



**6th Annual BAAMS Conference**

**TRAINING ABA  
SUPERHEROES IN  
MISSISSIPPI**

OCTOBER 24TH-  
OCTOBER 25TH

THE MILL CONFERENCE CENTER  
STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

# Table of Contents

BAAMS 2022 Executive Council	3
Information about BAAMS	4
CEU Information	5
Conference Schedule	6-7
Monday's Presentations	8
Tuesday's Presentations	18
Conference Sponsors	29
Guide to Starkville	30

## Meet Your 2022 Executive Council

Hallie Smith	President
Garrett Yeager	President-Elect
Christopher Furlow	Past-President
Robyn Brewer	Treasurer
Hailey Ripple	Secretary
Kayla Bates-Brantley	ABAI Representative
Kayla Crook	APBA Representative
Anna Claire Waldrop	Region 1 Representative
Laura-Katherine Barker	Region 2 Representative
Amanda Kirk	Region 3 Representative
Greg Stanford	Region 4 Representative
Rita Druffner	Student Representative

# Information About BAAMS

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Behavior Analysis Association of Mississippi is to promote and support the practice, research, education, and dissemination of behavior analysis throughout the state of Mississippi.

## Membership Numbers

Reporting as of 10/10/2022

Student Members	125
Full Members	73
Affiliate Members	2

<b>Membership by Region (excludes Student Members)</b>	
Region 1	36
Region 2	26
Region 3	7
Region 4	6

## Contact Information

**Email us at:** baamsinfo@gmail.com

**Website:** <https://baams.org/>

**Facebook:** BAAMS-Behavior Analysis Association of Mississippi



# CEU Information

CEUHelper

## Instructions for Obtaining CEUs at the BAAMS Conference Via CEU Helper

### 1. BEFORE you attend the conference

- Visit <https://ceuhelper.com/info> on your smart phone or tablet to sign up for an account.
- Download the app from the website or on your app store on your smart phone or tablet.
- Search for and join the BAAMS 2022 conference at home before you arrive.

Check out this video for more information: [https://youtu.be/JSi0VQJ\\_f54](https://youtu.be/JSi0VQJ_f54)

(This video is also available in the app and on our website at <https://ceuhelper.com/info>)

### 2. AT the conference

- You will need to check in and check out of each talk at the conference to document your attendance and earn your CEUs using the app.
- QR codes and 4-digit event code numbers will be posted at the entrances and exits of the conference room and will be shared on the screen before and after speakers have given their talk. You can choose to confirm your attendance and check-ins either using the 4-digit code or scanning the QR code.
- You will have 5 minutes to check in at the start of the talk and check out will begin 5 minutes before the end of the talk.
- The app will still work regardless of if you have service or are connected to Wifi.

### 3. AFTER the conference


- In the app, make sure you choose to “**Leave the Conference**” after you are done attending events and are leaving the conference (i.e., you’re not coming back the next day) and you have an internet connection.
- This will make sure all your CEUs are synced. You should receive a CEU certificate via email within a few weeks (remember to check junk email folders).

**\*If you need assistance with using the app please contact Hallie Smith at 813-240-9699**

# Conference Schedule




**24**  
Oct

- 8:00 AM** Check-In
  - 8:30 AM** **Welcome Address**  
Dr. Hallie Smith, BAAMS President
  - 9:00 AM** **Keynote Address**  
Dr. Alice Shillingsburg
  - 10:00 AM** **What We Teach is More Important than How We Teach (*1 Ethics CEU*)**  
Dr. Kevin Ayers
  - 11:00 AM** **Harnessing your Cultural Responsiveness Superpowers**  
Dr. Juliana Aguilar
  - 12:00 PM** **Lunch Break**
  - 1:15 PM** **Assessing and Programming to Promote Generative Language-Workshop**  
Dr. Alice Shillingsburg
  - 3:30 PM** **Update from the Mississippi Autism Board**  
MS Autism Board Members
  - 4:00 PM** **Sexuality and the Spectrum: Lessons on ABA, Dating, and Love, Autism Style**  
Amy Gravino, M.A.
- 

