Bridging Knowledge to Know-How Conference 2025
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Monday, July 28, 2025

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

001: Thriving Begins with SEEing Differently: How Changing Our Vision Changes Their Future

Presenter: Kristin Smedley

Description:
Known for her high energy, humor, and real-life storytelling, Kristin Smedley takes you on an empowering journey that challenges how we view disability—and how we define success. Through powerful personal stories of raising two blind sons who are now thriving leaders, Kristin shows how setting extraordinary expectations and looking through a thriving lens can transform outcomes for all students, not just those with disabilities. You'll leave inspired and equipped to shift mindsets, build confidence, and create environments where every child can thrive.

Objectives:
- Discuss the impact of setting extraordinary expectations for students with disabilities and how this approach benefits all learners.
- Learn how to apply the thriving lens mindset in classrooms, homes, and communities to foster greater confidence, independence, and success.
- Identify practical strategies to shift from a deficit-based approach to an empowerment-based model for supporting diverse learners.

CEU Credits: ACVREP. Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Level of Expertise: Basic/Foundational

2:45 pm to 5:00 pm (with 15 min break)

002: The Overlapping Spectrum: Navigating CVI and Neurodivergent Needs in Education

Presenter: Kathy Alstrin

Description:
This presentation offered by the Chair Elect of the NVI division of AERBVI will give participants an overview of the overlapping spectrums of brain-based visual impairments such as the spectrum of Cerebral Visual Impairment and visual behaviors of children with neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Focus will be placed upon current research pointing to the need for universal screening, the latest data on the

prevalence of such challenges for children. Learners will consider and discuss a selection of appropriate approaches to screening, assessment, evaluation, intervention, and education for children falling within these spectrums.

Objectives:
- Identify children in need of screening for further evaluation for brain-based visual impairment.
- Describe how current screening tools identify universal red flags for children at risk for visual challenges in their education.
- Describe a framework from which to plan evaluation and intervention for such children.

CEU Credits: ACVREP. Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

003: Related Services: Maximizing Functional Independence and Optimizing Efficiency and Productivity

Presenter: Angela Griffs, Rita Geddes

Description:
This session will explore and empower administrators to progress related services to a participation based model that facilitates maximal student independence while minimizing overall staff costs. Participants will gain knowledge in the initial steps of implementation of a paradigm shift in language, terminology, and service delivery, which provides all students with an opportunity to maximize independence and function. Benefits and barriers to a participation-based model will be explored to aid in the success of implementation. Strategies, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and flexible school environments, will be highlighted, allowing for efficiency of team function and maximal functional independence of students. In this model, isolated related services interventions will be gradually phased out and replaced with consistent guided practice for students, thereby promoting maximum function and minimizing student reliance on support staff as they progress through the educational system. The primary focus will be on students with autism and/or intellectual disabilities and maximizing their functional independence by the time they transition to adulthood.

Objectives:
- Describe a participation-based related service delivery model that simultaneously promotes student independence while minimizing staff cost.
- Describe benefits and barriers to a participation-based model, and identify UDL and flexible school environment strategies to promote efficiency of team function and functional independence of students.
- Implement a paradigm shift to participation based language, terminology and interventions in their own district.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work

Level of Expertise: Intermediate

004: Helping Students Succeed in General Education Classrooms

Presenter: William Heward

Description:
The most scientifically documented learning outcomes by children with autism (ASD) have been achieved by early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) with children under age 6. While some children make a smooth transition from EIBI to public school classrooms, others struggle mightily with the demands of a new and highly complex environment. A group of teachers, clinicians, researchers, and parents with extensive experience in ASD were asked to identify the most important skills needed by students with ASD for success in general education classrooms and instructional practices for helping students acquire those skills. The group's responses revealed a remarkably similar set of student skills (e.g., complete tasks independently, interact with peers appropriately) and instructional practices (e.g., teach self-management, use collaborative learning activities). The rationale, implementation guidelines, and access to resources for implementing research-based interventions that help students with ASD learn skills necessary for success in inclusive classrooms will be provided.

Objectives:
- Identify six skill areas most frequently listed by a group of autism experts as most important for success in regular classrooms by students with autism.
- Describe choral responding and response cards and how these techniques make group instruction more effective.
- Identify three positive outcomes of teaching students how to recruit teacher attention and assistance.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

005: Student-Led IEPs

Presenter: Natasha Fletcher, Hayley Penn, and Hunter Steinitz

Description:
In this session, youth will learn the principles and strategies of Student Led Individualized Education Programs (SLIEPs). Participants will hear from both family and self advocates and practice their leadership and advocacy skills. They will leave with tools to take and use in their own IEP meetings.

Objectives:
- Define the Student Led IEP process.

- Practice self-advocacy and leadership skills.
- Create individual tools for use in IEP meetings.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

2:45 pm to 3:45 pm

006: Feeding Session: Exploring New Foods Via School Lunches (OTs)

Presenter: Morgan Levy

Description:
Restrictive eating, often referred to as "picky eating" is commonly observed in autism and related disorders, and mealtimes are often fraught with anxiety. Current best practices for helping picky eaters explore foods can include frequent and repeated exposure to specific novel food items, long duration feeding sessions, child-led exploration and play, behavioral interventions, and sensory integration therapy. While all these intervention strategies have merit, they can sometimes be inaccessible or challenging to carry out for a variety of reasons. This session will discuss a program that utilizes district-provided school lunches in a short, predictable protocol. When integrated into regular mealtime routines, this program aims to improve exploration and decrease negative behaviors associated with picky eating. This program consolidates multiple effective picky eating strategies into a simple structure that can be carried out with limited resources, time, and training.

Objectives:
- Identify common picky eating interventions and their efficacy.
- Discuss how school lunches can be used as a tool to address picky eating and disruptive mealtime behaviors.
- Describe strategies for improving exploration of food with limited resources.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

007: Misconceptions of ABA in Special Education

Presenter: Jason Travers

Description:
The popularity of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is sometimes exceeded by various myths and misconceptions about what it is, how it is used, who benefits from it, and what professionals rely on it. This session will share popular myths and misconceptions along with clarifying explanations and sources of evidence to aid further understanding. Specific attention will be

given to bribery and reinforcement, coercion and punishment, compliance, behavior modification, and function-based interventions.

Objectives:
- List at least three common myths or misperceptions about ABA.
- Explain why a myth or misperception is inaccurate and provide alternative explanations rooted in facts and evidence.
- Understand the potential and actual reasons why myths proliferate and how to respond to them.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

008: Working with School Teams

Presenter: Diane Perry

Description:
In this session we will explore strategies for working with your school team to ensure collaboration amongst all team members. We will share ideas for effective communication during team meetings and when communicating with individual members of the team. Conflict is an opportunity for creativity amongst IEP teams to explore resolution.

Objectives:
- Identify strategies that are essential to successful communication.
- Discuss the importance of keeping the focus of the conversation on your student and their needs.
- Describe what to do if and when conflict does arise.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

009: Learn the Signs. Act Early!

