



# Busy Analytical Bee

NEWSLETTER April

Welcome to the April edition. In this edition I review the research supporting Active Support. The NET activity looks at tracing shadows, which is a great outdoor activity. The product ideas and events look at what you can do while self-isolating during the COVID-19 crisis. Also I celebrate the career of James E. Carr, Ph.D, BCBA-D. Have a great month and stay safe.

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## INCREASING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ACTIVE SUPPORT

Active Support (AS) aims to increase people's engagement and independence in daily activities. AS is a person-centered approach and focuses on training staff within group settings, typically for adults with intellectual disabilities, to increase engagement in activities and improve quality of life. The training focuses on staff planning activities and engaging adults in those activities. The training approach includes two key aspects; classroom/theory teaching and direct observation. Classroom teaching will involve theory being delivered through presentations, delivering materials and resources and training videos. Active Support Handbooks can inform the implementation of this approach and training procedures (Jones et al, 1996; Jones et al, 2009). Direct observations involve the staff working with adults during these activities, whilst observers deliver feedback, demonstrating or suggesting alternative and monitoring the implementation of the skills taught.

This approach has been found to increase participants (residents) engagement in activities following AS training (Jones et al, 1999; Stancliffe, et al, 2008; Stancliffe ; Totsika, et al, 2010). The results from these studies showed significant difference between baseline and intervention results of resident's engagement in activity. The effectiveness of AS was demonstrated by Jones et al (1999), who used a multiple baseline design to introduce AS across five separate settings and analysed

the impact on participant engagement in activities. This means the AS training was introduced in a staggered approach across five different homes. The results showed that engagement increased only once the AS training was introduced, which shows that AS was responsible for the increase. In their literature review Stancliffe et al (2008)<sup>±</sup> state that the studies they reviewed noted an increase in staff support during activities following AS. Stancliffe, et al (2008) also discussed the importance of staff support in eliciting residents engagement in activities. They found that the results showed that staff help was more likely to precede and lead to resident engagement. This shows a correlation between staff support and resident engagement.

Researchers have investigated which components are most important for AS training. Totskia et al (2010) implemented the Direct Observation component only, extending previous research that had only implemented classroom teaching with little success. They found that there were increases to engagement of residents, however this was not maintained. When reflecting on their results they state that it "suggests that both AS training components may be required for an beneficial effects on the quality of life for people with intellectual disability". Stancliffe et al (2008)\* highlighted this issue in a review and stated, "one important question relates to the components of AS training and whether they are each necessary or sufficient to yield positive outcomes".

Furthermore, in their literature review Stancliffe et al (2008)<sup>±</sup>, discuss that many of the studies they re-



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viewed adopted the same approach, and stated “all current approaches are vastly more similar than they are different”. They also show that many of the studies show that AS has the most positive impact with residents who have more significant barriers. Although they did discuss that some studies did show no significant difference in participant engagement, which may be due to the participants abilities or the staff willingness and training. Generally the results are positive and rewarding as resident engagement will improve their quality of life. The research also highlights that teaching theory and doing ‘hands-on’ training is required for effective and maintained change. If you want to learn more about AS, reach out to a professional with training in AS.

Jones, E., Perry, J., Lowe, K., Allen, D., Toogood, S., & Felce, D. (1996). *Active Support: A handbook for planning daily activities and support arrangements for people with learning disabilities. Book 1: Overview; Booklet 2: Activity and support plans; Booklet 3: Opportunity plans; Booklet 4: Teaching plans; Booklet 5: Individual Plans; Booklet 6: Maintaining quality*, Cardiff: Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities Applied Research Unit.

Jones, E., Perry, J., Lowe, K., Allen D., Toogood, David Felce, (2009) *Active Support: A Handbook of supporting people with learning disabilities to lead full lives*, Retrieved from: <https://arcuk.org.uk/activesupport/files/2014/09/Active-Support-Handbook-revised.pdf>

Jones, E., Perry, J., Lowe, K., Felce, D., Toogood, S., Dunstan, F., Allen, D., & Pagler, J. (1999). Opportunity and the promotion of activity among adults with severe intellectual disability living in community residences: the impact of training staff in active support, *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, **43**(3), 164-178.

Stancliffe, R. J., Harman, A. D., Toogood, S., & McVilly, K. R. (2008). Staff behaviour and resident engagement before and after active support training, *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, **33**(3), 257-270.

\*Stancliffe, R. J., Jones, E., & Mansell, J. (2008). Research in Active Support, *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, **33**(3), 194-195.



