



Busy Analytical Bee

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER

Welcome to the December edition. This month's main article discusses the treatment of depression with ACT. I also had the chance to interview Jane McCready to discuss her work with ABAA4ALL. In addition we will continue our discussion of time out definitions, review the career of Montrose Wolf and highlight upcoming events in the UK. Have a great month and Happy Christmas!

Kirsty Angel M.Sc. BCBA (Author)

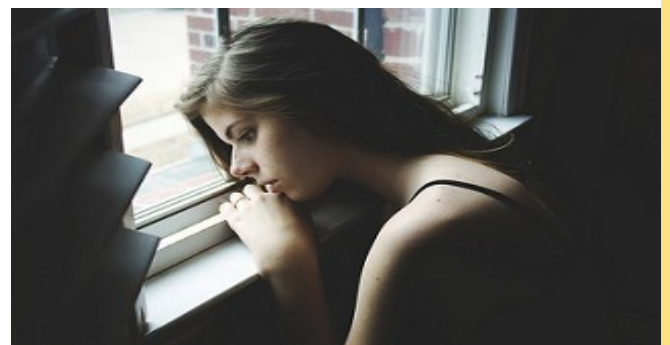
Todd Ward PhD BCBA-D (Editor)

COMBATING DEPRESSION WITH ACT

Depression is an extremely prevalent mental health issue in the UK and is one of the most common mental health disorders in Britain. Depression affects 1 in 5 adults. The symptoms of depression include feeling low or helpless, loss of interest in typical activities, changes to appetite/weight, changes in sleeping pattern (difficulty sleeping, or sleeping more) and loss of energy, to name just a few. Depression has a significant impact on a person's ability to complete daily tasks, and people suffering from depression may behave recklessly, or try to harm themselves which can lead to suicide. These and other symptoms need to present for several weeks to warrant a diagnosis of depression. There are many options for people suffering from depression, which range from medication to counselling. It is important people contact their General Physician (GP) if they are concerned they are suffering with depression. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) is a behavioural therapy that promotes behavior change via acceptance, mindfulness, perspective taking, and values clarification processes. ACT is based on the principles of behaviourism and Relational Frame Theory (RFT). RFT posits that, while our ability to derive relations amongst millions of untrained stimuli without direct training sets humans apart from other species, it can also impair psychological functioning. One of the goals of ACT is to undercut the functions of overgeneralized relational operants such that the individual comes to respond to the contingencies present in his/her environment that are

aligned with his/her life values. People work to view the content of their own private verbal behavior as part of a natural behavioral process devoid of any inherent truth. Rather than rationally trying to change one's verbal content, ACT attempts to undercut the functions of said content through acceptance, rather than attempting to avoid or escape negative private events (feelings of sadness, agitation, etc.). One's private verbal content can impair psychological functioning as when someone leaves a party early to avoid feelings of anxiety tied to negative verbal content (e.g., "No one here likes me."). Rather than attempting to change the content itself, ACT might have the individual simply view the negative content as simply behavior, and work to reorient the individual's behavior to the actual contingencies present in the situation. Hayes and Wilson (1994) state that the goal of ACT "is to treat emotional avoidance, excessive literal response to cognitive content, and the inability to make and keep commitments to behavior change".

ACT has been shown to be very successful with combating depression. One investigation compared ACT and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT; derived from theories of cognitive psychology; Clark et al, 2014). Researchers compared the scores from Becks Depression Inventory and Global Severity Index, which assess the severity of depression, or broader psychological issues and symptoms of psychopathology, with higher scores indicating more severe symptoms. The participants in this study had been resistant to previous interventions and engaged in self harm, so were considered



Picture taken from: <https://flic.kr/p/dNVy75>

high risk. The scores for the group receiving ACT reduced more compared to the CBT which supports the efficacy for ACT group-based interventions. Furthermore, at a six month follow up the participants of the ACT group showed significantly reduced depression.

Preventative interventions have also been a focus of research. Bohlmeijer, et al (2011) offered ACT to people suffering with symptoms of depression. The researchers assigned people to either a treatment group or to a waiting list. The results showed that the people that received the ACT group service compared to people who were on the waiting list and received no treatment had significantly improved "acceptance". This is socially significant because the value of preventative strategies

Picture taken from <https://i1c.kr/p/hjXrA>



is so great. If depression can be combated before symptoms worsen, then it can make a great impact to the sufferer and improved the long term recovery.

The research supports ACT as an effective intervention for people suffering with depression. If you are concerned that you are suffering with depression, contact your GP as they will be able to help you access the support you need. If you think someone you know is suffering from depression, talk to them, encourage them to go to their GP and assure them that you care. You can find out more on the website for the [Association of Contextual Behavior Science](#).

Bohlmeijer, E. T., Fledderus, M., Rokx, T.A.J.J., Pieterse, M. E. (2011). Efficacy of an early intervention based on acceptance and commitment therapy for adults with depressive symptomatology, *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, **49**, 62-67.

