

# Bios & Presentations

## 5th Annual Behavioral Science: Applications in Leadership & Supervision Conference

Friday, November 10, 2023, In-Person or Virtual Attendance, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

### INVITED SPEAKERS

#### Rob Holdsambeck, EdD, LCP, BCBA-D

Executive Director, Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies™



Dr. Holdsambeck is a licensed psychologist and BCBA-D with over 40 years of clinical experience delivering services to people with developmental disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum. He was one of the first people to become certified in behavior analysis (#0007). The company he founded at one point employed over 120 clinicians serving 1000+ individuals annually in California and Hawaii. Previously he served his country as a Captain in the Air Force and his community as a tenured professor of behavior analysis and human sexuality. He was selected as the 2010 distinguished colleague by the Chicago School of Professional Psychology's Department of Applied Behavior Analysis. In 2011, he received the outstanding service award from the Cambridge Center for his work in bringing evidence-based practices to California. Dr. Holdsambeck is an author and

frequent keynote speaker at national and state conferences. His most recent publications are the highly acclaimed books, *Behavior Science: Tales of Inspiration, Discovery, and Service* (Holdsambeck and Pennypacker Eds., 2017, Volumes I-3 and Omnibus). In addition to the activities mentioned above, Dr. Holdsambeck has served for over a decade as the Executive Director of the prestigious Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies™.

**8:45 - 9:45 am (Central)**

#### **“Circling Back and Zooming Out: Leadership’s Irritating but Useful Cliches”**

Among other things, leadership involves sharing a vision. For some leaders the inspiration for that vision comes from exposure to a life situation that was powerfully sad. Families in the mid-20th century rearing children with special needs, found the options were limited. The predominant medical model of the time had some of these folks committed to “state hospitals.” Many professionals felt that these children were sick, and they needed to be treated in a place that kept them safe. Many of us who visited or worked in such places saw a problem that needed solving. Some fortunate ones saw a science that could help. The cliches of “circling back” and “zooming out” may be tiresome in everyday conversation, in this talk, they will be used to emphasize both the “big picture” and our “historical lessons.”

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- List two reasons why some children with severe behavioral issues were committed to state hospitals in the mid-20th century.
- List one advantage and one disadvantage of reliance on binary data for complex decision making in organizations.
- Write a paragraph discussing the pros and potential cons strict adherence to only using “evidence-based practices.”

#### Patrick C. Friman, PhD, ABPP

Director, Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health



Dr. Patrick C. Friman received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. He is the current Vice President of Behavioral Health at Boys Town and a Clinical Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Nebraska School of Medicine. He was formerly on the faculties of Johns Hopkins University, University of Pennsylvania, and Creighton University Schools of Medicine. He was also formerly the Director of the Clinical Psychology Program at University of Nevada. He is a Fellow of the Association for Behavior Analysis International, in three divisions of the American Psychological Association, and of the American Board of Behavioral Psychology. He is the former Editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* and former President of the Association for Behavior Analysis International. He has published more than 200 scientific articles and chapters and three books. The majority of his scientific and clinical work is in Behavioral Pediatrics and Behavioral Medicine.

Dr. Friman’s work in behavioral pediatrics has concentrated on the gap between primary medical care for children on one

*continued*

**Patrick C. Friman, PhD, ABPP** *continued*

side, and referral-based clinical child psychological and psychiatric care, on the other. A secondary focus is on adolescent behavior and development. He also specializes in consultation regarding workplace issues such as motivation, dealing with difficult people, change, happiness and pathways to success.

**10:00 - 11:00 am (Central)**

**“Leadership: Turning Personal Verbal Behavior into Preferred Actions by Followers”**

Leadership is an expansive, amorphous concept with an extremely diverse literature. Each portion of literature puts forth a definition, often in peremptory fashion, yet also usually at odds with the other available definitions. One book on my shelf identifies vulnerability as the central attribute of a good leader. Another identifies virtue as the central attribute. And yet another identifies characteristics that are, if not antonyms, are at odds with emphasis on vulnerability and virtue (e.g., ruthlessness, strategic cruelty). In this talk I will supply my own perspective which simply stated is the ability to turn one’s verbal behavior into preferred action by followers. Obviously, this definition is simple, and it was also easy to compose. The hard part is how to make that happen. This talk will supply several suggestions whose purpose is to accomplish that goal.

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between assigned and attributed authority.
- Describe the ratio at the heart of all behavior, especially social behavior.
- List at least four nonmaterial reinforcers that all humans seek.

**Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Applied Disability Studies,  
Brock University



Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Disability Studies at Brock University. Kendra earned her Ph.D. in Psychology with specialization in Applied Behaviour Analysis from the University of Manitoba in

2011 and became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in 2013. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship in the Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health lab at York University before starting her academic career at Brock in 2014. Kendra has over 20 years of experience in various clinical and research settings supporting people with learning differences across the lifespan. With her trainees, Kendra conducts community-based research that focuses broadly on translating evidence-based behavioural training strategies to empower people with lived experience and their families/care providers, and professionals to improve independence and quality of life. Most recently Kendra and her team have been investigating Acceptance and Commitment Training

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**Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D** *continued*

(ACT) for improving quality of life for caregivers. Kendra also holds a part-time Scientist position in the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, ON. She is a past-president of the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis and was honoured to be the recipient of the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts “Jerry Shook Award” in 2021. She is a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) Council (soon to be the College of Psychologists and Behavior Analysts as of July 1, 2024). She serves in several other roles at CPO including being a member of the Behaviour Analysis Working Group, the Behaviour Analysis Professional Standards Committee, and the Registration Committee.

**11:15 am - 12:15 pm (Central)**

**“Behavior Analytic Trainees and Interdisciplinary Research: A Case for Operant Variability”**

*“...when variations are desired, societies might reward individuals for varying, not simply permit it.”  
(Neuringer, 2002, p. 700).*

Behavior analysis as a discipline values interprofessional collaboration (e.g., Slim & Reuter-Yuill, 2021; LaFrance et al., 2019), although it is unknown how many trainees receive supervision in interdisciplinary research and practice settings. I will discuss how research supervisors can set the occasion for behavior analytic trainees to become involved in interdisciplinary research, and how the resulting operant variability may promote effective practice and progress in research. I will share three examples of my collaborative research experiences within a large mental health teaching hospital: (1) an application of behavior skills training with facilitators of acceptance and commitment therapy; (2) a randomized controlled trial of behavior skills training to teach staff safety skills to mental health hospital staff; and (3) an ongoing evaluation of ProjectECHO for adults with intellectual disabilities. The reinforcing value of these relationships will be discussed in terms of trainee development and progress of the field.

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe examples of behavior analysts contributing to interdisciplinary research in a mental health teaching hospital.
- Describe a reinforcing outcome of interdisciplinary research for trainee development.
- Describe a reinforcing outcome of interdisciplinary research for the progress of the field.



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## Peter Sturmey, PhD

Professor, Department of Psychology, Queens College CUNY



Peter Sturmey is Professor of Psychology at The Graduate Center and the Department of Psychology, Queens College, City University of New York. He specialized in autism and other developmental disabilities, especially in the areas of applied behavior analysis, dual diagnosis, evidence-based practice, and staff and parent training. He gained his PhD at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom and subsequently taught at the University of the South West (Plymouth) and University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. He then worked for the Texas Department of Mental Retardation from 1990-2000 as Chief Psychologist, first at Abilene then at San Antonio State School during a federal class action lawsuit. There he supervised behavioral services and master's level psychologists providing behavior support plans for severe behavioral and psychiatric disorders in adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities and implemented large-scale active treatment and restraint reduction programs. Professor Sturmey has published 28 edited and authored books, over 225 peer reviewed papers, over 80 book chapters and made numerous presentations nationally and internationally, including recent presentations in Canada, Brazil and Italy. His research focuses on developing and evaluating effective and efficient ways of training caregivers using modeling and feedback to use applied behavior analysis with children and adults with autism and other disabilities.

**1:15 - 2:15 pm (Central)**

### **“Behavioral Skills Training to Teach Staff in Human Services: An Evidence-Based Practice, But What Good Is It?”**

Behavioral skills training (BST) is an intervention package to teach skills in a wide range of contexts. Over 100 experiments and multiple systematic reviews confirm that it is a robustly effective evidence-based practice (EBP). So, why do human services not rush to implement it? This presentation reviews the evidence for the effectiveness of BST. It then reviews the evidence that BST is not used too much, except in islands of excellence. The presentation goes on to explore the reasons for human services' failure to adopt this EBP in terms of lack of knowledge, lack of skill, competing contingencies, lack of clinical and administrative persistence. Finally, it explores one or two models used to disseminate EBPs that might be models for the dissemination of EBPs such as BST.

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe and understand the key features of BST.
- Describe and understand the current literature summarizing the effectiveness of BST.
- Describe and understand organizational factors that promote and inhibit the uptake and maintenance of BST.

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**Mary Jane Weiss, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA**

Dean of the Institute for Applied Behavioral Science & Director, PhD Program in Applied Behavior Analysis  
Endicott College



Mary Jane Weiss, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA is the Dean of the Institute for Applied Behavioral Science and is Director of the Ph.D. Program in ABA at Endicott College, where she has been for 11 years. She also works with the research and training teams at Melmark. She has worked in the field of ABA and Autism for over 35 years. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Rutgers University in 1990 and she became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in 2000. She previously worked for 16 years at the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center at Rutgers University. Her clinical and research interests center on defining best practice ABA techniques, integrating compassionate care and cultural responsiveness into ABA service delivery, exploring ways to enhance the ethical conduct of practitioners, training staff to be optimally effective at instruction and at collaboration, and maximizing family members' expertise and adaptation. She serves on the Scientific Council of the

Organization for Autism Research, is on the board of Association for Science in Autism Treatment, is a regular contributor to the ABA Ethics Hotline, is on the editorial board of Behavior Analysis in practice, and is an advisor to the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. She is a regular presenter at national and international conferences and is a frequent member of service committees for a variety of organizations.