Presenter: Angela Caldwell, Shelley Chapin

Description:
Milestones Matter! How a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development.

The US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Learn the Signs. Act Early (LTSAE) Initiative offers free, family-friendly materials and resources to engage families in tracking,

identifying, and celebrating their young child's (birth to 5) milestones while also providing families with the tools and resources so they can act early if there is a developmental concern!

The LTSAE Initiative also provides information and resources for professionals about how to talk with families in the early identification of developmental concerns while promoting family-engaged developmental monitoring and building family advocacy so children and families can get the early services and support they need.

Join us to learn about these amazing resources and brainstorm ideas about how to integrate these family-friendly and FREE tools into existing family systems. You will leave with new skills, an action plan and a materials toolkit to get you started.

Objectives:
- Gain awareness of "Learn the Signs. Act Early" resources and materials for families and professionals.
- Promote understanding about the importance of family engaged developmental monitoring to support early identification of developmental delays and disabilities in young children.
- Develop an action plan to guide utilization, dissemination and integration of CDC LTSAE resources and materials, using the provided LTSAE toolkit and guided tour of all of the resources available.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

010: Minding the Gap: Navigating Transitions from Early Intervention to Postsecondary Exit

Presenter: Lydia Ocasio-Stoutenburg

Description:
This session discusses the multiple barriers that exist for families and students navigating transition gaps, from early intervention to postschool exit. It describes the strategies that practitioners can employ in order to support and empower students and families, with recognition of the many social, system-level, and district challenges. Attendees will leave this session with points of reflection, a highly-engaged discussion and interactive exercises, as well as tools for navigating these critical gaps.

Objectives:
- Learn about the different types of transitions navigated by families, students, and the practitioners who support them
- Discuss the barriers and roadblocks that families and students may encounter, especially for those who are more profoundly impacted.

- Interact with other participants and collectively learn some strategies to help navigate the transitions

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

011: Journey into Little Minds: Brain-Based Learning for Early Childhood Learners - Cancelled

Presenter: Jennifer Bloom

Description:
This session explores the impact of trauma and dysregulation on young learners and how brain-based learning strategies can foster emotional regulation and resilience. Using the Applied Educational Neuroscience (AEN) framework, we share our journey in integrating neuroscience-informed interventions for early childhood learners to create a supportive and effective learning environment. Key topics will include addressing student dysregulation; understanding trauma and brain function; shifting from extrinsic to intrinsic Interventions; brain-based learning strategies; and the role of amygdala reset stations and biofeedback in regulation.

Objectives:
- Discuss neuroscience-driven techniques that enhance student self-regulation.
- Describe how to promote engagement in students experiencing social/emotional needs.
- Discuss ways to support the overall well-being of children in early education settings.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

012: Ensure Students Take the Right Test: PASA Compliance and Statewide Assessment Participation

Presenter: Lisa Hampe, Lisa Hauswirth

Description:
This session will provide information on why statewide assessment participation matters for students with disabilities. Tools and resources for IEP teams to make appropriate PASA eligibility decisions will be shared. Participants will also explore ways to best support students who transition from the PASA DLM to the PSSA or Keystone Exams including testing accommodations and available tools for instruction. Commonly asked questions from the field will be addressed.

Objectives:

- Discuss the legal and regulatory aspects associated with statewide assessment participation for students with disabilities.
- Identify tools and resources for appropriate statewide assessment determination and accommodations for IEP teams to consider.
- Discuss ways to support students' participation in statewide assessments.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

3:45 pm to 4:00 pm: Break

4:00 pm to 5:00 pm

013: Understanding Echoics: Identifying Predictive Behaviors of Vocal Imitation

Presenter: Lee Mason

Description:
A growing body of literature supports the use of echoic prompts toward conditioning other functional language skills. However, many individuals with autism spectrum disorder do not emit verbal behavior under echoic control. Identifying the prerequisite skills of an echoic repertoire may be beneficial for intervention planning and clinical decision making. This session provides a deep dive into the echoic repertoire, examining how the operant was originally defined by Skinner (1957) and how contemporary research has led to a better understanding of echoic control.

Objectives:
- Define "echoic" as one end point of a continuum of intraverbal control.
- Identify three variables that help predict the presence of echoic behavior.
- Describe how echoic control can be used as part of a prompt hierarchy to condition other verbal operants.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

014: Practice-Based Coaching to Advance Instructional Practices of Special Education Teachers

Presenter: Susan Johnson

Description:

This session provides a comprehensive exploration of the Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) framework as a robust, evidence-based approach to enhancing instructional practices among special education teachers. Attendees will gain a thorough understanding of the PBC model, which emphasizes collaborative goal-setting, focused observation, and constructive feedback to support continuous professional growth and improve teaching effectiveness. Through the examination of practical examples and proven strategies, the presenter will illustrate how PBC can be systematically implemented to enhance instructional practices and foster positive outcomes for students with complex learning needs.

Objectives:

- Identify the essential components of PBC and its application in special education settings.
- Analyze assessment tools used to determine site-level professional development needs and alignment of PBC practices with building priorities.
- Examine successful examples of PBC implementation and consider how these practices can be adapted to their own teaching/coaching contexts.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Advanced

015: College Pathways to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Program

Presenter: Melissa Wert-Thrush

Description:
This session will showcase Harrisburg OVR Early Reach Coordinators' College Pathways to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. post-secondary education exploration program, which provides high school students with an opportunity to gain independent living and self-advocacy skills while touring local universities and colleges. Program history, development, and variations will be discussed. Special attention will be given to highlighting outcome analysis and adaptations to the program in light of budgetary variations.

Objectives:
- Describe the history and variations of the College Pathways to SUCCESS program.
- Discuss if their (attendees) constituents may need additional support in navigating the postsecondary education exploration process.
- Discuss how to replicate similar programming for their constituents.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

016: Navigating Service Systems/ Understanding Waivers and the Transition to Adulthood

Presenter: Andrea Layton

Description:
Understanding the different service systems can be confusing and complex for parents, families, educators, and individuals to navigate. This session will provide an overview of the different service systems available to support individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities as they head toward adulthood, with particular focus on the Office of Developmental Program waivers.

Objectives:
- Identify all of the waivers available through the Office of Developmental Programs.
- Explain the process of having eligibility determined for the waivers.
- List services available for individuals as adults with intellectual disabilities/autism.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

017: Raising Thrivers: Real Stories. Real Strategies. Remarkable Outcomes.

Presenter: Kristin Smedley

Description:
"Raising Thrivers" has quickly become Kristin Smedley's most talked about and impactful presentation of 2025! In this dynamic breakout session, Kristin is joined by her two blind sons—Michael and Mitchell—who will join remotely to share their powerful perspectives on growing up in a home and school system that expected them not just to survive, but to thrive.
Through honest conversation, real-life challenges, and uplifting wins, this session offers an inside look at what happens when families and educators look through a thriving lens and choose empowerment over limitation. You'll hear firsthand how setting high expectations, fostering independence, and building confidence can launch young people with disabilities toward success—and how those same strategies benefit all students."