Clarke, S., Kingston, J., James, K., Bolderston, H., Remington, B. (2014). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy group for treatment-resistant participants: A randomized controlled trial, *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*.

Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (1999). Acceptance and commitment therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change. New York: Guilford.

Hayes, S. C., & Wilson, K. G. (1994). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Altering the Verbal Support for Experiential Avoidance, *The Behavior Analyst*, **17**(2), 289-303.

TERMINOLOGY

Time out is a widely used punishment procedure (i.e., a procedure in which the future probability of behavior decreases following a change in the environment). There are two main types of time out procedures. This month we are looking at exclusion time-out (following last month when we did non-exclusion time-out).

Exclusion time-out: The person is removed from the environment, or the ability to access the environment is blocked, following the target behaviour occurs.

Time-out Room: The person is taken to a time-out room for a specified time, which is separate from any setting where teaching occurs. The room would be typically be plain (no toys or furniture) to prevent the person accessing reinforcement or causing harm to themselves.

Partition Time-out: In this procedure the person remains in the environment where the target behaviour occurs, however their view is blocked.

Hallway time-out: The client is expected to go to the hallway for a specific time. This would just be outside the learning environment. This procedure is adopted frequently in schools following challenging behaviour.

PRODUCTS

This month we look at some great building products. Building is great for promoting hand eye co-ordination and imagination. You can support imitation of block building by giving a model. To see the list of different building products click [here](#).

EVENTS

Ambitious about Autism have released a new leaflet with all their dates for 2016. To view click [here](#).

Child Autism UK are offering many courses across 2015. Courses are typically £65 for one day (two day costs £130). For more information, please go to their [page](#).

Mary Lynch Barbera is offering a great online course covering 5 units. There is currently a waiting list for the next phase which should occur in early 2016. To find out more and sign up for the next phase click [here](#).

Vincent Carbone will be in the UK from the 22nd until the 24th February running a workshop titled "An introduction to Verbal Behavior". This will be held in Chester. Go to his [website](#) to find out more.

If you know of any events, or wish to advertise an event, please email us busyanalyticalbee@gmail.com

Interview

Jane McCready

This month we are pleased to welcome Jane McCready from ABAA4ALL. Jane has a son who was diagnosed with Autism and Severe Learning Disability. They began an ABA programme for him and saw significant change in his progress. Jane is dedicated to making ABA accessible to others, through providing information and campaigning. She speaks to us now about her background, ABAA4ALL and the future of ABA in the UK.

1. Could you tell us a bit about your background and how you became involved in ABA?

Pre-motherhood I worked in investment banking and PR, and before that I qualified as a teacher and taught classics at secondary school level. Now I am a mum of two and also step-mum of two. I live with three of the children and my husband just outside of London. My second child is a beautiful, smilingly-happy boy called Johnny, who has autism and a severe learning disability (plus also Type 1 diabetes and a hole in his heart). He has benefited greatly since the age of 3 from an ABA education and I want to 'pay that forward'. I also tried other methods like Teacch, SALT and OT and found them very ineffective for Johnny: to be honest, they didn't even touch the sides. I can see how the graph would have looked for Johnny with an 'eclectic' education and I think it ended only in one place: an institution, once he grew to 6ft 5 with aggression and self-injury unchecked and zero means of communication. ABA transformed that graph and his quality of life is just so much better. He is the happiest of boys, which is why the misinformation about ABA ('cruel' 'robotic' 'endless table drills' etc.) drives me insane. I also think there's a lot of hypocrisy talked about autism in general and a lot of inverted prejudice dressed up as 'respecting the autism' and in fact resulting in sub-standard education for a huge tranche of kids with autism in the UK.

2. Could you tell us a bit about ABAA4ALL and what you try to achieve?

Very simply, I don't think it is fair that Johnny has had ABA and other kids haven't, solely due to money. I want ABA to be available - to those who choose it - on the state. The ABAA4All campaign is



Jane with her son

using three tools to help break down barriers to families seeking ABA: the legal route, via ongoing Judicial Reviews of the present system, which makes it too hard to choose ABA; PR, helping to dispel the myths about ABA through media and social media; and lobbying, including meeting with, civil servants and leading autism charity heads to talk about widening the accessibility of ABA. We think we are getting somewhere. Slowly but surely more families are winning ABA provision, plus new ABA schools, units and Saturday clubs are opening plus existing special and state schools are starting to embrace ABA.

