EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

CERTIFIED PROGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR ANALYST-AUTISM PROFESSIONAL™

Exam Content

The development of valid assessments begins with an analysis of practice which identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed for competent job performance. Experts in the field of ABA worked to identify these essential KSAs and developed a comprehensive list of learning objectives (LOs) based on these KSAs. The LOs are organized into ten domains and are the target content which will be evaluated in each of the assessments. The process undertaken to develop the examination blueprint and all assessments sought to bring in perspectives from practitioners, trainers, and educators who represent a diverse range of practice settings and geographical locations.

The ten domains and the percentage of questions allocated to each area that are included in the examination are as follows:

Domain	Percentage of Assessment
1: Foundational knowledge of autism spectrum disorder and intervention	8 %
2: Principles, concepts, and history of behaviorism	8 %
3: Respondent conditioning - theory and application	7 %
4: Contingency-focused responsiveness to client and treatment progress	10 %
5: Dynamic application of basic behavioral tools	12 %
6: Progressive teaching procedures	14 %
7: Curriculum across the life-span	7 %
8: Behavior intervention planning	10 %
9: Treatment design and decision-making	12 %
10: Ethical behavior, clinical sensitivity skills, training, supervision, collaboration, and consultation	12 %
	100 %

DOMAIN 1:
FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND INTERVENTION

In this domain, the candidate will be assessed on concepts related to foundational knowledge of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and various interventions that are commonly implemented for individuals diagnosed with ASD. Content areas in this domain include:

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)

- The current DSM-5 diagnosis of ASD including the development, purpose, and severity levels
- ASD compared to typical development and other developmental disabilities
- Comorbidity rates of ASD and other disorders
- Diagnostic and behavioral differences between boys and girls diagnosed with ASD
- Differences between DSM-4R and DSM-5 as it pertains to a diagnosis of ASD

Etiology

- Evidence-based and non-evidence theories of ASD etiology
- Claims about vaccines related to ASD

Assessments

- Type, content, appropriate use, and application of results of assessments/screening tools that pertain to individuals diagnosed with ASD

Impact of a Diagnosis of Autism on Parents and Siblings

- Common challenges of parents/caregivers and siblings of an individual diagnosed with ASD

Seminal Studies in Autism

- Foundational literature pertaining to the development of the autism diagnosis and behavioral intervention for individuals diagnosed with ASD

DOMAIN 2:
PRINCIPLES, CONCEPTS, AND HISTORY OF BEHAVIORISM

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on basic concepts of applied behavior analysis (ABA), the foundations of behaviorism and ABA, and the evolution of the discipline of ABA. Content areas in this domain include:

Basic Concepts

- The current seven dimensions of ABA
- Social and experimental validity
- ABA compared to other fields in psychology
- The differences between science, pseudoscience, and anti-science

Foundations of Behaviorism

- Seminal research and major contributions of the founders of behaviorism

Foundations of Applied Behavior Analysis

- Seminal research and major contributions of the founders of ABA

Evolution of the Discipline

- Important historical events within the field of ABA and ASD (e.g., creation of JABA) and how they have shaped the current field of ABA

DOMAIN 3:
RESPONDENT CONDITIONING - THEORY AND APPLICATION

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on concepts related to respondent conditioning and respondent-based procedures that are implemented with individuals diagnosed with ASD. Content areas in this domain include:

Basic Concepts

- Critical components of respondent conditioning
- Distinction between operant and respondent behavior
- Identification of appropriate respondent procedures based on environmental events

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Acquisition and Extinction

- Components of respondent acquisition and extinction and relevant research

Generalization

- Essential characteristics of respondent generalization

Exposure

- Components of respondent exposure and relevant research
- Various respondent exposure procedures – similarities, differences, and application of results

Reciprocal Inhibition

- Components of reciprocal inhibition procedures and relevant research
- Various reciprocal inhibition procedures – similarities, differences, and application
- Advantages and disadvantages of reciprocal inhibition procedures

DOMAIN 4:
CONTINGENCY-FOCUSED RESPONSIVENESS TO CLIENT AND TREATMENT PROGRESS

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on concepts related to reinforcement, punishment, and contingency based systems. Content areas in this domain include:

Basic Concepts

- Research on basic concepts and principles of reinforcement
- General guidelines for providing reinforcement
- Considerations in the use of reinforcement including variables that alter the effects
- Identification of ways to thin schedules of reinforcement

Conditioning

- Components for conditioning stimuli to function as reinforcers
- Behavior analytic research on conditioning reinforcers
- Evaluation of the application of conditioning reinforcers
- Importance of conditioning stimuli to function as reinforcers

