



Affordable ABA

Supervision



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Introduction

The need for behavior analysts has continued to increase as the years progress. While job security within the field may not be questionable for some time, the impact of these demands on organizations that need and require behavior analysts as well as the direct and indirect effects that exist for those employed by these organizations should be thoroughly evaluated and recognized. Behavior analysts may feel pressured by organizations to provide services to more clients than they can adequately manage or provide services for. They may also need to turn away clients as their needs are outside of their scope of competence. Organizations may be faced with evaluating whether or not they can financially sustain the needs of a company if behavior analysts are unable to expand their caseloads or need to refer services to another provider. With these factors and others that can be delineated, employers should be aware of stressors that can contribute to work-related stress and how to address employee burnout within an organization.

Therefore, it is important to first evaluate and understand the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* and the delineation of supervisory requirements for behavior analysts (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). By laying this foundation for behavior analysts, it provides a detailed set of guidelines for supervisors to be able to develop and oversee supervision activities and to base their practices on an ethical service delivery model. Additionally, the productivity of an organization is important in any service delivery model. Measures of productivity and performance expectations can pose problems for behavior analysts if not evaluated in a systematic and effective manner. Therefore, it is important to also analyze the factors that are affecting the productivity of an organization and how those factors align with effective supervision practices.

As supervision practices continue to be evaluated, part of the evaluation process includes identifying risk factors associated with work-related stress and how conflict can contribute to an employee's ability to provide effective services. Risk factors that individuals present with that are associated with burnout should be identified as managerial staff navigate toward remedying the symptoms of burnout for an employee. As an employee notices that they are exhibiting behaviors that align with symptoms of burnout, they should evaluate the self-care practices that they engage in or ensure that they are engaging in self-care practices to alleviate these symptoms. There are several different self-care practices that an employee can engage in to ensure that their own values align with the organization in which they work for. With all of these components together, supervision practices can be evaluated so that employees can be supported

within their organization and symptoms of burnout can be reduced, so that individuals can be effective employees within their work culture.

Section 1: Supervisory Requirements for Behavior Analysts

The field of behavior analysis is continuously dependent on supervision that will guide and mold the skills of professionals. Supervision takes on a multicomponent approach that ensures competence in certain areas within one's practice, develops expectations that are clear and performance based, determines mastery criteria for skill attainment and ensures this criteria is met, corrects errors and concerns as they are brought forth, and keeps employees engaged and motivated to come back the next day and do it all over again with performance at its highest (Sellers et al., 2016). Individuals that pursue any level of certification through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB®) are required to obtain supervision from a qualified Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®) as they accrue their fieldwork hours. Ongoing supervision is often required to maintain certification status for those that become Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT®) or Board Certified Associate Behavior Analysts (BCaBA®).

Supervision in ABA

An individual that exhibits competence in applying various principles and procedures does not ensure that this same individual is able to teach these skills to others (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Therefore, it is safe to say that behavior analysts that are new to the field and that just earned their certification may be competent in utilizing behavior analytic procedures but not necessarily effective at teaching other individuals until they receive adequate and appropriate supervision and training. Training a newly minted behavior analyst should revolve around the use of behavioral skills training and its implementation, providing feedback that is valuable and supportive to supervisees, and even how to incorporate a structured approach to supervision of employees.

A structured supervision curriculum should encompass evidence-based methods of training so that a newer behavior analyst is exposed to performance and competency based training involving both didactic and naturally occurring settings. Development of this curriculum should be based on the function that the supervision practice serves and the form of this supervision should support the function. Therefore, if the function of supervision is to establish a network of peers to aid in developing various professional

skills (i.e., collaboration with coworkers), then the use of group supervision may be best at meeting this need.

Professionals that take part in supervisory practices in any aspect can have a direct effect not only on supervisees and the clients involved, but also on the field of behavior analysis, future professionals in the field, and future consumers that will need to seek out services. Typically, when a newer supervisor enters into the realm of supervision, they are likely to implement skills, training, and feedback as it was modeled to them by a previous supervisor. By doing this and dependent on the supervisory practices that were employed by these previous supervisors, newer supervisors may engage in practices that are either ethical and productive or in practices that are unethical, inappropriate, and exhibit harmful behavior. Newer supervisors should frequently consult and become familiar with the ongoing guidance that is provided through the website and newsletters from the BACB® as these often detail the supervisory activities that are required for each professional at each level of practice. Additionally, the BACB® provides guidance on the ethical requirements for professionals within the field as well as an avenue for reporting any violations of these requirements (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). This guidance allows professionals to have the knowledge needed to develop rules following behavior as well as rules that have antecedent control over an individual's behavior. Although the consequences of any unethical behavior that is committed by a professional in the field is not necessarily always clear, the BACB® does provide disciplinary action for such violations that warrant these consequences.

Every instance of unethical behavior that occurs may not come in contact with disciplinary action or a consequence that further molds one's behavior so they refrain from engaging in unethical responses. Even though this may be the case, various disciplines continue to develop ethical guidelines and consequences so that professionals in their respective fields can be guided on how to respond when direct contingencies do not always protect them from unethical responses. The *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* was developed based on ethical codes that had been established in related disciplines (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). A panel of experts then adapted this input to align with behavior analytic practice to form a code of ethics that applied to behavior analysts. This set of codes provides behavior analysts with a set of rules to follow, not necessarily examples or a detailed description of each rule (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). Therefore, it may be beneficial for professionals in the field to have further discussion surrounding the expectations within each rule as well as the rationales for the development of each rule. This might, in turn, assist behavior analysts with proactively engaging in ethical responses to situations as they arise.

Therefore, it is essential that certain sections of the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* are further discussed as they pertain to the supervisory practices of professionals in the field of behavior analysis (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Responsibility to Supervisees and Trainees

When evaluating the supervisory practices of professionals in the field of behavior analysis, it is important to understand that one's scope of responsibility is broad. Specifically, the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* even states that behavior analysts are to understand, know, and follow all of the supervisory requirements (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020):

4.01 Compliance with Supervision Requirements

Behavior analysts are knowledgeable about and comply with all applicable supervisory requirements (e.g., BACB® rules, licensure requirements, funder and organization policies), including those related to supervision modalities and structure (e.g., in person, video conference, individual, group) (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

While this wording can be daunting, it provides the basis for professionals to understand that supervisory practices should be taken seriously and that one should know and understand all requirements and acknowledge the responsibility that comes with taking on a position of such magnitude. A supervisor should have a thorough understanding of all supervision requirements, agree to and act in accordance with each and every requirement, and to guide the behavior of those receiving supervision.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.01 Compliance with Supervision Requirements

As a BCBA-D® within an organization that provides behavior analytic services to children diagnosed with autism, several of the technicians work toward accruing their fieldwork hours through our site. Often, there are several BCBA®s that are overseen by the BCBA-D® that provide supervisory experiences to the technicians. Technicians are responsible for reaching out to their respective BCBA® if they need to accrue fieldwork hours and to develop a game plan for having the requirements met to be eligible to sit for certification. One BCBA® that works for the organization was recently certified within the past three months and let the technicians on her team know that she was eligible to supervise their fieldwork hours.

As the BCBA-D® that is overseeing the newly certified BCBA®, what steps should be taken

to ensure that supervisory requirements, as outlined by the BACB®, are complied with and met?

4.02 Supervisory Competence

Behavior analysts supervise and train others only within their identified scope of competence. They provide supervision only after obtaining knowledge and skills in effective supervisory practices, and they continually evaluate and improve their supervisory repertoires through professional development (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

This section refers to supervisors acknowledging that they are to only provide supervisory activities that coincide with their own area of competence. A behavior analyst is restricted by their scope of competence in the areas that they are able to teach, conduct research activities, or engage in clinically. This applies to supervisory activities as well. When a behavior analyst does not have the required training or competency as it relates to a supervisory practice or activity, the behavior analyst is required to make a referral, obtain the required training, or seek consultation from a behavior analyst that is able to competently meet the needs of the individual (Sellers et al., 2016). This guideline further protects individuals who need services by ensuring that they are receiving services from professionals that are equipped to and have the knowledge to provide the services needed for their situation. This guideline also protects supervisees from receiving training that encourages the use of inadequate interventions or developing a repertoire that is based on unethical practices. Furthermore, a supervisor's level of competence in a certain area will affect how they are able to effectively train on this specified area. If a supervisor's level of competence is low on a certain topic, then they will not be able to effectively train on the material until they receive the necessary training and experience as it relates to this topic. Lastly, this guideline ensures the integrity of the field of behavior analysis, by providing a barrier to those that are not trained or specialize on a subject matter and their ability to conduct clinical practice and research.

When further evaluating this guideline, examples can easily be brought to the forefront to demonstrate the need for professionals to ethically abide by these rules. Individuals that have worked only with individuals over the age of 50 may not have the skill set that translates or transfers to preschool aged children. For example, there are differences across each population's life span such as the goals they are working on, the behaviors they will exhibit, the individuals that may be involved as supports in their lives, and the procedures that are shown to be evidence-based to further one's independence.

Therefore, without the required training or skill set to effectively work with both populations, inadequate interventions and unethical practices may occur.