# Conference Schedule



**25**  
Oct

- 8:30 AM** Poster Session
- 9:00 AM** Supervision Panel (*1 Supervision CEU*)  
BCBA's from across Mississippi
- 10:15 AM** Assessment and Treatment of Severe Problem Behavior: Barriers, Solutions, and Considerations for Practice  
Dr. John Michael Falligant
- 11:15 AM** Outpatient Strategies to Address Feeding Problems for Children with Autism  
Dr. Valerie Volkert
- 12:15 PM** Lunch Break
- 1:30 PM** Applications of OBM on the Kennedy Krieger Institute's Neurobehavioral Unit  
Dr. Samantha Hardesty
- 2:30 PM** Application of Relational Frame Theory to Teach Skills to Individuals with Autism  
Dr. Caleb Stanley
- 3:45 PM** In-State Speaker Presentations  
Madison Billingsley-Ring, M.S.  
Dr. Kayla Bates-Brantley  
Katherine Tackitt, M.S.  
Rita Druffner, BCBA
- 

## Invited Speakers-October 24<sup>th</sup>

**WELCOME ADDRESS** Hallie Smith, PhD, BCBA-D, LP



*Sponsored by MSU ABA Program, Canopy Children's Solutions, and Will's Way*

BAAMS President, Dr. Hallie Smith, will welcome attendees to the conference, report on activities the organization has engaged in throughout 2022, discuss progress towards goals set by the Executive Council for completion this year, and present suggested goals and directions for the organization in 2023.

---

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS** Alice Shillingsburg, PhD, BCBA-D, LP



**Keynote Title:** Strengthening Gestures: A Critical Component to Building Robust Communication Skills for Autistic Children

*Sponsored by Blue Sky Behavior Therapy*

Alice Shillingsburg, PhD, BCBA-D, LP is Professor and Yale Family Endowed Chair at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Shillingsburg also serves as Director of the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (iCASD) at the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation. She received her PhD in child clinical psychology at Auburn University and completed her APA Accredited doctoral Internship at the Marcus Institute in Atlanta, GA. In prior roles, she has served as Sr. Vice President of Children's Clinical Services and Training at May Institute, Director of the Language and Learning Clinic at Marcus Autism Center, and previously held an appointment as Associate Professor at Emory University School of Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics.

Dr. Shillingsburg's research and clinical interests involve the development and implementation of comprehensive and focused interventions to promote robust, meaningful skill development for children and adolescents diagnosed with autism. Her clinical interests focus heavily on increasing access to high quality, compassionate care serving autistic individuals and their families. Dr. Shillingsburg has supervised numerous pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellows and enjoys mentoring early career researchers and clinicians. She has published over 60 empirical research articles and book chapters, is current Editor-in-Chief of *Operants Magazine*, and is past Associate Editor for the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* and *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*. She is appointed to several editorial boards and is regularly invited to speak at national conferences.

**Abstract:** The use of gestures in early child development is highly related to the development of language and communication. Research has repeatedly shown that children who are later diagnosed with autism use fewer gestures to point things out to others (i.e., show and share) and to request things from others (i.e., mand). Recent research has shown that these differences can be seen even before 12 months of age. Given the altogether lower levels of gestures observed in children with autism and the important role they play in learning language and other important social interaction skills, early intervention programs should focus on developing gestures as foundational to building robust communication repertoires. This presentation will provide an overview of how gestures are related to language development, how providers may inadvertently diminish gestures, how to implement procedures to strengthen and improve gestures, and how to capitalize on gestures as an active ingredient in quality mand training for children diagnosed with autism.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Describe how early gesture use is related to later language outcomes.
2. Describe how gesture use differs in early childhood development for children with and without autism.
3. Describe the importance of indicating responses in quality mand training.



FOUNDED  
2008



**Will's Way,** LLC  
PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL  
PSYCHOLOGY

< 2400  
CLIENTS  
SERVED



4  
LOCATIONS  
& GROWING



WILL'S WAY IS:  
Locally Owned and  
Operated  
Family Centered  
Compassionate Care

OUR TEAM IS:  
Passionate  
Hard Working  
Collaborative  
Enthusiastic

NOW HIRING!! APPLY TODAY!