Objectives:
- Discuss firsthand accounts from blind young adults about what truly helped them thrive in school, at home, and in life.
- Identify practical ways families and educators can shift from protective mindsets to empowering practices that promote independence and confidence.
- Define how the THRIVER Formula for Success can be applied to support youth with disabilities in becoming confident, capable contributors to their communities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work

Level of Expertise: Basic/Foundational

018:Family Leadership and High Expectations: HUNE and F2MAX

Presenter: Luz Hernandez, William Paz de Melo

Description:
This session will introduce participants to the work of HUNE and Families to the Max (F2M). HUNE will highlight its bilingual (English/Spanish) virtual trainings, workshops, and Andy's Café, a supportive online space for families. HUNE also supports the Hispanic population of F2M. F2M, a family-led network supported by BSE, PaTTAN, the PEAL Center, and HUNE, promotes family leadership, high expectations, and the belief in presuming competence for all students with all abilities.

Objectives:
- Describe HUNE's bilingual services, such as virtual trainings, workshops, and Andy's Café in order to support and inform families in their own communities.
- Identify key elements of the Families to the Max (F2M) network to help families and professionals connect with statewide family-led resources and supports.
- Discuss strategies used by HUNE and F2M to promote family leadership, high expectations, and inclusive education, and apply these approaches in their own work with families and students.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

019: Advancing AAC Users' Complex Language Development During Writing Instruction Using Recasts

Presenter: Janet Sturm, Maureen Staskowski

Description:
There are well-established interrelationships between oral and written language development. Learn how to capitalize on this connection and the power of recasts to teach complex language to students who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Students who use AAC are at risk for using short simplistic syntax whereas typically developing preschool children are using a wide range of complex language forms. Complex syntax can be systematically tracked and targeted. Learn about a team approach to teaching complex language using recasts during AAC aided language stimulation, as part of writing instruction Recasts are a proven language instructional tool that are often underestimated and underutilized. Instructional strategies targeting complex language in authentic communication will be illustrated with classroom videos.

Objectives:
- Explain the recast practices that research has shown to be effective to advance language learning.
- List 12 types of complex syntax typically acquired in the preschool years.
- Explain how aided language stimulation and recasts can be used during writing instruction.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

8:00 am to 11:15 am (with 15 min break)

020: Safety Skills for All Students (Assessment, Goals, Instructional Practices)

Presenter: Amanda Kelly, Amy Foxman

Description:
In Part 1, the presenters will delve into the essential role of integrating safety preparedness for children and adults, with a specific focus on individuals with autism and developmental disabilities. The presenters will introduce an assessment tool they have developed to empower parents, caregivers, and professionals in their discussions and with the formulation of safety protocols. This tool comprises a thoughtfully crafted set of open-ended questions that cover critical areas, such as fire safety, water safety, wandering behavior, and in-school safety. Part 2 of the presentation will focus on the practical application of the safety assessment through the use of a goal bank and the implementation of Behavioral Skills Training (BST). Presenters will highlight how individualized goals can be derived from assessment responses and tailored to the specific needs and developmental levels of individuals with autism and related disabilities. Attendees will be introduced to a goal bank that addresses key safety domains and provides a starting point for instruction. Through demonstrations and examples, the presenters will outline how BST—comprising instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback—can be effectively used by caregivers, educators, and clinicians to systematically teach and reinforce critical safety skills across home, school, and community settings.

Objectives:
- List four key domains included in the safety preparedness assessment tool developed for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.
- Generate two individualized safety goals based on hypothetical assessment responses, using the provided goal bank as a reference.

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the components of Behavioral Skills Training (instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback) to teach one selected safety skill in a role-play or case-based scenario.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

021: Ethical Considerations of Fad, Pseudoscientific, and Poorly Supported Communication Practices

Presenter: Heather Forbes

Description:
Professionals (e.g., speech-language pathologists, behavior analysts, special educators) and family members who address communication needs of autistic children are often inundated with intervention options, some of which may be considered faddish or pseudoscientific interventions. During this session we will review some popular communication interventions for children with autism through an evidence-based practice lens. We will discuss the ethical implications of implementing practices that have limited empirical support and provide professionals and families with methods for critically analyzing practices presented to them.

Objectives:
- Discriminate between science, pseudoscience, fads, and poorly supported interventions.
- Identify at least two popular pseudoscientific, faddish, or poorly supported communication interventions for autistic children.
- Describe ethical concerns when considering pseudoscientific, faddish, or poorly supported communication interventions for children with autism.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

8:00 am to 9:30 am

022: OVR's Order of Selection and Introduction to OVR

Presenter: Kim Robinson

Description:
The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has returned to an Order of Selection (OOS). This process, established under the Rehabilitation Act, is used by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs to manage caseloads during limited funding or staffing. By implementing OOS, OVR can better allocate resources, adjust programs, and introduce cost-saving measures in anticipation of continued flat-funding. Join us for an informative session that will break down

what OOS means, why it's necessary, and how it will affect secondary students transitioning from school to work.

Objectives:
- Define the OVR Order of Selection (OOS) and its purpose within OVR.
- Discuss how OVR's OOS guidelines may impact student eligibility for OVR services.
- Describe how OOS affects Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) and service delivery.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

023: Science Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Presenter: Meagan Karvonen, Russell Swinburne-Romine, Lindsay Ruhter

Description:
Science learning expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities are changing. How can you teach science lessons that align to standards and are engaging for students with significant cognitive disabilities? In this session you will learn about the new Dynamic Learning Maps Science Essential Elements (EEs), which include disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), science and engineering practices (SEPs), and crosscutting concepts (CCCs) at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity so they are rigorous and appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Science alternate assessments based on the new science EEs will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2027. Session participants will learn how to design and teach lessons aligned to the new EEs using inquiry routines and how to embed English language arts and mathematics concepts in inquiry-based science instruction. The session includes hands-on activities to apply information about effective science teaching.

Objectives:
- Describe the multidimensional DLM Essential Elements as science expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Describe how to design science lessons using inquiry-based routines.
- Identify ways to integrate English language arts and mathematics concepts into science lessons for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

024: Inclusion for Special Education Students

Presenter: Jason Travers

Description:
Inclusion of students with disabilities is often spoken about and discussed by educators, related service providers, parents, family members, attorneys, and experts. Despite decades of discussion, formal and technical, the term remains ambiguous and associated practices unclear. This session will overview various issues, interpretations of the law, perspectives, and considerations about inclusive education for students with disabilities.

Objectives:
- Recognize differences between inclusion and full inclusion of students with disabilities, and the associated arguments for each.
- Identify key supports that must be in place to maximize potential educational benefit to individuals with disabilities.
- Explain differences between interpretations of "least restrictive environment" found in the IDEA.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

025: Empowering Parents of Children Living with TBI: Cognitive Strategies, Advocacy, and Support

Presenter: Jean B. Miksch, Meaghan G. Wright

Description:
Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) that occur during childhood and adolescence have significant impacts due to the ongoing brain development that is occurring during that period. Evidence-based techniques will be shared to support cognitive recovery. The importance of self-advocacy and strategies for developing these skills will be discussed. Parents and young people often are faced with barriers to access supports and because resources are not well known, they can struggle with getting the supports needed for their recovery. Pennsylvania specific resources and techniques to support recovery will be addressed in this presentation.

