



Contents

Changes to BCaBA
Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines
for Autism Spectrum
Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal
Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming
Standard Changes



BACB Newsletter

December 2014

Changes to BCaBA Supervision Requirements

As was described in the *November 2014 issue* of the *BACB Newsletter*, the BACB recently convened a workgroup of 10 subject matter experts (SMEs) to review a number of certification standards for possible revision. One of the main standards assigned to the workgroup by the BACB's Board of Directors was the requirement that a BCaBA receive ongoing supervision by a BCBA.

At its annual meeting in 2013, the Board of Directors authorized further review and potential modification of BCaBA supervision standards because (a) it had been more than 7 years since the original policy had been developed (the prior SME workgroup met in early 2007); (b) there were some ambiguities in the current policy regarding the responsibilities of the supervisor; (c) US state regulatory authorities and third-party payers have been increasingly scrutinizing and regulating the oversight of bachelors-level credentials; (d) supervisors were increasingly identified in complaints regarding BCaBA practices; and (e) BCaBAs were requesting supervision requirements that reflected their practice (or interruptions therein). The primary ambiguity in the *BCaBA supervision policy* was whether the BCBA supervisor was clinically responsible for the behavior-analytic services performed by the BCaBA.

The SME workgroup discussion began with a review of the current BCaBA supervision standards and similar standards from other disciplines (e.g., physical therapy, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy). The workgroup then engaged in lengthy critical discussion about the appropriateness of each BCaBA supervision standard. During the discussion, numerous questions were raised about the potential impact that raising standards could have on the already low-volume BCaBA certification program. Despite such concerns, however, the consensus of the workgroup was to recommend a number of changes to the current policy to clarify the supervisor-supervisee relationship, ensure sufficient service oversight, and provide additional support for new BCaBAs.

On August 8, 2014, the Board of Directors voted to accept the changes recommended by the workgroup, including: (a) explicit supervisory responsibility over the BCaBA's services, (b) an allocation of the amount of supervision based on practice hours, (c) increased supervision of new BCaBAs, (d) elimination of the physical-presence observation requirement, and (e) publication of the supervisor's name in the BCaBA's record in the BACB Certificant Registry.

The changes to the BCaBA supervision policy are described below and will go into effect on **January 1, 2017**.

Supervisor Responsibilities and Qualifications

The current standards do not define supervisor qualifications apart from the BCBA credential requirement. The new standards address these by matching them to those in the *Experience*



Contents

Changes to BCaBA
Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines
for Autism Spectrum
Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal
Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming
Standard Changes

Standards policy for individuals pursuing certification (e.g., the supervisor may not be related to or subordinate to the BCaBA). The current standards also do not address the number of BCaBAs that may be supervised by one BCBA. Although the new policy does not provide a quantitative limit on the number of supervisees due to the diversity of behavior-analytic practice circumstances, element 5.02 of the *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts* will apply: "Behavior analysts take on only a volume of supervisory activity that is commensurate with their ability to be effective."

The most substantial changes to the supervisor responsibilities involve two new standards. The first specifies that the supervising BCBA is now responsible (i.e., can now be held accountable) for the supervisee's behavior-analytic services, regardless of the employment circumstances of each professional. Other stakeholders (e.g., service funders) will likely monitor and enforce this new relationship in different ways; the BACB will enforce the relationship under the new *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*. This standard change was made to improve oversight of and accountability for the services being provided by BCaBAs. In addition, the supervisor's name will now be publicly listed in the BCaBA's record in the Certificant Registry.

Supervision Amount and Structure

The current standard regarding the amount of supervision (i.e., 1 hour per month) does not take into account the amount of behavior-analytic services being provided by a BCaBA, if any. The new standard will require that BCaBAs be supervised for 2% of the behavior-analytic service hours they provide each month; supervisors may require more than this at their discretion. This change means that BCaBAs who do not provide behavior-analytic services during a given month will not require supervision during that time. In addition, the BCaBA's supervisor must be available for consultation between supervisory interactions. The current requirement of real-time, face-to-face interactions will be eliminated in the revised policy. The policy also now clarifies that text and email communications *may not* count towards supervision hours. In addition, the nature of supervision activities will now match the Experience Standards.

Under the current standards, observation of the BCaBA by the supervisor must occur twice per year and be conducted in person. The new standards stipulate more frequent observation (quarterly) but allow observation to be conducted via any appropriate means with no physical-presence requirement. Finally, a new requirement was added to address the supervision of newly certified BCaBAs. This addition specifies a more intensive level of supervision of 5% of the number of behavior-analytic service hours provided per month for the first 1,000 hours of post-certification practice, with no less than one hour of supervision every two weeks. Current BCaBAs will be exempt from this requirement.

