2022 Ethics Code in Action

with Dr. Jon Bailey

ETHICS OF RBT TURNOVER





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This Self-study Online Webinar was created in conjunction with **Jon S. Bailey,** PhD, BCBA-D and **Amy Gable**, BCBA. Funding to develop and deliver this webinar was provided by Special Learning Global Solutions.

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Downloadable Tools

- Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts
- Ethics Crosswalk
- RBT Ethics Code
- RBT Crosswalk



Jon S. Bailey | PhD, BCBA-D

Dr. Jon Bailey received his PhD from the University of Kansas and is currently Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Florida State University, where he was a member of the graduate faculty for 38-years and produced a record 63 PhDs. He is on duty faculty of the Masters Program in Applied Behavior Analysis at the FSU Campus.

Dr. Bailey is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. He is Managing Editor of the FABA Observer of the Florida Associated for Behavior Analysis, which he founded in 1980.

Dr. Bailey has published over 100 peer-reviewed research articles, is a past Editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, and is co-author of Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis, How Dogs Learn, Ethics for Behavior Analysts, 4th Edition, How to Think Like a Behavior Analyst, 2ND Edition, and 25 Essential Skills and Strategies for Professional Behavior Analysts, all co-authored with Dr. Mary Burch.





Behavior Analyst

Understanding the Science That Can Change Your Life

by Jon S. Bailey Mary R. Burch







by Jon S. Bailey Mary R. Burch





Amy Gable | BCBA, CEO, ABA Support Services



Amy Gable, BCBA, is the owner and CEO of ABA Support Services LLC. Her company provides school-based and in-home ABA services to children with behavioral, communication, and social skill deficits. In the last 8 plus years, their rapid growth has allowed them to able to reach out and help clients in the Lehigh Valley and surrounding communities in PA. They accept many forms of insurance and contract with brick-and-mortar, cyber and charter schools.

Their company comprises of many BCBAS with various backgrounds. Some come from education, others through psychology, and some specialize in working with adults.

The philosophy behind ABA Support Services is to integrate children and adults into society using research-based environmental technologies that will help support skill acquisition and decrease problem behavior. The goal for every person requiring their services is autonomy.

When autonomy is achieved, they have successfully helped the family and the individual.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the history of RBT Credential and its impact on key stakeholders
- List top 10 factors contributing to RBT Turnover
- Describe the impact of RBT Turnover among key stakeholder groups (Clients, Parents, RBTs, BCBAs, Organizations, Funding Sources)
- Compare and contrast different RBT employment HR models commonly in practice
- Explain employment models designed to increase RBT commitment and buy-in and reduce turnover
- Discuss the pros and cons of implementing an RBT employment model that offers fulltime salary and benefits to RBTs
- Define an Ethical ABA organization
- Explore systems-level contingencies that can be put in place to govern the behavior of unethical ABA organizations