## Topic Presentation #1: What We Teach Is More Important Than How We Teach It 10:00 AM – Kevin Ayres, PhD, BCBA-D



Kevin M. Ayres, Ph.D., BCBA-D began his career as a classroom teacher in metro-Atlanta. He earned his doctorate in special education with an emphasis on intellectual disability and behavior analysis from the University of Georgia. He is currently a professor at the University of Georgia where he serves as Co-Director for the Center on Autism and Behavioral Education Research. He is also the program coordinate for UGA's graduate program in behavior analysis. He has authored more than 80 peer reviewed articles and chapters. His research has largely focused on classroom ready interventions based on behavior analysis.

**Abstract:** If as behavior analysts and educators we spend time designing programs and teaching useless things not only are we wasting our time, our student, or client's time, resources, we are also violating the ethics of our field. Code 2.01 indicates that we are obligated to maximize desired outcomes for our clients. Code 3.01 says that we have to act in the best interest of our clients and reiterates 2.01 in that we have to maximize benefits. Maximizing benefits does not mean bubbling in boxes on a broad assessment and curriculum tool. Rather, maximizing benefits means that the behavior analyst or educator approaches education ecological and individually. Putting the needs of the client and their family first and understanding the current and future needs. This presentation discusses the relation of these parts of the code to our practices in both behavior analysis and education and highlights ways we can truly maximize outcomes for our client.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Discuss the role and importance of curriculum planning as it relates to generalizable outcomes.
2. Discuss the ethical implications of the curriculum choices behavior analysts and educators make.
3. Identify ecologically based strategies to develop program planning



## Topic Presentation #2: Harnessing Your Cultural Responsiveness

**Superpowers** 11:00 AM – Juliana Aguilar, PhD, BCBA, LBA



Juliana Aguilar, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Applied Behavior Analysis at Purdue University. She received her Ph.D. in Disability Disciplines with an emphasis in behavior analysis from Utah State University. She earned her Master's in Applied Behavior Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Her

clinical experiences include early intervention and school settings for children with ASD. Her research interests include cultural responsiveness, stakeholder training, and skill acquisition for early learners with autism.

**Abstract:** The *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* delineated unprecedented professional guidelines for BCBAs regarding cultural responsiveness and diversity. Code 1.07 requires professional development in the areas of evaluating cultural biases, addressing the diverse needs of the individuals we work with, as well as training others to engage in these practices. The purpose of this talk will be to introduce practitioners and educators to existing tools within and outside of behavior analysis that can be used to promote behaviors aligned with the new cultural responsiveness and diversity ethics code standard.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Define observable and measurable behaviors associated with Code 1.07 of the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*.
2. Identify existing tools that can help practitioners and trainees develop those behaviors.
3. Discuss how to use those tools to provide culturally responsive care.





We believe every child can be a *success story!*

Great Place To Work<sup>®</sup>

Certified

SEP 2022-SEP 2023

USA

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

**CANOPY'S AUTISM TEAM IS GROWING**

- Salaries positions
- Comprehensive benefit plan
- Innovative team environment
- Mission-minded organization



SCAN TO EXPLORE CANOPY'S WEBSITE  
Interactive Map | About Solutions  
Careers | Volunteer Opportunities



The  
**CANOPY**  
School

*Come spread your wings!*



The Canopy School is the newest educational solution from Canopy Children's Solutions. It is a nonprofit, accredited and individualized academic environment for children with an array of learning differences.

**NOW ENROLLING**

K-8th

Vocational/Career Path for High School Students

SCAN TO EXPLORE THE CANOPY SCHOOL

Philosophy | Admission | Events



[mycanopy.org](http://mycanopy.org)

[thecanopyschool.org](http://thecanopyschool.org)



## **Workshop: Assessing and Programming to Promote Generative**

**Language** 1:15 PM – Alice Shillingsburg, PhD, BCBA-D, LP



**Abstract:** Children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often exhibit deficits in language and communication development. While neurotypically developing children demonstrate adult-like language production by age five (Luinge, Post, Wit, & Goorhuis-Brouwer, 2006), expressing abstract and hypothetical ideas across a variety of topics (Tager-Flusberg et al, 2009), some children with ASD and language delays may have difficulty with more complex language that has not been directly targeted in intervention. Further, studies have found that some children with autism do not combine known words at the same time as non-autistic peers (Paul, Chawarska, Klin, and Volkmar, 2007; Weismer et al., 2011) pointing to a deficit in generative language. Strategies to promote the emergence of generative language are of critical importance for learners with ASD. This line of research has developed greatly over the last decade but is slow to show up in clinical programming. Additionally, practitioners may struggle with remediation strategies when emergence fails to occur. The current presentation will cover research focused on assessing emergence of untrained verbal operants as well as strategies to promote emergence and generative language using strategies such as matrix training, multiple exemplar instruction, instructive feedback, and bi-directional naming protocols.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to describe the importance of assessing and programming for emergence of untaught skills when teaching children with autism.
2. Participants will be able to describe 2 ways to assess for emergence of untaught skills.
3. Participants will be able to describe 2 ways to program to promote emergence of untaught skills.