Additionally, cultural conditions should be considered when examining whether or not a professional is competent within this realm to provide supervision. Some concerns that should be considered are legal issues, ethical dilemmas, and cultural conflicts that occur. A behavior analyst is responsible for being culturally competent or securing training to ensure cultural competency within the environment and to the population that they are providing services. When conflict occurs, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide guidance to the supervisee on how to handle and navigate situations. For example, issues may arise regarding transgender marriages in an area where transgender marriages are not readily accepted or recognized. These issues could become problematic for treatment when consent for treatment is needed or development of gender related goals are created. A supervisor would need to be able to inform their supervisee and staff members on how to move forward with these situations in a manner that does not engage in discriminatory practices and leads to beneficial outcomes. In another example, conflicts may occur that align with cultural norms such as how individuals are greeted when they enter a home. Some cultures engage in warm, affectionate greetings while others are closed off and refrain from any personal contact with one another. In these situations, it is important for supervisors to keep in mind that the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* was not developed by these differing cultures (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). Therefore, it may be necessary for the supervisor to model how to successfully communicate regarding these situations so that difficult situations can be approached with a thoughtful and critical problem solving approach. The supervisor should be able to inform the supervisee on how to accommodate various family practices into an individual's treatment so that the family unit does not feel that they are being judged and instead feel accepted for their cultural norms and beliefs. Ultimately, the supervisor should be able to understand and acknowledge not only their competencies but also their limitations so that a referral can be made, supervision practices declined, or a willingness to pursue training and a skill set that allows for competent supervision to be upheld.

As it relates to a supervisor's level of competence, it is important for a behavior analyst to understand that they are not ultimately confined to only practicing within the area that they were initially trained in. A behavior analyst is able to pursue additional training, mentorship, and supervision to expand their skill set into new areas as well as with different populations. Therefore, a behavior analyst should not shy away from these opportunities, but instead embrace the ever growing needs of the field of

behavior analysis and seek out ways to further their training and skill set.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.02 Supervisory Competence

As an individual at a site that is pursuing their BCBA® certification, it is important to accrue fieldwork hours that meet the requirements as outlined by the BACB®. Several BCBA®s have mentioned through social media that they are willing to provide supervision of these fieldwork hours through remote methods. One BCBA® that this individual contacted agreed to provide supervision remotely and sent over a contract that delineated the expectations for this relationship. The contract was signed and the BCBA® began to supervise the individual's fieldwork experience. A couple of months went by, and the individual realized that their BCBA® supervisor should have completed the eight-hour supervisor training prior to agreeing to supervise this individual. The individual searches on the BACB® website and is unable to verify that their BCBA® has completed this training.

If the individual verifies that their BCBA® supervisor has not completed the eight-hour supervisor training as required by the BACB®, how should they proceed with this situation?

4.03 Supervisory Volume

Behavior analysts take on only the number of supervisees or trainees that allows them to provide effective supervision and training. They are knowledgeable about and comply with any relevant requirements (e.g., BACB® rules, licensure requirements, funder and organization policies). They consider relevant factors (e.g., their current client demands, their current supervisee or trainee caseload, time and logistical resources) on an ongoing basis and when deciding to add a supervisee or trainee. When behavior analysts determine that they have met their threshold volume for providing effective supervision, they document this self-assessment and communicate the results to their employer or other relevant parties (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Throughout supervisory practices, supervisors are tasked with guiding future members of the field. As part of this process, it is important for supervisors to effectively manage the volume of supervisory activities they take on and ensure that these activities do not affect the high quality behavior analytic services that they are able to provide to those requesting their services. In particular, this guideline in the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* is concerned with the number of supervisees that a behavior analyst accepts and is responsible for at any period of time (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

If a behavior analyst were to oversee too many supervisees or engage in supervisory activities beyond their ability to remain effective, this may result in the services that are being provided to be inadequate, problematic, and even harmful to those receiving the services. Ultimately, this could affect the supervision of a supervisee, resulting in unethical practices being modeled and ineffective practices being implemented.

Often, supervisors take on too many supervisory activities and supervisees because individuals need help and training. Behavior analysts, by the mere delineation of their job duties, enjoy helping people and alleviating problems that occur. Although the immediate response is to help everyone they encounter, behavior analysts should fight this urge to do so and have an ethical obligation to only supervise those that can reasonably be accommodated by a supervisor. Furthermore, behavior analysts may gain significant financial gain from providing supervisory services or an employer may direct a behavior analyst to accommodate an inappropriate number of supervisees. When these situations arise, it is important for a behavior analyst to have clear and open communication with their employer so that these situations can be remedied, and behavior analysts are empowered to effectively implement the guidelines that are delineated for their practice.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.03 Supervisory Volume

A local agency that provides behavior analytic services to individuals diagnosed with autism is looking to expand their services to other nearby areas as well as grow their existing sites. There are currently three BCBA®s that have been hired by this agency to meet the needs of the clients and to maintain the billable hours that have been authorized by the insurance provider for each client. As it stands without adding any additional growth to the agency, the three BCBA®s each have 50 billable hours assigned to them on their caseloads. These hours do not provide time for nonbillable activities to be completed. The managerial staff at the agency do not have any plans to hire any additional BCBA®s at this time until the agency can show a profit. The BCBA®s have been instructed to continue to conduct intake assessments and to provide start dates for the clients once authorizations have been obtained from the insurance provider.

As one of these three BCBA®s that have been hired by this agency, how should you approach this situation with the managerial staff?

4.04 Accountability in Supervision

Behavior analysts are accountable for their supervisory practices. They are also

accountable for the professional activities (e.g., client services, supervision, training, research activity, public statements) of their supervisees or trainees that occur as part of the supervisory relationship (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Ultimately, when a behavior analyst agrees to engage in supervisory practices, they are accepting accountability for the supervisory practices that they engage in as well as the professional activities for any supervisee or trainee that they agree to provide supervision to as part of their supervisory relationship. When a behavior analyst is accountable for supervisory practices, they are ensuring that RBT®s and BCBA®s as well as any trainees that are accruing fieldwork hours that they are overseeing are engaging in behavior analytic activities and practices that are held to the highest standard. Additionally, a behavior analyst may need to meet minimum supervision requirements, complete any BACB® paperwork, assess competency of supervisee and trainees, and ensure that billable hours are recorded accurately each month.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.04 Accountability in Supervision

In a group home setting where adults diagnosed with autism reside, several technicians are on staff at any given moment to provide services to these individuals as they navigate living in an environment with others. The BCBA® that has been assigned to this group home setting arrives on site and sits in a corner of the living room with her computer. She does not say anything to anyone, does not provide any guidance or support, and continually is observed working on her computer. The BCBA® will stay for 2-3 hours at a time and then leave. She turns in her billable notes to her supervisor each week that accounts for these visits to the group home.

As a technician in the group home setting, how would you approach this situation where the BCBA® is using billable time for consulting as a supervisor, but does not provide any consultative services to anyone in the home?

4.05 Maintaining Supervision Documentation

Behavior analysts create, update, store, and dispose of documentation related to their supervisees or trainees by following all applicable requirements (e.g., BACB® rules, licensure requirements, funder and organization policies), including those relating to confidentiality. They ensure that their documentation, and the documentation of their supervisees or trainees, is accurate and complete. They maintain documentation in a manner that allows for the effective transition of supervisory oversight if necessary. They retain their supervision documentation for at least 7 years and as otherwise required by

law and other relevant parties and instruct their supervisees or trainees to do the same (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Each supervisor should engage in organizational habits that will ensure that documentation is stored in an effective and appropriate manner. At a minimum, each supervisor should have a file cabinet (i.e., digital, paper) for each supervisee that they are overseeing or providing supervision for in a supervisory relationship. There should be separate folders for each of the different kinds of paperwork that the BACB® requires to be completed as well as any paperwork required to meet the requirements for state licensure. Paperwork required by the company that the supervisee is employed by as well as any governmental agency paperwork should be saved in the filing system. Competency assessments, data, observations conducted from supervision sessions, feedback that has been provided to the supervisee, and any verification logs or trackers that have been completed should also be stored in this system. Lastly, all monthly and final verification forms that have been completed and signed should be kept on file. A supervisee or trainee may contact a behavior analyst at a later time requesting any of this documentation, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to have kept and to also provide this documentation for them (Bailey & Burch, 2022).

Section 1 Case Study: 4.05 Maintaining Supervision Documentation

A BCBA® has been providing supervision for an individual accruing fieldwork hours. At the onset of supervision, a contract was signed that outlined the requirements for this supervisory relationship. Several months go by and the individual accruing fieldwork hours tells the BCBA® that they will be moving at the end of the month to another state. The individual also lets the BCBA® know that they will need to complete any paperwork required by the BACB®, so that their supervisory experience together can be finalized. On the individual's last day of employment, the BCBA® was out sick and unable to sign the verification form for the fieldwork hours for that month. The individual reaches out to the BCBA® the next week, when the BCBA® returns to work, and requests that the document be signed and mailed to her. The BCBA® stated that she would complete the documentation. Several months go by and the BCBA® has not sent any documentation to the individual.

If you are the individual that received the supervision from the BCBA®, how would you handle this situation so that you can receive the documentation required from your fieldwork experience?

4.06 Providing Supervision and Training

Behavior analysts deliver supervision and training in compliance with applicable requirements (e.g., BACB® rules, licensure requirements, funder and organization policies). They design and implement supervision and training procedures that are evidence based, focus on positive reinforcement, and are individualized for each supervisee or trainee and their circumstances (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

When a behavior analyst enters into an agreement to provide supervision to another individual, it is important for the supervisor to review the relevant rules and regulations that surround the realm of supervision. The BCBA® Handbook delineates the requirements of a supervisor and the various roles that a supervisor may acquire throughout their experience (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2022). For example, the BCBA® Handbook designates three roles of oversight: supervisor, assessor, and trainer. The supervisor is the individual who oversees others that are providing behavior analytic services (i.e., RBT®s) and those individuals that are accruing fieldwork hours toward their certification. An assessor is an individual that may directly conduct or oversee individuals that conduct assessments of individuals that are pursuing or maintaining their RBT® certification. Through these assessments, this oversight determines whether these individuals are competent in specific tasks. Typically, the Initial Competency Assessment or the Renewal Competency Assessment are completed. Lastly, the trainer is an individual that is tasked with developing and/or providing training to fulfill the 40-hour RBT® training requirements. This individual may also oversee others that are providing this training.