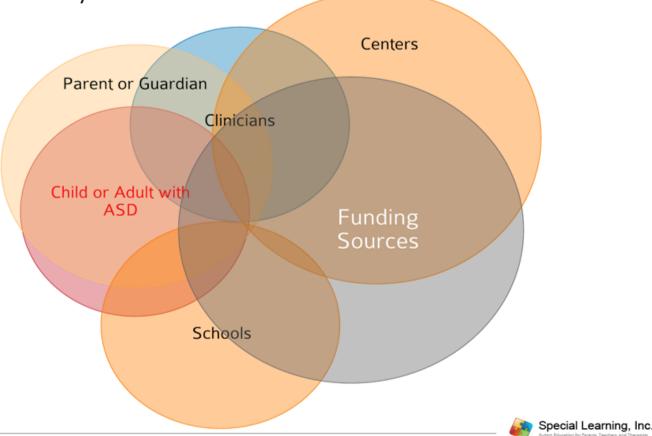
Global Autism Ecosystem

Complex system with several parties, many with conflicting agendas

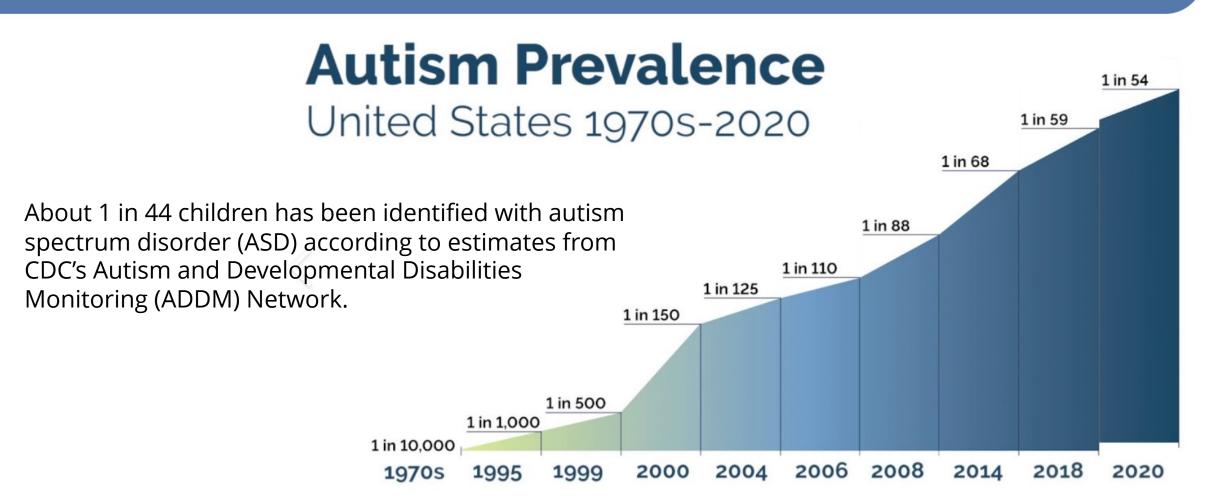
Global system with uneven distribution of availability of services

Applied Behavior Analysis is a young field...

Staffed with inexperienced clinicians



Autism Prevalence

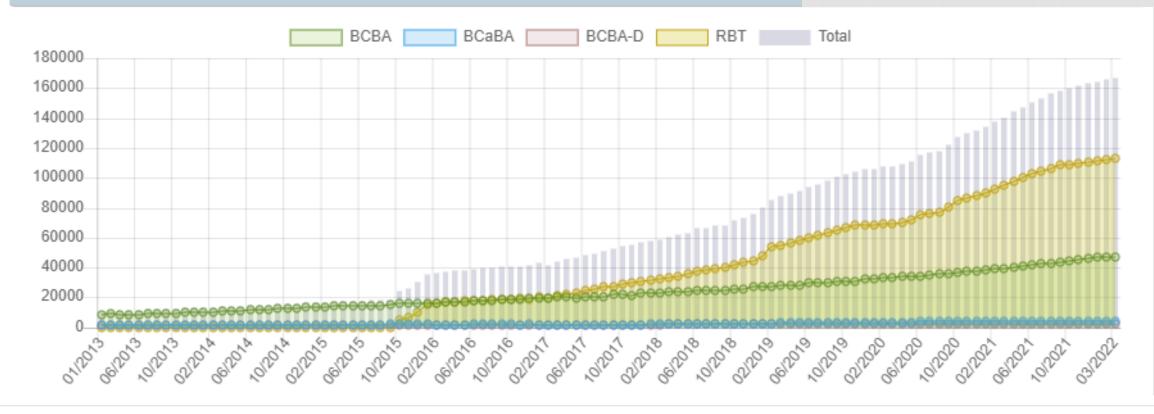




BACB Certificant Growth

BCBA-D BCBA BCaBA RBT **Total** 2640 52436 5768 116933 **177777**

Certification History: United States





BACB Ethics Code Timeline





Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts 2022

- Scope and BACB's jurisdiction
- 4 Core Principles
- Application and Enforcement
- Glossary
- Ethics Standards
 - Section 1—Responsibility as a Professional (16)
 - Section 2—Responsibility in Practice (19)
 - Section 3—Responsibility to Clients and Stakeholders (16)
 - Section 4—Responsibility to Supervisees and Trainees (12)
 - Section 5—Responsibility in Public Statements (11)
 - Section 6—Responsibility in Research (11)