3. What are the difficulties families are faced with when beginning ABA?

Money! Lack of tutors as ABA becomes more popular. Fighting the misinformation about ABA, fighting the LAs. Shortage of BCBA's. I could go on! All has hopefully helped as it's a central repository of information about ABA for families across the UK. Parents can share experiences, legal tips, research documents, names of tutors etc., plus we link to useful sites and organisations such as the UKSBA or the BACB. It helps us to fight for ABA with one single, loud voice rather than just as lots of individuals: mum power is what I call it, though we have lots of very active Dads on the Facebook page too! There are now over 3200 people on the Facebook page. We even produced a leaflet on ABA for parents to hand out to the doubters or professionals in the autism field who've never heard of ABA, click [here to see this](#). Plus we link with and learn from colleagues and fellow ABA mums abroad, especially from the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

4. Why do think these barriers exist?

There is a huge anti ABA lobby atop the autism establishment, which simply has the wrong end of the stick about it (or, if I am being more charitable, has an outdated view of how ABA really is nowadays, how helpful and kind - and fun! - it can be for our kids). Since autism education in the UK is pretty much an oligarchy, the fact that a handful of people are hanging on to old opinions of ABA has a huge effect on what government will and won't fund. We need a changing of the guard in Autism UK PLC.

5. What advice would you give to parents who are embarking on beginning an ABA programme

Come onto the ABAA4All Facebook page and join the ABA-UK yahoo group to get as much info as possible before starting the journey. But you are definitely doing the right thing!

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Interview

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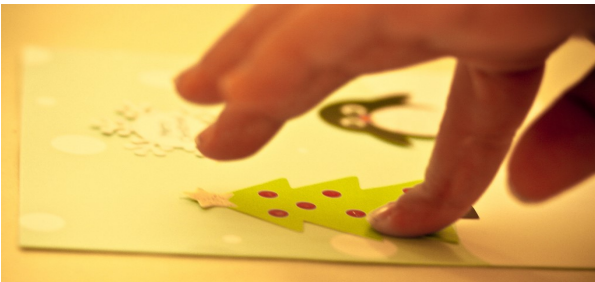
6. Lastly, what are your hopes for ABA services in the UK in the future?

The name of the campaign is 'ABA - Access 4 All ' and that's what I want to see happen. We don't want to impose it on anyone, just make it available and put it on the 'menu' of choices for those who want it, on a state-funded basis.

Thank you to Jane for taking the time to do this interview. She is doing some incredible work and her support of ABA is really helping to debunk the outdated, invalid views of ABA in the UK. To learn more about ABAA4ALL you can go to the [Facebook page](#).

NET IDEAS

Christmas is a great opportunity for great arts and craft activities. One of these activities can be making Christmas cards. You can use many types of coloured cards, to use or cut various shapes out of the card (independent play 13a, 13c, 13M). You could use different materials, including pom-poms, felt, card, or stickers. You could also use felt tip pens, paints, glitter or pencils to decorate. Drawing shapes could be used as



Picture taken from: <https://flic.kr/p/7iUXCg>

an opportunity for imitation (stamping) or copying pictures (writing 11a-M, 12b, 12d, 13a). All these variations allow for opportunities to label or identify shapes, colours, or items, like a Christmas tree, presents, etc. (tact 7e, 10d, 10e ;listener responding 6a, 7M, 10b, 10c). To write a message inside you can write with pens or type on a computer and then stick this inside (writing 13d, 14M). This activity allows opportunities to talk about Christmas . As this topic is very motivating for children you may be able to get many exchanges in the conversation (IV⁺ 13h) and discuss toys that they hope to receive (IV⁺ 15i, 15M).

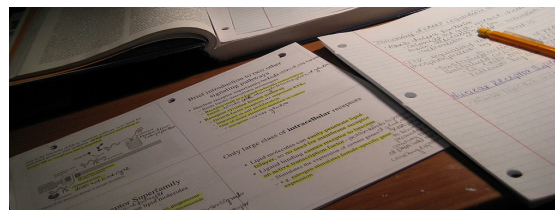
Preceding skills reference to the VB-MAPP Assessment tool:
Sundberg, M. L. (2008) Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program: The VB-MAPP. Concord, CA: AVB Press LRFFC: Listener Receptive Feature Function. †IV Intraverbals (conversation skills)

PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE US

This month we are celebrating the life of Montrose Wolf who has made significant contributions to the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis and wider field of psychology. Montrose Wolf was born in Texas, in 1935. He studied psychology at University of Houston and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1959. He was introduced to Behaviourism and the theories of B. F. Skinner by Jack Michael. Wolf followed Michael to Arizona State University, which is where he completed his Masters and PhD degrees. Wolf managed a clinic set up by Sidney Bijou, run out of University of Washington. Wolf went on to co-author many papers surrounding how effective adult attention (positive reinforcement) can be, which is still referenced to this day. In the 1960s Wolf developed the [Teaching-family model](#), which is an effective model for care homes for troubled youths. Montrose Wolf helped to set up the Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis and in the first edition published an article with Donald Baer and Todd Risley called "Some dimensions of Applied Behaviour Analysis" which helped shaped the field. Following the research being published, Wolf was an early proponent of social validity in ABA applications and also developed the technique for time-out. Click [here](#) to see an article written by Todd Risley about Montrose Wolf.

STUDY TIPS

Reading research papers is a great way to study. Applying your knowledge to comprehend the methodology and interpreting the results of a study will help you further your understanding of experimental designs and terminology. Click [here](#) for free access to the archive of Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis.



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