


TRAUMATIC STRESS INSTITUTE

## Trauma-Assumed Behavior Analysis for People with IDD: From Trauma-Inducing to Trauma-Reducing



**Greg Hanley, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA**  
FTF Behavioral Consulting

**May 16, 2023**

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TRAUMATIC STRESS INSTITUTE

## Traumatic Stress Institute

**Mission:** To foster the transformation of organizations and service systems to trauma-informed care through the delivery of whole-system consultation, professional training, coaching, and research.

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TRAUMATIC STRESS INSTITUTE

## Core Services

**Whole System Change Model to Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)**

- ❖ Internationally-recognized model for changing systems to TIC

**Trauma-Informed Care Research**

- ❖ Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC). The most widely used validated measure of TIC currently available

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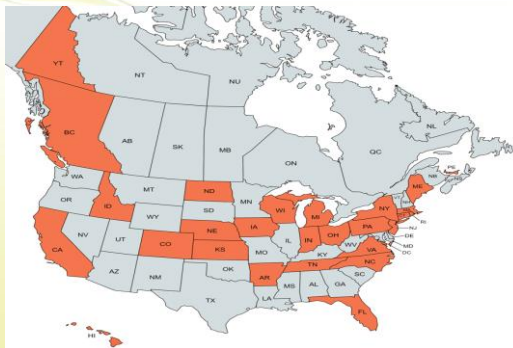
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## 90 TSI Client Agencies in 23 US States and 3 Canadian Provinces



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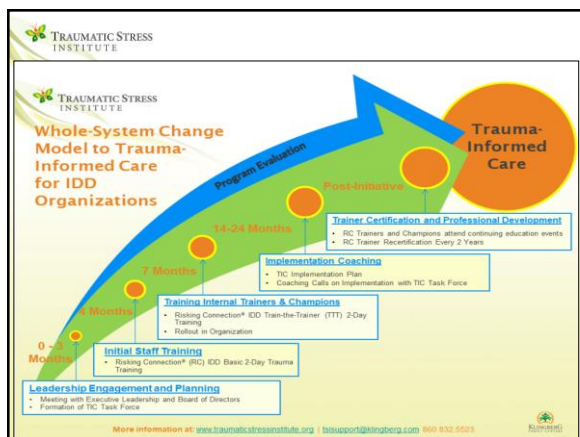
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## For information about Trauma-Informed Care for IDD Organizations

[Click Here](#)

[Contact a Whole-System Change Model Consultant](#)

Contact Steve Brown, Psy.D.  
[steveb@klingberg.com](mailto:steveb@klingberg.com)

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## Trauma-Assumed Behavior Analysis for People with IDD From Trauma-Inducing to Trauma Reducing

Gregory P. Hanley



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### The Still Present Problem

- Many “solutions” often exacerbate or prolong the problem
  - Behavior modification
  - Behavior medication
  - Behavior mollification
  - Behavior micro-analysis
  - Behavior remediation without developing a replacement repertoire

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**Today's ABA  
is Compassionate  
and Trauma-assumed**

*Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*  
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 2021, 99(9), 1–22  
Toward trauma-informed applications of behavior analysis  
Adithyan Rajaraman  
Department of Psychology, UMBG  
Jennifer L. Austin  
School of Psychology, University of South Wales, UK  
Holly C. Gover  
The Lyceum School  
Anthony P. Cannellieri  
FTF Behavioral Consulting, Inc.  
David R. Donnelly  
Department of Education, Weber University  
Gregory P. Hanley  
Department of Psychology, Western New England University

**Freedom from Problem  
Behavior is possible with  
Today's ABA**

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Today's ABA?

1. Starts with asking question  
(i.e., interviewing caregivers and clients)

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Today's ABA?

2. Creating a context in which the probability of problem behavior is zero.

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Today's ABA?

2. Creating a context in which the probability of problem behavior is zero.

Create a non-threatening context that promotes:

- content to **happy** affect,
- **relaxed** to jazzed demeanor,
- **engagement** in preferred activities,
- social bids towards teacher

**Today's ABA  
teaches from joy**

- not through escalated  
problem behavior -

**HRE**

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### Today's ABA?