Group Supervision

The definition of group supervision will now match the Experience Standards policy for individuals pursuing certification: "Small groups are interactive meetings in which 2-10 supervisees who share similar experiences participate in the supervision activities. If non-supervisees are present during the meeting, their participation should be limited so as to increase the interaction opportunities of supervisees." No changes were made to the current standard that group supervision can only account for a maximum of 50% of the overall supervision time.

Documentation of Supervision

Two primary changes were made to supervision-documentation requirements. Current standards require that the BCaBA report written documentation of supervision only once per year. This standard will be changed to require ongoing documentation via a supervision form (details forthcoming) kept by the supervisor and supervisee and reported only if requested by the BACB. This documentation process is identical to the Experience Standards policy. In addition, the contract between the BCaBA and supervisor must now include the following content: the nature and frequency of supervision, methods of documenting supervision, supervisor observation methods,



Contents

Changes to BCaBA Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming Standard Changes

third-party consent, the supervisor's responsibility for BCaBA service delivery, retention of written feedback by both parties, supervision fees, and termination and supervision-verification criteria. A sample BCaBA supervision contract will be made available online in 2015.

The following cross-reference guide organizes the new standards and presents them along with the current ones. Stay tuned for the newly revised policy document on the supervision of BCaBAs, which will be released in the spring of 2015.

Cross-Reference Guide for BCaBA Supervision Standards

Category	Requirement	Current Standard	New Standard (effective January 1, 2017)
Supervisor Responsibilities and Qualifications			
NEW	Responsibility	Not addressed	BCBA supervisor will be responsible for the work of the BCaBA(s) he/she is supervising
NEW	Public Identification	Not addressed	BCBA supervisor will be publicly identified on the Certificant Registry
NEW	Qualifications	Not addressed	Same requirements as in the Experience Standards policy (e.g., the supervisor may not be related to or subordinate to the BCaBA)
NEW	Caseload	Not addressed	Volume of supervisory activity must be commensurate with ability to be effective
Supervision Amount and Structure			
	Amount	1 hour per month (regardless of practice hours)	2% of hours of ABA services provided per month; supervisors may require more when appropriate (adjusted based on hours of practice)
	Frequency	Every month	At least once per month, but the supervisor must be available for consultation during service-delivery periods
NEW	New BCaBAs	Not addressed	5% of hours of ABA services provided per month for the first 1,000 hours of practice, with no less than one hour of supervision every two weeks (current BCaBAs exempt)
	Interaction Type	Real-time, face-to-face interactions only	Real-time, face-to-face interactions not required; no supervision via text or email; incorporates Experience Standards provisions on nature of supervision
	Observation	Semiannually, in person	Quarterly via any appropriate means (no in-person requirement)
Group Supervision			
	Type	No stipulation on group size or activities	Small interactive groups of 2-10 supervisees. If non-supervisees are present, their participation should be limited
	Amount Allowed	Max. 50% of supervision	No change
Documentation of Supervision			
	Reporting	Once per year	Ongoing documentation of supervision meetings using meeting form that must be provided if requested by the BACB



Contents

Changes to BCaBA
Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines
for Autism Spectrum
Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal
Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming
Standard Changes

Category	Requirement	Current Standard	New Standard (effective January 1, 2017)
Documentation of Supervision (cont'd)			
NEW	Contract	Not addressed	<p>A contract must be in place that specifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and frequency of supervision (including grounds for increased supervision at the discretion of the supervisor) Mechanism for reporting caseload to supervisor Methods of supervisory observation Mandatory third-party consent for supervisor involvement Written feedback retained by both parties Supervisory responsibility over services and client consent for supervisor's involvement Provision terms for supervision (fee for service) Termination and verification criteria

Revised Practice Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder Released

In September 2012, the BACB published practice guidelines for the behavior-analytic treatment of autism spectrum disorder: *Health Plan Coverage of Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder*. The guidelines were developed to provide guidance to health plans, consumers, and providers so that individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are more likely to receive behavior-analytic treatment consistent with the best available scientific evidence and expert clinical opinion. Since the publication of the guidelines, they have been widely used by various stakeholders and incorporated into numerous policies.

Consistent with the original intention to periodically revise the guidelines for content and clarity, in late 2013 the BACB's Board of Directors authorized the development of a second edition of the guidelines. In June 2014, the original project coordinator convened a workgroup comprised of 9 doctoral-level behavior analysts, all of whom were experts in the ABA treatment of ASD. The workgroup carefully reviewed the initial guidelines and, using a consensus process, proposed revisions and additions to the document to enhance clarity and supplement existing guidance. BACB staff then generated a revised draft that was sent to the project coordinator, revision-workgroup members, and public policy experts for additional feedback, after which the guidelines were finalized.

The BACB is pleased to announce the publication of the updated version of its ASD practice guidelines, now titled *Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers (2nd ed.)*. Although the organization of the document has remained unchanged along with the original core guidelines, numerous revisions have resulted in clarified and expanded guidance. The most notable changes and additions are listed below.

