

Rhode Island Association for Behavior Analysis Conference

March 7th, 2026

Salve Regina University (O'Hare Academic Center)

2026 Program Schedule

8:00am: Registration Begins

9:00am-9:10am: Welcome Address

9:10am - 10:00am: Automatic Reinforcement Revisited: An Evidence-Based Treatment Progression

Automatically reinforced behavior presents unique challenges because it persists in the absence of socially mediated consequences and is often resistant to standard intervention approaches. This presentation outlines an evidence-based progression for assessing and treating automatically reinforced behavior, integrating findings from several empirical studies. Topics include using functional analysis to clarify response-reinforcer relations, identifying effective competing stimuli through preference and competition assessments, selecting and sequencing reinforcement-based intervention components, and determining when supplemental response-reduction procedures may be appropriate when reinforcement alone is insufficient. Emphasis will be placed on efficiency, clinical feasibility, and the individualized decision-making steps that guide movement from one intervention strategy to the next.

Presented by Eileen Roscoe, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA



Dr. Eileen Roscoe received her PhD in Behavior Analysis from the University of Florida under the mentorship of Dr. Brian Iwata. She currently serves as the Director of Behavior Analytic Research at the New England Center for Children in Massachusetts. She teaches courses on behavioral assessment and intervention and supervises master's and doctoral research for the Applied Behavior Analysis program at Western New England University. Her research has addressed preference and reinforcer assessments, refinements to functional analysis methodology, and interventions for automatically reinforced problem behavior, and more recently has focused on increasing engagement in leisure and physical activities. She has served as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA) and as a board member for the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, and she currently serves on the editorial boards for JABA and Behavioral Interventions. She was the recipient of the B.F. Skinner Young Researcher Award from Division 25 of the American Psychological Association.

10:10-11:00am: Concept Analyses of Intrusive and Restrictive Procedures

At times, behavior analysts include intrusive and restrictive procedures in a treatment plan, especially when an individual engages in challenging behavior that puts themselves or others at risk. Such procedures must be used with caution and infrequently. The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (Behavior Analysts Certification Board, 2020) states that behavior analysts should use the least restrictive treatment necessary and provides specific criteria behavior analysts should consider when implementing intrusive and restrictive procedures (Code 2.15). While the definitions of these procedures may seem straightforward, they are not. In fact, few definitions of these procedures can be found in the literature, and the ones that can be found are either very narrow or very broad and ambiguous. This is problematic, because behavior analysts may not recognize that the procedures they are recommending could be characterized as restrictive and intrusive, which may result in behavior analysts being unable to identify strategies as intrusive or restrictive. We conducted concept analyses and developed proposed definitions of intrusive/restrictive procedures. We surveyed general behavior analysts and expert doctoral-level behavior analysts, gauging opinions on the proposed attributes. Then, we convened an expert panel to review and discuss the results of the survey to solidify critical and variable attributes and develop definitions of intrusive/restrictive procedures. One critical attribute and four variable attributes of intrusive/restrictive procedures were identified. However, the expert panel did not reach consensus on definitions. We completed a concept analyses and proposed definitions of intrusive/restrictive procedures using the information obtained from the survey and expert panel. In this presentation, I will review this process, our findings, and our proposed definitions.

Speaker: Stephanie Peterson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA



Stephanie M. Peterson, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Michigan University. She also serves as the executive director of the Western Michigan University Kalamazoo Autism Center. Her research interests include choice making in the treatment of problem behavior, functional communication training, reinforcement-based interventions for children with problem behavior, concurrent schedules of reinforcement in the treatment of severe problem behavior, functional analysis of problem behavior and teleconsultation. She has served on a variety of editorial boards, including the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis and Behavior Analysis in Practice, and recently rotated off as the editor in chief of Behavior Analysis in Practice. She currently serves on the publications board for the Association for Behavior Analysis International, which oversees the seven journals operated by the association. She served two three-year terms on the board of directors for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. For nearly 10 years, she has served and continues to serve as a subject matter expert for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, most frequently serving on the disciplinary appeals committee. In the recent past, she was appointed by the governor of Michigan to the Michigan Board of Behavior Analysts.

11:10am-12:00pm: On the Death of Parsimony in Behavior Science

There is no governing body that has ever formally declared the foundational principles of science. But those who have published on the topic tend to include overlap with respect to only a few such principles: falsifiability, replicability, sufficiency, and parsimony. Recently, parsimony has begun to vanish from such lists. This should be both appalling and unsurprising given the corresponding rise in mentalistic accounts – within our science – of behavioral phenomena. Although often misunderstood, parsimony has long separated science from pseudoscience. I will argue – with specific examples from within behavior science – that if we continue to ignore the death of parsimony, we are welcoming the end for a science of behavior.