1. Interviewing caregivers and clients
2. Creating a context in which probability of problem behavior is zero

### 3. Empowering the learner

Progressively introduce a challenging situation and reinforce first instance of PB, protest response, or communication

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### Today's ABA?

1. Interviewing caregivers and clients
2. Creating a context in which probability of problem behavior is zero
3. Empowering the learner

### 4. Shaping Skills

Communication, Toleration, & Cooperation

The main drivers of behavior change should be prompting and differential reinforcement not extinction or punishment

**Making  
Peaceful  
Progress**

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### Today's ABA?

1. Interviewing caregivers and clients
2. Creating a context in which probability of problem behavior is zero
3. Empowering the learner
4. Shaping skills

### 5. Then assessing/teaching everything else,

and continually allowing the behavior of the client to teach whether your decisions are just

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**Practical Functional Assessment**  
Understanding Problem Behavior Prior to its Treatment

Home Blog Publications Implementation Antecedents Interventions For Parents Contact Us

### A Perspective on Today's ABA from Dr. Hanley

gheney15 | June 10, 2021

This is today's ABA when starting therapy with an autistic person, especially one who routinely engages in problem behavior.

Today's ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) is about continually learning about the preferences of the autistic person being served so that preferred learning content can be developed as a means to developing skills that can be appreciated by the autistic person as well as others. What follows is a guide for those implementing today's ABA, but written for those who are curious about what today's ABA involves.

**Learn by listening:**

Ask the autistic person and/or ask people who know and love the autistic person about how he/she/they loves and uses the ways to receive the flow, presence, and influence towards activities, objects, behaviors, contexts, and especially social interactions. Ask that person about the autistic person's voice. How do they routinely communicate? And especially, what are they communicating with their problem behavior? In other words, today's ABA starts with asking questions, listening, and learning about the autistic person by people who know and love the autistic person.

**Learn by creating joy:**

From the conversation, put together a context in which the autistic person will be happy, relaxed, and

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[A Perspective on Today's ABA](#)

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What is Essential in Today's ABA?

**Safety, televisibility, and rapport are prioritized**

**Values**

**Procedures**

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Consistent with *Today's ABA* and proven effective for addressing **severe problem behavior**:

**PFA & SBT**

- **Practical Functional Assessment and Skill-Based Treatment**
  - Shown to produce socially meaningful outcomes
  - Shown to be a socially valid and generally applicable process
  - Shown to be effective without coercion or physical management

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### Aim of a Practical Functional Assessment

\*NOT to identify the function of a problem behavior\*

Aim is to:

- a) Bring joy
- b) Turn on PB
- c) Turn off PB

\*PFA: Interview, Design, Analysis, Reflection: 90-120min total

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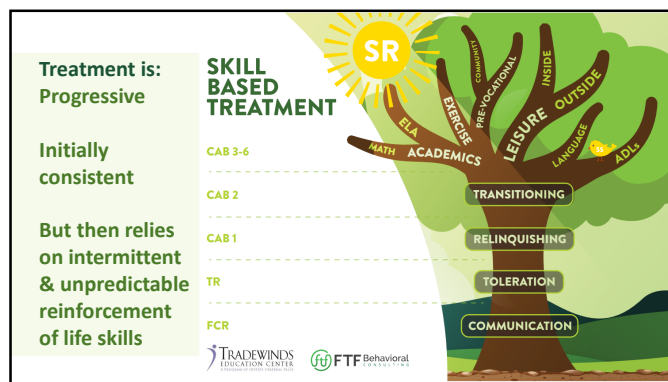
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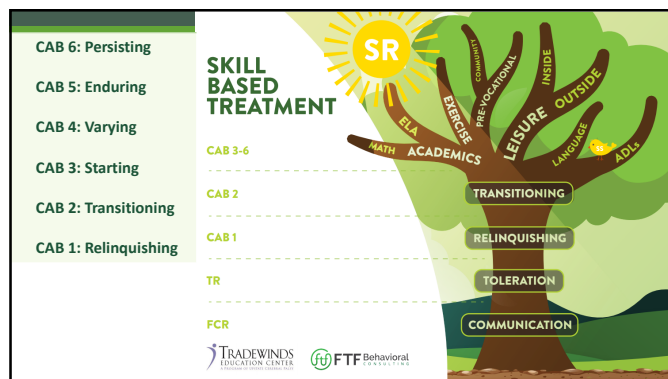
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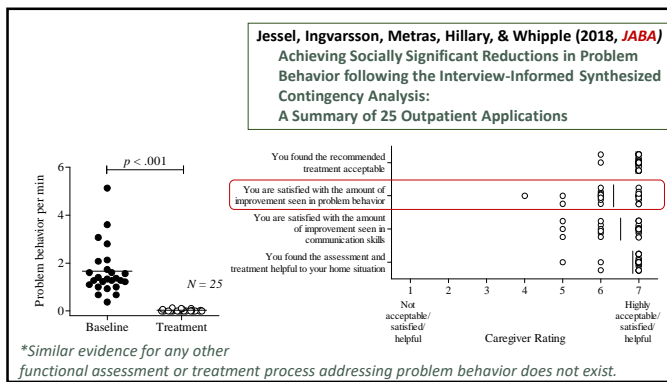
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<b>PFA: Practical Functional Assessment</b> <b>SBT: Skill-Based Treatment</b>	<i>Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis</i> <small>Published online in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/jaba.1200</small> <b>PRODUCING MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENTS IN PROBLEM BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM VIA SYNTHESIZED ANALYSES AND TREATMENTS</b> <small>Gregory F. Hodel, C. Sandy Jit, Nicholas R. Vosseler, and Laura A. Hanrahan</small> <small>Western Michigan University</small> <b>(2014) JABA</b>
<b>Socially validated outcomes demonstrated with PFA and SBT</b>	Santiago, Hanley, Moore, & Jin (2016) <i>JADD</i> Strand & Eldevik (2017) <i>Beh. Int.</i> Herman, Healy, & Lydon (2018) <i>Dev. Ne.</i> Jessel, Ingvarsson, Metras, Hillary, & Whipple (2018) <i>JABA</i> Beaulieu, Clausen, Williams, & Herscovitch (2018) <i>BAP</i> Taylor, Phillips, & Gertzog (2018) <i>Beh. Int.</i> Rose & Beaulieu (2019) <i>JABA</i> Ferguson, Leaf, Cihon, Milne, Leaf, McEachin, & Leaf (2020) <i>ETC</i> Rajaraman et al. (2021) <i>BAP</i> Review by Coffey et al. (2021) <i>Beh. Int.</i> Lundy, Healy et al. (2021) <i>EJoBA</i> Fiani & Jessel (2022) <i>E&amp;TC</i> Staubitz, Staubitz et al. (2022) <i>JABA</i>
<b>The process has strong and unprecedented treatment utility</b>	

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What is required for a Meaningful Outcome?

**Personalized & Synthesized Reinforcement Contingencies**

and

a progressively developing, skill-based treatment process relying on unpredictable and intermittent reinforcement

and

**A proper plan for addressing problem behavior that resurges**

SR

SKILL BASED TREATMENT

LEARNING OUTCOMES

ACADEMICS

TRANSITIONING

RELINQUISHING

TOLERATION

COMMUNICATION

THOMPSON'S TRACKING SYSTEM

FTF Followup

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*During Skill-Based Treatment....*  
*How to respond to mild problem behavior*

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*During Skill-Based Treatment....*  
*How to respond to mild problem behavior*

- (a) Immediate and empathetic response
  - (b) Encourage persistence
  - (c) Adjust criteria for SR; reinforce next bit of cooperation/achievement
- = partial reinforcement of MPB; use of televisable extinction

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*During Skill-Based Treatment....*  
*How to respond to mild problem behavior*

- (a) Immediate and empathetic response
- (b) Encourage persistence or offer a choice to  
go to reinforcement  
or  
persist in challenge

