

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities' 18th Annual Autism Conference

Keynote: Redefining Consequence: A Team-Approach for Responding to Challenging Behaviors

Presenter: David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

Description: This keynote presentation examines why many conventional ways of responding to difficult behaviors demonstrated by students with autism contribute to the persistence of challenges. Practical evidence-based and team-focused strategies to decrease maladaptive behaviors, to increase adaptive alternative behaviors, and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention plans will be discussed. Attendees will consider whether their current means of responding to challenging behavior include the necessary elements to build skills and curtail future problematic behaviors.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Name at least 2 limitations of conventional school-based behavioral approaches when applied to students with autism and assess if these factors apply to their situation
2. List at least 2 key components for building adaptive alternative behaviors for individuals with autism describe methods to treat escape-maintained behavior via use of positive reinforcement
3. Describe the essential role of “team” in reducing challenging behaviors

Disclosure: David Meichenbaum Financial – Dr. Meichenbaum receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – He has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biography: Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in the diagnostic evaluation and treatment of developmental and mental health disorders. He is both the Clinical Director of the Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic and Director of Community Consulting and Clinical Services at The Summit Center in Amherst, NY. Dr. Meichenbaum is a highly sought after consultant for school districts, offering practical behavioral and educational strategies that focus on the social, emotional, adaptive, and behavioral development of students with autism spectrum and disruptive behavior disorders. For the past decade Dr. Meichenbaum has also been a primary presenter for the Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum graduated with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and he completed his clinical internship at Duke University Medical Center.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions:

1A: Use of Technology-Based Self-Monitoring Interventions for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Presenter: Stephanie Contrucci Kuhn, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Description: Recent studies examining the use of technology-based self-monitoring interventions have produced promising results. These applications (i.e., “apps” on mobile devices) have been demonstrated to both increase task completion and decrease challenging behavior, and have been shown to be effective in high school settings with students with disabilities. This session will provide an overview of technology-based self-monitoring interventions and outline factors to consider for implementation across settings.

Objectives:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the key features of a self-monitoring program
2. State importance of evaluating the effectiveness of self-monitoring interventions

3. List at least 2 barriers to using self-monitoring interventions

Disclosure: Stephanie Contrucci Kuhn Financial – Dr. Kuhn receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biography: Dr. Kuhn is a doctoral level behavioral analyst and licensed psychologist. She has almost 25 years of experience in the field of Behavioral Psychology. She currently holds a faculty appointment and teaches full time in the ABA program at Western Connecticut State University and provides clinical services as part of a private practice in Westport, CT. In the past, she had held faculty appointments at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and New York Medical College. Dr. Kuhn has authored and co-authored multiple publications in peer reviewed journals and has extensive clinical experience in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

1B: Executive Functioning Strategies to Keep Individuals with ASD Organized and On-Target

Presenter: Kristin S. Knapp-Ines, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Description: Executive functions are the cognitive tasks that allow us to plan, organize, initiate, attend to task, and regulate and monitor behavior. They are the key building blocks to learning! In this session, participants will learn how challenges with executive functions can impact academic achievement and social success. Participants will learn about how strategies to create supports to help teach executive functioning skills.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe how executive functions impact individuals with autism spectrum disorder
2. Name at least 2 interventions that target executive functioning difficulties
3. List at least 2 supports to use at home, in school, or in the community

Biography: Kristin Knapp-Ines, Ph.D., BCBA-D is a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of New York and a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D). Dr. Knapp-Ines currently serves as a clinical investigator at the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University at Albany, SUNY. In her role as a clinical investigator, she conducts trainings, presentations and workshops covering a large array of topics related to autism. As part of CARD's training clinic, Dr. Knapp-Ines conducts comprehensive psychological assessments for children and adults. In her role as an Adjunct Professor, she coordinates and teaches the Certificate of Graduate Studies in Autism Spectrum Disorders at UAlbany.

Disclosure:

Kristin Knapp-Ines Financial – Dr. Knapp-Ines has a financial relationship with the Center for Autism/Research Foundation for SUNY – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

1C: I Hate to Write! Rescuing our Reluctant Writers – Strategies for Elementary Students

Presenters: Cheryl Boucher, MS, OTR and Kathy Oehler, MS, CCC-SLP

Description: "I hate to write!" How often have we felt the frustration of reluctant writers as they face yet another writing task! Writing in today's classroom affects both academic achievement and behavior. In order to meet academic standards in ANY subject, students must be able to demonstrate proficiency through written expression. Too often the language, organization, motor, and sensory demands of writing overwhelm reluctant writers, including many students w autism. This session will highlight successful strategies for engaging elementary-age students to become successful writers.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. List at least 2 skill areas that are required for functional writing skills and list why reluctant writers may be challenged in these areas
2. Illustrate how behavior difficulties may be linked to writing challenges for elementary students
3. Name at least 2 meaningful strategies related to the language, organization, motor and sensory processing struggles for students with writing challenges

Disclosure:

Cheryl Boucher Financial – Ms. Boucher receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Kathy Oehler Financial – Ms. Oehler receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. She has a financial relationship with AAPC Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biographies: Cheryl Boucher is an Occupational Therapist with more than 25 years of experience. She also earned a Master’s degree in special education. Cheryl has worked as an OT for large urban and rural school corporations. She also is in demand as a speaker and presenter, specializing in strategies to support students with sensory, motor and executive functioning challenges. Cheryl is co-author of ‘Low Cost / No Cost Sensory Strategies for the Classroom’, published by Autism / Asperger Digest. Along with Kathy Oehler, Cheryl is author of *I Hate to Write! Tips for Helping Kids with ASD and Related Disorders Increase Achievement, Meet Academic Standards, and Become Happy, Successful Writers.*

Kathy Oehler was originally trained as a speech-language pathologist, and has worked with individuals with autism for over 20 years. Kathy currently works as an independent Autism Consultant, traveling around the country presenting workshops, seminars, and trainings on a variety of topics related to meeting the educational needs of kids with ASD and related disorders. Kathy has served on the Advisory Board of Autism Asperger Digest and is author of the article “Please Don’t Make Me Write!” Along with Cheryl Boucher, Kathy is the author of *I Hate to Write! Tips for Helping Kids with ASD and Related Disorders Increase Achievement, Meet Academic Standards, and Become Happy, Successful Writers.*

1D: Creating Individualized, Data-Based, and Effective IEPs for Students with ASD

Presenters: Kylee Formento, MA, BCBA; Sharon Onda, MEd, BCBA; Erin Way, MS, BCBA

Description: Based on IDEA, a comprehensive IEP process must be established to ensure appropriate and attainable goals are being set for each student. This session will outline a process to determine appropriate annual goals, choose functional targets, consistently monitor progress, and make data-based program modifications to best meet the needs of individual students with autism.

Objectives:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Define backward design and describe how it should be used to determine appropriate annual goals
2. List at least 2 assessments involving direct observation of students completing skills across various domains
3. Describe a process for consistent data monitoring as well as strategies to guide program modification to ensure adequate progress toward goals

Disclosure:

Financial - Kylee Formento, Sharon Onda, and Erin Way: All receive an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – All have a relevant financial relationship with Melmark.

Biographies: Kylee Formento is an Assistant Director at the Melmark School. She received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from American University and a Master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Rowan University. Kylee when first coming to Melmark worked as an ABA Counselor in the Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) for two years, Behavior Analyst intern for six months, Research & Clinical Specialist in the Professional Development Department for one year and a Behavior Analyst in the school program for three years prior to becoming an Assistant Director.

Sharon Onda joined the Melmark School in 2007 while completing her bachelor's degree in Applied Psychology from Penn State University. Post-graduation, Sharon continued at the Melmark School as an ABA Counselor while completing her Masters of Education from University of Massachusetts. She began working as a Behavior Support Specialist with Melmark in 2009. She completed her Masters of Education and became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in 2012. Sharon began working as a Behavior Analyst at Melmark in 2012. She is Assistant Director of Education for the Melmark School.

Erin Way is the Director of Educational Services at the Melmark School. She received her Bachelor's degree from Worcester State University in psychology with a concentration in developmental processes in 2008. She obtained her Master's degree from Northeastern University in Behavior Analysis in 2011, and is Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She is currently enrolled in the EdD program for Educational Leadership at Immaculata University. Her areas of expertise include verbal behavior programming in a classroom setting, toilet training individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, and using ABA in the creation and implementation of IEPs. Before joining Melmark, Erin served as a direct care professional in a residential program, a home based teacher for early intervention services, and a research assistant and classroom supervisor at a school for children with developmental disabilities.

2A: Behavioral Treatment Components Related to Reinforcement Strategies in the Classroom

Presenter: Stephanie Contrucci Kuhn, Ph.D., BCBA

Description: Positive reinforcement is important to learning programs. However, there are concerns that using reinforcement may lead to a student depending on a reinforcer or require ever increasing amounts of reinforcement to engage in appropriate behavior in the classroom. Strategies such as delayed ("wait") or denied access ("accepting or tolerating no") to reinforcement are effective ways to systematically increase tolerance to a reduced reinforcement schedule. This session will provide an overview of relevant research in this area and will provide information on effective strategies to implement in the classroom.

Objectives:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the difference between delayed and denied reinforcement
2. List at least 2 evidence-based strategies used to implement a delay or denial procedure
3. Name at least 2 factors to consider when choosing to implement a delay to reinforcement or denial of reinforcement program

Disclosure:

Stephanie Contrucci Kuhn Financial – Dr. Kuhn receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biography: Stephanie Contrucci Kuhn is a doctoral level behavioral analyst and licensed psychologist. She has almost 25 years of experience in the field of Behavioral Psychology. She currently holds a faculty appointment and teaches full time in the ABA program at Western Connecticut State University and provides clinical services as part of a private practice in Westport, CT. In the past, she had held faculty appointments at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and New York Medical College. Dr. Kuhn has authored and co-authored multiple

publications in peer reviewed journals and has extensive clinical experience in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

2B: Using Practical Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Students with ASD in the Classroom

Presenter: Kari Sassu, Ph.D.