Objectives:
- Identify at least three common cognitive challenges following TBI and identify at least three compensatory strategies for use in both classroom and community settings.
- Describe advocacy skills and techniques to support communication between student, teacher, and administration.
- Identify three common barriers for accessing services and will be able to identify resources for parents and students.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

026: Science of Reading and Writing: Instruction and Monitoring for Students with Complex Needs

Presenter: Janet Sturm, Maureen Staskowski

Description:
There has been a national movement to ensure that instruction is anchored in the Science of Reading and Writing. It is challenging for educational teams to apply these practices to students with Complex Learning Needs (CLN), yet it must be done. Explicit instruction is most effective when student assessment is used to design precise instruction. Learn methods of assessment and progress monitoring of foundational literacy skills for students with limited intelligibility or difficulty reliably responding orally. Case studies will be shared showing assessment data and how it was used to design instructional plans for phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and writing.

Objectives:
- Explain how scientific discoveries about learning to read, write, and spell have informed practice.
- Describe considerations for the assessment of phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and writing for students with CLN.
- Provide two examples of how to use reading or writing assessment data to design corresponding instruction based on science.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

027: Teaching Math to Students with Complex Instructional Needs

Presenter: Charles Mohler, Kirsten DeRoche

Description:
This session will explore effective strategies for identifying and assessing early numeracy skills to students with complex instructional needs. Participants will learn about the instructional hierarchy learning stages, which provide a structured framework for building math skills from foundational concepts to more advanced understanding. The session will highlight key approaches and teachers will gain insight into how to scaffold instruction, work towards mastery of skills, and create a learning environment that fosters success for all students.

Objectives:
- Identify early indicators for math success.
- Discuss the stages of learning.
- Identify strategies to improve student achievement.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

028: Lead Happier: Leading as a Rational Optimist

Presenter: Suzanne Dailey

Description:
This session is designed to be part professional development and part personal development for educational leaders. We will examine universal practices of happiness and consider how small shifts in our thoughts, language, and actions can help support ourselves while we support others. Time will be given to reflect on current practice and create goals that will help us get closer to joyful leadership.

Objectives:
- List universal happiness practices.
- Discuss current practice and create leadership goals for the upcoming year.
- Describe how this information could be shared with colleagues in their district.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

029: Building Bridges to Braille Literacy

Presenter: Sheena Rancher

Description:
This session aims to build a bridge to braille literacy by recognizing literacy as a human right and connecting braille literacy to positive life outcomes. Parents, students, and educators will learn more about braille literacy, collaboration, and curriculum considerations to support student learning outcomes. Participants will leave with an action plan to promote braille literacy within their prospective areas. This session also includes a how-to workshop for teachers regarding the Natural Order of Contractions framework.

Objectives:
- Identify and share concerns from the field of Blindness Education, braille, literacy, etc.
- Identify evidence-based strategies and frameworks for braille/reading instruction.
- Create an action plan to promote braille literacy.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

030: The Nuts and Bolts of Self-Advocacy

Presenter: Natasha Fletcher, Hayley Penn, and Hunter Steinitz

Description:
In this session, attendees will gain an understanding of the role self-advocacy plays during life transitions, including moving into adulthood, entering the workforce, and pursuing higher education. We will explore what self-advocacy looks like in these contexts and provide strategies for students to advocate for themselves effectively. Participants will leave with an understanding of what it means to be a self-advocate and with valuable tools to use in practice.

Objectives:
- Connect with Self-Advocate Mentors.
- Practice using Self-Advocacy tools.
- Discuss the value of self-advocacy in life transitions.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

9:30 am to 9:45 am: Break

9:45 am to 11:15 am

031: Science Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Repeat Session)

Presenter: Meagan Karvonen, Russell Swinburne-Romine, Lindsay Ruhter

Description:
Science learning expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities are changing. How can you teach science lessons that align to standards and are engaging for students with significant cognitive disabilities? In this session you will learn about the new Dynamic Learning Maps Science Essential Elements (EEs), which include disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), science and engineering practices (SEPs), and crosscutting concepts (CCCs) at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity so they are rigorous and appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Science alternate assessments based on the new science EEs will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2027. Session participants will learn how to design and teach lessons aligned to the new EEs using inquiry routines and how to embed English language arts and mathematics concepts in inquiry-based science instruction. The session includes hands-on activities to apply information about effective science teaching.

Objectives:

- Describe the multidimensional DLM Essential Elements as science expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Describe how to design science lessons using inquiry-based routines.
- Identify ways to integrate English language arts and mathematics concepts into science lessons for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

032: PA Planning for the Future Checklist

Presenter: Christine Cyktor

Description:
Are you ready to take charge of your future? In this interactive session, you'll dive into the PA Planning for the Future Transition Checklist from the PEAL Center—a powerful tool designed to help youth with disabilities like YOU set goals, plan for life after high school, and advocate for what you need. You'll learn how this checklist can help you organize your thoughts, speak up at IEP and transition meetings, and make sure your voice is heard when it comes to education, employment, independent living, and more. We'll break it down step by step through real-life examples, group discussions, and hands-on activities so you can start using it right away. Whether you're just starting to think about life after school or already on your path, this session will give you the tools to confidently plan for the future you want."

Objectives:
- Identify three key sections of the PA Planning for the Future Transition Checklist and explain their purpose.
- Describe how the checklist can be used as a self-advocacy tool during IEP and transition planning meetings.
- Utilize the checklist to create one personal goal related to education, employment, or independent living.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

033: Open-Source Implementation Models for Emergent to Conventional Literacy Instruction

Presenter: Claire Greer

Description:
The team at the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (CLDS) has embraced open-source technology and dissemination approaches to empower professionals to deliver comprehensive

literacy and communication instruction to students with extensive support needs. In this session, the presenter will describe the relationship between literacy and communication, comprehensive emergent and conventional literacy, and demonstrate and share free resources from four projects: Project Core, Tar Heel Shared Reader, Building Bridges, and Project VC.

Objectives:
- Discuss 3 benefits of open - source implementation models.
- List 5 topics covered by available, open - source professional learning modules.
- List 4 questions to determine the need for emergent versus conventional literacy instruction.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

034: Bridging Gaps, Building Futures: The PA Expanded Core Competencies for DHH Students

Presenter: Tara Kelly

Description:
Discover how the Pennsylvania Expanded Core Competencies for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (PA ECC-DHH) are transforming educational access and functional skill development for students with varying hearing levels throughout the Commonwealth. Through interactive discussion and hands-on activities, attendees will learn to use the PA ECC-DHH content rubrics to create meaningful, individualized goals for their students. The session emphasizes the critical role of access - both to language and learning environments - and the development of functional skills that empower DHH students to thrive academically, socially, and in future career pathways. Leave equipped with practical strategies and resources to bridge gaps, build futures, and ensure every student's success.

