

## May 2024



## Mental Health and Behavior Science

Every month our Health Trends newsletter includes, “**ABA Snippets...**”, a monthly column written by behavior analysts at DBHDS. This month in honor of Mental Health Month and Right Help Right Now, we moved the “**ABA Snippets...**” to the front page!

While **applied behavior analysis (ABA)** may not be the first thing that comes to mind during Mental Health Month, mental health has been at the core of “**ABA**” for a long time.

**Mental Health Month** is recognized every May. This tradition was founded back in 1949 by Mental Health America (6). Around the same time the behaviorist, B.F. Skinner, “*began trumpeting the potential of behavior analysis to change the world for the better*” (2). Years later, in 1968, the **Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA)** was established, building upon Skinner’s work along with other notable contributors to behaviorism, psychology, mental health and science.

The first volume of JABA included articles on improving the use of reinforcement in hospital settings (1), phobias (4), and increasing social responses with individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia (3).

Some of the funding for these early JABA articles was provided by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (3). Behavior science journals like JABA, The Analysis of Verbal Behavior, Behavior Analysis in Practice, and the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions (to name a few) have continued to address socially significant behaviors related to mental health.

It has been **75 years since the first Mental Health Month** and a lot has changed. Our language has evolved to be more inclusive and less stigmatizing (6), and our society has become more comfortable discussing mental health.

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding the Office of Integrated Health Supports Network “Health Trends” newsletter to [communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov)

### Behavioral Science from A to Z

Behavior science researchers and practitioners continue to contribute to mental health research and treatment with empirical work across various topics.

A 2022 article by Heward and colleagues described over 350 applications of behavioral science from A to Z. The following are a few topics relevant to mental health that you may be surprised to learn about:

#### Behavior Science Applied to 350 Domains of Socially Significant Behavior (2).

- Alzheimer’s disease (Bourgeois, 1990; LeBlanc et al., 2006).
- Anxiety (Flood & Wilder, 2004; Rounds et al., 2007).
- Binge eating (Kjelsås et al., 2004; Lee & Miltenberger, 1997).
- Bipolar disorder (Bradshaw & Szabadi, 1978; Whitton et al., 2015).
- Brain injury, traumatic (Tasky et al., 2008; Wehman et al., 1989).
- Bullying (Bradshaw, 2013; Ross et al., 2009).
- Death and dying (Maccallum & Bonanno, 2016; Papa et al., 2013).
- Depression (Cuijpers et al., 2007; Polenick & Flora, 2013).
- Fear (Shabani & Fisher, 2006; Tyner et al., 2016).
- Gambling (Dickerson, 1979; Dixon et al., 2015).
- Happiness (Green et al., 1997; Moore et al., 2007).
- Hoarding (Donaldson et al., 2014).
- Hopelessness (Rezende et al., 2021).
- Obesity (Carr & Epstein, 2020; Hustyi et al., 2011).
- Psychogenic [psychosomatic] conditions (Grosz & Zimmerman, 1965; Watson & Sterling, 1998).
- Psychopharmacology instruction (Zinn et al., 2015).
- Schizophrenia (Salzinger & Pisoni, 1958; Wilder et al., 2001).
- Stress (Koegel et al., 1992; Osborne et al., 2008).
- Substance use (Greenfield et al., 1996; Roll et al., 2009).
- Suicide (Bryan & Bryan, 2021; Dombrovski et al., 2011).
- Weather-related behavior (Ardila Sánchez et al., 2019; Gelino & Reed, 2020).

For additional information and resources about support for yourself or how to support someone who may be experiencing a mental health condition (or possible symptoms of a mental health condition), visit one of the following:

**[Right Help. Right Now.](#)**  
**[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)**  
**[Mental Health America](#)**

### App of the Month



MindShift, created by Anxiety Canada, a nonprofit committed to promoting anxiety awareness and facilitating access to effective resources and treatment, offers a comprehensive range of tools. The app equips users with valuable resources to explore and acquire practical tips for managing common concerns such as general worry, social anxiety, perfectionism, panic, and phobias. It’s free. Has breathing and meditation exercises. Available on Apple and Android (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS Office of Integrated Health-Health Supports Network. User accepts full responsibility for utilization of app).