Identifying Reinforcers

- Identification of variables that are critical to reinforcer identification
- Knowledge of behavior analytic research on procedures to identify reinforcers
- Evaluation of the application of reinforcer identification
- Similarities and differences between progressive and standard approaches to identifying reinforcers

Using Reinforcement Differentially

- Behavior analytic research procedures regarding the use of differential reinforcement
- Rationales and advantages to using differential reinforcement
- Similarities and differences between progressive and standard approaches to using reinforcement differentially

Schedules of Reinforcement

- Identification and implementation of various reinforcement schedules
- Knowledge of research on schedules of reinforcement
- Advantages and disadvantages of various schedules of reinforcement
- Behavioral patterns associated with each schedule of reinforcement

Punishment

- Components and evaluation of the implementation of punishment procedures
- Behavior analytic research on punishment
- Identification of the range of potential punishers
- Aversive controversy associated with punishment
- Evaluation of the implementation of ethical and effective punishment procedures – minimizing potential negative side effects

Contingency Systems

- Various contingency systems and their components
- Behavior analytic research on contingency systems
- Evaluation of the application of various contingency systems
- Observation and identification of contingency systems in use
- Similarities and differences between progressive and conventional approaches to contingency systems

DOMAIN 5:
DYNAMIC APPLICATION OF BASIC BEHAVIORAL TOOLS

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on some of the basic behavioral tools required to teach skills to individuals diagnosed with ASD. Content areas in this domain include:

Basic Concepts/General Teaching

- Evaluation of intervention for maximized number of learning opportunities
- Analysis of the application of pacing during teaching

Prompting and Flexible Prompt Fading

- Considerations for choosing prompting versus shaping
- Behavior analytic research on prompting
- Components of various prompting systems, prompt types, and the associated advantages and disadvantages
- Strengths and limitations of various prompting systems
- Observation and identification of the prompting system in use
- Issues regarding prompt dependency and how to decrease prompt dependency
- Evaluation of the application of flexible prompt fading
- Similarities and differences between conventional approaches to prompting and flexible prompt fading

Shaping

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on shaping
- Similarities and differences between progressive and standard approaches to shaping
- Evaluation of the application of a progressive approach to shaping

Chaining Procedures

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on chaining procedures
- Evaluation of the application of various chaining procedures
- Selection of best chaining procedure to implement based on contextual variables

Task Analysis

- Key components and application of task analyses

DOMAIN 6:
PROGRESSIVE TEACHING PROCEDURES

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on concepts related to procedures to teach individuals diagnosed with ASD a variety of skills. Content areas in this domain include:

Discrete Trial Teaching

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on discrete trial teaching
- Evaluation of the application of progressive discrete trial teaching and various data collection systems
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to discrete trial teaching
- Assessment of potential future skill targets based on environmental variables

Incidental Teaching

- Key components, behavior analytic research, and application of incidental teaching
- Advantages and limitations of incidental teaching and other naturalistic interventions

Modeling and Rehearsal

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on teaching procedures that use modeling and rehearsal
- Evaluation of the application of procedures using modeling and rehearsal including advantages and limitations
- Comparison of different teaching procedures using modeling and rehearsal

Group Instruction

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on group instruction
- Evaluation of the implementation of group instruction
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to group teaching procedures
- Roles and responsibilities of interventionists in group instruction

Observational Learning

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on teaching procedures using observational learning
- Evaluation of the application of observational learning procedures
- Comparison of different observational learning procedures

DOMAIN 7:
CURRICULUM ACROSS THE LIFE-SPAN

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on meaningful curriculum taught to individuals diagnosed with ASD across the life-span. Content areas in this domain include:

Learning How to Learn

- Identification of key skills and molar and molecular goals of learning how to learn programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness pertaining to learning how to learn behaviors
- Ways to facilitate generalization for learning how to learn behaviors (e.g., sitting and waiting)

Academic

- Identification of molar and molecular goals for academic programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness as it pertains to academic related skills
- Ways to facilitate generalization for academic behaviors (e.g., writing and math)

Language

- Identification of key components, scope, sequence, and goals of language acquisition programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness as it pertains to language related skills
- Ways to facilitate generalization for language skills

Adaptive Behavior and Independent Living

- Identification of key components, scope, sequence, and goals of self-help programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness related to adaptive behavior
- Ways to facilitate generalization for adaptive behaviors (e.g., washing and bathing)

Social Competence

- Identification of key components, scope, sequence, and goals of social skills programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness related to social behaviors
- Ways to facilitate generalization for social behaviors

Play, Recreation, and Leisure

- Identification of key components, scope, sequence and goals of play, recreation, and leisure programming
- Identification of a client's current strengths and weakness related to play, recreation, and leisure programming
- Ways to facilitate generalization for play, recreation, and leisure skills