**2:30 - 3:30 pm (Central)**

**“Elusive Targets of Behavior Analytic Supervision: Building Compassionate Care, Cultural Responsiveness and Interprofessional Collaboration Skillsets in Practitioners”**

Treating others with compassion, providing culturally responsive intervention, and collaborating respectfully with colleagues from allied professions are foundational values within ABA. Recent conversations in the field have highlighted deficits in these skills among practitioners. There have been calls to action for behavior analysts to develop skills in compassionate care and in cultural responsiveness, in particular. This presentation will focus on how these skills can be emphasized and taught in supervision and training. Effective methods for instructing trainees in components of these skillsets will be shared. Tools that can be used to assess trainee performance will also be shared, as well as data on the reliability, validity, and social validity of those tools. Issues related to the generalization and authenticity of trained skills will also be highlighted. The integration of soft skill training into supervision is important for the improvement of these skill sets in behavior analytic practitioners; this presentation will provide an array of methods that can be used for this purpose, along with data on their effectiveness.

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Learn multiple approaches to integrating compassionate care into teaching, training and supervision, including: conceptual analysis, the use of tools to evaluate the quality of interactions with stakeholders and direct service recipients, and the use of tools to guide more individualized and more humane, compassionate treatment.
- Learn about resources that can be used to guide trainees in understanding the expertise and contribution of allied professionals to multidisciplinary teams and to expand the repertoire of trainees to translate interventions suggested by other members of those teams.
- Be introduced to resources that focus on teaching trainees to provide services to diverse populations, to consider cultural variables in assessment and treatment, and to embed cultural responsiveness into all professional roles including supervision.

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**PANEL DISCUSSION: Moderator Thomas Zane, PhD, BCBA-D**

Director of Online Behavior Analysis Programs, Department of Applied Behavioral Science, University of Kansas



Dr. Thomas Zane is a Professor of Practice and the Director of Online Programs in Behavior Analysis in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science at the University of Kansas. Dr. Zane earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in psychology at Western Michigan University and his doctorate in Applied Behavior Analysis at West Virginia University. He has served as a Post-Doctorate Research Associate at the University of Massachusetts and as a Research Scientist at Johns Hopkins University Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Zane serves on the Executive Board of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies, the international organization that represents the field of behavior analysis. Dr. Zane has been past President of the Ethics Special Interest Group of the International Association for Behavior Analysis. His research interests include online learning, evidenced-based practice in autism, and the philosophy of science and radical behaviorism. He is particularly interested in why some behavior analysts drift from the code and the importance of adhering to choosing scientifically-supported treatments in clinical and educational work.

**3:45 - 4:45 pm (Central)**

**“Complexity of Supervision and Leadership: The Speakers Weigh In”**

The behavioral repertoire of supervision (such as in BACB supervision) are relatively straightforward and have been studied for years. Continuing research brings forth new dimensions, areas, and issues to explore within supervision, such as assent, compassion, and all of the other ‘soft skills.’ Leadership, however, is more vague. Behavioral science hasn’t dove as deep into this nebulous area, due to a lack of an operational definition that has social validity. The panel of speakers at the Kansas Conference will be asked to comment and speculate as to how our field can conceptualize leadership, both at the macro and micro levels. Furthermore, the speakers will field questions from audience members about organizations systems designed to promote effective and efficient supervision, and how to involve administrators and other upper-management personnel on how to establish a leadership style based on behavioral science, and how to set up conditions to maintain such systems over time.

Learning Objectives - At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Provide an operational definition of leadership from a behavioral science perspective.
- Orally state 3 statements made by one or more of the speakers with regards to their thoughts/conclusions/recommendations about behavioral supervision and leadership.
- Orally describe at least one actionable step s/he could take to promote a supervision model based on behavioral research.

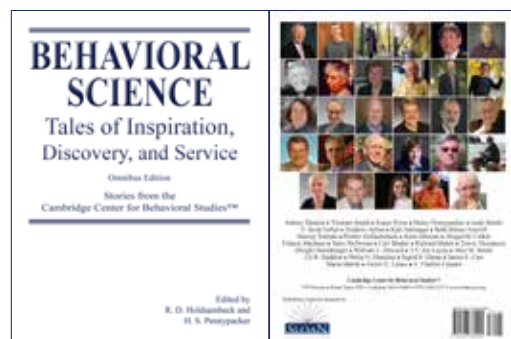
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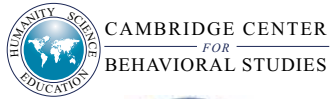


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Questions or concerns? Contact Rebekah Pavlik [pavlik@behavior.org](mailto:pavlik@behavior.org)

\*It is the attendee's responsibility to check with their State and Professional organization to confirm all CE offerings.