References

1. Avllon, T., & Azrin, N.H. (1968). Reinforcer sampling: A technique for increasing the behavior of mental patients. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1*, 13-20. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.1968.1-13>.
2. Heward, W.L., Critchfield, T.S., Reed, D.D., Detrich, R., & Kimball, J.W. (2022). ABA from A to Z: Behavior science applied to 350 domains of socially significant behavior. *Perspectives on Behavior Science, 45*, 327–359.
3. Kale, R.J., Kave, J.H., Whelan, P.A., & Hopkins, B.L. (1968). The effects of reinforcement on the modification, maintenance, and generalization of social responses of mental patients. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1*, 307-314.
4. Leitenberg, H., Agras, W.S., Thompson, L.E., & Wright, D.E. (1968). Feedback in behavior modification: An experimental analysis in two phobic cases. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1*, 131-137.
5. Lindsley, O.R. (1968). A reliable wrist counter for recording behavior rates. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1*, 77-78.
6. Mental Health America (2024). May is mental health month 2024 outreach toolkit: Where to start.

## May 2024

### “More Than Enough”

During the month of May the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) concentrates on raising awareness about mental health.

NAMI is focused on fighting MH stigma, providing supports for individuals, and educating the public, along with advocating for policies to improve services for individuals with mental illness (2).

This year the NAMI campaign is called “*More than Enough*” which centers around the value of all individuals who suffer from MH no matter their cultural background, economic situation, appearance, diagnoses, or abilities. Their message is very person is fundamentally worth life, love and healing (2).

Visit The NAMI website at <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month> to get all the details of the “*More than Enough*” campaign.

The NAMI website links to information on how to get involved in special events such as Mental Health Action Day (5/18), NAMI Walks (5/6 - 5/27) and the NAMI Convention (5/24-27), along with resources such as the NAMI Helpline, support groups, programs, classes, podcasts, and webinars.

### Mental Health & IDD

- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have a three to four times higher rate of co-occurring mental illness than the general population (3) (1).
- Current research done by the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) suggests individual's with IDD may not be receiving sufficient mental health services in their communities (1).
- The hospital emergency room is where many individual's with IDD seek mental health care when experiencing a crisis and are hospitalized for longer periods of time for altered mood, anxiety and psychotic disorders (1).
- Identified barriers to mental health services in the community include poorly prepared physicians who have limited understanding of IDD, resulting in a poorer quality of care (3) (1) overall.
- Individuals with IDD who experience disruptive, destructive and self-injurious behaviors may require some level of behavioral support needs which may or may not be related to mental health needs (1).

#### References:

1. Lineberry, S., Bogenschutz, M., Broda, M., Dinora, P., Prohn, S., & West, A. (2023, January). Co-occurring mental illness and behavioral support needs in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 1-10.
2. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). (2024, April). Mental health awareness month: *More than enough*.
3. Pinals, D.A., Hovermale, L., Mauch, D., & Anacker, L. (2022, March). Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the mental health system: Part 1. clinical considerations. *Psychiatric Services*, 73(3), 313-320.

### Spring Cleaning Time!

Is a Great Time to Schedule a Power Washing Clinic with the Mobile Rehab Engineering (MRE) Team!



- The MRE Team will provide pressure washing of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) between the months of March thru October.
- Weather dependent (can't power wash in rain, high winds, etc.).
- Can power wash all washable DME.
- Site needs to be a level area for equipment set-up with an outside spigot.
- Hot water only—no detergents are used.
- The MRE Team voluntarily complies with Virginia's Clean Water Act.
- To contact the MRE team to set-up a power washing clinic send an email to [mreteam@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:mreteam@dbhds.virginia.gov)
- Or scan the QR code to access the MRE form to request services.



### Save the Date

**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**

### The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Nursing Conference

*Will be held at...*

**George Mason University's Verizon Auditorium**

**10900 University Blvd.**

**Manassas, Virginia 21000-2203**

This year's focus topic is  
Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

