

VBC 2025 Abstracts for Judah Axe

Day 1

Mand Training: Updates on Concepts and Procedures

When teaching children with significant language delays, it is vital to teach them to mand. Increasing manding allows a child to access their reinforcers and reduces challenging behavior. There are three sub-topics in this presentation. First, to teach mands, a therapist must identify a child's motivating operations (MOs), which are often elusive. One method to identify MOs is to observe indicating responses, which may be correlated with MOs and in the form of gestures or eye contact. Second, given the need to capture and contrive MOs to teach mands, such as by using the interrupted chains procedure, the presenter will provide an updated literature review and practice recommendations on these tactics. Third, the presenter will describe a recent study on using the quick-transfer-of-stimulus-control procedure to teach mands.

Day 2

Ethical Considerations in Teaching Verbal Behavior

In the decades prior to 2000, researchers designed procedures for teaching verbal behavior to autistic individuals that were structured, rigid, and focused on teaching rote skills. Now in the 2020s, there is a clear call for behavior analysts to ensure their interventions “produce outcomes likely to maintain under naturalistic conditions” (BACB Code of Ethics, 2.14). In terms of teaching verbal behavior, the mand often meets these guidelines, but the other verbal operants are not as straightforward. With a focus on the tact, the presenter will differentiate “educational tacts” and “natural tacts” and present a study analyzing variables that may lead to natural tacts. There will also be a discussion of the reinforcement for natural tacts and methods to establish generalized conditioned social reinforcers.