A supervisor that is overseeing RBT®s should note that they are also responsible for the actions of the RBT®s that are being overseen by them (Bailey & Burch, 2022). If an RBT® has been accused of any ethical violations, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to handle these accusations and remedy any violations that may have occurred. For example, internal company policies may need to be followed regarding a situation or a notice may need to be filed with the BACB® if the allegations include acts of abuse or fraudulent billing.

After an RBT® completes their initial 40-hour training, further training is required in all aspects. Often, families and consumers see RBT®s as the face of their treatment and the point of contact for the field of behavior analysis. Therefore, it is important to facilitate training for RBT®s on how to handle and communicate the needs of clients, parents, and stakeholders (Bailey & Burch, 2022). Unfortunately, if there are issues with

communication between any of these relevant parties and an RBT®, the end result can have a trickle down effect in all aspects of treatment and for the field of behavior analysis. Training should also continue for RBT®s on the implementation of behavior analytic principles and procedures. If an RBT® implements an intervention incorrectly or inadvertently provides reinforcement for a behavior, it could result in reducing the work that has already been associated with reducing an inappropriate behavior or provide the opportunity for the individual to engage in aggression, property destruction, or self-injurious behaviors.

Furthermore, supervision and training procedures are to be evidence-based, focus on positive reinforcement, and individualized for each supervisee and their circumstances (Bailey & Burch, 2022). Modeling these types of practices to supervisees helps to provide each supervisee with the foundational requirements needed for successful interventions and practices within the field of behavior analysis.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.06 Providing Supervision and Training

An RBT® is working at a clinic-based setting that provides behavior analytic services to individuals diagnosed with varying disabilities. The BCBA® that provides supervision for each of the cases has been a BCBA® for three years and has worked for this company for two years. The RBT® is newer to the field, but has been working with the company for six months. The RBT® is eager to learn and advance their skill set, but the BCBA® does not provide opportunities for skill advancement, does not provide feedback during consultative services, and implements interventions without ensuring that they are based on evidence. The RBT® feels that they will never advance in the field without any opportunities for growth.

As the RBT®, how would you handle this situation with the BCBA® and how should opportunities for skill advancement look for an RBT®?

4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity

During supervision and training, behavior analysts actively incorporate and address topics related to diversity (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

In their day to day work as a behavior analyst, supervisees will encounter people from different cultures, races, socioeconomic statuses, and even genders. Every person that

they interact with will have varying views on topics and have been a part of different experiences that shape their decision making processes and thoughts on different situations. Furthermore, people may differ on their ideas surrounding behavior and the interventions used to affect change on an individual's behavior. A behavior analyst should be prepared to listen with an open mind to the viewpoints and thoughts of another person surrounding their topic of discussion instead of immediately presenting with a closed mind. Other individuals should be considered and listened to based on their knowledge, expertise, and opinions not based and judged on their race, gender, sexual orientation, or other personal aspect. Supervisors should provide material and resources for their supervisees so that a supervisee is able to confidently work in an environment with other individuals from different backgrounds, free from prejudice, judgment, or bias (Bailey & Burch, 2022). They should be able to work cooperatively with individuals from varying backgrounds and promote an environment filled with mutual respect.

Supervisors should be aware of unconscious bias and teach their supervisees to accept all individuals without allowing the possibility of any stereotypes to enter into their conversations and interactions (Bailey & Burch, 2022). Furthermore, supervisors should be ready and willing to provide feedback to their supervisees regarding any bias, hesitancy, insensitivity, or intolerance that they observe during interactions so that a supervisee becomes aware of these instances and can work to remedy the situation so that future encounters will not be affected.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity

An RBT® was sitting at a table in the lunchroom, eating a snack and enjoying a break. Three BCBA®s walked into the lunchroom and continued their conversation that they were having in the hallway of the clinic. One BCBA® looks at the others and begins to discuss the training that they had just received earlier in the morning. The BCBA® talks about how easy it is to conduct a preference assessment and how they could not believe that “these” people were not understanding the information and unable to grasp how to conduct one. Another BCBA® speaks up and says that “the hiring of these people must be part of the company’s equal opportunity hires.” The BCBA®s then get their lunches out of the refrigerators and leave the lunchroom.

As the RBT® that overheard this conversation among the BCBA®s in the lunchroom, how should the situation be handled and what steps should the RBT® take to address the situation?

4.08 Performance Monitoring and Feedback

Behavior analysts engage in and document ongoing, evidence-based data collection and performance monitoring (e.g., observations, structured evaluations) of supervisees or trainees. They provide timely informal and formal praise and feedback designed to improve performance and document formal feedback delivered. When performance problems arise, behavior analysts develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate an improvement plan with clearly identified procedures for addressing the problem (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Throughout the supervisory process, skill attainment and competency of material are some of the main focuses and components of these areas include feedback. Positive and negative feedback are essential to learning new material and gaining additional skills. A supervisor should provide feedback based on systems that utilize behavior analysis so that the targeted effects are able to be obtained. If a supervisor does not use feedback or the principles of reinforcement effectively, this could result in potentially harmful skills being acquired by the supervisee. Additionally, the less than desired reinforcement and feedback systems that are demonstrated by the supervisor are in turn being modeled as appropriate methods for the supervisee. This creates a continuous cycle of ineffective feedback and reinforcement procedures being applied in the supervisory process and the development of skills and knowledge acquired to be hindered.

Systems that focus on implementing effective feedback should be designed so that reinforcement is delivered in a manner that closely follows the targeted behavior as behavior is most effectively shaped when a consequence follows a behavior (Sellers et al., 2016). By implementing a process with this in mind, it will increase the likelihood that the change desired in an individual's performance will take place and allows for supervisory behavior that is appropriate and effective to be modeled to the supervisee. When inappropriate feedback is modeled, several risks can be possible and hinder the supervisory process. If feedback is not specific to the behavior that is occurring, it may not shape the desired targeted behavior of the individual. Feedback should be specific and follow closely to when the targeted behavior occurs so that shaping of the behavior can be reinforced and desired repertoires can be established. Furthermore, general feedback may allow an individual to have a false sense of competency and not be able to identify their own areas of strength and weaknesses (Sellers et al., 2016). Lastly, if feedback is not provided in a timely and effective manner, performance issues may occur and result as direct occurrence of insufficient skills that were taught as well as impact

any progress that an individual receiving services makes.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.08 Performance Monitoring and Feedback

It has been made known that an RBT® has refused to provide access to the bathroom on several occasions if a client did not do what they were asked to do. This denied access resulted in the client soiling themselves each time. The RBT® would then refuse to allow the individual to change clothes and would state that they were “working through” problematic behaviors. Denying access to the bathroom was not included in the client’s behavior plan and was never agreed upon by the client or their family as part of an intervention. Other RBT®s brought these concerns forth to the attention of managerial staff within the organization. The company chose to handle the concern internally and to not tell the family of these issues.

As an RBT® that witnessed these events, how would you proceed and what would be the best course of action to take in regard to the company choosing to not discuss these concerns with the family?

4.09 Delegation of Tasks

Behavior analysts delegate tasks to their supervisees or trainees only after confirming that they can competently perform the tasks and that the delegation complies with applicable requirements (e.g., BACB® rules, licensure requirements, funder and organization policies) (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Supervisory practices also include the tasks and activities that the supervisor assigns to the individual(s) that they are overseeing. Therefore, it is important that the supervisor is able to determine and confirm that the supervisee has the required skill set to complete any tasks that they are assigned. If a supervisor allows a supervisee to complete any tasks that they do not have the required training or skill set to complete, the supervisor has just opened up themselves, the supervisee, coworkers, clients, and anyone else associated with these tasks to possible safety and ethical risks. For example, if a supervisee implements a behavior reduction intervention procedure that they do not have the training or skill set required to implement, the individual receiving services may end up with injuries or inadvertently reinforcing the behavior targeted for reduction.

Additionally, a supervisor is responsible for being able to identify various tasks that a supervisee should be able to complete but is unable to because of a skill deficit. Once these skills have been identified, the supervisor should create opportunities and

situations where the supervisee is able to learn the skill so they can achieve independence in this area and be effective in similar scenarios. When a supervisor does not provide opportunities for supervisees to learn and acquire skills that they exhibit deficits in, they ultimately put future coworkers and individuals needing services at the risk of experiencing harm. Furthermore, by not addressing these deficits and allowing for learning opportunities, this behavior is then modeled for the supervisee and stresses that it is acceptable to exhibit the same behavior when they are supervisors themselves (Sellers et al., 2016).

It is ideal for supervisors to prevent any ethical dilemmas that may possibly occur. Therefore, clear descriptions of responsibilities and prohibitions should be delineated (Sellers et al., 2016). By doing this, everyone involved in the supervisory process would be clear on the tasks that they are able to complete or participate in and what activities they should stay clear of until they acquire the appropriate training and skill set. This approach allows conversations to occur between the supervisor and the individual receiving oversight concerning the practical and ethical implications that exist regarding appropriate training and the preparation needed to complete various activities. Also, by having a list of tasks that are allowed and not allowed, this will allow a supervisee to understand the possible requirements necessary to learn for their next professional role or promotion. It will give them a checklist that provides guidance and direction for further skill development.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.09 Delegation of Tasks

A company that provides behavior analytic services in a home-based setting hires newly certified RBT®s to provide services to clients. The BCBA®s that provide oversight to these RBT®s visit the homes once a month for 1-2 hours and evaluate the programming that is in place for each client. The RBT®s are responsible for developing behavior intervention plans and selecting programming for the individuals that are on their caseloads. Goals are selected based on the RBT®s preference and for what they feel would be an appropriate goal to work on. Assessments have not been completed on any of the clients and there is no systematic way for integrating programming for each client.

As an RBT® that works for this company, do you feel that you could provide adequate services and care for each client on your caseload? What do you feel are the next steps that an RBT® should follow?

