



BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS SUPPORTING AUTISM

More than 1 in 100 people are estimated to be on the autism spectrum, with an estimated 700,000 children and adults in the UK. Each person has their own individual profile of strengths and challenges. However, the most significant challenges relate to communication and language, social interactions and rigid or repetitive behaviour. Individuals may also process sensory input differently. While many individuals lead positive and fulfilling lives, others face significant challenges due to skills not yet developed, or behaviours which range from interfering with everyday life through to behaviours which cause severe harm. The use of strategies based on Behaviour Analysis has a strong history and research base. Often termed 'Applied Behaviour Analysis' (ABA), there are packages implemented with young children covering all developmental areas known as Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI). Then there is also a wealth of evidence that shows 'ABA' is effective for teaching specific skills (such as communication or play skills), and for understanding and decreasing behaviours that challenge, or affect an individual's quality of life (such as aggression or self-harm).

The focus of Behaviour Analysis for Autism is to provide a safe and positive learning environment, and then teach each priority skill step by step using high levels of positive reinforcement, and enough support to ensure regular success. Behaviour analysts working in this field may work within or alongside multidisciplinary teams (e.g., speech therapists, educational psychologists) and work in the home as well as nurseries and schools, in care homes, nursing homes, hospitals, or in the community.

EXAMPLES OF UK-BASED RESEARCH

Lambert-Lee et al (2015), Translating Evidence-based Practice into a Comprehensive Educational Model within an Autism-specific Special School. *British Journal of Special Education*. 42(1), 69-86.

<https://nasenjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8578.12090>

Foran et al (2015), Using Applied Behaviour Analysis as Standard Practice in a UK Special Needs School. *British Journal of Special Education*.42(1), 34–52.
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Tzanakaki, P. et al (2014). Use of a tactile prompt to increase social initiations in children with autism. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*. 8, 726-736.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1750946714000683>

KEY RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

Virués-Ortega, J. (2010). Applied behavior analytic intervention for autism in early childhood: Meta-analysis, meta-regression and dose-response meta-analysis outcomes. *Clinical Psychology Review* 30: 387-399
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272735810000218?via%3Dihub>

Peters-Scheffer, N. et al (2011) A meta-analytic study on the effectiveness of comprehensive ABA-based early intervention programs for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders* 5: 60-69.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1750946710000498?via%3Dihub>

Cohen, H., et al., (2006) Early intensive behavioral treatment: Replication of the UCLA Model in a community setting. *Developmental and Behavioral Paediatrics*, 27, 145–155
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Eldevik, S., et al., (2009) Meta-analysis of Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention for children with autism. *J Clin Child Adolesc Psychol* 38 (3): 439–50.
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Howard, J. S., et al., (2005) A comparison of intensive behaviour analytic and eclectic treatment for young children with autism. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 26, 359–383.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0891422205000247?via%3Dihub>

Howard, S., et al., (2014). Comparison of Behavior Analytic and Eclectic Early Interventions for Young Children with Autism After Three Years. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 35:12, pp.3326-3344. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S089142221400362X#b>

Medavarapu S. et al (2019), Where is the Evidence? A Narrative Literature Review of the Treatment Modalities for Autism Spectrum Disorders.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30911457/>

Makrygianni, Gena, Katoudi and Galanis (2018), The Effectiveness of Applied Behavior Analytic Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Meta-Analytic Study. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 51, 18-31.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1750946718300485>

Lydon, H. et al (2017) Comparison of behavioural intervention and sensory integration therapy on challenging behaviour of children with autism. *Behavioral Intervention*, 32, 297-310.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/bin.1490>