

# **The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs**

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## Preface

*The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs* is designed to train supervisors and aspiring supervisors in evidence-based methods of supervising staff who provide ABA (applied behavior analysis) services for people with autism. The content 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 Curriculum is presented by a BACB Approved Continuing Education (ACE) provider, participating trainees can also receive continuing education credits. The curriculum is performance- and competency-based, requiring trainees 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 the *Curriculum*, 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 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.*



**Section I**  
**Introduction**



## **Using the Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs**

*The Training Curriculum for Supervisors of ABA Technicians in Autism Programs* consists of three main components. The first component is the primary curriculum, to be used by trainers when training supervisors. The second component is the *Trainee Manual*, which is to be provided to each trainee as a resource and note-taking guide. The third component consists of *Supplemental Video Aids*, which can be used on an optional basis with, or partially in lieu of, the trainer's presentation of the curriculum content.

### **Primary Curriculum**

The primary curriculum includes nine training modules. Presentation of modules one through seven represents the BACB-required eight hours of supervisory training based on the BACB task list for effective supervision. Modules eight and nine provide additional information for further enhancing effective supervision based on ABA research and application. Additionally, the last two modules combined include one hour of ethics training. Each module is organized into five parts:

1. Module summary page
2. Presentation content
3. Trainee work sheets coinciding with in-class activities
4. Trainee mastery checks
5. Presentation slides

The curriculum is most effectively implemented by at least two trainers with a group of no more than 20 trainees. Two trainers are desired to ensure accurate role-play demonstrations of target skills, adequately observe and provide feedback regarding trainee practice activities, and appropriately administer the trainee mastery checks. When training smaller groups of trainees, one trainer can conduct the training with the curriculum. In the latter case, it is recommended that the number of trainees not exceed a maximum of eight trainees per group. Also, if one trainer implements the curriculum, the trainer would need to solicit the help of one or more trainees to perform the role-play demonstrations or use the video aids.

The curriculum requires 11 hours of classroom-based training time. The training can be most readily conducted within two, five and one-half-hour days. Alternatively, the training can be conducted in smaller blocks of time such as one or two hours across several days. However, separate time segments for training must each be at least one hour in duration to comply with BACB requirements for supervisor training. An approximate 45 minutes also are required to conduct the mastery checks as part of the on-the-job training with each trainee.

## **Module Summary Page**

Each module summary page specifies the knowledge and skills to be taught with the module and corresponding objectives to be mastered by each trainee, the general training procedures to be used with the module, the types of trainee mastery checks to be conducted, the materials to be used during the training, and the estimated time to train with the module.

## **Presentation Content**

The presentation content represents what the trainer should describe within each module. It also describes all training procedures encompassed within each module including role-play demonstrations, questions to present to trainees, and instructions for trainee practice activities using the designated work sheets. The content is organized to facilitate the training process through highlighted pointers to trainers provided in the left margin next to the corresponding information to be presented.

More specific instructions to trainers are also provided in separate sections of the presentation text, distinguished by horizontal lines and a different font. This is illustrated below.

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When you see this font between the two lines, the information is for the trainer only, not to be presented to the trainees.

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Trainers must become very familiar with the content that will be presented prior to training with each module. Trainers should also practice the role plays included within the module to ensure the role plays are performed appropriately during the training. Obtaining familiarity with each trainee practice activity and mastery check is likewise necessary before beginning the training process.

## **Trainee Work Sheets**

Trainee work sheets for practice activities as part of training with a module are provided immediately following the presentation content. These must be copied prior to training a module in order to disseminate to each trainee at the point specified in the module. It is also helpful to have extra copies of the work sheets such that interested trainees can be provided blank copies to apply within their own supervisory work following the training.

## **Trainee Mastery Checks**

Trainee mastery check forms are provided in the modules immediately after the activity work sheets. The mastery checks build on the practice activities and must be completed by each trainee at the designated mastery level to successfully complete the

training. The mastery check forms must also be copied prior to initiating training with a module to provide to each trainee at the point specified in the module. It is likewise helpful to have extra copies of the mastery forms for interested trainees to use following the training.

There are four types of mastery checks: (a) in-class paper and pencil activities, (b) quiz questions, (c) role-play demonstrations, and (d) on-the-job demonstrations. For the paper and pencil activities and quiz questions administered in the class sessions, trainers should review trainee responses as soon as possible during breaks or between classes and then provide feedback to trainees. If a respective trainee does not meet designated criteria, the activity or quiz should be re-administered following the feedback. For the on-the-job mastery checks, instructions and necessary forms are provided in a later section of the curriculum (see **Section III**). The on-the-job mastery checks must be scheduled with each trainee before the classroom portion of the training is completed.

### **Presentation Slides**

Power Point © slides are used for presenting the content of each module and are provided on a CD enclosed with the curriculum. The slides are arranged by module and the order in which they are to be presented within each module. Paper copies of the slides are also presented at the end of each module for the trainer's reference. Note that the format of the paper copies of the slides may be a little different than what is projected on a screen. However, the content on the paper copies is always the same as the content on the projected slides. A computer and digital projector are necessary for training with each module.

### **Recommended Readings and Sample Forms**

At the end of the curriculum is a list of recommended readings and sample forms for interested trainees (**Section IV**). These readings and forms are also included in the *Trainee Manual*.

## **Trainee Manual**

The *Trainee Manual* is provided as a separate package within the curriculum. Additional copies of the manual can be ordered with the curriculum. Alternatively, the manual provided with the curriculum can be copied by the purchasing agency for trainee use within that agency.