5 min

BREAK



Ethics Code: Introduction

Introduction

As a diverse group of professionals who work in a variety of practice areas, behavior analysts deliver applied behavior analysis (ABA) services to positively impact lives. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) exists to meet the credentialing needs of these professionals and relevant stakeholders (e.g., licensure boards, funders) while protecting ABA consumers by establishing, disseminating, and managing professional standards. The BACB facilitates ethical behavior in the profession through its certification eligibility and maintenance requirements, by issuing the ethics standards described in this document, and by operating a system for addressing professional misconduct.

The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (Code) guides the professional activities of behavior analysts over whom the BACB has jurisdiction (see Scope of the Code below). The Code also provides a means for behavior analysts to evaluate their own behavior and for others to assess whether a behavior analyst has violated their ethical obligations. An introduction section describes the scope and application of the Code, its core principles, and considerations for ethical decision making. The core principles are foundational concepts that should guide all aspects of a behavior analyst's work. The introduction is followed by a glossary that includes definitions of technical terms used in the Code. The final section includes the ethics standards, which are informed by the core principles. The standards are organized into six sections: 1) Responsibility as a Professional, 2) Responsibility in Practice, 3) Responsibility to Clients and Stakeholders, 4) Responsibility to Supervisees and Trainees, 5) Responsibility in Public Statements, and 6) Responsibility in Research.

Scope of the Code

The Code applies to all individuals who hold Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA®) or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst® (BCaBA®) certification and all individuals who have completed an application for BCBA or BCaBA certification. For the sake of efficiency, the term "behavior analyst" is used throughout this document to refer to those who must act in accordance with the Code. The BACB does not have separate jurisdiction over organizations or corporations.

The Code applies to behavior analysts in all of their professional activities, including direct service delivery, consultation, supervision, training, management, editorial and peer-review activities, research, and any other activity within the ABA profession. The Code applies to behavior analysts' professional activities across settings and delivery modes (e.g., in person; in writing; via phone, email, text message, video conferencing). Application of the Code does not extend to behavior analysts' personal behavior unless it is determined that the behavior clearly poses a potential risk to the health and safety of clients, stakeholders, supervisees, or trainees.

Specific terms are defined in the Glossary section; however, two definitions are provided here because they are frequently used in the Core Principles section.

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).

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).



Ethics Code: Core Principles

Core Principles

Four foundational principles, which all behavior analysts should strive to embody, serve as the framework for the ethics standards. Behavior analysts should use these principles to interpret and apply the standards in the Code. The four core principles are that behavior analysts should: benefit others; treat others with compassion, dignity, and respect; behave with integrity; and ensure their own competence.

- Benefit Others. Behavior analysts work to maximize benefits and do no harm by:
 - Protecting the welfare and rights of clients above all others
 - Protecting the welfare and rights of other individuals with whom they interact in a professional capacity
 - Focusing on the short- and long-term effects of their professional activities
 - Actively identifying and addressing the potential negative impacts of their own physical and mental health on their professional activities
 - Actively identifying potential and actual conflicts of interest and working to resolve them in a manner that avoids or minimizes harm
 - Actively identifying and addressing factors (e.g., personal, financial, institutional, political, religious, cultural) that might lead to conflicts of interest, misuse of their position, or negative impacts on their professional activities
 - Effectively and respectfully collaborating with others in the best interest of those with whom they work and always placing clients' interests first
- Treat Others with Compassion, Dignity, and Respect. Behavior analysts behave toward others with compassion, dignity, and respect by:
 - Treating others equitably, regardless of factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/ relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or any other basis proscribed by law
 - · Respecting others' privacy and confidentiality