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**During Skill-Based Treatment....****How to respond to severe problem behavior**


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**During Skill-Based Treatment....****How to respond to severe problem behavior**

- (a) Create space, and provide an immediate and empathetic response
- (b) Provide access to all reinforcers; yes, reinforce the SPB
- (c) Extend the SR period a bit, no trials until HRE
- (d) Reflect on that which occasioned the SPB
- (e) Change procedures
  - Add in prompt, change expectation, reconsider learning target in general

**= full reinforcement of SPB**

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**The Core Components of Trauma-Informed Care****Safety**

Ensuring physical and emotional safety

**Choice**

Individual has choice and control

**Collaboration****Definitions**

Making decisions with the individual and sharing power

**Trustworthiness**

Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries

**Empowerment**

Prioritizing empowerment and skill building

Chart by the Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (2015), University of Buffalo

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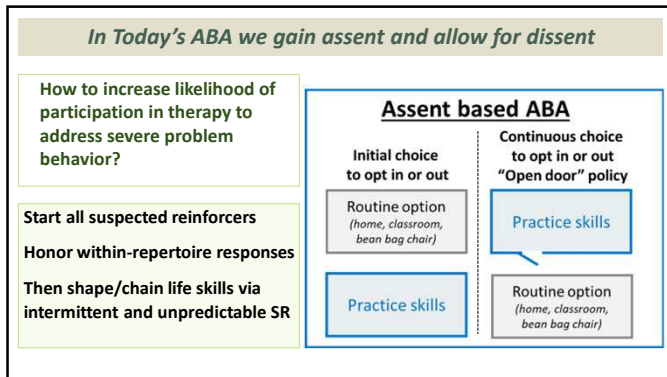
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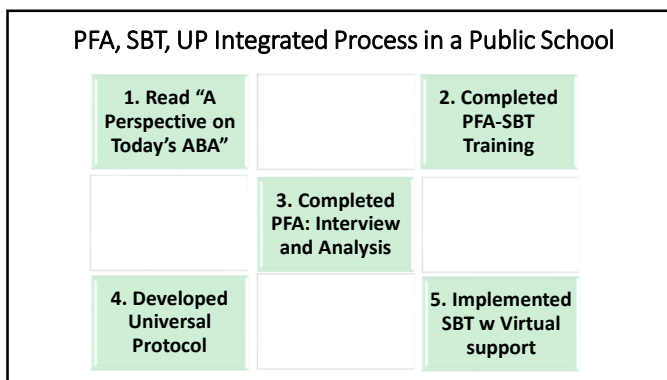
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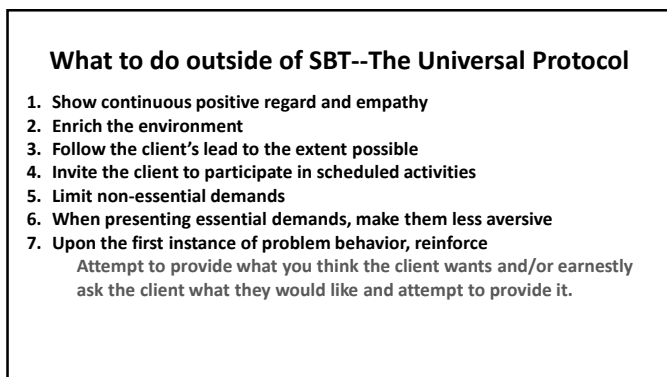
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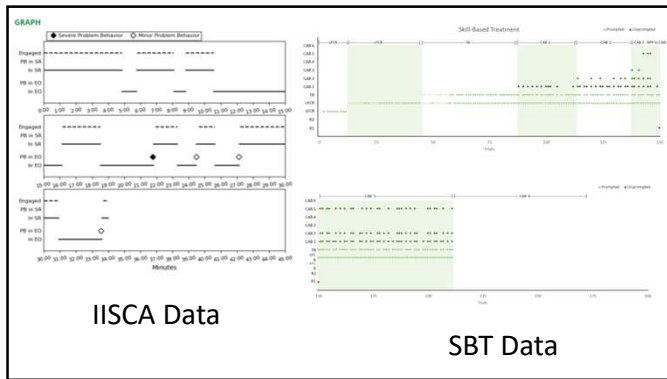
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### PFA/SBT Summary

