

SupervisorABA

What systems do you recommend for ensuring coverage of the whole task list curriculum?

We recommend using SupervisorABA! For our consumers, each task list item is tracked and supervisors can see what areas they have assessed the trainee in and which items are left to be covered. If you are not using SupervisorABA, one suggestion is to bring the task list document with you to each supervision session, and as the trainee has demonstrated both verbal and performance competency, highlight it. As you progress through supervision, you will have a visual of what items are left to complete.

What tools do you find helpful in using a competency-based approach?

At SupervisorABA, we look to conduct a baseline assessment as each new task list item is assigned. As the trainee works through the assigned activities and readings, we reassess the skill both in verbal and performance competency. We also use the projects, which are a culmination of various task list items as another way to assess both verbal and performance competency (with some generalization and maintenance included!).

How often do you assess competency?

Each supervision session, as you discuss task list (TL) items, you are assessing competency! This can be done during baseline assessment or as the trainee is learning the concept. Typically, a baseline assessment is conducted when you first begin to review the TL item, then verbal and performance competency is measured each supervision session until the trainee has acquired these skills. It is important to revisit TL item competency, which we recommend doing through the projects, which are a culmination of TL items that produce a tangible product.

Do you recommend running group supervision with supervisees who themselves are at different points in their skill development?

Yes! We do recommend having group supervision with trainees with varying skills and experience. Group supervision affords supervisees with the ability to develop professional relationships with colleagues that may last a lifetime. In addition, having trainees who are further along in supervision be able to explain content to others or model appropriate skills is a way to develop these skills. A trainee would really have to know the content to be able to “teach” it to another person. In addition, you may be able to develop a mentor system between a newer and more senior trainee.

Is there a case when you would NOT recommend group supervision?

Aside from the reasons outlined by the BACB in terms of the number of people, content, etc. there are unlikely many reasons to not conduct group supervision, unless a trainee is not able to learn through the group discussions. Additionally, a trainee who is completely new to behavior analysis may not benefit from group supervision if all of the other trainees in the group are much more advanced in their training and likely to use jargon or speak at a very technical level. Finally, remember that some states have specific licensure laws for behavior analysts, so it is important to be sure that you are

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meeting those state requirements if you are providing supervision in that state, which may include restrictions on group supervision.

Any “deal breakers” for entering into a supervisor/supervisee relationship?

“Deal breakers” might not be evident until after the supervisory relationship has started, unless you are providing supervision to someone that you already have a working relationship with. Definite “deal breakers” are history of ethical violations that have not been corrected, or that are particularly egregious. You may also want to avoid supervisory relationships with prospective trainees who have been demonstrated to be unreliable in their work. While there is a certain amount of professionalism that may be developed through the supervisory relationship, it is reasonable to expect that trainees will come into supervision with a certain level of knowledge about ethics and respect for the supervisor and the clients. Trainees who do not demonstrate those minimum competencies may need pre-training prior to entering a supervisory relationship.

Any circumstances in which you definitely would decline supervising someone?

It is important to ensure that you are meeting ethical guidelines when providing supervision, so any circumstances that might challenge those guidelines should be avoided. For example, you would not want to provide supervision to someone who is practicing in an area that you aren't trained to competence in. You should also decline to provide supervision if you don't think you will have the time to provide adequate support. Finally, you should be cautious about providing supervision in states or regions where you are not fully credentialed. Some states have specific licensure laws for behavior analysts, so it is important to be sure that you are meeting those state requirements if you are providing supervision in that state.

What about supervision for someone in a state (not your state) that has licensure but you don't have licensure in that state? Do you get licensure within all those different relevant states if you are offering out of state?

Yes, you should be licensed in the state where you are providing supervision, even if you don't live or practice in that state. It is your responsibility as the supervisor to know what the state guidelines are for practice and supervision, and to ensure that you are following those guidelines and also that your trainee is following these. Remember, the BACB ethics code requires behavior analysts to follow all state and local requirements, in addition to the BACB codes.

What would you say is a really important quality for a supervisor to have, especially for newly-designated BCBA's?

First, you should ensure you meet the requirements outlined by the BACB to be eligible to provide supervision. As these change over time, it is best to review these on the BACB website. Supervisors need to be comfortable with providing feedback and directing the course of supervision. Newer BCBA's may find themselves in the position of providing supervision to their peers, or to trainees who are older or even potentially more experienced in the field. In addition, BCBA supervisors must be very well-organized and knowledgeable about the requirements for supervision. It is very helpful

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to establish procedures, guidelines, and plans for supervision ahead of time, and to remain consistent with those procedures. For example, using a consistent agenda to plan supervision sessions (click here for a sample of the type of agenda that we recommend) helps to structure the supervision session. Providing trainees clear instructions for what they are expected to accomplish between sessions is also important. Providing effective, positive, and helpful feedback is crucial, as well as soliciting feedback from the trainee on the supervision process and experience. Finally, remember to regularly check that BACB website and review each BACB newsletter when it comes out, to stay on top of any changes in supervision and experience requirements.

Do you have any suggestions or guidelines that we can adhere to to ensure cultural competence as a supervisor?