Objectives:
- Describe the PA ECC-DHH website and find its 8 content rubric areas.
- Identify at least 3 ways that the PA ECC-DHH can be used to inform IEP development and program planning for DHH students.
- Select at least 2 action steps for implementing the PA ECC-DHH with their students.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

035: Bridging the Gaps: Strategies for Supporting Students with Visual Impairments and Autism

Presenter: Tessa McCarthy, Rachel Robertson

Description:
Students with visual impairments and autism face unique challenges in educational settings, requiring tailored support strategies to ensure their success. This session will explore approaches for bridging gaps in communication, social interaction, and accessibility. Educators, service providers, and administrators will gain practical insights into fostering appropriate learning environments, implementing individualized interventions, and collaborating effectively with families and support teams. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to enhance engagement, independence, and academic achievement for students with dual diagnoses.

Objectives:
- Identify the key challenges faced by students with visual impairments and autism in educational settings.
- Discuss strategies to support communication, social interaction, and sensory needs.
- Define effective collaboration techniques between educators, families, and support professionals.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

036: Overview of PA Services

Presenter: Carole Clancy, Kristen Ahrens, Ryan Hyde, Luz Hernandez, William Paz de Melo

Description:
This dynamic session brings together leadership from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education (BSE), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL), and Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Participants will hear directly from agency heads about current priorities, interagency collaboration, and initiatives that impact individuals with disabilities and their families across the lifespan. This session offers a unique opportunity to explore how state systems align to promote inclusive education, transition planning, independent living, and meaningful community participation.

Objectives:
- Identify the key services provided by BSE, OVR, OLTL, and ODP in Pennsylvania.
- Describe how each agency supports individuals with disabilities across different stages of life.
- Formulate relevant questions to engage directly with agency leaders during the live Q&A session.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

037: Charting the Life Course

Presenter: Natasha Fletcher, Hayley Penn, and Hunter Steinitz

Description:
In this session attendees will learn about the Charting the LifeCourse Framework, and how to use it to help them plan for their best life. Participants will create a Life Trajectory for what they want their life to be and not be. They will also map out the important relationships in their lives to get a sense of their support networks. Participants will leave with tools to use for future planning.

Objectives:
- Define the Charting the LifeCourse Framework.
- Discuss the Life Trajectory activity.
- Discuss the importance of building confidence for future planning.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

038: Theater for Life: How Acting, Spontaneity and Roleplay Support Secondary Transition

Presenter: Nick Webster, Nicole Meier Emery

Description:
To become good at something, one must practice and develop that skillset. The same is true for communication, professionalism, and creative problem-solving. Using drama therapy techniques, session participants will have fun and learn how theatre games and activities can be utilized for engaging students to achieve greater self-awareness and decision-making skills to support their secondary transition goals. These strategies are core elements of The Arc of PA's Include Me Pre-ETS program in conjunction with participating school districts.

Objectives:
- Discuss active agents of drama therapy that promote learning and empathy.
- Describe basic concepts of Role Theory and how it can be used to empower students.
- Participate in 3 theatre games to support connection and explore conflict.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

11:15 am to 12:30 pm: Lunch

12:30 pm to 4:45 pm (with 15 min break)

039: Deaf/HoH Students' Assent in Communication Modalities and Treatment

Presenter: Stephanie Dille-Huggins

Description:
Join Stephanie Dille-Huggins, MA, BCBA and ABA accessibility advocate as she guides participants through learning about different language and communication modalities for Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) + individuals with Autism (ASD) and the role that assent plays in communication. Participants will leave empowered when it comes to understanding key communication Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)-based training components and will develop a more in-depth understanding of what assent looks like for D/HH + ASD individuals, including within treatment considerations. In addition, participants will develop an understanding regarding how data collection can fuel pathways to communication accessibility, thus improving treatment outcomes and accessibility for this population.

Objectives:
- Describe (tact) the topography of assent demonstrated by a D/HH + ASD individual within their communication modality.
- Describe (tact) the topography of what assent withdrawal in communication looks like for a D/HH + ASD individual.
- Identify appropriate data collection methods used to track multi-system communication modalities for D/HH + ASD individuals.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

12:30 pm to 2:30 pm

040: Emphasizing Therapeutic Rapport in Instruction with Children with Autism

Presenter: Alice Shillingsburg

Description:
Children diagnosed with autism may experience difficulties in acquiring language, adaptive, and social skills and often benefit from early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI). During EIBI sessions, clinicians work on important skills that may be difficult to learn, resulting in lack of interest in or even avoidance of the therapy session. Given the importance of child assent to therapy, clinicians should focus on building therapeutic rapport at the beginning and throughout

therapy. Rapport-building, or "pairing" the therapist and therapy setting with highly preferred activities, can increase choice to participate in therapy sessions. This presentation will provide an overview of guidelines for incorporating rapport building strategies prior to intensive teaching with children with ASD.

Objectives:
- Describe the Stages of Pairing and Instructional Fading.
- Describe alternatives to using physical guidance during interventions with those with ASD.
- Describe how indicating responses are used to evaluate readiness for therapy.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

041: ELEMENTS: Working with Families of Early Preschool Children

Presenter: Johanna Higgins

Description:
This session will provide participants with foundational knowledge on autism prevalence and characteristics. Then, attendees will explore the ELEMENTS framework, a set of five evidence-based, naturalistic strategies derived from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to support young autistic children and their families. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to improve interaction and engagement among children, their caregivers, and other team members that support them.

Objectives:
- Identify prevalence, potential reasons for increase, and common characteristics of autism.
- Define and apply the ELEMENTS framework to daily interactions.
- Brainstorm an action plan to incorporate ELEMENTS strategies into practice.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

042: Some Practical Applications to Teach Safety Skills for All Students in the School Setting

Presenter: Cindy Szapacs, Rachel Bove, Taylor Lindsey, Amy Foxman, Amanda Kelly

Description:
This session aims to equip families, educators, administrators, and support staff with effective strategies for teaching fire prevention and safety skills to students with disabilities. Recognizing

the unique needs and challenges faced by these students, the session will provide tailored approaches to ensure all individuals in the school environment can act appropriately in case of a fire emergency.

Objectives:
- Define how to address emergency planning with a student's educational or care team.
- Identify situations that require emergency planning and how to include information in the student's IEP to ensure availability of necessary materials and implementation of prescribed procedures when needed.
- Evaluate existing safety procedures and develop new ones to support diverse physical, emotional and sensory needs of students in special education classrooms.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

043: Transitioning from HS to Adulthood with ID/DD/Autism

Presenter: Andrea Layton

Description:
Leaving high school is an exciting time for students but it can also be a time of stress and anxiety as students move into the next phase of life. This session will focus on tips and tools to help high school students and families prepare for what comes next after high school, whether that means heading off to college or joining the workforce. We'll cover formal supports and services as well as things individuals and families can do at home to help prepare for what comes next!