Source: BACB

- Behave with Integrity. Behavior analysts fulfill responsibilities to their scientific and professional communities, to society in general, and to the communities they serve by:
 - · Behaving in an honest and trustworthy manner
 - Not misrepresenting themselves, misrepresenting their work or others' work, or engaging in fraud
 - · Following through on obligations
 - Holding themselves accountable for their work and the work of their supervisees and trainees, and correcting errors in a timely manner
 - Being knowledgeable about and upholding BACB and other regulatory requirements
 - Actively working to create professional environments that uphold the core principles and standards of the Code
 - Respectfully educating others about the ethics requirements of behavior analysts and the mechanisms for addressing professional misconduct
- Ensure their Competence. Behavior analysts ensure their competence by:
 - Remaining within the profession's scope of practice
 - Remaining current and increasing their knowledge of best practices and advances in ABA and participating in professional development activities
 - Remaining knowledgeable and current about interventions (including pseudoscience) that may exist in their practice areas and pose a risk of harm to clients
 - · Being aware of, working within, and continually



Ethics Code: Application

Application of the Code

Behavior analysts are expected to be knowledgeable about and comply with the Code and Code-Enforcement Procedures. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethics standard is not a defense against an alleged ethics violation. When appropriate, behavior analysts should inform others about the Code and Code-Enforcement Procedures and create conditions that foster adherence to the Code. When addressing potential code violations by themselves or others, behavior analysts document the steps taken and the resulting outcomes. Behavior analysts should address concerns about the professional misconduct of others directly with them when, after assessing the situation, it seems possible that doing so will resolve the issue and not place the behavior analyst or others at undue risk.

The BACB recognizes that behavior analysts may have different professional roles. As such, behavior analysts are required to comply with all applicable laws, licensure requirements, codes of conduct/ethics, reporting requirements (e.g., mandated reporting, reporting to funding sources or licensure board, self-reporting to the BACB, reporting instances of misrepresentation by others), and professional practice requirements related to their various roles. In some instances, behavior analysts may need to report serious concerns to relevant authorities or agencies that can provide more immediate relief or protection before reporting to the BACB (e.g., criminal activity or behavior that places clients or others at risk for direct and immediate harm should immediately be reported to the relevant authorities before reporting to the BACB or a licensure board).

The standards included in the Code are not meant to be exhaustive, as it is impossible to predict every situation that might constitute an ethics violation. Therefore, the absence of a particular behavior or type of conduct from the Code standards does not indicate that such behavior or conduct is ethical or unethical. When interpreting and applying a standard, it is critical to attend to its specific wording and function, as well as the core principles. Additionally, standards must be applied to a situation using a functional, contextualized approach that accounts for factors relevant to that situation, such as variables related to diversity (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) and possible imbalances in power. In all instances of interpreting and applying the Code, behavior analysts should put compliance with the law and clients' interests first by actively working to maximize desired outcomes and minimize risk.

Ethical decision making. Behavior analysts will likely encounter complex and multifaceted ethical dilemmas. When faced with such a dilemma, behavior analysts should identify problems and solutions with care and deliberation. In resolving an ethical dilemma, behavior analysts should follow the spirit and letter of the Code's core principles and specific standards. Behavior analysts should address ethical dilemmas through a structured decision-making process that considers the full context of the situation and the function of relevant ethics standards. Although no single ethical decision-making process will be equally effective in all situations, the process below illustrates a systematic approach behavior analysts can take to document and address potential ethical concerns.

Throughout all of the following steps, document information that may be essential to decision making or for communicating the steps taken and outcomes (e.g., to the BACB, licensure boards, or other governing agencies). For example, consider documenting: dates, times, locations, and relevant individuals; summaries of observations, meetings, or information reported by others. Take care to protect confidentiality in the preparation and storage of all documentation.

- Clearly define the issue and consider potential risk of harm to relevant individuals.
- 2. Identify all relevant individuals.



Ethics Code: Glossary

Glossary

Assent

Vocal or nonvocal verbal behavior that can be taken to indicate willingness to participate in research or behavioral services by individuals who cannot provide informed consent (e.g., television, radio, ebook, website, social media, (e.g., because of age or intellectual impairments). Assent may be required by a research review committee or a service organization. In such instances, those entities will provide parameters for assessing assent.

Behavior Analyst

An individual who holds BCBA or BCaBA certification or who has submitted a complete application for BCBA or BCaBA certification.

Behavior-Change Intervention

The full set of behavioral procedures designed to improve the client's wellbeing.