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±Stancliffe, R. J., Jones, E., Mansell, J., & Lowe, K. (2008). Active Support: A critical review and commentary, *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, **33**(3), 196-214.  
Totsika, V., Toogood, S., Hastings, R. P., & McCarthy, J. (2010). The effects of Active Support interactive training on the daily lives of adults with an intellectual disability, *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, **23**, 112-12.

## PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE US

This month I am celebrating the career of James E. Carr, PhD, BCBA-D. He is a notable Behaviour Analyst whose work has contributed greatly to the field. He has published over 150 journals and book chapters on topics including verbal behaviour, behavioural assessments and treatments of developmental disabilities, and practitioner training. He received his Ph.D. from Florida State University in 1996, where his mentor was Dr. Jon Bailey. He then served at University of Nevada-Reno, Western Michigan University and then Auburn University. Carr has held editorial roles on many prominent Behavioural Journals, including *Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. He is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and a fellow of the Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). He has received awards for his contributions to the field including the Jerry Shook Award (2017) and Azrin Distinguished Contributions to Applied Behavior Analysis Award (2017). If you want to learn more, you can visit his [BACB page](#).

## TERMINOLOGY

This month let's look at the acronym of ABA.

**A—Applied:** This relates the social significance of the interventions.

**B—Behaviour:** This relates to the interventions being based upon observable covert behaviours.

**A—Analysis:** This relates to data driven decisions regarding interventions.

### Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

The application and practise of a science based on the principles of behaviours and learning. The field focuses on socially significant behaviours and strives to be empirical and make data driven decisions.



Picture made by Kirsty Angel BCBA

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEACHING (NET) IDEA

This month's NET activity is shadow drawing. This is a simple activity that you can take outside on a sunny day. Place toys or shapes at the side of a paper which is laid on the floor, so that the objects cast a shadow on the paper and then draw around them. This will allow opportunities for your learner to request for the items they need, pencils, papers and the objects. You can use motivating objects, or also objects that relate to targets you are currently working on or want to generalise (mand: 1-6M, 8-10M). If your learner wants to choose the motivating objects, you can still embed your targets in between access to the motivating objects. This can be done as a receptive or tact targets, by asking your learner to identify a object (LR\*: 5-7M, 11M) by locating and giving it, or by labelling, for instance, "Look I've finished my drawing! What is it?" and point to object (tact: 1-7M). When you've traced around the objects you can colour them in, so your learning can request the colours (mand 1-5M, 13M), or ask your learning to label (tact: 11M) or identify (LR\*: 11M) the colours. You can also embed intraverbal targets in this activity, for instance, "You've drawn a dinosaur and a dinosaur has... [legs/tails/etc]", or "You've traced the bus, and a bus is a type of.... [vehicle]" (IV±: 8M (fill-in statements, or 9-10M answering WH? questions). A learner who finds this activity very motivating, may be able to engage with this activity independently (IP<sup>v</sup>: 13M (for 5 minutes)). This activity would involve your learner imitating (probably) a very novel type of drawing action which will be good for generalisation and supporting other writing skills (writing: 11M). You can also expand this activity to encourage your learner to count out, for example if you wanted to draw around cars you could ask your learner to give a number of cars out of a group, "Give me 3 cars" and encourage your learner to count out that number of cars (maths: 13M).

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.



Picture taken by Kirsty Angel  
BCBA

\*LR: Listener Responding.  
±IV: In-traverbal.  
<sup>v</sup>IP: Independent Play

## STUDY TIPS

The tip for students this month is to explore Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT can help you with difficult or unpleasant thoughts or feelings that are impacting your ability to reach your goals. ACT isn't just for people with mental health issues, or for stress or anxiety. It can help you generally in life. Learning more about this approach could benefit you if you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Happy Studying! Read "[What is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy \(ACT\)?](#)" blog.

## PRODUCTS

In light of COVID-19 and recommendations to stay at home, it may be difficult time to order new resources. So why not make your own? There are some great websites where you can get resources, which you can print and possibly laminate before going back to work! Check out [Twinkl](#), [Sparklebox](#), [Mission Cognition](#), [Teachers Pay Teachers](#) (N.B. some of these websites require payments). Also you can search google images for a topic plus the word 'worksheets' or 'printable' and you can find some great resources.

## EVENTS

Due to COVID-19 many people are recommended to stay at home and isolate. I have put together a list of some fantastic online resources, webinars and podcasts, which you can check by clicking [this link](#).

Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) will be hosting a conference in Dublin, Ireland in September 2021. To learn more, visit the [event page](#).

Next month we're looking at *Dementia*, so be sure to subscribe so you receive the next exciting edition.

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