Objectives:
- List the service systems and supports available to students after high school
- Describe skills that will be important for students to have in their repertoire for life after high school.
- Describe the differences between IDEA and ADA for students going to college.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

044: Mand Training: Updates on Concepts and Procedures

Presenter: Judah Axe

Description:
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.

Objectives:
- Define indicating responses and explain how to use them in practice.
- Describe ways to capture and contrive motivating operations to teach mands.
- Describe quick-transfer-of-stimulus-control procedure and how it may be used to teach mands.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

045: Referent-Based Instruction and PT to Strengthen the Verbal Behavior of Early Learners

Presenter: Lee Mason

Description:
The analysis of verbal behavior deconstructs language according to different features of environmental control. Although the functional independence of different verbal operants has been empirically demonstrated, more commonly a speaker's verbal behavior is influenced by a convergence of factors. For individuals diagnosed with autism, however, stimulus overselectivity may inhibit the development of a fluent verbal repertoire. In this session, we describe a behavior-analytic intervention with the overarching goal of establishing multiple control over verbal behavior through the conditioning of referent stimuli, and explain how precision teaching can be incorporated with language instruction to monitor progress and make data-based decisions.

Objectives:
- Describe convergent multiple control over verbal behavior.
- Explain the use of abstraction for conditioning specific verbal operants.
- Discuss the use of precision teaching for making data-based decisions regarding language instruction.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

046: Telling the Story: Data Collection and Visual Representation Strategies for Progress Monitoring

Presenter: Tessa McCarthy, Rachel Robertson

Description:
Effectively monitoring student progress requires more than just collecting data—it's about telling a meaningful story that drives informed decision-making. This session will explore practices for gathering, organizing, and visually representing data to track student growth and outcomes. Attendees will learn how to use various data collection tools and visual analysis techniques to make progress monitoring more accessible, actionable, and impactful. Educators, administrators, and service providers will leave with practical strategies to enhance data-driven decision-making and improve student success.

Objectives:
- Discuss the importance of data collection in monitoring student progress and informing instruction.
- Define different methods and tools for collecting and organizing student data.
- Identify how to visually analyze data to identify trends, patterns, and areas of need.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

047: A Mediational Theory of Equivalence Relations and Verbal Relations: There Are No Free Lunches!

Presenter: Elbert Blakely, Henry Schlinger

Description:
This presentation will describe a mediational theory of equivalence relations resulting from matching to sample (MTS) procedures and verbal relations resulting from verbal statements or rules. In both cases the resulting relations are said to emerge or to be derived, meaning that they occur without being directly trained. A mediational theory provides a different explanation in which the derived relations are trained, although not explicitly by the instructor. When a learner is exposed to equivalence-based-instruction, or to rules or instructions, a mediational theory suggests that the learner engages in, for example, echoic or tact responses, to the relevant stimuli. These mediating behaviors can then be reinforced automatically, or by an instructor, in the presence of relevant stimuli to generate new relations. This theory has two important implications. First, there may be no such thing as a derived relation, if by "derived" one means not directly trained. Second, and perhaps most importantly, this theory involves specific skills that can serve as acquisition targets for learners who don't benefit from rules or equivalence-based-instruction.

Objectives:
- State in general what a mediational theory is and how it differs from other contemporary theories of complex behavior.
- Describe how a mediational theory explains performances on matching-to-sample tasks and behavior that results from rules.
- Explain some clinical applications of mediational theory (for example, problem solving and remembering).

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

048: Practical Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Special Education

Presenter: Beth Poss

Description:
This dynamic, interactive session delves into ways that educators and therapists can harness the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to innovatively enhance outcomes for individuals with disabilities along with streamlining paperwork and prep time! Attendees will participate in interactive discussions, try out different tools, and actively reflect on how AI can elevate their practice. The emphasis will be on practical, easy to use applications that can bring therapy services to a whole new level. Participants will leave the session with a collaboratively created set of shared resources that they can use immediately upon returning from the convention.

Objectives:
- Describe 3 ways that Artificial Intelligence can be integrated into a classroom or therapy setting.
- Describe 3 ways that education professionals can use Artificial Intelligence to streamline paperwork or other tasks.
- Create 2 resources with AI tools that they can use personally or with students.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

049: Resumen de los Servicios en Pensilvania (in Spanish)

Presenters: Luz Hernandez, William Paz de Melo

Description:
Esta sesión presentará un video informativo con mensajes de los Directores y Secretarios de las principales agencias del estado de Pensilvania: la Oficina de Educación Especial (BSE), la Oficina de Rehabilitación Vocacional (OVR), la Oficina de Vida Independiente a Largo Plazo (OLTL) y la Oficina de Programas para el Desarrollo (ODP). El video ofrecerá una visión

general de los servicios y apoyos disponibles para personas con impedimentos y sus familias, incluyendo recursos educativos, planificación de transición, empleo, vida independiente y participación comunitaria.

Los líderes de estas agencias estarán presentes en persona para una sesión interactiva de preguntas y respuestas, brindando a los asistentes la oportunidad de dialogar directamente con ellos.

Objectives:
- Los participantes podrán identificar los servicios clave que ofrecen BSE, OVR, OLTL y ODP en Pensilvania.
- Los participantes podrán describir cómo cada agencia apoya a las personas con impedimentos en diferentes etapas de la vida.
- Los participantes podrán formular preguntas relevantes para dialogar directamente con los líderes de las agencias durante la sesión de preguntas y respuestas.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

2:30 pm to 2:45 pm: Break

2:45 pm to 4:45 pm

050: Early Mathematics Concepts: The Keys to Conceptual and Procedural Understanding

Presenter: Claire Greer

Description:
The presentation delves into the foundational principles of mathematics education, emphasizing the importance of four key concepts: Attribute, Pattern, Comparison, and Change. These concepts serve as the bedrock for all mathematical understanding. In this interactive session, participants will be encouraged to critically evaluate their current lessons through the lens of these foundational concepts, exploring how each lesson builds upon the previous one to enhance both conceptual and procedural understanding. Attendees will leave with practical insights on structuring their mathematics curriculum to foster a deeper, more cohesive learning experience for their students.

Objectives:
- Identify and articulate the four foundational concepts—Attribute, Pattern, Comparison, and Change—in their mathematics lessons.

- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze their current mathematics lessons, pinpointing specific areas where these foundational concepts are effectively integrated or need enhancement.
- Create or modify lesson plans to ensure a logical progression that builds on the foundational concepts, thereby enhancing both conceptual and procedural understanding for students.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

051: A Comprehensive Approach to CVI Evaluation

Presenter: Kathy Alstrin

Description:
This presentation offered by the Chair Elect of the AER NVI Division will give participants a current overview of the latest in CVI and NVI terminology. A succinct review will be given of the brain-based visual functions that need to be assessed by O&Ms and TVIs. This approach will show practitioners how to update existing assessment protocols and offer a brief look at existing tools. There will be time for Q&A and discussion.