Behavioral Services

Services that are explicitly based on the principles and procedures of behavior analysis and are designed to change behavior in meaningful ways. These services include, but are not limited to, assessment, behavior-change interventions, training, consultation, managing and supervising others, and delivering continuing education.

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).

Clients' Rights

Human rights, legal rights, rights codified within behavior analysis, and organization rules designed to benefit the client.

Conflict of Interest

An incompatibility between a behavior analysts' private and professional interests resulting in risk or potential risk

Digital Content

Information that is made available for online consumption, downloading, or distribution through an electronic medium videogame, application, computer, smart device). Common digital content includes documents, pictures, videos, and

Informed Consent

The permission given by an individual with the legal right to consent before participating in services or research, or allowing their information to be used or shared.

Service/Research: Providing the opportunity for an individual to give informed consent for services or research involves communicating about and taking appropriate steps to confirm understanding of: 1) the purpose of the services or research; 2) the expected time commitment and procedures involved: 3) the right to decline to participate or withdraw at any time without adverse consequences; 4) potential benefits, risks, discomfort, or adverse effects; 5) any limits to confidentiality or privacy; 6) any incentives for research participation; 7) whom to contact for questions or concerns at any time; and 8) the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.

Information Use/Sharing: Providing the opportunity for an individual to give informed consent to share or use their information involves communicating about: 1) the purpose and intended use; 2) the audience; 3) the expected duration; 4) the right to decline or withdraw consent at any time; 5) potential risks or benefits; 6) any limitations to confidentiality or privacy; 7) whom to contact for questions or concerns at any time; and 8) the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.

Legally Authorized Representative

Any individual authorized under law to provide consent on behalf of an individual who cannot provide consent to receive services or participate in research.

Multiple Relationship

A comingling of two or more of a behavior analyst's roles



Ethics Code: Ethics Standards

Ethics Standards

Section 1—Responsibility as a Professional

1.01 Being Truthful

Behavior analysts are truthful and arrange the professional environment to promote truthful behavior in others. They do not create professional situations that result in others engaging in behavior that is fraudulent or illegal or that violates the Code. They also provide truthful and accurate information to all required entities (e.g., BACB, licensure boards, funders) and individuals (e.g., clients, stakeholders, supervisees, trainees), and they correct instances of untruthful or inaccurate submissions as soon as they become aware of them.

1.02 Conforming with Legal and Professional Requirements

Behavior analysts follow the law and the requirements of their professional community (e.g., BACB, licensure board).

1.03 Accountability

Behavior analysts are accountable for their actions and professional services and follow through on work commitments. When errors occur or commitments cannot be met, behavior analysts take all appropriate actions to directly address them, first in the best interest of *clients*, and then in the best interest of relevant parties.

1.04 Practicing within a Defined Role

Behavior analysts provide services only after defining and documenting their professional role with relevant parties in writing.

1.05 Practicing within Scope of Competence

Behavior analysts practice only within their identified scope of competence. They engage in professional activities in new areas (e.g., populations, procedures) only after accessing and documenting appropriate study, training, supervised experience, consultation, and/or co-treatment from professionals competent in the new area. Otherwise, they refer or transition services to an appropriate professional.

1.06 Maintaining Competence

Behavior analysts actively engage in professional development activities to maintain and further their professional competence. Professional development activities include reading relevant literature; attending conferences and conventions; participating in workshops and other training opportunities; obtaining additional coursework; receiving coaching, consultation, supervision, or mentorship; and obtaining and maintaining appropriate professional credentials.

1.07 Cultural Responsiveness and Diversity

Source: BACB

Behavior analysts actively engage in professional development activities to acquire knowledge and skills related to cultural responsiveness and diversity. They evaluate their own biases and ability to address the needs of individuals with diverse needs/ backgrounds (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status). Behavior analysts also evaluate biases of their supervisees and trainees, as well as their supervisees' and trainees' ability to address the needs of individuals with diverse needs/backgrounds.

1.08 Nondiscrimination

Behavior analysts do not discriminate against others. They behave toward others in an equitable and inclusive manner regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or any other basis proscribed by law.