Vocational Skills

- Identification of key components, scope, sequence and goals of vocational skills programming
- Identification of client's current strengths and weakness related to vocational skills
- Identification of ways to facilitate generalization for vocational skills

DOMAIN 8:
BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANNING

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on ways to identify the cause(s) of aberrant behavior and to effectively reduce aberrant behavior. Content areas in this domain include:

Basic Concepts of Behavior Management

- Identification of various proactive and reactive approaches to managing problem behavior
- Identification and selection of the least restrictive and most effective interventions
- Identifying when and under what conditions a restrictive programming option is appropriate

Data

- Strengths and limitations of, and behavior analytic research on various data collection procedures
- Evaluation of the application of various data collection procedures
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to data collection

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Functional Relations

- Identification of operant and respondent behaviors
- Components of, and approaches for conducting a functional analysis
- Behavior analytic research on FBA and functional analysis
- Evaluation of the application of components of an FBA
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to FBA and functional analysis
- Advantages and limitations of an FBA and functional analysis

Functional Replacement Skills

- Selection of skills to teach based on function and goals
- Behavior analytic research on teaching functional replacement skills
- Evaluation of teaching functional replacement skills

Tolerance Development

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on tolerance development procedures
- Evaluation of the application of tolerance development procedures
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to tolerance development

Antecedent-based Procedures

- Types of, and behavior analytic research on antecedent based procedures
- Evaluation of the implementation of antecedent based procedures

Differential Reinforcement Procedures

- Key components of, and behavior analytic research on differential reinforcement procedures
- Evaluation of the implementation of differential reinforcement procedures
- Comparison of differential reinforcement procedures and the conditions under which they should be implemented

Extinction

- Components, advantages, and limitations of extinction procedures
- Behavior analytic research on extinction
- Evaluation of the implementation extinction procedures
- Evaluation of the conditions under which extinction procedures should be implemented

Response Cost

- Components, advantages, and limitations of response cost
- Behavior analytic research on response cost
- Evaluation of the implementation of response cost
- Evaluation of the conditions under which response cost procedures should be implemented

Time-In and Time-Out

- Components of, and behavior analytic research on time-in and time-out procedures
- Evaluation of the implementation of time in and time out procedures
- Similarities and differences in progressive and standard approaches to time-in and time-out
- Evaluation of the conditions under which time-in and time-out procedures should be implemented

DOMAIN 9:
TREATMENT DESIGN AND DECISION-MAKING

In this domain, the candidate will be evaluated on components regarding quality and progressive intervention. Content areas in this domain include:

Clinical Judgment

- Components of, and behavior analytic research on a progressive approach to ABA
- Progressive and standard approaches to ABA and the role of clinical judgment
- Components of clinical judgment
- Evaluation of rationales for intervention/program changes

Intervention Evaluation

- Sources to identify quality of evidence for interventions
- Distinguishing between evidence-based, empirically-supported, science, pseudoscience, and anti-science interventions
- How best to proceed when non-evidence-based procedures are implemented

Quality Teaching

- Key components of a successful teaching session, including preparation
- Evaluation of teaching sessions

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Socially Valid Outcomes

- Characteristics of socially valid outcomes
- Assessment of outcomes for social validity

DOMAIN 10:

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR, CLINICAL SENSITIVITY SKILLS, TRAINING, SUPERVISION, COLLABORATION, AND CONSULTATION

In this domain the candidate will be evaluated on ways to ensure professional behavior. Content areas in this domain include:

Interpersonal Skills, Cultural, and Professional Competence

- Definitions of cultural diversity, clinical responsivity, and clinical sensitivity
- Working sensitively and professionally with others
- Identification of resistance and responding differentially
- Components of cultural background that may affect intervention
- Analysis of the occurrence and non-occurrence of cultural sensitivity
- Components of successful collaboration
- Evaluation of professional collaboration

Training and Supervision of Supervisees

- Components of quality staff training
- Similarities and differences in various models of staff training
- Contextual and implementer variables that may affect training
- Evaluation of staff training

Parent Support

- Identification of parental goals and major roles of family members
- Research on parent training
- Components of parent support and different parent support models
- Evaluation of parent training
- Components of professional behavior

Case Management

• Components of successful case management

• Appropriateness of individualized teaching goals

School and Agencies

• Problems that may arise in schools and school districts

• Key elements to successfully working in school districts

• Key components/attributes of quality classrooms, teachers, and districts

• Challenges that school districts, agencies, schools, classrooms, and teachers face as they relate to intervention

Ethics

• Progressive Behavior Analyst Autism Council™ Code of Ethics for Certified Progressive Behavior Analyst-Autism Professionals™

• Evaluation of appropriate signal detection as related to ethical contexts

• Common ethical errors and appropriate remedies