Objectives:
- Describe how to apply fresh knowledge to their existing approaches to assessment.
- Discuss the current state of NVI and CVI terminology and assessment.
- Ask questions in order to obtain personalized advice of the speaker with consideration of the latest research.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

052: Cooperation Skills for Early Learners

Presenter: Brittany Blount, Cindy Szapacs

Description:
This session provides information regarding foundational skills for lifelong learning in various environments. Examples of these skills are: self-advocacy (requesting basic wants and needs), handing over an iPad to a teacher or parent, waiting in line at a store, transitioning from recess to the school building, and walking next to teachers or parents in the parking lot. Areas of focus will include: a scope and sequence of skills, assessment of skills, teaching procedures, data collection practices, and staff training. Instructors will provide case examples of direct teaching, of skill generalization, and connections to readiness for group learning.

Objectives:
- State principles for effective teaching and identify learning readiness skills.
- Assess learning readiness skills in the area of cooperative behavior.
- Identify areas for intervention and instructional methods to begin teaching cooperative skills.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

053: How OTs, Physiotherapists, and SLPs Can Benefit from Precision Teaching

Presenter: Jared Van

Description:
This presentation explores how occupational therapists (OTs), physiotherapists, and speech-language therapists (SLPs) can apply Precision Teaching (PT) to build fluency in foundational motor and oral motor skills essential for daily living and communication. Grounded in decades of applied research and recent innovations in the Big 6+6 framework, attendees will learn how frequency building and the Standard Celeration Chart (SCC) can enhance the effectiveness of interventions targeting skills such as grasping, reaching, pushing, speaking, and swallowing. Participants will be introduced to the concept of element-compound (component-composite) skill analysis and how it supports more individualized, efficient, and measurable progress toward functional goals. The session will highlight successful case studies involving learners with autism and intellectual disabilities, as well as strategies to collaborate across disciplines. Practical strategies for interventionists and families will be shared, including how to embed brief timing procedures (frequency-building) and data collection into everyday routines to promote retention, endurance, stability, and generalization of essential behaviors.

Objectives:
- Detect and measure behavior using the pinpoint+.
- Conduct a component/composite analysis.
- Describe how to use precision teaching with occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

054: Teaching Problem Solving Across Home and School Environments

Presenter: Sarah Frampton

Description:

Designing programs to teach useful skills to individuals with developmental disabilities is challenging. Thankfully, Skinner's method of molecular analysis provides the necessary tools to analyze even highly complex human behavior. Applying his analysis has many advantages when designing instruction to teach meaningful skills to individuals with and without disabilities. This presentation will focus on translating Skinner's theoretical analysis of problems and problem solving into real world applications. Examples from applied research will be reviewed with recommendations for ways to integrate the findings into practice. Common problems faced in home and school environments will be analyzed along with appropriate precurrent responses that can be taught to solve the problems. Attendees will practice designing applications of problem solving relevant to their students and children.

Objectives:
- Define a problem and problem solving using a Skinnerian analysis.
- Identify examples of problems that occur in everyday life that could be opportunities to teach new skills.
- Identify appropriate precurrent responses that can be taught to solve problems in everyday life.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

055: Evidence-Based Practices in Action: Mediating Verbal Behavior: Translating Research to Practice

Presenter: Alex Miklos, Seth Chamberlain, Henry Schlinger, Elbert Blakely

Description:
How do behaviors that have never occurred before, such as following novel multiple step directions or matching words to objects, emerge without a history of direct reinforcement? A complete explanation likely requires an analysis of verbal mediating behavior. That is, individuals engage in pre-current verbal behavior that allows for novel behaviors to occur. Put simply, people talk to themselves which guides other behavior. However, Autistic learners or learners with other language delays do not always engage in mediating verbal behavior without direct teaching. This session seeks to provide a conceptual overview of mediating verbal behavior, and present several applications and potential ways to teach mediating verbal behavior to learners with language delays. Part 2 of "A Mediational Theory of Equivalence and Verbal Relations: There Are No Free Lunches!

Objectives:

- Identify situations where mediating behavior is important.
- Develop sample skill sequences for teaching verbal mediating behavior.
- Describe and implement specific teaching procedures for establishing and applying mediating behaviors.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

056: Five Strategies to Consider Before Requesting an FBA

Presenter: Matt Cicoria, Ashley Harned

Description:
Given the broad dissemination of Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) processes in public education, more and more schools have access to professionals who can provide these supports. However, what happens when a referred student would benefit from a simple reward system instead of one of the many function-based treatments at our disposal? Also, what should clinicians do when a teacher has multiple students in their classroom with mild to moderate behavioral challenges? In these cases, it may be difficult or altogether unworkable for a teacher to implement several different interventions that have been produced from functional assessment processes. As such, this talk will review five practical classwide and individual approaches for addressing challenging behavior in public school settings.

Objectives:
- State one strategy for improving classroom transitions.
- State two benefits of using choral-response instructional strategies.
- State the basic procedures of the Good Behavior Game.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

057: The Science of Reading for Complex Learners

Presenter: Natalie Smith, Amy Cavalier

Description:
This professional learning opportunity equips educators with evidence-based strategies to support students with intellectual disabilities in language comprehension and word reading. Grounded in scientific research, this session explores phonological awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and background knowledge to enhance literacy instruction. Strategies and practical applications will provide educators with tools to help students navigate reading challenges. By applying these methods, teachers can foster meaningful literacy development and improve student outcomes. Join us in transforming reading instruction and unlocking new pathways to literacy for students with complex disabilities.

Objectives:
- Describe how to apply evidence-based strategies to support students with complex learning needs in enhancing language comprehension and word reading.

- Discuss how to implement targeted approaches in phonological awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and background knowledge to improve literacy outcomes for students with complex learning needs.
- Discuss how to integrate tools such as AI, PASA DLM instructional tools, comprehension planners, and others when planning for and providing literacy instruction to students with complex learning needs.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

058: A Dozen Faulty Notions about Teaching and Learning in Special Education

Presenter: William Heward

Description:
Like all learners, students with disabilities progress best when they actively participate in well-executed lessons informed by scientific research. Unfortunately, many students with disabilities spend their school days in educational programs (mis)informed by a set of widely held beliefs about teaching and learning. A dozen well-intentioned but misguided notions will be identified (e.g., teaching discrete skills trivializes education and ignores the whole child, patience is a virtue when teaching children with disabilities), why each notion is faulty examined, and practical strategies for countering these notions and the "worst practices" they encourage offered.

Objectives:
- Name any six of twelve widely held notions about teaching and learning that hinder the effectiveness of special education.
- Briefly describe how each of those six notions hinders optimal learning outcomes.
- Identify a research-based instructional practice that counters the negative impacts of those six notions.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

059: Beyond the Plate: Navigating the Ethics of Food Restriction in Children with Autism

Presenter: Dena Kelly

Description:
Proper nutrition is vital for all children, but for those on the autism spectrum, the impact of diet on physical and cognitive functioning can be even more profound. This session will explore the ethical considerations of feeding interventions that aim to address the nutritional needs of children with autism, including the role of nutrition in supporting growth, development, and

overall well-being. Attendees will engage in discussions about how food refusal, selective eating, and sensory sensitivities can impede a child's ability to receive essential nutrients, potentially affecting behavior, sleep, and physical health. By the end of the session, participants will have a comprehensive understanding of the connection between nutrition and behavior, and how to ethically guide feeding interventions to support optimal health outcomes for children on the autism spectrum.