## **Topic Presentation #3: Update from the Mississippi Autism Board**

3:30 PM – Mississippi Autism Board

The Mississippi Autism Board consists of five (5) members appointed by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. The board consists of one (1) licensed psychologist practicing in the area of applied behavior analysis, three (3) licensed behavior analysts, and one (1) non-licensed public member who is the family member of a recipient of applied behavior analysis services to provide for the licensure and regulation of the practice of applied behavior analysis.

The Board's duties include, but are not limited to:

- Investigating and evaluating applications for individuals seeking licensure to practice applied behavior analysis
- Investigating allegations or practices potentially violating applicable law concerning the practice of applied behavior analysis
- Adopting and revising, as necessary, rules and regulations related to the licensure and practice of applied behavior analysis.
- The Mississippi Autism Board was established by the 2015 Mississippi Legislature.

## **Topic Presentation #4: Sexuality and the Spectrum: Lessons on ABA, Dating, and Love, Autism Style 4:00 PM – Amy Gravino, M.A.**



Amy Gravino, M.A., is an autism sexuality advocate and Relationship Coach in the Center for Adult Autism Services at Rutgers University. She is also the President of A.S.C.O.T Consulting, which offers autism consulting, college coaching, and mentoring services for organizations, schools, individuals on the autism spectrum, and their families. Amy is an international speaker who has given TED talks, spoken

twice at the United Nations for World Autism Awareness Day, and presented worldwide to audiences on a variety of topics related to autism, with a dedicated special focus and research on the subject of autism and sexuality. Ms. Gravino obtained her Masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Caldwell University in 2010 and currently serves on the Boards of Directors of Yes She Can, Inc. and the Golden Door International Film Festival of Jersey City, as well as the Scientific

Advisory Board of Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research (SPARK). She is an award-winning writer who has co-authored a chapter on autism and sexuality in the *Handbook of Quality of Life for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, and her work has been featured in *Spectrum*, the leading online news source for autism research, and other outlets. Visit [www.amygravino.com](http://www.amygravino.com) to learn more. training, and skill acquisition for early learners with autism.

**Abstract:** Individuals on the autism spectrum are sexual beings, yet ABA as a field has not risen to the challenge of helping autistic people learn skills related to dating and sexuality. This session, which features a woman on the autism spectrum sharing her firsthand perspective, will discuss how and why the field of ABA has fallen short in teaching dating skills, what we can do better, and the potential challenges involved with teaching these skills. Strategies and resources will also be offered to help professionals and parents begin conversations about relationships and sexuality with their children and clients.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. List the misconceptions around autism, sexuality, and ABA, and the potential serious consequences of not teaching dating and sexuality skills
2. Understand the potential for using ABA to teach dating and relationship skills to individuals on the spectrum and the challenges involved in teaching these skills
3. Apply specific strategies when opening a dialogue about sexuality and dating with their children and clients



# APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

UNDERGRADUATE MINOR IN ABA	MASTERS DEGREE IN ABA	RBT COURSE
ALL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND AT STARKVILLE CAMPUSES	UNIQUE TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	VERIFIED COURSE SEQUENCES- LEADS TO BCaBA & BCBA CREDENTIAL
	SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND LEARN MORE! OR EMAIL DR. HALLIE SMITH- HMS238@MSSTATE.EDU	GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE



**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™**  
APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS



NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR  
FALL 2023 ADMISSION TO OUR MASTER'S PROGRAM!