Cultural competence as a supervisor includes many layers. You will want to be aware of the need to be culturally sensitive to both your trainee, and to the clients that your trainee is working with. You will also need to ensure that your trainee is demonstrating cultural competence in their work. Like ethics, cultural competence should be an ongoing conversation with your trainee, and should be addressed frequently throughout supervision. Fortunately, as behavior analysts, we are uniquely trained to assess each client as an individual, which should lend itself well to cultural sensitivity. It is also important to provide educational opportunities and to provide modeling for trainees on how to learn about other cultures to provide the most effective intervention possible. For example, taking the time to ask your trainee about their culture, and how you might best provide supervision to them, is a great way to model how to provide the same sensitivity to clients. Assessing this throughout supervision, especially when assessing the effects of supervision, can assist the supervisor in being culturally competent too!

How do you address the underwhelming supervisee?

Unfortunately, there are situations that may arise during supervision where the trainee is not completing the activities and assignments you suggest. In this instance, we recommend you first speak to the trainee to determine the cause. If they are overwhelmed with work, school, and life commitments, can you look to slow down supervision and assignments to meet their needs? Or, perhaps they would want to adjust their other commitments to make more time and space for supervision. This would also be a good time to assess the effects of supervision and make adjustments as needed. It is also important to revisit the initial contract between the supervisor and trainee, to determine if both parties are meeting the agreed-upon terms. The contract is instrumental in outlining what both parties will adhere to during supervision. If the trainee is chronic in not meeting these terms, a discussion about revision of expectations, or if supervision should be paused, is warranted.

How do you track items completed on the task list?

There are a variety of ways to track task-list mastery, and it really doesn't matter what you choose, as long as you do it! It's so important to be sure that your trainee can demonstrate competence in each task list item, both verbally and in practice. Various

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strategies for tracking task list competence range from low- to high-tech. A very simple strategy is to print out the task list, and to highlight items as they are considered mastered. The ongoing list provides visual feedback and reinforcement of completion, as more and more items are highlighted. There are also higher-tech systems, such as using Excel spreadsheets, or interactive systems like the SupervisorABA program. Our program provides activities and readings for each task list item, as well as a tracking system for identifying task list items as mastered.

How do you structure supervision over time?

Supervision is a process of building skills and shaping behavior. Starting with an assessment of the trainee's current knowledge and skills is important for planning the structure of supervision. In general, if a trainee has no or little prior experience, you will start by addressing each item on the task list. As the trainee masters task list items (verbally and in practice), similar task list items can be grouped together to create smaller and then larger projects. For example, when a trainee has learned to use several different measurement systems, you might assign them to create and provide training to others for a specific type of data collection. When that task is mastered, you can then assign a more comprehensive project where they might develop a multi-component data collection system, train and monitor others to use it, and assess the validity and reliability of the system. During these larger projects, other task list items can be introduced at earlier levels. Over the course of supervision, it is also important to continue to revisit earlier mastered task list items to ensure maintenance. Taking a long view of the ultimate projects that you want your trainee to work on, and the goals of supervision, helps to identify the order of task list items to be addressed on the way to meeting those goals.

What do you do if your supervisee doesn't have basic knowledge from their coursework?

It is important to know what the trainee is covering in terms of coursework so you can support the applied application of this into their fieldwork. Each VCS covers the same content. If your trainee has not yet covered material in a course, yet it seems appropriate to address in supervision, you should plan to supplement their learning. If it is something the trainee has already covered, but perhaps it was not as in-depth as needed, the supervisor can assign readings, videos, etc., to supplement learning.

How do you fit in supervision when it becomes part of your job?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions! Supervisors should account for the time supervision takes during their workweek. Ensuring that you have volume capacity can be a challenge if you are required to supervise trainees. If the workload is becoming too much, discussing the needs and priorities of your work week with your own supervisor would be essential.

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How do you structure a supervision session?

We recommend spending time each session with the following activities:

Structure	Percentage of time
Review follow up from the last session	10-15%
Discuss current cases New programming Behavioral Skills Training Performance Feedback Ethics	40%
Designated task list items Activities and/or projects based on task list items Ethics	25%
Review course work	10-15%
Make task list and set goals Clients Next session task list items Readings/videos/activities Set observation/meeting time for next session	10%
Complete: Assessment of supervisee skills Summary of supervision activities Required paperwork (UDS, M-EVF, etc.)	>3%
Reinforce successes!	Unlimited!

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When conducting supervision as part of the work environment, how do you address task list items that are not part of this environment?

Ideally, the focus of supervision aligns with the trainee's work responsibilities, but this is not always the case. Many trainees do not have the opportunity to work on tasks that represent the entire task list in the course of their jobs. For example, a trainee who works in a setting with individuals who are mostly non-verbal might not have the chance to address task list items regarding the breadth of verbal operants. In cases like this, it is important to provide additional experiences outside of the work environment or to creatively embed these experiences into the work setting. To take the example of verbal operants, if the trainee will not have the opportunity to experience advanced concepts with their clients, you might arrange a learning opportunity where they explore those concepts in training other staff members. The incorporation of all task list items into supervision usually requires some flexibility on the part of the trainee, including a willingness to do some unpaid work outside of the workday, and on the part of the supervisor, to develop creative approaches to the learning experience.

How do you recommend responding to COVID-19 adaptations allowed by the BACB while ensuring effective and ethical supervision?

The BACB posted that beginning March 1, 2020, they temporarily waived the "observation with a client" sub-requirement for trainees who do not have access to clients and, thus, are only accruing unrestricted hours. The BACB also posted greater leniency around specific requirements that involve interactions with clients such as the number of trainee client observations and the minimum number of experience hours in a month. It is up to the supervisor (and trainee) to determine if the supervision should be paused or if the experience obtained during the COVID-19 pandemic is appropriate to acquire the needed skills to be a BCBA. It is important to document any exceptions to present to the BACB if requested.