Treatment status at 22 weeks

Was at CAB 6 across all 3 Branches

- Branch A – Table top learning activities
- Branch B – Adaptive Daily Living Skills
- Branch C – Social skills and play skills
- And, developing specific requests during reinforcement

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### Transition Plan Wins

- Significant decrease in SIB (no more helmet, bruises healed)
- Elimination of physical aggression towards others
- Attends full days, 5 days a week
- Seeks out interactions with adults and peers
- Uses more language to communicate
- Engages in his private SLP sessions
- Plays with toys again
- Demonstrates an interest in learning
- Joins in group learning activities
- Shows an interest in reading with Mom at night
- Interacts and plays more with his guide dog

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### Private BCBAs Comments

- The process of working through problem behaviour and family concerns using the Universal Protocol, Practical Functional Assessment and Skills Based Treatment has been **an invaluable experience**.
- Specifically, when the Kenny's family, myself as the home service provider, and the school team initially met to discuss the plan to address Kenny's increasing severe SIB and aggression at school, the tone of the meeting was explosive. **The family had lost trust in the school team and believed some of the decisions made had put their child at risk of significant injury to himself and others.** In a climate where media attention is a historical solution for parents who feel they are not being heard and want solutions to challenging situations, it was a possibility that this case was going in that direction.
- Through the use of the Interview and the plan to immediately implement of the Universal Protocol, the school team, led by Tina Gunn, was able to **defuse the situation in less than one hour.** In one meeting, the **parents felt heard and understood there was true collaboration in the process.** In this situation, the parent understood how to support her child into a Happy, Relaxed and Engaged state better than anyone else. I believe, it was the first time, she had been offered this type of collaborative experience and immediately built trust in the school team. Together we **developed an effective plan** that was viable for both the family and the school.
- Immediately Kenny responded to the Universal Protocol and **dangerous behaviour reduced to near zero levels.** Not only was the parent relieved, but she felt like a **valued member of the team and started to build trust and positive rapport** with the teachers and staff at the school. The school team was then able to proceed to a safe PFA and implementation of SBT.
- In over 20 years experience in the field of ABA, I had not been apart of such a successful plan before. **Not only was a safe and televisable plan implemented and clear behaviour change realized in a very short amount of time, but the respect built between all team members was incredible.** Immediately energy and resources went into actually supporting the student and the implementers rather than a lengthy conflict between the parents and school, while a child continued to suffer.
- Truly this is an ex. of how to produce tangible, **meaningful differences for children & their families.**

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1. I have been involved in my child's treatment in the following ways (check all that apply).

☐ Open ended interview

☐ Viewed a recording of the PFA assessment

☐ Attended

☐ Received

☐ Received

☐ Received

☐ Accessed my child's two weeks folder to view notes

☐ My home behaviour consultant was collaborating with the school team

☐ None of the above

2. Rate the extent to which you are satisfied with the outcomes of treatment in the school environment?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

3. Rate the extent to which you are satisfied with the reduction in problem behaviour in the school environment?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

4. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

**"The change in our son since the program has been drastic. My happy child is back and our family feels at peace for the first time in years."**

Parent Social Validity Survey

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**Optimizing Therapeutic Processes Via Enhanced Choice**

Behavior Analysis in Practice  
https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-020-00548-2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Minimizing Escalation by Treating Dangerous Problem Behavior Within an Enhanced Choice Model**

Adithyan Rajaraman<sup>1</sup> · Gregory P. Hanley<sup>2</sup> · Holly C. Gover<sup>1,3</sup> · Johanna L. Staubitz<sup>4</sup> · John E. Staubitz<sup>4</sup> · Kathleen M. Simcoe<sup>1</sup> · Rachel Metras<sup>2</sup>

Accepted: 21 December 2020.