4.10 Evaluating Effects of Supervision and Training

Behavior analysts actively engage in continual evaluation of their own supervisory practices using feedback from others and client and supervisee or trainee outcomes. Behavior analysts document those self-evaluations and make timely adjustments to their supervisory and training practices as indicated. (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Supervisors should continually evaluate the effectiveness of the supervision that they provide so that decisions that are based on data are able to be made as to whether or not modifications should be made to the supervisory process and the tasks that are being implemented (Sellers et al., 2016). There are three different levels that supervision can be evaluated on: the performance of the consumer, the performance of staff, and the performance of the supervisor (Sellers et al., 2016). Throughout the supervisory experience, the supervisor will need to be able to determine if the supervision activities they align are truly impacting the supervisory relationship in a positive manner. For example, activities that could impact this relationship are whether or not the supervisee attends various training opportunities, completes tasks that are delegated to them, or seeks out and responds to the feedback of the supervisor in a professional manner. Additionally, the supervisor will need to determine if the supervisee's knowledge base has improved and if they are more apt to be effective in predetermined areas. These areas might include evaluating if a client has made significant progress on a goal that the supervisee developed or if the clinicians that the supervisee is guiding are able to implement treatment with fidelity. Furthermore, a supervisor should also evaluate if a relationship has formed between the practices that have been taught and developed and that of the performance of both the client and staff. As the supervisor evaluates all of these areas, it is important for the supervisor to determine if changes should be made so that the desired results of supervision can be met. Throughout the evaluation process, the supervisor should model decision-making skills that are based on data collected and evidence-based practices so that the supervisee has effective supervision methods demonstrated for them.

There are several risks that could occur if a supervisor is unable or does not evaluate the effectiveness of the supervision that they provide to others (Sellers et al., 2016). The first risk centers around the supervisor actually providing and implementing effective supervision techniques but not evaluating these practices. Therefore, when the supervisor attempts to replicate the procedures they previously have implemented with other supervisees, the supervisor may not be able to do so, thus interfering with the supervisor's ability to implement these effective techniques and procedures. Another risk that could be associated is that the supervisor continues to provide ineffective

supervision which affects both current and future consumers. The supervisee, in turn, could continue these ineffective supervision practices when they become a supervisor, instilling the vicious cycle of ineffective supervision practices for those that later become behavior analysts. In addition to the two previously mentioned risks associated with failure to evaluate the effectiveness of supervision practices, a third risk should also be mentioned. A supervisor may also harm their current supervisee by providing supervision that is damaging. By providing harmful supervision practices, the future field of behavior analysis could be affected as well.

Evaluating one's own supervision practices can be a difficult endeavor to encounter and overcome, requiring immense effort and resources on the part of the supervisor. Significant time can be spent formulating systems so that supervision practices can be evaluated across the performance of the supervisee, the consumer, and the supervisor. Additionally, this may require the supervisor to engage in self-reflection techniques which necessitates a willingness to complete these tasks. Often, a multifaceted approach to this level of evaluation is warranted which should include multiple sources of data and various social validity measures within each performance measure. Performance goals should be objectively measured as well. This approach to analysis should be based on evidence-based practices and research within the field. There are a multitude of avenues that can be pursued for measuring performance goals and evaluating the practices of supervisees, consumers, and supervisors. Although it may be a multifaceted and complex process, it is a process that should be conducted correctly from the beginning to ensure the longevity of the field of behavior analysis as an ethically sound discipline.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.10 Evaluating Effects of Supervision and Training

Several behavior technicians have been reporting to a BCBA® at the agency that they work for. Over time, the BCBA® has provided feedback to these behavior technicians in a subjective manner, never with feedback based on data. The BCBA® has not changed their style of supervision, despite the lack of progress that clients are making and the turnover that has been occurring with RBT®s that report to this BCBA®.

As the BCBA® that has been providing supervision to these behavior technicians, what are some avenues that you could take or put into place to reduce turnover and ensure progress occurs for the clients on your caseload?

4.11 Facilitating Continuity of Supervision

Behavior analysts minimize interruption or disruption of supervision and make appropriate and timely efforts to facilitate the continuation of supervision in the event of planned interruptions (e.g., temporary leave) or unplanned interruptions (e.g., illness, emergencies). When an interruption or disruption occurs, they communicate to all relevant parties the steps being taken to facilitate continuity of supervision (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

It is important for behavior analysts to minimize any interruption or disruption of supervision as much as possible. An interruption or disruption of supervision could occur when a supervisor quits their job, is transferred to another job site, or needs to be on leave for any period of time. When these things occur, delivery of services may also, in turn, be disrupted or interrupted. This could result in clients not being able to obtain appropriate services, supervisees not being able to access appropriate levels of supervision and guidance, or even the development of behavior programming being placed on hold. All of these things could inadvertently harm the progress that a client is making and affect the rapport that was built regarding the field of behavior analysis and the consumer.

Therefore, it is vital that when an interruption or disruption of supervision needs do occur, it is minimized and remedied as quickly as possible. Conversations should occur among supervisors and the managerial staff that they report to, so that any disruptions could be planned for if possible. For example, if a behavior analyst will be flying out of the country to visit family for an extended period of time, the behavior analyst should inform the managerial staff in advance that they report to that this planned absence will be occurring. Then, the managerial staff would have optimal time to plan for this absence, ensure that other behavior analysts and RBT®s are able to continue to meet the needs and provide the services necessary for any clients on this individual's caseload, and ensure that all supervisees will still obtain appropriate supervision and guidance during this absence.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.11 Facilitating Continuity of Supervision

A BCBA® works at a small agency where only one other BCBA® is employed. Both of these BCBA®s provide oversight to all RBT®s that work for the agency and ensure the needs of the clients are met. One of the BCBA®s will be going on maternity leave in a week and the managerial staff at the agency have not discussed coverage for the needs

of the clients or the supervisory needs of the RBT®s that are on their caseload. The other BCBA® at the agency already has over 50 billable hours to meet each week, not including nonbillable activities that have to be completed. The parents of the clients have not been informed of this upcoming change, either.

As the BCBA® that will be leaving on maternity leave, what are the next steps that should be taken to ensure that continuity of supervision has been secured for both the RBT®s and the clients on their caseload?

4.12 Appropriately Terminating Supervision

When behavior analysts determine, for any reason, to terminate supervision or other services that include supervision, they work with all relevant parties to develop a plan for terminating supervision that minimizes negative impacts to the supervisee or trainee. They document all actions taken in this circumstance and the eventual outcomes (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

There may be times when supervision or other services that include supervision need to be terminated. When this occurs, there are several things that a behavior analyst should complete to continue to align their practices with the ethical guidelines provided by the BACB® (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). The first and main step that should be taken is that a behavior analyst should review the contract that was completed at the onset of supervision (Bailey & Burch, 2022). Within this contract, the supervisor should have outlined the criteria for which it is acceptable to terminate supervision. This criteria will provide the behavior analyst with acceptable reasons for terminating supervision and allow the supervisor to refer to this contract when discussing this outcome with the supervisee. If the supervisor failed to include termination of supervision language into the contract at the onset of supervision services, this can prove to be problematic for the supervisor. The supervisor may not have any criteria for which termination can occur and therefore, be thrust to make a decision as to if they continue to terminate the supervision agreement and risk being reported or keep the supervisee in place and create a performance improvement plan for the behavior that needs to be corrected (Bailey & Burch, 2022). There may be times when the performance or behavior of the supervisee is egregious such as fraudulent billing or abuse of a client that termination of the supervision agreement needs to occur immediately. In these situations, it is important to have proper documentation that aligns with these occurrences of misconduct.

Section 1 Case Study: 4.12 Appropriately Terminating Supervision

A behavior technician worked for an agency and provided services to individuals in a home-based setting. The behavior technician worked for the company for six months and never saw a BCBA® or managerial staff member come to the home or provide consultation services for the client. The behavior technician never received feedback during this six month period, either. The behavior technician decided to call the BCBA® and ask that supervision be provided to them as they had been working without any oversight for months. Two days later, the BCBA® contacted the behavior technician while they were working in the home and informed them that they no longer worked for the company. The BCBA® then asked the behavior technician to end their shift and leave the client's residence.

As the BCBA® that works for this agency, what could have been done differently to ensure that the situation did not occur in this manner for the behavior technician? If a behavior technician does need to be terminated, what are some appropriate steps that can be taken to ensure that supervision is terminated appropriately.

Section 1 Personal Reflection

What are the supervision practices that you have encountered that you feel should be changed so they better align with the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* (2020)?

Section 1 Key Words

The terms in this section are taken directly from the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (2020).

Behavior Analyst - An individual who holds BCBA® or BCaBA® certification or who has submitted a complete application for BCBA® or BCaBA® certification. (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Client - The direct recipient of the behavior analyst's services. At various times during service provision, one or more stakeholders may simultaneously meet the definition of client (e.g., the point at which they receive direct training or consultation). In some contexts, the client might be a group of individuals (e.g., with organizational behavior management services) (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Scope of Competence - The professional activities a behavior analyst can consistently

perform with proficiency (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Stakeholder - An individual, other than the client, who is impacted by and invested in the behavior analyst's services (e.g., parent, caregiver, relative, legally authorized representative, collaborator, employer, agency or institutional representative, licensure board, funder, third-party contractor for services) (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Supervisee - Any individual whose behavioral service delivery is overseen by a behavior analyst within the context of a defined, agreed upon relationship. Supervisees may include RBT®s, BCaBA®s, and BCBA®s, as well as other professionals carrying out supervised behavioral services (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Trainee - Any individual accruing fieldwork/experience toward fulfilling eligibility requirements for BCaBA® or BCBA® certification (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020).