**APPLY TODAY!**

COURSEWORK AVAILABLE AT OUR STARKVILLE AND ONLINE CAMPUSES

6 FULL-TIME FACULTY DEDICATED TO ABA PROGRAM

COMMUNITY-BASED PRACTICUM PARTNERSHIPS WITH CLINICS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EXAM PREP

UNIVERSITY-BASED PRACTICUM PARTNERSHIPS  
Autism & Developmental Disabilities Clinic  
TK Martin Center for Technology & Disability  
Pediatric Feeding Disorders Lab at MSU



**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™**  
APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS



## Invited Speakers-October 25<sup>th</sup>

**Poster Session – 8:30 AM in the Delta Room**

*Sponsored by The Growing Tree & The Autism Center of North Mississippi*

**Title:** Evaluation of Emailed Prompts to Promote Preschool Teachers' use of Effective Instructions

**Primary Presenter:** Chelsea Johnson

**Affiliation:** University of Southern Mississippi

**Title:** Rapport Building and Instructional Fading Prior to Discrete Trial Instruction and Natural Environment Teaching: Moving from Child-Led Play to Intensive Teaching: A Replication and Extension

**Primary Presenter:** Chelsea Smith

**Affiliation:** Blue Sky Behavior Therapy

**Title:** Using Abbreviated Skillstreaming to Teach Conversation Skills to Adolescents with ASD

**Primary Presenter:** Chelsea Thorpe

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program

**Title:** Teachers' Generalization of Evidence-based Practices Trained through School-based Consultation

**Primary Presenter:** Emily Maxime

**Affiliation:** University of Southern Mississippi; Will's Way Behavioral Clinic

**Title:** Perspectives for the Delivery of Early Intervention Services via Telemedicine in Rural States: Outcomes from the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Primary Presenter:** Frances Huff

**Affiliation:** Canopy Children's Solutions

**Title:** Attendance and Impact of Supplemental Instruction Sessions in Asynchronous Course

**Primary Presenter:** Heidi Myers

**Affiliation:** University of Mississippi

**Title:** Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Receptive and Expressive Money Skills

**Primary Presenter:** Jacie Rinehart

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program

**Title:** The Effects of Self-Monitoring on Increasing Performance on Early Numeracy Skills

**Primary Presenter:** Jennifer Ani

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program

**Title:** Stimulus Fading to Enhance Campus Building Recognition

**Primary Presenter:** Mallie Donald

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program

**Title:** Using Visual Stimuli and Differential Reinforcement to Increase Voice Volume of a Child with ASD

**Primary Presenter:** Mary Eliza McCarley

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, Applied Behavior Analysis Program

**Title:** Self-Monitoring Intervention to Address Chewing Difficulties

**Primary Presenter:** Mary Eliza McCarley

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, Applied Behavior Analysis Program, Pediatric Feeding Disorders Lab

**Title:** Clinical Application of the Rapid Attention Assessment Test Within a Preschool Setting

**Primary Presenter:** Neylie Breazeale

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, Applied Behavior Analysis Program

**Title:** Evaluation of Teaching PECS via Video Modeling

**Primary Presenter:** Rita Druffner

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program

**Title:** Enhancing Email-Writing Skills in College Students with Disabilities

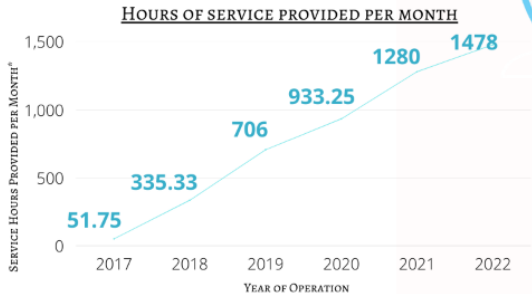
**Primary Presenter:** Rylee McHenry

**Affiliation:** Mississippi State University, School Psychology Program



To engage compassionately  
with our clients, their caregivers, and our community.

*Blue Sky Value Statement*



**82%**

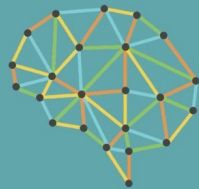
A REVIEW OF CLIENT OUTCOMES FROM 2021 SHOWED THAT 82% OF CLIENTS TRANSITIONED TO A LESS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF STARTING THERAPY WITH BLUE SKY BEHAVIOR THERAPY.

