Is this socially significant and if so, to whom?*
  - *We can teach this skill, but is it the best use of our time and resources to do so?*
  - *Is this essential, preferable, or simply preferable to me?*
  - *Is this unethical, unprofessional, or does it just make me uncomfortable?*

# Active Student Response

Fill-in-in the blank

1. The ethical requirements for RBTs® less extensive.

# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **1.06 Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest.**



(a) Due to the potentially harmful effects of multiple relationships, behavior analysts avoid multiple relationships.

(b) Behavior analysts must always be sensitive to the potentially harmful effects of multiple relationships. If behavior analysts find that, due to unforeseen factors, a multiple relationship has arisen, they seek to resolve it.





# *ETHICS TOUCHPOINT*

## **1.06 Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest.**



(c) Behavior analysts recognize and inform clients about the potential harmful effects of multiple relationships.

(d) Behavior analysts do not accept any gifts from or give any gifts to clients because this constitutes a multiple relationship.



# What is a “Multiple Relationship”?

## ***Multiple relationship***

- A multiple relationship is one in which a behavior analyst is in both a behavior-analytic role and a non-behavior-analytic role simultaneously with a client or someone closely associated with or related to the client.

# Multiple Relationships

## Types of Multiple Relationships

### At the Start

- Clinician/Family Member
- Clinician/Co-Worker
- Clinician/Friend

### Over Time

- Clinician/Family friend

# Avoiding “Multiple Relationships”

*Those that are present at the start*

## **DO**

- Clarify the relationship
- Act in accordance with that relationship
  - *Give advice*
  - *Offer encouragement*
  - *Make referrals*

## **DON'T**

- Take on clients that you have a previous relationship with
- Assume that you are the only person who can do the job

# Avoiding “Multiple Relationships”

*Those that develop over time*

## **DO**

- Clarify the nature of the relationship
  - *This may need to be repeated over time*
- Ask “Is this for me or for them?”
- Set reasonable limits on your time and availability
- Develop relationships with colleagues

## **DON'T**

- Accept or give gifts from clients
- Attend clients' family events or accompany family members to events outside sessions

# Active Student Response

Fill-in-in the blank

1. Providing services to your nephew would be a *multiple relationship*.

# Ways to Evaluate Supervision

## ***Client Performance***

- Is the client making adequate progress?

## ***Staff Performance***

- Is the supervisee achieving the goals of supervision in a timely manner?
- Is their engagement in the supervision process as expected?
  - *Taking initiative*
  - *Response to feedback*
  - *Seeking out supervision*
  - *Punctuality and completion of assignments*

## ***Supervision Fidelity***

- Are the requirements of the supervision process being met?
- Are supervisee and supervisor adhering to the contract?

# Client performance

## Evaluation of Supervision Through Client Performance

### Advantages

- Focused on client goals and outcomes
- Addresses client satisfaction, focuses on social significance of intervention

### Disadvantages

- There may be extraneous factors that affect client performance





# Client Performance

---

Objective measures of client behavior addressed by services

- Graphic display of client performance

Interviews and direct observations of client and caregiver satisfaction with services

- Social validity
- Satisfaction questionnaires

Matching observations and evaluation methods to the client goals and setting

# Client Performance: Considerations

Client may progress at different rates

- In addition to monitoring progress in skill development, supervisors should monitor progress in programming
  - *Are changes being made?*
  - *Are the right questions being asked?*
  - *Are the client's needs being addressed?*

# Staff performance

## Evaluation of Supervision Through Staff Performance

### Advantages

- May be more informative if there are confounding variables with client performance

### Disadvantages

- Does not address client performance



# Staff Performance

---

Objective measures of staff behavior

- Should be done regularly
- Should address area of the Task List as well as job responsibilities

# Supervision Fidelity

## ***Specification of supervisory performance criteria***

The expectation must be clear to the supervisor and be made clear to the supervisee

- *Is supervision implemented consistently?*
  - Hours must be tracked consistently
- *Are supervision goals being met?*
  - Goals should be S.M.A.R.T. and relevant to work experience
- *Is the supervisee gaining skills in the necessary areas?*

# Supervision Fidelity

## Evaluation of Supervision Through Supervision Fidelity

### Advantages

- Promotes long-term generalization of skills

### Disadvantages

- Self-observation must be handled carefully

# Self-Observation of Performance

Most people are not good at self-evaluation.

Dunning Kruger Effect (Dunning, 2011)

- Top performers tend to underestimate knowledge
- Bottom performers tend to overestimate it

*Make sure that the specific tasks are clearly and objectively defined to avoid issues with subjective self-evaluation*

# Self Management

*The goal of supervision and oversight should be for the supervisee to perform necessary task on their own*

## **Self management**

- Self-monitoring
  - *Individual observes their own behavior and records*
- Self-evaluation
  - *Comparison with a given standard*
- Self-reinforcement
  - *Delivery of consequences. This can also refer to accessing reinforcers from someone else*



# Encouraging Self Management

The goal of supervision and oversight should be for the supervisee to perform necessary task on their own

- Oversight: job responsibilities
- Supervision: execution of the responsibilities of a BCBA<sup>®</sup> or BCaBA<sup>®</sup>
- Ultimately both types of supervisees must show some level of independence in these responsibilities

# Encouraging Self Management

- *Self Monitoring*
  - Procedural integrity checklists
  - Allow access to these for independent checks
- *Self-Evaluation*
  - What is the standard?
  - Encourage collaboration
  - Observation of peers
- *Self Reinforcement*
  - Can your supervisee go to you to tell you what is going well?
  - Do you share in celebrations?
  - Can your supervisee celebrate the good days?

# Active Student Response

Multiple-choice (select the best response).

Necessary elements of self management include

- a) Self monitoring
- b) Self-reinforcement
- c) Consistent reliability checks
- d) Both a and b but not c
- e) Both a and c but not b

# Active Student Response

Multiple-choice (select the best response).

Necessary elements of self management include

- a) Self monitoring
- b) Self-reinforcement
- c) Consistent reliability checks
- d) Both a and b but not c
- e) Both a and c but not b

# References

- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2012) *Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline*. Littleton, CO.
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2012). *BCBA/BCaBA 4th Edition Task List*. Littleton, CO
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2017). *BCBA/BCaBA 5th Edition Task List*. Littleton, CO
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2018). *BCBA/BCaBA Experience Standards Monthly System*. Littleton, CO
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2018). *RBT® Competency Assessment Packet: Requirements*. Littleton, CO
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2018). *RBT® Ethics Code*. Littleton, CO
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2013). *Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) Task List*. Littleton, CO
- Beirne and Sadavoy, Understanding Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis: Practical Applications. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. 2019.
- Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2009). The power of SMART goals: Using goals to improve student learning. Solution Tree Press.
- Dunning, D. (2011). The Dunning–Kruger effect: On being ignorant of one's own ignorance. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 44, pp. 247-296). Academic Press.
- Van Houten, R., Axelrod, S., Bailey, J. S., Favell, J. E., Foxx, R. M., Iwata, B. A., & Lovaas, O. I. (1988). The right to effective behavioral treatment. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 21(4), 381-4.