Section 2: Factors Affecting Productivity

Productivity of an organization involves a calculation of not only the efficiency of people but also the machines, systems, or units that are involved in and used to transform inputs into expected outcome and permanent products. Not only is it a measure that delineates performance standards as they relate to the production of a workplace, but it also enhances the revenue and sustainability of a business. As the productivity of an organization increases, often the revenue and profitability of the business increases as well. A multitude of components systematically work together to comprise a workplace environment. Most organizations are composed of a human resources department, equipment, financial resources, employees with varying educational backgrounds, and different settings or conditions in which employees are exposed to. All of these vital components must work together for both a work environment that attracts employees and for profitability to rise. With that being said, there are several factors that can influence productivity of an organization.

Employees

One main factor includes the employees that are hired to complete a particular job within the workplace. The job or labor that an individual performs directly impacts and influences the overall productivity of an organization. The right employee should be

selected to perform the specified tasks at hand and to represent the organization. Therefore, it is key that each employee receives all training that is relevant to each job task that they are asked to complete, and tasks should be delegated in an appropriate manner so that the best possible performance outcomes can be expected of each employee. By providing relevant training and ensuring that each employee does not feel overworked, unable to complete the job asked of them, or left without clear expectations, this will contribute to enhancing the performance of employees within the workplace environment.

Technology

A second factor that influences productivity within a workplace environment is technology. The term technology can encompass many different variables including equipment, machinery, and the technical insight and knowledge of a system that is being used in the workplace dynamic. Organizations should stay up to date with modifications that need to be made to technological components within a company, upgrading software as needed, replacing broken parts required for a machine to run, and even ensuring that employees have the needed skills to effectively integrate their knowledge on processes and product creation with the tools needed to complete these tasks.

Financial Resources

An additional factor that can influence the productivity of an organization includes the financial resources that are required for an organization to successfully run the day-to-day operations and any expenses that the organization has taken on for any long-term endeavors. Financial resources are important within the structure of an organization. They not only are used to pay employees their wages or to keep the lights on within a building, but financial resources can be used to train employees to have the skills needed to perform specific tasks as well as other avenues to enhance employee performance (i.e., performance increases, paid time off).

Work Environment and Conditions

The work environment of an organization includes the location that the employee reports to in order to conduct their assigned tasks. An employee may report to several different work environments to fulfill their job duties. Each work environment is composed of different components such as the different facilities, the safety of each

employee, and even the conditions that an employee is exposed to (i.e., lighting, heat, clean restrooms). Employees desire a supportive work environment as the work environment influences their mood, satisfaction with a company, and their day-to-day performance levels.

Supervisory Skill Set

The abilities, knowledge, and skills that a supervisor possesses are critical when evaluating the productivity of an organization. The right individuals should be placed in leadership and managerial positions so that they can provide the correct guidance and direction that enables employees to exhibit ideal productivity. Supervisors will need to be able to monitor employee performance and provide direction that allows employees to grow their own skill set, maintain productivity measures, and enjoy the culture of the workplace.

Employee Skill Set and Motivation

Employees that are highly skilled perform their job duties with accuracy and detail, paying attention to specific performance measures in place and adhering to productivity measures. It is necessary that employees have the required training to complete their job duties to their fullest potential as this will continue to propel organizations forward. Organizations that employ highly skilled employees are able to achieve maximum productivity from those employed.

Employee motivation is also important to consider when evaluating productivity measures. Motivation is a key component of the workplace and can affect the success of any organization. Employees that have a high motivational factor (i.e., wages, employee benefits) will emit higher production rates. Therefore, it is important for a supervisor to understand the items that an employee values as these will contribute to an employee's motivational factor. Each employee should be considered as an investment. As employees feel that they have been invested in by an organization, productivity increases, the workplace culture is motivated, and morale is boosted. Each of these variables further supports the company culture and environment.

There are several benefits to having employee motivation levels at the top end of the continuum (i.e., high). First, the organization will see higher levels of productivity among the workforce. Employee motivation levels coincide with an employee's work engagement level. Work engagement includes the level of emotional and intellectual

commitment that an employee shows or demonstrates towards the values of an organization (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). Work engagement contains dedication, vigor and absorption at high levels thus affecting an employee's level of energy, enthusiasm, and persistence. Employees will pay closer attention to their work, deliver their best effort when at their job, and will refrain from wasting time or engaging in counterproductive activities (i.e., talking on the phone, scrolling on social media). Employees will also bring in innovation and look for new ways to complete projects, job duties, and tasks. These employees are typically self-directed and goal-oriented, generating work that is of high-quality with enhanced efficiency. Additionally, employees will have improved satisfaction with the organization that they work for, aiding in healthy and safe work practices as well as bringing in a positive outlook for other employees. Lastly, employees will be more committed and loyal to an organization. They will increase the effort that they put into their job duties and will feel more fulfilled when engaging in work related tasks, thus reducing their intention to quit.

Section 2 Personal Reflection

Are there other factors not listed above that could affect employee productivity within an organization?

Section 2 Key Words

Productivity - a measure in terms of the rate of output within an organization as it compares to each unit of input

Technology - the application of scientific knowledge, as well as machinery and equipment developed from scientific knowledge, for practical purposes

Work engagement - the level of emotional and intellectual commitment that an employee shows or demonstrates towards the values of an organization

Section 3: Work-Related Stress

Work-related stress has captured an increased focus from managerial staff and researchers alike. The health and well-being of employees is crucial as it can affect productivity and sustainability of an organization. Often, work related stress is found when an employee's capacity and capability to cope are exceeded. This can be done by

requested job duties being outside of one's current skill set, an employee's compensation not being aligned with the output of work that they are completing, or even by unsanitary work conditions. There are a multitude of symptoms that can be identified when an employee is affected by work-related stress (Better Health Channel, n.d.):

Physical Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Sleeping difficulties
- Dermatological disorders

Psychological Symptoms

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Pessimism
- Feelings of being overwhelmed and unable to cope

Behavioral Symptoms

- An increase in sick days or absenteeism
- Aggression
- Diminished creativity and initiative
- A drop in work performance
- Lower tolerance of frustration and impatience
- Isolation

While it is important to be able to identify the symptoms of work-related stress in any employee within an organization, it is also equally important to understand potential

stressors that may exist that can contribute to work-related stress. Some of the work-related stressors that may be relevant in an organization are (Better Health Channel, n.d.):

- Physical work environment and conditions
- Change in managerial staff
- Lack of support from managerial staff and co-workers
- Role conflict
- Job content and the demands expected of an employee
- Culture of an organization
- Management practices that are unsatisfactory
- Low salaries
- Lack of opportunity within the organization for growth or advancement

Within each of these work-related stressors, there are causes of work-related stress embedded within each stressor that members of the organization can work to alleviate and provide additional resources to staff to foster support and further discussion (Better Health Channel, n.d.):

- Long an/or increased work hours
- Heavy workload
- Tight deadlines or deadlines that are unrealistic
- Job insecurity
- Poor relationships with colleagues
- Over-supervision and feelings of being micromanaged
- Lack of equipment
- Work that lacks excitement
- Inadequate working environment

It is the responsibility of the employer to recognize the various signs that an employee

can exhibit when they are undergoing work-related stress. Work-related stress can pose various health and safety concerns for both employees and the organization. There are several steps that an organization can take to ensure employees are not subjected to undue stress while engaging in job duties and tasks (Better Health Channel, n.d.):

- Create and maintain a working environment that is safe and promotes safe work habits
- Provide proper and adequate training for all employees and the tasks that they are expected to complete
- Openly discuss issues and grievances with employees, provide support when necessary, and take action when items need remediated
- Create a stress management policy that includes feedback and opinions from employees
- Foster a work environment that allows employees to voice their concerns and feedback regarding their job duties and other organizational matters as appropriate
- Try to reduce the amount of overtime needed by hiring additional staff or reorganizing the job duties of existing staff
- Be open with considering the personal lives of employees as the demands of an employee's home life may not align with the demands of the work environment at all times

Section 3 Personal Reflection

What symptoms of work-related stress have you encountered previously and what were the work-related stressors that contributed to these symptoms?

Section 3 Key Words

Work-related stress - Negative reaction that people have when an excess of demands are placed on an employee or the demands of a position do not align with the capabilities, resources, or needs of the employee within the work environment

Work-related stressors - Any event within or coinciding with the workplace that is physical, psychological, or behavioral that triggers the parasympathetic nervous system

Section 4: Employee Burnout

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) professionals work tirelessly to develop interventions, provide services to those that need guidance and support, and enhance the lives of others in socially significant ways so that they can live their lives as independently and fulfilled as possible. Often, these professionals work an abundance of hours, sacrifice time with their own families, and put their own needs to the side. This imbalance of work-life roles can lead to an employee feeling exhausted and overworked. Continued long-term exposure to stressors found in the work environment can further lead to feelings of job dissatisfaction and even burnout.

Research has shown that there are high rates of burnout being experienced by BCBAs and BCaBAs. Approximately 26% of these individuals surveyed reported high emotional exhaustion and 29% of them reported that they had high levels of depersonalisation (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Furthermore, 50% of those surveyed expressed that they experienced a lack of accomplishment (Plantiveau et al., 2018).

Research also found that lower rates of burnout were associated with an increase in an employee's years of training that they had completed (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Increased job satisfaction and lower rates of burnout were also associated with an increase in the social support that is provided to an employee. Employees that perceive their level of supervisor support to be high have shown lower levels of burnout as well as lower levels of exhaustion and depersonalisation (Plantiveau et al., 2018). There are times, though, when supports that are offered are not utilized to their fullest within a work environment due to fear that an employee may be deemed that they are not able to complete their job duties.

When evaluating the needs of employees, employers should consider employee burnout as a possible scenario or situation that may arise and look for ways to alleviate these feelings and symptoms within an employee. Employees that experience work-related stress (i.e., increased work demands, long or increased work hours) and that are not allotted resources that are supportive from their employer (i.e., adequate training to complete job duties, discussions regarding working conditions) often experience physical and mental exhaustion (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). When these work-related stressors are left unattended, they can lead to burnout.

