

Mission First. Every Individual, Every Day.®

PUBLICATION: Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders, January, 2022

Article: Behavioral Training and Performance Management of Human Services Organization Care Providers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created and continues to impose serious problems, challenges, and obstacles for applied behavior analysis (ABA) day and residential settings serving persons with neurodevelopmental and intellectual disabilities. For example, Cox et al. (2020) published a position statement that outlined ethical dilemmas associated with suspending in-person ABA services as the result of COVID-19–related health and safety risks to clients and practitioners.

Page 1

authors



HELENA MAGUIRE, M.S., LABA, BCBA



JILL M. HARPER, Ph.D., LABA, BCBA-D



RYTA M. GARDNER, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA



JAMES K. LUISELLI, Ed.D., ABPP, BCBA-D

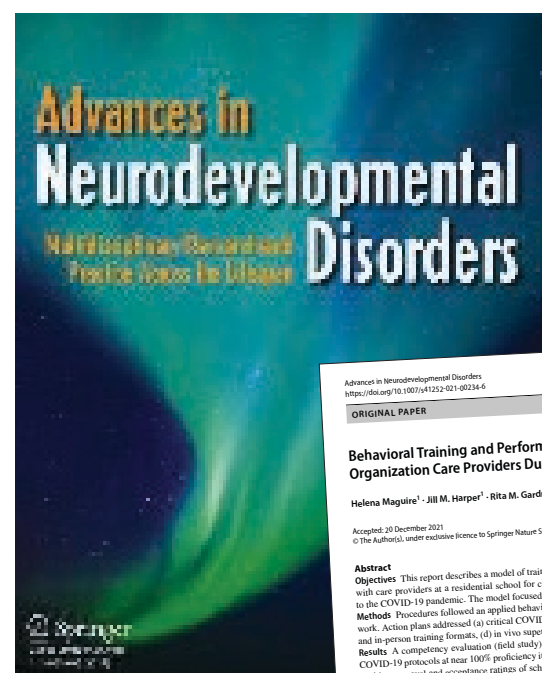


Fig. 1. Behavior checklist: putting on and removing PPE.

Steps	Competency	Completed
1. Wash hands or apply hand sanitizer		
2. Remove gloves from dispenser		
3. Check gloves for tears/damage		
4. Clean gloves with soap and water before steps to remove step 6		
5. Roll up of gloves away from self and discard		
6. If wearing gloves, roll gloves off away from self and discard		
7. Repeat steps 1-5 with other hand		
8. Turn on germicidal hand and glove near eye wash area		
9. Gargle and spit away from face		
10. Face wipe eye and nose area		
11. Roll removed glove with germicidal hand		
12. Place face tightly under roll of waste glove without touching exterior		
13. Step away from sink, turning waste out, leaving place with disinfectant wipe glove		
14. Remove glove from dispenser		

other questionnaire items also received an average "agree" rating related to supervisor training and recommendation to other human service settings (M = 4.42), school care (M = 4.21), and conducting supervision confidently and effectively (M = 4.14). The data in Table 1 are the results of COVID-19 pre- and post-training survey items.

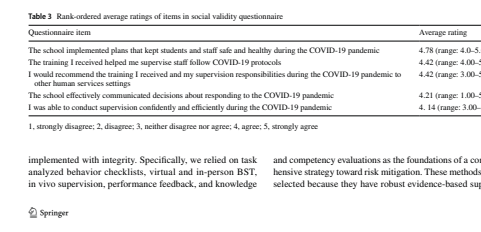
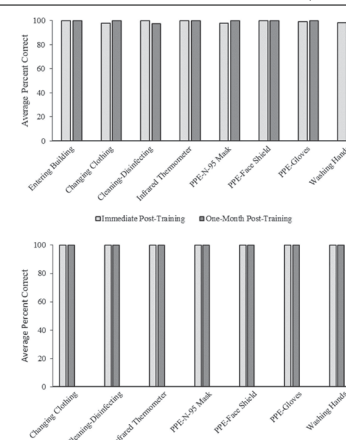


Table 4. COVID-19 surveillance testing results.

Month	Positive test results	Positive test results
March 2020	18	1
April 2020	1	0
May 2020	1	0
June 2020	1	0
July 2020	2	0
August 2020	1	0
September 2020	6	0
October 2020	4	1
November 2020	12	0
December 2020	17	0
January 2021	10	3
February 2021	2	0
March 2021	2	0
April 2021	0	0
May 2021	0	0
June 2021	0	0
July 2021	2	0
August 2021	6	1
September 2021	1	0

be extended to behaviors such as wearing face coverings, donning and doffing PPE, and physical distancing (Gervais et al., 2020).

Our competency evaluation revealed that participants responded effectively to training and performance management. For example, assessment according to behavior checklist was completed with participants immediately following training sessions and 1 month later had almost no baseline phase. The training measures, we determined, would be artificially low because the participants had no prior experience or received instruction for implementing the novel protocols which were designed in response to the transmission challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As well, training and performance management procedures were delivered in an "information package" that did not test any of the influence of separate components. Finally, our evaluation included a relatively small sample of participants although representative of the larger population of classroom and group home care providers at the school.

The COVID-19 infection rates among students and employees decreased concurrently with implementation of training and performance management strategies. These critical health data also demonstrated greater containment of the virus compared to regional incidence reporting among students. The relationship between school response to the COVID-19 pandemic and positive test results is poorly correlated but demonstrates a desirable outcome that supports large-scale risk mitigation. At the time of this writing and in conjunction with students and care providers, we fully anticipated, viral infection rates remain low. Also, social validity assessment found uniformly positive ratings among the supervisors who implemented training and performance management with participants. The findings demonstrated favorable reactions to leadership decisions about health and safety plans, training guidelines for supervising COVID-19 protocols, and conducting reports

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Within the context of a field study, the competency evaluation was conducted to facilitate rapid and practical assessment of the outcomes from training and performance management but did not conform to the most controlled research methodology. In this regard, inter-observer agreement (IOA) was not recorded during measurement, and supervisor

Within the context of a field study, the competency evaluation was conducted to facilitate rapid and practical assessment of the outcomes from training and performance management but did not conform to the most controlled research methodology. In this regard, inter-observer agreement (IOA) was not recorded during measurement, and supervisor interactions with participants were not checked for implementation integrity.