Locations

**Winona**  
515 Simpson Drive  
Winona MS 38967

**Ridgeland**  
402 Legacy Park  
Ridgeland MS 39157

**Brookhaven**  
1094 S. 1st Street  
Brookhaven MS 39601



**AUTISM CENTER**  
OF NORTH MISSISSIPPI

**Celebrating Every Mind**

Offering ABA and Mental Health services to the families of North Mississippi and beyond. We are here to support, encourage, and celebrate every mind.

146 S. Thomas St., Ste C, Tupelo, MS 38801  
317 Heritage Dr., Oxford, MS 38655  
662-840-0974





## **Supervision Panel 9:00 AM – BCBA’s from across Mississippi**

**Introduction & Discussant-** Hallie Smith, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP

**Panel Host-** Kayla Bates-Brantley, Ph.D., BCBA-D, NCSP

**1+ Years of Experience:** Mary Aultman Weldon, Ed.S., BCBA

**5+ Years of Experience:** Hailey Spinks, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP and Kathryn Rankin, BCBA

**10+ Years of Experience:** Christopher Furlow, Ph.D., BCBA-D and Neelima Duncan, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP

**15+ Years of Experience:** Emily Thomas Johnson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP

**Student/Supervisee-** Ellie Hinton

**Student/Supervisee-** Mallie Donald

## **Topic Presentation #5: Assessment and Treatment of Severe Problem Behavior: Barriers, Solutions, and Considerations for Practice**

10:15 AM – John Michael Falligant, Ph.D., BCBA-D



Dr. Falligant is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a Senior Behavior Analyst in the inpatient Neurobehavioral Unit at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. The Neurobehavioral Programs at the Kennedy Krieger Institute serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who suffer from severe behavioral dysfunction, including self-injury. Dr.

Falligant’s clinical work and research is focused on the assessment and treatment of behavioral dysfunction in individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders. He is also interested in translational behavioral research involving models of choice behavior and impulsivity, reward sensitivity, behavioral persistence, and the identification and quantification of predictive behavioral markers. Dr. Falligant is a clinical psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D). He received his Ph.D. from Auburn University. He completed his Doctoral Internship and a Postdoctoral Research

Fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

**Abstract:** Severe problem behavior (e.g., aggression, self-injury) is a heterogeneous phenomenon with respect to its onset, presentation, and causal/maintaining variables. Individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, or other co-occurring psychiatric, medical, or neurodevelopmental conditions are at increased risk for engaging in severe problem behavior. Individuals referred for behavioral assessment and treatment services may present with a wide range of challenging behaviors that differ along the dimensions of topography, frequency, and severity. When problem behavior occurs regularly and/or with high intensity, it is likely to produce injuries to self and others, greatly impair functioning, and lead to placement in less-inclusive settings. The consequences of these behaviors may range from relatively minor to highly significant and even life-threatening. The purpose of this presentation is to review practice considerations relevant to the functional assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior, and discuss some potential barriers and solutions relevant to the effective management of problem behavior in community-based settings.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Describe core elements of the functional assessment of severe problem behavior.
2. Identify common modifications for functional assessment procedures when encountering inconclusive outcomes, high-risk behaviors, and additional practical/contextual barriers to assessment.
3. Understand how functional assessment outcomes inform behavioral interventions for individuals with severe problem behavior.

A Rewarding Career in ABA

Your dream job  
may be a  
scan away!



### Benefits

- > Flexible Scheduling
- > Health Insurance
- > In-House CEUs



[GrowingTreeABA.com/Careers](http://GrowingTreeABA.com/Careers)



GREAT FOOD BRINGS US TOGETHER



## Topic Presentation #6: Outpatient Strategies to Address Feeding Problems for Children with Autism

11:15 AM – Valerie Volkert, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Associate Professor  
(Pediatrics)



Dr. Valerie Volkert is a psychologist site manager in the Children’s Multidisciplinary Feeding Program at the Marcus Autism Center. She sees patients in the intensive day treatment and outpatient clinics in the feeding program, supervises interns and residents, and pursues lines of clinical research. She has authored four book chapters and published 41 peer-reviewed research studies in multiple journals including the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* and *Journal of Pediatrics*. Dr. Volkert has served on the board of editors for various journals and is currently associate editor for the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