Burnout can be described as disengagement (i.e., reducing one's connection with the organization, increased intent of turnover) and exhaustion (i.e., fatigue, lack of energy) (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). Burnout occurs when an employee experiences

prolonged and intensive physical and mental strains revolving around their job duties. Employees could be asked to complete a task from their supervisor that conflicts with their personal preferences. Additionally, the available resources to an employee and what is required with the job demands may be imbalanced. While these are only a few examples, a multitude of physical and mental strains exist as they relate to job expectations.

Approximately every two out of three ABA practitioners have experienced moderate to high levels of burnout that coincides with low levels of job satisfaction (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Organizations tend to express that they are seemingly aware of the demands that are placed on employees within the workforce as research has shown that 46% of individuals in human resources positions have reported that they feel turnover in the workforce is directly correlated with employee burnout (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). While the direct link between the two variables has not been established, there is a correlation between burnout and turnover intentions. Turnover within an organization can be a stressful moment or period of time for not only the employee but the employer as well. Costs, both direct and indirect, can be substantial for an organization. There are costs that are associated with hiring staff, training new employees, and recruiting. These costs can add up to an amount that is almost as much as 200% of a direct support's 1 year salary (Lee et al., 2018). On average and based on reported salaries for direct reports and supervisors with various ABA providers, turnover costs could potentially be as high as \$166,200 per individual employee (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021).

Research has shown that through assessing an employee's level of job satisfaction and burnout, vital behavioral and health outcomes can be assessed (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Some of these outcomes include absenteeism, turnover, and even a decline in an individual's physical health. Employees that are exposed to demands that are perceived as unrealistic and unattainable will not immediately exhibit symptoms of burnout. Instead, these employees will only succumb to feelings of burnout once these high and unrealistic demands have been present for a significant period of time.

A significant form of work-related stress that may eventually lead to an employee experiencing feelings of burnout is conflict (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Conflict can occur between an employee and their supervisor, an employee and his or her colleagues as well as between an employee and clients involved with the organization. Conflict can exist when job demands and personal preferences do not align with one another. Positive interactions, though, can help to moderate an employee's emotional and behavioral response to the presence of conflict. For example, when co-workers are

present during a negative interaction between an employee and their supervisor, these co-workers may act as a buffer and diminish the punitive nature in which a supervisor may talk to an employee. Additionally, employees that work with clients who exhibit aggressive behaviors toward others may exhibit a higher rate of burnout levels than employees who work with clients that do not exhibit these types of behaviors.

Sociodemographic and Personal Risk Factors

When evaluating the chronological age of an employee, it has been found that younger employees tend to experience burnout within their work environment more often than individuals that are older (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Furthermore, employees that are either single or divorced are more likely to have lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of burnout than those employees that are married (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Ultimately, when an individual identifies work as their primary means of satisfaction, these individuals will be more likely to experience symptoms of burnout. Several factors that may be associated with this include having a limited social support system and working longer hours to get job duties completed. Research has also shown that individuals that have a higher level of education will also exhibit higher levels of burnout (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Although there are not any significant differences between genders regarding rates of burnout, certain behavioral signs of burnout may differ among men and women.

Individual Traits

An employee's individual traits can also be a contributing factor to symptoms of burnout. Traits such as a hardy personality, locus of control, and being able to view new situations as a challenge were found to be predictors of the likelihood that an employee would reach out to seek social support (Plantiveau et al., 2018). Employees that had different individual traits, those that are aligned with a more hopeful approach to situations, experienced higher levels of exhaustion, depersonalisation, and stress (Plantiveau et al., 2018). These individuals used coping strategies that were based in emotional-based coping, passive approaches, and exhibited an external locus of control.

In further exploration of how personality traits can play a role in the feelings of burnout, additional research evaluated core personality traits (i.e., extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) and how they influenced different factors associated with burnout. Research indicated that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism were more likely to experience symptoms of burnout

(Plantiveau et al., 2018).

Long-term Effects

Burnout can have a significant effect on both the individual and organization. Burnout may result in employees not reporting to work or calling out for their shift. Job turnover may occur, resulting in possible service disruption for clients receiving services if other qualified employees are not available to replace the employee that left the organization. Any time there is a disruption in services, clients are at risk for experiencing regression in progress and the overall quality of services can diminish. The employees that continue to work for an organization despite those that leave, often experience stress as a result of absenteeism or turnover which can lead to symptoms of burnout. There are times, though, that an employee that is experiencing symptoms of burnout will continue to work for an organization even though they may be performing their job duties poorly. This can ultimately result in long-term stress and diminished services being delivered to those surrounding or that are involved with this employee.

ABA Professionals and Burnout

ABA professionals often engage in a service delivery model that involves one-on-one support and delivery. Often, these professionals will provide services to individuals in a home setting or in a clinic setting as a front line worker. In both of these settings, these professional have little interaction with coworkers or supervisors, leaving them alone to respond to and deescalate challenging behaviors. This lack of support that these employees experience can be a potential risk factor that coincides with low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of burnout for individuals that provide behavioral services. When an employee has access to a strong social network, supportive supervisory staff, and coworkers that offer experience and guidance, these act as protective factors against the symptoms of burnout. These protective factors counterbalance the effects that high job demands and ineffective supervision may have on an employee.

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue has been accepted as an extended form of burnout. The term was first developed by Joinson (1982) when attempting to describe the unique stressors that were affecting individuals that were providing care to others or in professions that were deemed a caregiving profession. This extended form of burnout includes the magnitude and intensity of a client's emotional, physical, and behavioral needs when evaluating the

well-being of individuals providing care in service delivery models (Simpson, 2020). Compassion fatigue also includes the negative aspects of helping individuals with intense needs, those that are suffering, or require extensive support. Additionally, this extension of burnout is concerned with secondary exposure to stressful events.

Often, compassion fatigue is described as an extreme state of fatigue that is manifested by the experience of intense moments in life or circumstances surrounding these moments that result in mental distress and the individual's reduced capacity to provide care that is compassionate and nurturing with the service delivery context (Simpson, 2020). Furthermore, it can occur as a reaction to secondary stress due to helping an individual that is experiencing intense moments in life or difficult circumstances surrounding these moments. Secondary stress is referred to as the behavior and emotions that result from knowing of a traumatic event that has been experienced by another individual. Ultimately, compassion fatigue impacts an individual's well-being and their level of satisfaction within their job, their level of productivity within the work environment, and their ability to provide effective care to those requiring services (Simpson, 2020).

Compassion fatigue can be influenced by several variables, thus affecting one's risk of experiencing this extension of burnout. Several of these factors include the amount of emotional energy that a caregiver exudes to relieve the individual's level of suffering or to provide extensive support to meet their needs, and their prolonged exposure to this degree of suffering and level of care provided. Additionally, an individual's own traumatic memories and life disruptions (i.e., illness, responsibilities, financial concerns) influence a caregiver's magnitude of compassion fatigue. All of these risk factors combined with a caregiver's ability to empathize with their client directly impact whether or not someone may experience compassion fatigue and to what degree this fatigue will be experienced. Over time, the experience of becoming consumed by compassion fatigue will reduce the capacity and interest that an individual has for continuing to be exposed and working with individuals that are experiencing some degree of suffering or require extensive support. This depleted capacity may result in detachment, inability to concentrate on work tasks, irritability, and lack of patience for working through difficult moments.

Presenteeism

ABA professionals often encounter a busy work schedule and the need to tend to tasks at all hours of the day. The fear of falling behind on work tasks, job demands, and letting someone down that needs assistance looms in the corner of one's mind on good days,

let alone when a professional is feeling under the weather. Employees, despite not feeling well or having an illness, will often still attend work in an effort to meet the job demands that are placed before them. This act of attending work while feeling ill or having an illness is known as presenteeism (Norhisham et al., 2018). While some employees and even managerial staff see this act as a level of commitment to one's organization, presenteeism can actually lower productivity rates among employees by one-third or more (Norhisham et al., 2018). It has also been known to cause even greater productivity loss than absenteeism (Norhisham et al., 2018).

By postponing an absence from work that could alleviate an illness or allow for an individual to recover from not feeling well, a more serious illness could present itself. Also, a sick employee may pass on their illness to other employees or the clients that they work with, thus jeopardizing others and the productivity of the organization. Presenteeism could be a factor that contributes to burnout with an employee (Norhisham et al., 2018). When an individual is sick, physical and psychological recovery can be impaired. If this level of impairment continues, especially in cases where an employee does not allow themselves to recover from work-related fatigue, then homeostatic levels may not be able to be reached. This can become a vicious cycle for an employee as chronic fatigue can occur as a result of never getting the chance to fully recover and continuing to work in a sub-optimal state. Therefore, presenteeism has the potential to reduce one's recovery which could lead to higher levels of exhaustion, negative attitudes toward one's work environment, feelings of depersonalization, and eventually the exhibition of symptoms of burnout (Norhisham et al., 2018).

Section 4 Personal Reflection

What conflict have you been exposed to within your work environment that could potentially lead to burnout among employees within the organization?

Section 4 Key Words

Burnout - Disengagement and exhaustion that occurs when an employee experiences prolonged and intensive physical and mental strains revolving around their job duties

Compassion fatigue - extreme state of fatigue that is manifested by the experience of intense moments in life or circumstances surrounding these moments that result in mental distress and the individual's reduced capacity to provide care that is compassionate and nurturing with the service delivery context

Disengagement - Reducing one's connection with their environment

Exhaustion - a lack of energy or fatigue

Presenteeism - the act of attending work while feeling ill or having an illness

Secondary stress - the behavior and emotions that result from knowing of a traumatic event that has been experienced by another individual

Turnover - the rate at which employees leave an organization and are replaced

Section 5: Self-care Strategies and Implications toward Ethical Practice

Behavior analytic research concerning work-life balance, burnout, and engagement among employees is limited concerning ABA providers and the services that they provide. Therefore, it is necessary that the contributions from other fields are consulted as interventions are developed within the realm of ABA literature. One area that has gained momentum as a focus of research encompasses the use of self-care strategies and five dimensions that exist and combine to reduce employee levels of burnout and exhaustion.