Presented by Matthew Locey, Ph.D.



Matthew Locey is the director of the behavioral neuroscience program at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. He earned his PhD from the University of Florida in 2008 where he specialized in behavioral pharmacology and the experimental analysis of behavior – in rats, pigeons, and people. He was a postdoctoral research associate in behavioral economics at Stony Brook University and has served as a psychology faculty member at four different institutions – including 10 years as part of the Behavior Analysis program at the University of Nevada, Reno. Dr. Locey has published conceptual and basic research in 12 different journals and served on the editorial boards of six. Now in Virginia, his research program focuses on examining the basic behavioral and biological processes underlying seemingly irrational (e.g., impulsive, risky, or altruistic) choices – in both humans and rats.

2026 Program Schedule - Cont.

12:00pm-2:00pm: Lunch and Poster Session

2:00pm-2:50pm: Discriminated Social Operants on the Table(top)

The discriminated operant is a class of responses all members of which potentially can produce a reinforcer or punisher in the presence of one stimulus but not in the presence of another. It has been investigated almost exclusively with individual organisms responding independently of the influence of others (except the experimenter). Yet there is nothing in its definition that precludes its expansion to incorporate responses from multiple organisms. Using simple tabletop apparatuses and, as a guide, two classic analyses of animal social behavior, the research described in this presentation was designed to examine discriminated operants defined across rather than within individual organisms. In one project, a replication of an early experiment on rat cooperation, a pair of pigeons alternated roles across trials between eating and standing on a platform to allow its partner to eat. Another project was a replication of an old report of one pigeon shaping standing on a platform by another. In both projects, the behavior of each pigeon co-actor was a discriminative stimulus controlling the behavior of its partner. These examples of intraspecies discriminated operants invited the question of interspecies discriminated operants. In a final project, therefore, the responses of rat and pigeon co-actors served as discriminative stimuli controlling the operant responses of the other subject. The results of these projects bear on what constitutes both operant behavior and operant social behavior, as well as having implications for application and providing a valuable, hands-on, learning experience for both students and their mentors.

Presented by Andy Lattal, Ph.D.



Andy Lattal is Centennial Professor of Psychology at West Virginia University, where he has taught in the behavior analysis program and mentored 48 doctoral students since 1972. Andy's research, covering a variety of topics across the discipline's spectrum, has appeared in numerous research articles, chapters, and edited volumes. Among the latter is the 1992 issue of the American Psychologist memorializing B. F. Skinner. He is a former Editor of JEAB and Associate Editor of JABA. He also has received the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis's awards for Distinguished Service to Behavior Analysis and for the International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis. Apropos to the latter, he has been a Fulbright Fellow in France and twice a Fellow of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science.

3:00pm-3:50pm: Rigorous Yet Realistic: Measurement Strategies for Procedural Fidelity

Procedural fidelity is essential for ethical and effective service delivery, yet it is often minimized or treated as a paperwork requirement rather than a meaningful part of service delivery. This minimization may be due to a lack of resources about how to develop and deploy rigorous yet realistic fidelity measures. In this presentation, I will describe challenges to measuring fidelity and solutions through practical, research-informed strategies for real-world settings where time and resources are often limited. Attendees will learn how to design sensitive and feasible fidelity measurement systems, distinguish between global and component-level fidelity, and apply fidelity data to improve both implementation quality and client outcomes. I will share examples of fidelity scoring methods, tools for assessing fidelity across repeated sessions, and ways to embed fidelity supports into training and supervision. Ultimately, the goal is to promote fidelity practices that are both rigorous and realistic.

Presented by Claire St. Peter, Ph.D., BCBA-D



Dr. Claire St. Peter is a behavior analyst and educator whose work focuses on procedural fidelity, behavioral measurement, and extinction processes. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis from the University of Florida and is currently the Eberly Family Professor for Outstanding Public Service and Chair of the Department of Psychology at West Virginia University. Dr. St. Peter has authored over 70 publications and secured over \$2.5 million in funding to support research improving services for children and families. She has served in leadership roles across the field and on editorial boards for major journals. Her work bridges translational and applied behavior analysis, with a focus on behavioral principles and high-quality measurement.

4:00pm-4:50pm: Panel: Mentoring the Next Generation of Behavior Analysts

Claire St. Peter, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Andy Lattal, Ph.D., Matthew Locey, Ph.D., Stephanie Peterson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Eileen Roscoe, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA

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https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehv3y8hXwDoTqK34s98Jlk4sLD_beKuglH-819CXXYi2weAg/viewform

Poster submissions are due by February 7th, 2026.

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