- Information has been added about changes to BACB certification standards and the Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) credential
- The service description for Focused ABA Treatment includes clearer guidance on the assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior



Contents

Changes to BCaBA
Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines
for Autism Spectrum
Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal
Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming
Standard Changes

- Multiple models of tiered service delivery are now illustrated
- Supervision has been reframed as “case supervision” with a delineation of direct and indirect supervision activities
- Expanded guidance has been incorporated on discontinuing services

Notes from the Legal Department

Implementation of the BACB’s New Code of Ethics

A few certificants have asked about the processing of complaints under the new *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*, which will go into effect on January 1, 2016 (described in the *September 2014 BACB Newsletter*). The questions concern how complaints based on actions that occurred prior to 2016 will be handled. The answer is that a certificant will be held to the standards in place when the alleged violation occurred. *All* currently existing *Professional Disciplinary and Ethical Standards* and almost all provisions of the *Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts* are contained in the new Compliance Code. The Compliance Code will not be “retroactively” applied to incidences arising prior to January 1, 2016 for those few areas where the Compliance Code imposes new or substantially revised requirements (see the *September 2014 BACB Newsletter*).

Tips for University Programs and Continuing Education Providers: Avoiding Misrepresentations

The BACB does not authorize the use of terms such as “BACB pending” or “application pending” for any individual, university, or continuing education provider with an application under review. The BACB reserves the right to deny or delay processing an application as a result of prior misrepresentations of “pending” BACB status. Course sequences that have not yet been approved should be particularly cautious when recruiting students into their programs with implications of BACB acceptability.

Reminder

Certificants can opt out of receiving certain types of emails (e.g., job announcements, CEU opportunities) through the BACB’s email campaign service. This feature is available in the *BACB Gateway* under *Email Preferences*.

News & Notes

New Directors Appointed

The BACB’s Board of Directors has appointed Dr. Christos Nikopoulos, BCBA-D (London, England) and Mark Lister, BCaBA (Gainesville, FL) to fill two recently vacated director positions. Dr. Christos, the founder of Autism Consultancy Services Limited and part-time lecturer at Brunel University, will complete the remainder of the current International Representative term (through August 2016). Mr. Lister, the founder of Behavior Analysis Support Services, will complete the remainder of the current BCaBA Representative term (through August 2015). Welcome to the Board!

Hemingway Award Nominations

The BACB is currently accepting *nominations* for the Michael Hemingway Behavior Analysis award. This annual award honors an individual distinguished for his or her contributions (a) to the development of public policy related to behavior analysis and/or (b) to increasing the availability of behavior-analytic services. Nominations will be accepted until **January 12, 2015**.



A Summary of Upcoming Changes to BACB Standards

Recent issues of the *BACB Newsletter* have described a number of impending changes to BACB standards. In an effort to assist certificants in keeping track of these many changes, we have provided the following table that includes the changes, their effective dates, and their original published source. We will publish this table and other reminders in future newsletters until the majority of the changes have been enacted.

Contents

Changes to BCaBA Supervision Requirements

Revised Practice Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder Released

Notes from the Legal Department

News & Notes

A Summary of Upcoming Standard Changes

Effective Date	Area	Change	Newsletter
January 1, 2015	Supervisor Requirements	Pass an 8-hr, post-certification, competency-based training on supervising pre-certification individuals	<i>September 2012</i>
January 1, 2015	Supervisor Requirements	Pass an online, competency-based <i>training module</i> on BACB experience standards at www.BACB.com	<i>September 2012</i>
January 1, 2015	Supervisee Requirements	Pass an online, competency-based <i>training module</i> on BACB experience standards at www.BACB.com	<i>September 2012</i>
January 1, 2015	Distribution of Experience	The start-date and end-date of experience may not be more than five years apart	<i>September 2012</i>
Recertification cycles that begin on or after January 1, 2015	Continuing Education	Changes to recertification cycle duration, # of required CEUs, ethics CE, and new CE categories	<i>February 2013</i>
January 1, 2016	BCBA Degree Requirement	Possession of a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited university that was (a) conferred in behavior analysis, education, or psychology, or (b) conferred in a degree program in which the candidate completed a BACB approved course sequence.	<i>February 2013</i>
January 1, 2016	Ethics and Discipline	The <i>Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts</i> will be enforced. Revisions to the disciplinary system will take effect.	<i>September 2014</i>
January 1, 2016	BCBA Eligibility Requirements	Changes to eligibility requirements for Options 2 (College Teaching) and 3 (Postdoctoral Experience)	<i>November 2014</i>
January 1, 2017	Approved Course Sequence Coordinator Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed as full-time faculty by the university • Hold a doctoral degree • Hold BCBA/BCBA-D certification 	<i>May 2013</i>

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