**Prioritizing Choice and Assent in the Assessment and Treatment of Food Selectivity**

Holly C. Gover, Gregory P. Hanley, Kelsey W. Ruppel, Robin K. Landis, & Juliana Marcus

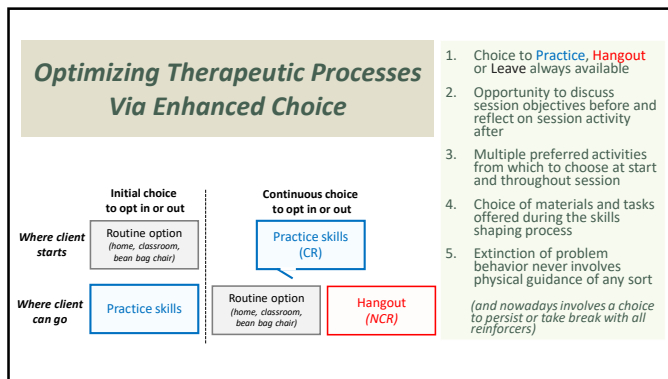
Western New England University  
Scheduled for publication in the  
*International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*

**Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis**  
2022, 99(9), 1–36  
ISSN 0098-7673

**Effects of an enhanced choice model of skill-based treatment for students with emotional/behavioral disorders**

Johanna L. Staubitz<sup>1</sup>  
Department of Special Education, Vanderbilt University  
John E. Staubitz<sup>2</sup>  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Marny S. Pollack<sup>3</sup> and Rachel A. Haws<sup>4</sup>  
Department of Special Education, Vanderbilt University  
Michelle Hopson  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

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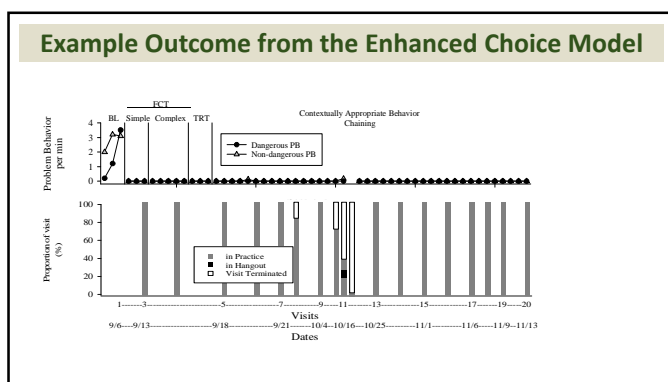
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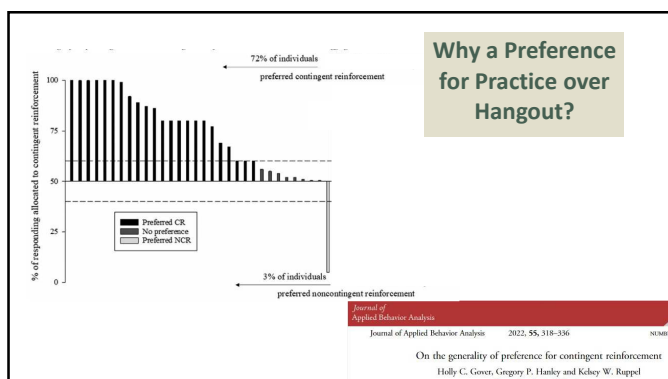
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### What is carried forward into Today's ABA from past ABA?

- (a) Assumptions like *if PB is occurring w regularity, it is being reinforced*
- (b) Commitments like *understanding why PB occurs prior to treating it*
- (c) Procedures like
  - differential reinforcement,
  - shaping,
  - chaining,
  - modelling

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### What then is new about Today's ABA?

- (a) Assumptions like assuming trauma histories for those who engage in SPB
- (b) Commitments to values-first, assent-based formats & omitting tactics that risk re-traumatization
- (c) Tactics like
  - Gaining HRE prior to teaching,
  - Gradually progressing challenging situations
  - Being highly responsive to PB
  - Relying on intermittent, unpredictable, and synthesized reinforcement

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Thanks for listening. Questions?

To learn more, go to:

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Facebook: "PEA and SPT Community"



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