### **Supplemental Video Aids**

The primary format for training with the curriculum is for trainers to present the information live with groups of trainees as summarized in previous sections. Additionally, DVD videos of an experienced trainer presenting the modules can be purchased from the publisher (consisting of vocal presentation of module content and role-play demonstrations). These can be used as a supplement to, or in lieu of, a trainer's vocal

presentation with trainees. However, in all cases a trainer will need to work face-to-face with trainees to conduct the in-class activities with the trainee work sheets and to conduct all trainee mastery checks.

**Section II**  
**Training Modules**



## Module 1: Introduction to Supervision

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|                      |  |            |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Objectives</b>    | Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify BACB-specified reasons for use of evidence-based, effective supervision.</li><li>2. Identify BACB-specified potential outcomes of ineffective supervision.</li><li>3. Provide a concise definition of supervision from an ABA perspective.</li></ol> |            |
| <b>Method</b>        | Discussion of purpose of training in regard to BACB and evidence-based supervision   | 5 minutes  |
|                      | Discussion of reasons for effective supervision and potential outcomes of ineffective supervision  | 10 minutes |
|                      | Trainee activity   | 10 minutes |
|                      | Presentation of ABA definition of supervision  | 5 minutes  |
| <b>Mastery Check</b> | Mastery demonstration of in-class activity of identifying BACB reasons for effective supervision and potential outcomes of ineffective supervision   | 10 minutes |
| <b>Training Time</b> | Total training time for module   | 40 minutes |
| <b>Materials</b>     | LCD projector<br>Slides 1-1, 1-2, 1-3<br>Work Sheet 1-1<br>Mastery Check Form 1-1  |            |

# **Presentation Content**

## **Introduction to Supervision**

### **Introduce training purpose and “technician”**

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.

### **Refer to BACB and evidence-based supervision**

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.

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### **Trainee Question**

Ask trainees “Why do you think supervision should be evidence-based in nature?”. After soliciting the answers from several trainees, relate their answers to the points discussed on Slide 1-1.

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**Show Slide 1-1**

Show Slide 1-1: Reasons for Effective, Evidence-Based Supervision. Summarize each point made on the slide.

---

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.

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**Show Slide 1-2**

Show Slide 1-2: Potential Outcomes of Ineffective Supervision. Summarize each point made on the slide.

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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*.

---

**Trainee Activity**

Hand out Work Sheet 1:1: A Concise Definition of Supervision. Then review the instructions on the top of the Work Sheet. When the trainees have completed the activity, ask several to share their answers.

---

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

---

**Show Slide 1-3**

Show Slide 1-3: An ABA Definition of Supervision. Note those parts of the answers that trainees just shared with the Work Sheet activity that are included in the definition on the slide.

---

**Describe ABA supervision definition**

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.

**BACB Features of Supervision**

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.

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**Conduct Mastery Check**

Conduct Mastery Check 1-1: Identifying Reasons for Effective Supervision and Potential Outcomes of Ineffective Supervision.

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## A Concise Definition of Supervision

**Instructions:** Arrange in groups of three or four people. Each person should provide a concise, one-sentence definition of what *supervision* means. Then, after each person has shared his/her definition, the group should reach a consensus regarding what represents the best, one-sentence definition of supervision. One person in the group should be selected to write the consensus definition below.

**Group consensus for a one-sentence definition of supervision:**

# **Mastery Check**

## **Module 1: Introduction to Supervision**

### **Trainer Instructions**

- Distribute Mastery Check Form 1-1 to each trainee.
- Instruct each trainee to read each aspect of supervision listed and then mark whether it represents a behavior demonstrated by an effective supervisor using evidence-based supervision practices (under “effective”) or a potential outcome of ineffective supervision (under “ineffective”) according to the BACB.
- Allow no more than 10 minutes for the activity.

### **Mastery Criterion**

Each trainee must correctly identify all aspects of supervision as effective or ineffective.

- Answers:
1. ineffective
  2. effective
  3. effective
  4. ineffective
  5. effective
  6. effective
  7. ineffective
  8. effective
  9. effective
  10. ineffective
  11. ineffective

Mastery Check Form 1-1: Identifying Reasons for Effective Supervision and Potential Outcomes of Ineffective Supervision

**Mastery Check Form**  
**Module 1: Introduction to Supervision**

Trainee name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Read each aspect of supervision listed and then mark whether it represents a behavior demonstrated by an effective supervisor using evidence-based supervision practices (under “effective”) or a potential outcome of ineffective supervision (under “ineffective”) according to the BACB.

| <b>Aspect of supervision</b>  | <b>effective</b> | <b>ineffective</b> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Low-quality client services (resulting in harm or lack of progress)  | ___              | ___                |
| 2. Model effective supervision practices for supervisees  | ___              | ___                |
| 3. Guide behavioral case conceptualization, problem solving, decision making, and assistance seeking of supervisees   | ___              | ___                |
| 4. Poor-performing supervisees with insufficient practice repertoires   | ___              | ___                |
| 5. Facilitate delivery of high-quality services resulting in client improvement   | ___              | ___                |
| 6. Develop behavior-analytic, professional, and ethical repertoires specified by BACB <i>Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts</i> | ___              | ___                |
| 7. Supervisees engage in unethical behavior   | ___              | ___                |
| 8. Improve current repertoires of supervisees   | ___              | ___                |
| 9. Maintain beneficial repertoires of supervisees   | ___              | ___                |
| 10. Poor-performing supervisees unable to problem solve and make decisions in novel or unfamiliar situations  | ___              | ___                |
| 11. Supervisees do not become effective supervisors in their own practices  | ___              | ___                |

## **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 for Behavior Analysts*
- 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

## 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

## **An ABA Definition of Supervision**

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