Self-care

The term self-care has been shown to vary in how it is defined across the various disciplines. Often, literature in human service fields has predominantly focused on the development of a framework that provides guidance for human service practitioners (Lee & Miller, 2013). This framework typically consists of personal and professional self-care. Research has shown that there is a distinction between personal and professional self-care with personal self-care focusing on actions by the employee that are directly related to their own health and well-being (Lee & Miller, 2013). Conversely, professional self-care has been noted to include actions that promote the use of the employee's self in an appropriate manner with the intent to sustain holistic health and well-being in their professional roles (Lee & Miller, 2013).

By using this framework, research has continued to propel the area of self-care into the realm of behavior analysis by developing specific behavioral strategies that can measure and evaluate self-care among individuals (Dorociak et al., 2017). Purposeful

engagement in these self-care strategies, in theory, should help promote healthy functioning among employees as well as enhance their well-being. These strategies of self-care are further delineated by encompassing five dimensions with behavior-focused approaches: professional support, professional development, life balance, cognitive awareness, and daily balance (Dorociak, et al., 2017).

Professional Support

When evaluating the sub-area of professional support and the resources that could be available, it is ideal to look toward any resource that can support or aid an employee as they encounter any job-related stressors and that helps to motivate them to collaborate with others. Providing professional support is beneficial for all employees; however, it is especially helpful for those employees that are experiencing feelings of isolation and those that encounter high demands and stress. Within this area, behavioral strategies focus on strengthening and developing relationships among colleagues.

Professional Development

The area of professional development encompasses activities that coincide with continued training and educational activities that align with an individual's scope of practice and helps to further develop an employee's scope of competence (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). An individual's scope of competence refers to professional activities that are performed at a specified level that demonstrates proficiency. When an employee is allowed to actively participate in activities that further develop their scope of competence, this allows employees to enhance their knowledge in areas of professional growth within their field and become more knowledgeable in areas that relate to their job duties. These activities may include attending professional conferences, trainings, workshops, or even obtaining consultation from other professionals within the field. As these activities relate to self-care strategies, these activities should be enjoyable to the employee and include opportunities both professional and work-related activities geared toward socialization and community involvement. Research has shown that professional development has a low negative correlation as it relates to turnover intention and a low positive correlation as it coincides with job satisfaction (Acker, 2018).

Life Balance

The term life balance facilitates the view of having engagements outside of work, participation in activities that are enjoyable, and connecting with individuals in an effort to build social support and connections outside of the work environment (Dorociak et

al., 2017). More predominantly known as a work-life balance, this dimension exists to provide a balance between one's job duties and the individual's life outside of the workplace. Life outside of the workplace can include anything outside of one's paid job (i.e., sporting activities, spending time with family, meditation). Individuals that perceive their work-life balance as meeting satisfactory expectations are correlated to higher job performance levels, lower levels of burnout with their job duties and workplace environment, and higher ratings of overall life satisfaction (Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

Cognitive Awareness

An individual can increase their cognitive awareness by engaging in strategies such as self-monitoring, self-exploration, and self reflection (Acker, 2018; Dorociak et al., 2017; Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). Cognitive awareness is a dimension that attempts to increase and maintain an employee's self-awareness of their needs and emotions. This also includes an individual's self-awareness of their reactivity levels to various experiences within the workplace that may be stressful or negative to encounter. Through use of cognitive awareness strategies, individuals may be able to exhibit positive feelings as well as feelings of accomplishment when they encounter negative experiences throughout their work day or are exposed to stressful situations.

Daily Balance

The last dimension is centered around the concept of a daily balance. Daily balance refers to several smaller self-care activities that can be incorporated throughout one's daily schedule. These activities may include taking breaks when an individual feels overwhelmed, refraining from engaging in overcommitment to work tasks, and setting limits as to the tasks that one can reasonably accomplish throughout their work time. These strategies are designed to help employees successfully manage their daily job duties and stressors as well as maintaining awareness so that one can advocate for supportive resources when they are needed (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2021). Research has shown that the implementation of strategies that are associated with life balance, cognitive awareness, and daily balance are integral in reducing exhaustion that may be associated with levels of burnout (Dorociak et al., 2017).

Ethical Practice

Self-care strategies are directly tied to implications that are correlated to the ethical guidelines set forth that ABA professionals should align their practices with. ABA professionals, as well as other employees, should work to take care of and maintain

one's well-being, setting up work conditions and strategies that aid in supporting healthy behavior habits and their professional endeavors. By failing to maintain these standards, ABA professionals and other employees may negatively impact themselves, their clients, and the profession as a whole. Behavior analysts are to recognize when their personal problems are interfering with their ability to be effective practitioners, and they are to refrain from engaging in service delivery methods when their personal situations may compromise their ability to deliver services effectively.

Therefore, self-care strategies may provide beneficial outcomes for not only the employee but also for those that the employee encounters and delivers services to in their profession. Self-care strategies aid in reducing stress levels. Research has shown that lower levels of stress are correlated with lower levels of burnout (Rupert & Dorociak, 2019). It is vital that ABA professionals recognize that self-care is essential to their day-to-day performance and should take steps to adhere to the professional ethics code that is outlined in connection with their certification.

Section 5 Personal Reflection

What are some self-care strategies that you have implemented personally that have aided in reducing work-related stress?

Section 5 Key Words

Life balance - facilitates the view of having engagements outside of work, participation in activities that are enjoyable, and connecting with individuals in an effort to build social support and connections outside of the work environment

Personal self-care - actions by an individual that are directly related to their own health and well-being

Professional self-care - the use of the employee's self in an appropriate manner with the intent to sustain holistic health and well-being in their professional roles

Scope of competence - professional activities that are performed at a specified level that demonstrates proficiency

Section 6: Avenues for Reducing Symptoms of Burnout

Job Crafting

A job redesign strategy that aids in reducing burnout and exhaustion levels among employees is job crafting. Job crafting involves modifying on-the-job behaviors as a response to job demands. There are four dimensions that have been identified within job crafting: increasing social job resources (i.e., reaching out to coworkers to obtain their feedback on performance measures), increasing structural job resources (i.e., engagement in continuing educational and training opportunities), increasing job demands that present a challenge (i.e., participating in a new project), and decreasing job demands that are a hindrance (i.e., participating in job duties that are not emotionally draining when possible) (Tims et al., 2012). Any employee within an organization can engage in job crafting and adjust the process to meet their own needs. Managerial staff can provide support for engagement in job crafting as a way of facilitating this approach so that employees can demonstrate a balance between their work duties and life obligations. Managerial staff can provide support and resources to employees, work toward developing a culture that demonstrates trust among supervisors and supervisees, and explain to each employee how they help reach organizational goals throughout the process. Research has shown that positive outcomes are associated with job crafting such as lower levels of burnout and increased levels of job satisfaction and job performance (Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Employees are often able to engage in eight or nine job-crafting techniques at a time in an effort to create a sustainable work-life balance. They are able to define their work-life balance in a meaningful way for them that allows them to identify what they will or will not take on as a responsibility. Additionally, employees will lean on both their professional and personal supports not only for feedback but to provide emotional stability and support when stress levels are high. They will also acknowledge and be mindful of when the work day ends and the type of tasks that they are reasonably able to complete.

Interventions associated with job crafting involve an employee being able to focus broadly on a wide array of crafting behaviors across multiple dimensions. Different interventions are associated with different aspects of an individual's well-being. For example, some interventions may be associated with reducing levels of exhaustion while others emphasize higher levels of work engagement.

Compassion Satisfaction

There are several positive aspects associated with helping others that can aid in reducing symptoms of burnout and lessen the effects that secondary stress and compassion fatigue can have on an individual. One aspect includes compassion satisfaction which refers to the level of gratification that an individual experiences when they provide care to an individual that alleviates their degree of suffering or lessens their need for extensive support (Simpson, 2020). Compassion satisfaction can be experienced through organizations that allow for professional development opportunities to expand one's knowledge base, adequate opportunities to receive supervisory support and oversight, and a company that upholds ethical practices within their work environment. In addition, an individual's life balance plays a significant role in their level of compassion satisfaction. The level of social support from friends and family was shown to be a predictor of an individual's level of compassion satisfaction. Also, as an employee feels that they have more control within their work environment and are more efficient, levels of compassion satisfaction have shown to increase (Simpson, 2020).

Another aspect that can be used for sustaining a high level of compassion satisfaction is by engaging in self-care practices. Self-care practices act as a protective barrier against experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue. By identifying the needs of an employee and the factors associated with symptoms of burnout, work-related characteristics can be evaluated and managed to better suit the needs of the employee. For example, shorter shifts for staff that work with highly intense behavioral need individuals may ultimately increase levels of compassion satisfaction and lower levels of burnout.

Psychological Flexibility

Psychological inflexibility can be found among individuals that work in stressful environments. These behaviors lead to engagement in avoidant or rigid behavior that is guided by a set of verbal rules that are not helpful to the individual, leading the individual further away from their values, whenever the individual comes in contact with external or internal stimuli that are aversive (Dixon et al., 2020; Tarbox et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand what psychological flexibility means and how these behaviors can be encouraged among employees. Psychological flexibility refers to the ability of an individual to adapt or adjust to both external and internal stimuli that they are experiencing while continuing to emit various overt behaviors (Dixon et al., 2020; Tarbox et al., 2020). By engaging in this ability to adjust, an individual is able to work toward their identified values despite the experiences and situations that they may

encounter (Dixon et al., 2020; Tarbox et al., 2020).

Psychological flexibility is one of the main concepts discussed in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT is derived from Relational Frame Theory (RFT) and can be found within the field of ABA. It is designed to guide and help individuals learn how to make connections among their own thoughts and feelings as well as within the environment that the individual is in (Hoffman et al., 2016). By forming these connections, it provides guidance for individuals and their behaviors, driving people in the direction of where they would like to be. The overarching goal of ACT is to increase an individual's psychological flexibility.