**Abstract:** Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is an eating or feeding disturbance involving avoidance or restriction of food intake resulting in four potentially overlapping manifestations: faltering growth (A1), nutritional deficiencies (A2 or severe food selectivity), enteral or oral formula supplementation (A3), and/or marked interference with psychosocial functioning (A4, American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Severe food selectivity is associated with nutritional insufficiencies and adverse health effects such as scurvy or rickets. Children with autism are at increased risk for severe food selectivity (Sharp et al., 2018). The current presentation will aim to discuss the difference between picky eating and food selectivity, the medical impact and etiology of food selectivity, and evidence-based treatment for children with autism and food selectivity.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Distinguish between picky eating and food selectivity (ARFID A2).
2. Understand the medical and nutritional impact of food selectivity.
3. Summarize evidence-based treatment for autism and food selectivity.

## Topic Presentation #7: Applications of OBM on the Kennedy Krieger Institute's Neurobehavioral Unit

1:30 PM – Samantha Hardesty, Ph.D., BCBA-D



Samantha Hardesty has worked on the Neurobehavioral Unit (NBU) and the Kennedy Krieger Institute since 2005. Samantha earned her master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis and her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at UMBC. Samantha is currently the Associate Director of Direct Care Services of the NBU and has two roles on the unit; she is a Senior Behavior Analyst overseeing the assessment and treatment of individuals admitted to the NBU and also utilizes her expertise in OBM to coordinate program

evaluation. Samantha is on the editorial board of the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, guest reviewer for the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis and is a member of the Behavior Analyst Advisory Committee in Maryland.

**Abstract:** OBM is the study and application of applied behavior analysis in organizations. Using an OBM lens, managers can better understand the behavior of their employees by first carefully assessing the work environment and then implementing an intervention based on assessment results in order to achieve optimal performance and better business results. The NBU is a 16-bed unit that employs over 150 direct care staff and more than 60 behavioral staff. We have relied on the principles of OBM to solve issues frequently encountered in human service settings such as recruitment, training, infection control, staff safety and performance management of staff's job duties. This presentation will provide a brief background of OBM, the use of performance diagnostics to understand environmental variables contributing to employee work deficits, and will describe how data-based decision making can be used to evaluate organizational practices. Several applied examples of OBM projects employed on the NBU will be reviewed. Potential barriers, as well as special considerations when applying OBM in the workplace, will also be discussed.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Define OBM and provide examples of employee behavior.
2. Describe the rationale of using function-based strategies to improve personnel performance.
3. Learn about using data-based decisions to evaluate the efficacy of organizational practices to improve employee behavior.

## Topic Presentation #8: Application of Relational Frame Theory to Teach Skills to Individuals with Autism

2:30 PM – Caleb Stanley, Ph.D., BCBA-D



Dr. Caleb Stanley is currently an assistant professor in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at Utah Valley University. Dr. Stanley graduated with a master's and PhD degree in Behavior Analysis & Therapy from Southern Illinois University. Dr. Stanley is a doctorate level BCBA and has nearly a decade of experience working as a behavior analyst in both research and clinical capacities. Dr. Stanley's primary area of expertise is concerned with understanding variables related to the development of complex language and cognition using contemporary behavior analytic approaches. Dr. Stanley has published over 40 publications inclusive of articles in peer-reviewed behavior analytic journals, textbooks, and several book chapters related to his area of expertise. Recently, he has sought to understand how such procedures can be applied to neurotypical individuals as well.

**Abstract:** Relational Frame Theory (RFT) is a contemporary behavior analytic account of human language and cognition which in recent years has shown a significant increase in conceptual and empirical development. One research area that has generated exceptional growth is related to the application of Relational Frame Theory to individuals with autism and related disabilities. The overarching aim of the current presentation is to provide discussion for potential avenues regarding the clinical applicability of Relational Frame Theory to individuals with autism. To this end, the presentation describes methods and examples for which Relational Frame Theory has been applied to this population as a means for teaching novel behaviors and related skills. Furthermore, the presentation describes outcomes related to the improvement of higher-order behaviors as a result of the incorporation of RFT-based procedures into clinical practice. Implications and clinical considerations relating to the application of Relational Frame Theory will be discussed.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Summarize the underlying tenants of Relational Frame Theory.
2. Describe the role of relational responding in language.
3. Describe methods and examples for the application of Relational Frame Theory.

