

Trainee Manual

The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs

William T. Courtney, Breanne K. Hartley, Vince J. LaMarca,
Mary Rosswurm, and Dennis H. Reid

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Introduction

This *Trainee Manual* is for your use as you participate in the training sessions on supervising technicians who provide ABA (applied behavior analysis) services for people with autism corresponding with *The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs*. The content of the training curriculum is based on over four decades of ABA research on staff training and supervision as well as the authors' hands-on experience. The content includes critical supervision knowledge and skills coinciding with the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB©) task list for effective supervision, and provides the BACB's required eight hours of supervision training. If the training with the *Curriculum* is conducted by a BACB Approved Continuing Education (ACE) provider, you can also receive continuing education credits, including one hour of ethics training. The curriculum is performance- and competency-based, requiring you to meet classroom and on-the-job criteria to successfully complete the training.

The *Curriculum* content is relevant for supervisors of staff providing comprehensive and/or focused ABA services across a variety of settings, including center-based programs, homes, schools, and clinics. Paraprofessionals who provide ABA services in these settings have many different titles. One formal title is Registered Behavior Technician, a title developed and endorsed by the BACB for credentialed paraprofessionals. More informal titles include technician, therapist, teaching assistant, instructor, one-to-one staff, shadows, and superheroes. Likewise, the people with autism whom the staff teach and otherwise support are referred to in different ways such as learner, student, client, patient, and consumer. Throughout this *Manual*, staff providing ABA services are referred to as ABA *technicians* and the people they support are referred to as *clients*.

It is fully acknowledged that references to staff and people with autism in human service agencies vary across the United States based on local customs and preferences. Certain references are well accepted in some locations and discouraged or prohibited in others. The reference to technicians and clients here is made for simplicity of presentation. It is sincerely hoped that our use of the technician and client references will not be offensive to anybody. Our underlying concern is for people who have autism to attain the outcomes they and their loved ones desire as people first, and to maximize the quality of their current and future lives. It also our intent that those who provide direct ABA services are effectively prepared and supported in a professional and acceptable manner.

The *Trainee Manual* is designed to assist you in acquiring the knowledge and skills presented during the training. It is organized into nine modules, each of which corresponds to a topic presented by a trainer. It also includes recommended readings and sample forms that can be used following the training in your work site.

The training program represented in The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs is based on the BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline but is offered independent of the BACB.

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Module 1: Introduction to Supervision

Objectives:

Trainee Notes

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify BACB-specified reasons for use of evidence-based, effective supervision.
2. Identify BACB-specified potential outcomes of ineffective supervision.
3. Provide a concise definition of supervision from an ABA perspective.



Introduction to Supervision

This is the first in a series of classes on how to supervise staff who provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) services to children or adults with autism. It is designed to train Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs), and really anyone who aspires to effectively supervise the work of hands-on technicians. For purposes of this training, “technician” means anyone who works directly with clients with autism to provide ABA.

The knowledge and skills to be taught are based on the Behavior Analysis Certification Board’s (BACB©) Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline. The information to be presented represents an evidence-based approach to supervision. This means that the recommended supervisory strategies have been researched and demonstrated to be effective.

Many of you are aware of why evidence-based procedures are necessary when teaching or otherwise providing services for individuals with autism. However, many professionals may not

be so aware of the importance of supervisors using evidence-based strategies in their work with technicians who provide those services.



Why do you think supervision should be evidence-based in nature?

Reasons for Effective, Evidence-Based Supervision

- Facilitate delivery of high-quality services resulting in client improvement
- Develop behavior-analytic, professional, and ethical repertoires specified by BACB *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code*
- Guide behavioral case conceptualization, problem solving, decision making and assistance seeking of supervisees
- Improve current repertoires of supervisees
- Maintain beneficial repertoires of supervisees
- Model effective supervision practices for supervisees

Each of these reasons relate directly to desired outcomes of supervision. As we go through this training we will talk about supervision in a way to attain these outcomes. We will also

discuss the importance of evaluating supervisor actions to help ensure that the outcomes are indeed attained.

Another way to understand the importance of supervisors using evidence-based strategies in their work with technicians is to consider what happens when supervision is not evidence-based and is not effective.

Potential Outcomes of Ineffective Supervision

- Low-quality client services (resulting in harm or lack of progress)
- Poor-performing supervisees with insufficient practice repertoires
- Poor-performing supervisees unable to problem solve and make decisions in novel or unfamiliar situations
- Supervisees do not become effective supervisors in their own practices
- Supervisees engage in unethical behavior

If you ask people what the job of a supervisor involves, you will likely get a variety of answers. This is because the job of a supervisor means different things to different people. Consequently, it can be helpful to concisely describe what it means to actually *supervise*.

Throughout this training, we will be discussing a supervisor's job from an ABA point of view.

ABA Definition of Supervision

Establishing and maintaining desired work skills
among staff to promote client outcomes.

There are three parts to an ABA definition of supervision. First, a supervisor must *establish* crucial skills among technicians. Second, a supervisor must actively work to *maintain* those skills. This part includes frequently reinforcing technician use of desired skills and where necessary, improving or correcting nonproficient use of the skills. Third, a supervisor must ensure that technician work performance results in client attainment of desired *outcomes*.

Each of these aspects of supervision will be discussed more in-depth in later modules. We will also emphasize that establishing and maintaining staff performance to attain client outcomes is most successful when done in an *acceptable* manner. That is, supervisors should go about their jobs in ways that are well received by technicians as much as reasonably possible to enhance their quality of work life.

We will focus on how to supervise in a way that is both effective and acceptable. One of the ways this will be done is by highlighting the BACB's *Important Features of Supervision* as we go through the different modules. Knowing these features is one of the requirements to successfully complete the training.