Ethics Code

5 ethics standards have been added. 5 have been removed.

The ethics standards that have been added are:

- 2.02 Timeliness
- 4.05 Maintaining Supervision Documentation
- 4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity
- 5.01 Protecting Clients, Stakeholders, Supervisees, and Trainees
- 5.10 Social Media Channels and Websites



Crosswalk for Behavior Analyst Ethics Codes:

Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts & Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts

This crosswalk document indicates where ethics standards from the <u>Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts</u> can be found in the <u>Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts</u>. In the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts, ethics standards might appear in the same code section, in a new code section, and/or in the Introduction section rather than among ethics standards. In addition, 5 ethics standards have been added to the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts and 5 have been removed. The ethics standards that have been added are:

2.02 Timeliness

Source: BACB

- · 4.05 Maintaining Supervision Documentation
- 4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity

- 5.01 Protecting Clients, Stakeholders, Supervisees, and Trainees
- · 5.10 Social Media Channels and Websites

Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts (effective 2016)	Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (effective 2022)
1.0 Responsible Conduct of Behavior Analysts (statement)	Introduction
1.01 Reliance on Scientific Knowledge	Introduction
	2.01 Providing Effective Treatment
1.02 Boundaries of Competence	Introduction
	1.05 Practicing within Scope of Competence
1.03 Maintaining Competence through	Introduction
Professional Development	1.06 Maintaining Competence
1.04 Integrity	Introduction
	1.01 Being Truthful
	1.02 Conforming with Legal and Professional Requirements
	1.03 Accountability
1.05 Professional and Scientific Relationships	Introduction
	1.04 Practicing within a Defined Role
	1.06 Maintaining Competence



ABA Service Delivery Model

- Role of BCBA
 - Billable
 - Unbillable
- Role of RBT
 - Billable
 - Unbillable

RBT Turnover is estimated to be 60% to 100%+

Impact of RBT Turnover

- Clients
- Parents
- RBT
- BCBA
- ABA Organizations
- Funding Sources
- Field of ABA





p r/ABA · Posted by u/Kelian2014 1 month ago





RBT Turnover: A story about recruiting RBTs...

RBT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: CASE STUDY

The goal of the RBT Pipeline Development Program is to match ethical ABA Organizations with ethical, experienced, career-minded RBTs and BTs interested in staying with the same organization for 2 or more years. My criteria was 3 or more years before I started my search and realized this was unrealistic.

Since the field of ABA has more than 120K RBTs and possibly an equivalent number of BTs, my original thought was that the difficulty would be in finding ethical ABA Organizations, not careerminded RBTs. I was completely wrong. Finding career-minded RBTs is like a needle in a haystack exercise.

Since this was a new program, I decided to do the recruiting myself to learn about the dynamics of recruiting RBTs and RBT candidates so I fully immersed myself in the sourcing process and have been talking to many, many people.



A forum to provide dissemination of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and evidence-based research, assist the public in understanding the science, and to promote conversation between BCBAs, aspiring BCBAs, BCaBAs, RBTs, and others who are interested.

20.0k 36 Members Online

(a) Created Jan 13, 2011

Joined



■ RBT Turnover: A story about recruiting RBTs...

These are my finding:

- (1) The nature of the RBT job is a very transient one.
- (2) The average tenure of an RBT with one company is less than 12 months.
- (3) Most RBTs job hop from one organization to the next. It literally looks like a ping pong ball.
- (4) RBTs are willing to entertain new opportunities because they work for companies that promised them full-time hours but are only providing part-time hours.
- (5) The few people I've found with longevity are seeking because their company was bought out by a PE-backed company and the business changed.
- (6) RBTs who are being paid \$25 to \$35 dollars per hour are making SUBSTANTIALLY less annually.
- (7) Many RBTs have Master's degrees in related fields but are not seeking to become BCBAs. Yet they're making less than \$35K per year.
- (8) Many RBTs have left the field. I'm not having much luck trying to convince them to come back to the field.
- (9) Many would jump at the chance to work as salaried employees but those jobs are nearly impossible to find.
- (10) About 20% to 30% of RBTs are in the process of becoming BCBAs



Why do RBTs Leave?