ACT uses various psychological constructs to help guide individuals into changing their own behavior. These constructs are known as the six ACT processes of change (Hoffman et al., 2016). Ultimately, ACT is centered around changing the function of private events so that they have less of an influence on a behavior or increase different behaviors that are in line with an individual's values. By altering the function of private events, these private events would no longer act as a discriminative stimulus for behaviors of an individual that have been problematic or detrimental (Hoffman et al., 2016). ACT uses experiential exercises so that an individual can experience a private event that has previously elicited unproductive behaviors while they are encouraged to engage in appropriate behaviors. This is done so that the individual can emit more appropriate behaviors when faced with aversive situations or experiences.

Six ACT Processes of Change

There are six different constructs within the processes of change in ACT.

Attention to present/present moment awareness

In the first construct, attention to present/present moment awareness, this includes the action of experiencing one's own environment which includes private and external events (Hoffman et al., 2016). This construct looks at how these experiences are occurring now and does not focus on events that have occurred in the past or that could occur in the future. By staying focused on the environment as it is occurring, this allows an individual to experience environmental contingencies directly. It also allows for an individual to exhibit behavior that is functional at that time and in the moment. Individuals are encouraged to use language that describes events as they are occurring at that specified time without placing judgment on or attempting to predict the events that may occur next (Hoffman et al., 2016). An individual may list different sights they

are being exposed to, sounds that they are hearing, and also their feelings and emotions that they are experiencing in the moment. The main purpose is for the individual to notice what is going on around them and to not react to any stimuli they experience that may be aversive but instead differentially respond to other appropriate components they encounter in the environment. This helps to change the reinforcing value of various consequences for the attending behavior that is being exhibited by the individual. Some interventions that can be used to focus on the present include various mindfulness exercises (i.e., paying attention to how one breathes, identifying what is occurring with each of the five senses, noticing sensory experiences).

Self as context/dimensions of self

In the second construct, self as context/dimensions of self, the self is viewed in a multitude of ways which then affect overt behavior (Hoffman et al., 2016). The sense of who we are as a person is based on one's own verbal behavior. For example, an individual can view themselves as being funny or kind-hearted. By engaging in behavior that matches these views that an individual has of themselves, it can impact one's behavior as well. If a person believes that they are funny, then they may go out of their way to tell a joke or to make someone laugh. This construct involves an individual developing perspective-taking skills so that an individual can see past the view they have of themselves and exhibit behavior despite the view they may have. With these perspective-taking skills, an individual can overcome negative self views such as being stupid or lazy and exhibit behavior that counteracts these viewpoints. They may be able to complete chores even though they see themselves as being lazy.

When an individual is able to change the view that they have of themselves, they are able to change the motivation that they have that enables them to engage in certain behaviors (Hoffman et al., 2016). There are three distinct areas to develop or strive for when working on the concept of self as context/dimensions of self. The first area involves undermining the individual's connection to the conceptualized self. This means that the thoughts and beliefs that an individual has concerning themselves should be pointed out as being problematic or counterproductive. The second area is to guide the individual into being aware of their current state of experiences, similar to that of the present moment awareness concept. Lastly, the individual should be encouraged to partake in perspective taking. Perspective taking can be completed by asking the individual questions that encourage them to look at things from a different perspective. Then, the responses that the individual provides that align with taking a different perspective should be reinforced.

Defusion

In the third construct, the process of defusion allows an individual to change how they interact with their thoughts. Cognitive fusion is known as an avenue through which an individual responds to private events as though they are concrete events that are occurring in the environment that everyone has access to (Hoffman et al., 2016). A person may respond to their own private events as though they are stimuli within the physical environment, and not respond to the external stimuli and contingencies that are actually occurring in the environment. This can occur without the individual being aware of what is going on. When this occurs, the individual can become less aware of the events that are occurring in the present environment; thus, their experiences start to become governed by verbal rules. These types of responses that are exhibited, known as fused responses, occur as a result of these verbal rules and not because of the direct contact that an individual may have with the contingencies that occur (Hoffman et al., 2016). The functional context that the private events occur under are altered, creating a different experience that can be associated with these private events. There are a couple of different ways that defusion can be completed. One way is for the function of the private event to be altered through the individual's thoughts or covert language. Another way is to change the function of the private event by de-literalizing language.

Acceptance

Another construct within the ACT processes of change is acceptance. Often, individuals find avenues that will allow them to escape contact with thoughts or experiences that are unpleasant; therefore, this allows for this exhibition of behavior to be reinforced and the unpleasant thoughts or experiences to be avoided (Hoffman et al., 2016). However, not all unpleasant thoughts can be avoided so an individual may then turn to avoiding experiences or situations that evoke the unpleasant thoughts. This behavior is known as experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance involves the attempt to change unpleasant private events by avoiding the experiences or situations that evoke those thoughts (Hoffman et al., 2016). Acceptance, though, is used to counter these behavioral occurrences of avoidance. Acceptance allows private events that are unpleasant to occur. When these private events occur, the individual is encouraged to approach the situations and experiences that evoke these private events in a purposeful manner. When an individual experiences pain, they attempt to avoid the thought and feelings that surround these events, and their behavior, in turn, cues the avoided event. This situation then strengthens the relational frames and causes even more difficulty for the individual when attempting to avoid the experience. Acceptance then replaces the

individual's experiential avoidance behavior and as this behavior strengthens, extinction occurs for the avoidance behavior that was once exhibited (Hoffman et al., 2016). For example, a child may avoid going to school by acting ill in order to stay home. This avoidance behavior allows the child to stay clear and avoid any aversive thoughts or feelings associated with children at school that have occurred on other school days. By accepting these thoughts and feelings associated with these events, the child can be taught to be at school and experience the thoughts and feelings that are associated with attending school. Acceptance can be developed in a couple of different ways. One way is by allowing an individual to relate to a private event in a manner that they see it as needing a home or something that should be cared for and that it is not a negative experience. This interaction allows the individual to have compassion for their feelings and to treat their feelings with kindness. Another way that acceptance can be taught is by allowing an individual to overcome their own fears through systematic desensitization and exposure. The individual could increasingly come in contact with their private event and be encouraged to be open to experiencing their event. This can encourage individuals that even though they may have these negative feelings and thoughts, they should still engage in actions that move them toward their values.

Values

An additional construct pertains to how an individual connects with their values. In accordance with ACT, values are viewed as a type of rule that are able to change the properties that are reinforcing of other stimuli (Hoffman et al., 2016). Values act in the same manner as motivating operations, except the properties of values are functionally developed through language instead of through a learning history that includes contingencies within the physical environment. Values are able to change the properties, either reinforcing or punishing, of stimuli that an individual may have never been in contact with previously. Values are seen as being important to an individual and can include ideas, actions, or even activities. They are used in ACT as a method of encouraging individuals to be purposely driven and to exhibit behavior that is both appropriate and functional.

Committed action

An additional construct that is discussed within ACT is committed action. Committed action includes the use of motivation to engage the individual in their behavior that helps them to function in appropriate and healthy ways (Hoffman et al., 2016). Behaviors that align with personal values and support the individual in engaging in those behaviors are identified. One way to identify these behaviors are through arrangement

of environmental contingencies by use of antecedent or consequence manipulation. Even though these contingencies are arranged so that reinforcement can be contacted, they are to be systematically faded as time progresses so that the individual is able to engage in appropriate behaviors in a more natural context (Hoffman et al., 2016). If the individual has identified their true values, then reinforcement for one's committed action should be able to be contacted automatically. By identifying true values and coming in contact with reinforcement in this manner, the maintenance and generalization of the change in behavior within the individual can be ensured. There are several ways that an individual's committed action can be encouraged. Setting goals that are valuable to the individual, using skill acquisition techniques to promote the attainment of additional or new skills, and devising a behavioral contract are all examples of committed action techniques. By attaining small committed actions, reinforcement can be obtained, behaviors can continue to be worked on and exhibited, and larger actions can be added to an individual's process. These larger actions will then eventually increase an individual's behavioral repertoire as they progress toward the values that they have identified.

ACT can be used as an intervention that forges the way toward obtaining socially significant outcomes. The six core processes of ACT that have been identified above can be used on their own or in conjunction with other behavioral interventions.

In summary, supervision practices should be continuously evaluated so that employees can be supported within their organization and symptoms of burnout can be reduced, so that individuals can be effective employees within their work culture. By incorporating some of the techniques mentioned, symptoms of burnout may be able to be reduced and employee job satisfaction and productivity may be able to be increased. It is important to know and recognize an employee's symptoms of burnout so that these concerns can be alleviated and a more supportive work environment can be fostered for employees.

Section 7 Personal Reflection

What are some avenues that you can take to reduce symptoms of burnout in your own life?

Section 7 Key Words

Attention to present/present moment awareness - includes the action of experiencing

one's own environment which includes private and external events

Cognitive fusion - an avenue through which an individual responds to private events as though they are concrete events that are occurring in the environment that everyone has access to

Committed action - the use of motivation to engage the individual in their behavior that helps them to function in appropriate and healthy ways

Compassion satisfaction - the level of gratification that an individual experiences when they provide care to an individual that alleviates their degree of suffering or lessens their need for extensive support

Defusion - weakening the control of verbal rules on behavior that is overt

Experiential avoidance - the attempt to change unpleasant private events by avoiding the experiences or situations that evoke those thoughts

Fused responses - occur as a result of verbal rules and not because of the direct contact that an individual may have with the contingencies that occur

Job crafting - modifying on-the-job behaviors as a response to job demands

Self as context/dimensions of self - the self is viewed in a multitude of ways which then affect overt behavior

Values - a type of rule that are able to change the properties that are reinforcing of other stimuli

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