## **In-State Speaker Presentations 3:45 PM**

### **Traditional Drill and Practice Effects on Increasing Knowledge of Drivers Permit Content for Individuals with ASD**-Madison Billingsley-Ring, M.S. & Kayla Bates-Brantley, Ph.D., BCBA-D, NCSP

**Abstract:** Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience significant barriers when learning to drive (Cox et al., 2020; Lindsay, 2016). These barriers impact their licensure rates and time it takes to successfully obtain a driver's license when compared to neurotypical peers (Almberg et al., 2017; Freely, 2010). Little to no research has been conducted to examine effective intervention strategies for obtaining a learning permit (Almberg et al., 2017; Lindsay, 2016). The current study examines a Traditional Drill and Practice (TDP) intervention on increasing knowledge of material on the drivers permit exam. A multiple probe design across participants was used to examine the effects of this intervention for three individuals with ASD, who did not currently hold a driver's permit. Results indicated TDP had a large effect on increasing participants' skill acquisition of learner's permit exam material. The presentation will present how academic interventions are based on behavior analytic principles and can promote functional life skills.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. This session will help teach practitioners learn about an intervention to promote adolescents with disabilities independence, specifically, by promoting the life skill of leaning to drive
2. This session will teach practitioners about adapting an academic intervention to promote functional life skills.
3. This session will aid in practitioners' ability to implement this intervention in students transition plans to promote independence through learning to drive.

## **What “Bad” Data Can Teach You: A Social Skill Intervention with Non-Significant Data-** Katherine Tackitt, M.S.; Rita Druffner, BCBA

**Abstract:** Individuals with autism and related disorders may need explicit teaching to acquire fundamental social skills (e.g., gaining attention, waiting for responses when asking questions). The current study sought to teach individuals with social skill deficits essential components of social initiation with peers. The skills taught were gaining attention of others, asking a question, waiting for a response, and asking a follow up question or making a statement. These skills were deemed important because of the foundational nature of these skills for functional interactions across social contexts. The results of the study were statistically non-significant. However, these results (or lack thereof) demonstrate the importance of social supports when teaching social skills. There are learning opportunities to be gained from non-significant data. Practitioners should not be discouraged by insignificant data or delays in progress. Although the data may not show change, the changes can be seen in the practitioner’s problem-solving approach. Non-significant data provides a point of reference for practitioners to begin their own exploration into social skill acquisition.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. The presenters will discuss their conceptualization of social skills components to teach peer social initiations to individuals with social skill deficits. They will discuss the importance of developing a task analysis for skills within social interactions.
2. The presenters will discuss the importance of variations in perspective taking to clinical problem solving.
3. The presenters will discuss the application of non-significant data to the literature and clinical practice.



# THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS!

## Diamond Level Sponsors



## Platinum Level Sponsor



## Gold Level Sponsors



AUTISM CENTER  
OF NORTH MISSISSIPPI



## Bronze Level Sponsors





## PLACES TO EAT

- **BBQ!**
  - Little Dooney's
- **Diverse Menu**
  - The Central Station Grill
  - Harver's
- **Burgers**
  - Bulldog Burger
  - Mugshots
- **Great Out Door Seating**
  - Georgia Blue
  - Humble Taco
- **Breakfast**
  - Starkville Café
  - The Breakfast Club
  - Proof
- **Best Coffee in Town**
  - 929 Coffee
  - Strange Brew
- **Cotton District Eats**
  - BIN 612
  - Two Brother's
- **Pizza**
  - Lost Pizza
  - Board Town Pizza
- **Best Happy Hour Spots**
  - Taste
  - BIN 612
  - Uno Mas
- **Quick Bites**
  - McAlisters
  - Jersey Mikes
- **Afternoon Pick-Me-Ups!**
  - Java Juice
  - Starkville Nutrition

## WHAT TO SEE

- **CAMPUS!!**
  - It's beautiful bring your walking shoes and stroll for a while!
- **Downtown Starkville**
  - Shot, Eat and Explore our Downtown!
- **The Cotton District**
  - Get a taste of New Orleans and feel for the local night life!
- **The Noxubee Refuge**
  - If you love nature this is the place for you!
- **Shopping**
  - Olive Tree
  - LA Green
  - George and Mary's
  - State Floral
  - Magnolia Soap Co.
  - Liza Tye
  - Reeds