- 1. Burnout / Compassion fatigue
- 2. Lack of guaranteed hours
 - Scheduling risk
- 3. Insufficient PTO
- 4. Difficulty of the job (Risk / reward imbalance)
- 5. Poor supervision (Social Media should NOT be a substitute)
- 6. Lack of training (Social Media should NOT be a substitute)
- 7. Lack of career path (Career RBTs)
- 8. Compensation
- 9. Lack of community and support
- 10. No sense of belonging to the field of ABA



Ethical vs. Unethical: Who Bears the Business Risk?

"Not getting paid if a session cancelled and the onus being on you to reschedule a session last minute is so incredibly fair. I experienced that countless times on my path to become a BCBA. Not knowing if I was going to make rent the next month or have enough money to pay bills is so incredibly stressful, so I don't blame RBTs who have no company loyalty. So many ABA companies show no loyalty to them, so why would they?"

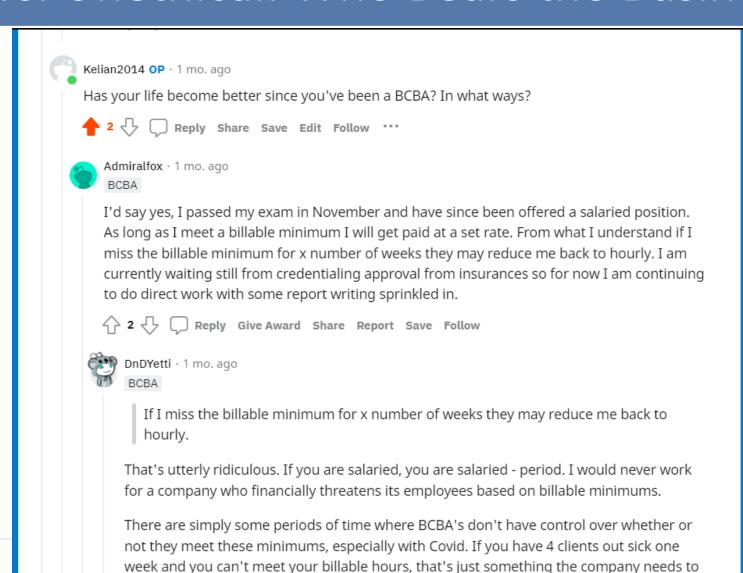
"I've been an RBT for 4 years, make \$26 an hour and work 24 hours over the course of 6 days a week. It's ridiculous how burnt out I am with how little I am working. I love what I do but I agree, it's not sustainable. My partner and I go back and forth all the time because I have no money and no time to spend with our family on the weekends. This industry needs a major overhaul"

"All my sessions are in the middle of the day (12-4, 1-5) and my requests to compress hours have been ignored. But yes, I feel like for all the time I'm away from home (one client is a 30 minute commute), I'm making pennies."

"Right now, I work5 days a week for 5.5-7 hours, depending on the day. Nothing too crazy. HOWEVER, client cancellations are ridiculous, so I lose at least 5 hours a week. We do have admin time, but it's like \$12/hr. I went back to doing SW (Social Work) and have made more money in 2 months than I did in 6 months last year."



Ethical vs. Unethical: Who Bears the Business Risk?



understand and accept.



Ethical vs. Unethical: Who Bears the Business Risk?

Ethical	Unethical
Guaranteed Hours	High Hourly Rate (without Guarantee)
Paid Training	Unpaid Training / Contractual Obligation
Professional Development Opportunities	No Professional Development
Quality Supervision	Minimal Supervision
PTO	No PTO
Viable Career Path	No Career Path
Supportive Corporate Culture	Toxic Corporate Culture
Paid Drive Time / Mileage Reimbursement	Unpaid Drive Time / No Mileage Reimbursement
Strategies to Mitigate Burnout	Strategies to Maximize Billable Hours
Robust Benefits (medical, dental, vision, 401-K)	Poor Benefits
Free Supervision (for BCBA Candidates)	No Supervision / Employee-paid Supervision



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