Description: This session will review the underlying causes of commonly encountered classroom challenges for students with autism. Practical, effective strategies to ameliorate difficulties that interfere with learning will be highlighted.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the underlying aspects of ASD that may give rise to challenges within the classroom
2. List at least 2 effective strategies for addressing classroom challenges in students with ASD
3. Illustrate the connection between classroom challenges and strategies that are likely to ameliorate these difficulties

Disclosure:

Kari Sassu Financial – Dr. Sassu receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biographies: Kari Sassu, Ph.D., NCSP, is the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders and an Associate Professor at Southern Connecticut State University. In this role, she has contributed to the creation of workshops and training modules for school-based personnel who work with students with ASDs. Dr. Sassu has worked directly with individuals with ASDs in public schools and private settings, conducting assessments, developing individualized plans, and providing supports that capitalize on individual strengths. She is a licensed psychologist, a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) and holds certifications as both a school psychologist and a school administrator in the state of Connecticut. Dr. Sassu is the mother of three children, one of whom has an ASD.

2C: I Hate to Write! Rescuing our Reluctant Writers – Strategies for Secondary Students

Presenters: Cheryl Boucher, MS, OTR and Kathy Oehler, MS, CCC-SLP

Description: "He just won't do his work!" This is a frequent comment from both teachers and parents as they work with middle and high school students who are hesitant to write. When a student can't, or won't, write it becomes difficult to measure proficiency in ANY subject area. Refusal to write affects academic achievement, grades, credits, and classroom behavior. What looks like refusal to do work may actually be difficulty with the writing process. This session will highlight successful strategies for engaging secondary students to become successful writers.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Name multiple skill areas that are required for functional writing skills and summarize why reluctant writers may be challenged in these areas
2. Name at least 2 behavior difficulties may be linked to writing challenges for secondary students
3. List at least 2 meaningful strategies related to the language, organization, motor and sensory processing struggles for students with writing challenges

Disclosure:

Cheryl Boucher Financial – Ms. Boucher receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Kathy Oehler Financial – Ms. Oehler receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. She has a financial relationship with AAPC Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Nonfinancial – She has no relevant nonfinancial disclosures.

Biographies: Cheryl Boucher is an Occupational Therapist with more than 25 years of experience. She also earned a Master’s degree in special education. Cheryl has worked as an OT for large urban and rural school corporations. She also is in demand as a speaker and presenter, specializing in strategies to support students with sensory, motor and executive functioning challenges. Cheryl is co-author of ‘Low Cost / No Cost Sensory Strategies for the Classroom’, published by Autism / Asperger Digest. Along with Kathy Oehler, Cheryl is author of *I Hate to Write! Tips for Helping Kids with ASD and Related Disorders Increase Achievement, Meet Academic Standards, and Become Happy, Successful Writers*.

Kathy Oehler was originally trained as a speech-language pathologist, and has worked with individuals with autism for over 20 years. Kathy currently works as an independent Autism Consultant, traveling around the country presenting workshops, seminars, and trainings on a variety of topics related to meeting the educational needs of kids with ASD and related disorders. Kathy has served on the Advisory Board of Autism Asperger Digest and is author of the article “Please Don’t Make Me Write!” Along with Cheryl Boucher, Kathy is the author of *I Hate to Write! Tips for Helping Kids with ASD and Related Disorders Increase Achievement, Meet Academic Standards, and Become Happy, Successful Writers*.

2D: Sexual Health Education for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Presenter: Rocky Bonsal, LCSW-R

Description: Navigating the complex social relationships of adolescence and young adulthood may be challenging for individuals with ASD. The sexuality education needs of individuals with autism are unique and may not be adequately addressed by existing programs. This presentation will provide an overview of sexual health education, including the importance of communicating medically accurate information. Resources for working with school-aged students and young adults will be highlighted.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Following participation in this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Name at least 2 reasons to teach medically accurate sexual health information
2. List at least 2 resources for supporting school-aged students and young adults
3. Describe essential components of an effective sexual health education program

Disclosure: Rocky Bonsal Financial – Mr. Bonsal receives an honoraria from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for presenting at the 18th Annual Autism Conference. Nonfinancial – He has a financial relationship with Schenectady ARC/Ridge Health Services.

Biography: Rocky Bonsal has been a social worker for people with developmental disabilities for over twenty years. While studying for his MSW at New York University, Rocky concentrated on the topics of mental health and sexuality. At Schenectady ARC, where he is the Senior Social Worker, Rocky supervises the Social Work Department and teaches staff training on sexuality. He is the administrator for the nine-week class, the Sexual Health Education (SHE) Program, which he and the Social Work Department developed as an amalgam of several existing sexual health curriculums. The SHE Program has been running since 2005.