Objectives:
- Identify the impact of nutrition on physical and cognitive development in children on the autism spectrum and how dietary deficiencies can influence behavior and overall functioning.
- Discuss the ethical considerations involved in interventions for feeding therapy.
- Discuss strategies for promoting more consistent eating habits through behavioral techniques.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

8:00 am to 4:45 pm (with breaks and lunch)

060: National Institute for Direct Instruction: Math, Reading, ELA

Presenter: Randi Saulter and Bryan Wickman

Description:
This session is designed to give participants an introduction to and an overview of Authentic Direct Instruction curriculum for literacy, numeracy, expressive/receptive language, and English language acquisition.Participants will gain background in the distinctive features of the Direct Instruction model. The following areas will be addressed: History of & research foundation for Direct Instruction, Organization of Instruction, Program Design, Teacher Presentation Techniques including scripts, signals, wait time, pacing, group unison responses, monitoring student performance, corrective feedback, differentiated praise

While this is not a specific program training, participants will have the opportunity to practice with curriculum materials in small peer groups and receive feedback from a seasoned Direct Instruction coach/consultant. Many of the teaching techniques can be applied to general teaching. Come see what Direct Instruction can do for your students!

Objectives:

- Demonstrate how to appropriately use signals.
- Demonstrate pacing.
- Demonstrate giving corrective feedback in small peer groups.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

8:00 am to 11:15 am (with 15 min break)

061: Strategies to Support Learning and Participation Through a Transdisciplinary Approach (OT/PT)

Presenter: Lori Bartleson, Kristen Chisholm, Denise Swensen

Description:
The current research on the transdisciplinary model under IDEA focuses on fostering collaboration among various stakeholders to enhance supports for students' academic and functional success. Educators, parents, therapists, and community members play crucial roles in developing comprehensive support plans that address students' diverse needs. A top-down evaluation involves assessing students' profiles to determine specific strengths and needs that align with their suspected disabilities. By setting discipline-free goals, educators can focus on addressing students' needs holistically and promoting their full participation in meaningful activities. Developing multidisciplinary intervention strategies and data collection methods are key components of promoting students' access and participation in meaningful activities. By collaborating with various professionals, educators can create comprehensive intervention plans that consider students' diverse needs.

Objectives:
- Summarize the current research regarding the transdisciplinary model under IDEA including various stakeholders' perspectives to promote solidarity in implementing supports for students' academic and functional success.
- Define a top-down evaluation process to identify student's strengths and needs based on their profile and areas of suspected disability.
- Define discipline-free, SMART, and meaningful goals related to students' participation in school and community activities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

062: Evidence-Based Practices in Action: A Case Study of Instruction for Early Learners

Presenter: Laura Auman, Brittany Blount, Seth Hershberger

BK2KH 2025, 5-7-25

Description:

This session is for educators, therapists, and professionals working with early learners, especially those with developmental disabilities or communication challenges. We'll cover essential strategies for assessing early learners and using that information to create effective, individualized instructional programs focused on communication and social skills.

Topics include defining early learners, using evidence-based practices, and teaching foundational skills—especially manding (requesting)—through various communication modes like verbal speech, sign language, and AAC.

A case study will illustrate how to apply these strategies in real classrooms, showing practical examples and learner success. Participants will leave with tools and techniques to build inclusive, supportive learning environments.

Objectives:
- Define what an early learner is.
- Identify appropriate ways to assess early learners.
- Apply the knowledge gained to develop programming for an early learner.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

063: Promoting Generative Language

Presenter: Alice Shillingsburg

Description:

Individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often exhibit deficits in language and communication development. While neurotypically developing children demonstrate adult-like language production by age five (Luinge, Post, Wit, & Goorhuis-Brouwer, 2006), expressing abstract and hypothetical ideas across a variety of topics (Tager-Flusberg et al, 2009), some people with ASD and language delays may have difficulty with more complex language that persists into adolescence and adulthood. Studies have found that some children with autism do not combine known words into multi-word phrases at the same time as non-autistic peers (Paul, Chawarska, Klin, and Volkmar, 2007; Weismer et al., 2011) pointing to difficulties with generative language. Strategies to promote the emergence of generative language are of critical importance for learners with ASD. This line of research has developed greatly over the last decade but is slow to show up in clinical programming. Additionally, practitioners may struggle with remediation strategies when emergent language skills fail to occur. The current workshop will cover research focused on assessing emergence of untrained verbal operants as well as strategies to promote emergence and generative language using strategies such as matrix training, multiple exemplar instruction (MEI), and instructive feedback.

Objectives:

- Describe the importance of assessing and programming for emergence of untaught skills when teaching children with autism.
- Describe two ways to assess emergence of untaught skills.
- Describe two ways to program to promote emergence of untaught skills.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

8:00 am to 9:30 am

064: Supporting Transition: The Readiness of Youths to Manage Their Low Vision Eye

Presenter: Emily Vasile

Description:
A key responsibility in adulthood is managing one's own healthcare. Along these lines, adolescents and young adults who have low vision will or may eventually be responsible for managing their own low vision specialty eye care. How does this transition occur and what makes one ready for this transition? This presentation explores these questions in relation to the field of blindness and low vision and presents the audience with considerations for instruction and family engagement.

Objectives:
- Identify the various roles of professionals within low vision specialty eye care transition.
- Identify skills beneficial for adolescents when transitioning to manage their low vision specialty eye care.
- Identify and make connections with promising practices that they currently implement to facilitate low vision specialty eye care transition.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

065: Empower All Learners to Acquire and Leverage a Digital Voice

Presenter: Nanci Shepardson

Description:
Learn about the technological tools that give voices a digital platform. So often, the student who does not raise a hand is drowned out. Using technology to provide each student a voice is empowering! Through hands-on exploration, discover the latest tools that make digital learning a success.

BK2KH 2025, 5-7-25

Facilitating Student Voice using digital tools effectively requires an understanding of how to empower student voice, while also understanding what digital literacy is and how we can leverage it to facilitate powerful positive outcomes for all students, especially students with dyslexia. There are a multitude of tools for online learning that empower Student Voice. Sifting through the options is a time-consuming and overwhelming task. With the important lens of online privacy, equity, and access, this presentation culls down the choices and succinctly presents the options by the following categories: physical tools, backchanneling, web-based add-ons, general apps, assessment tools, video and audio tools, digital storytelling, presentation tools, organization tools, and blogging. Teachers, educators, parents, and students will all find this interactive and hands-on session helpful, as after each category of tools is discussed, participants will be able to explore the tools during the session. This hands-on exploration will provide the participant with concrete next steps for further investigation once the session ends. Leaving the session with a clear takeaway or takeaways generally translates to the application of the material presented in the session.

Objectives:
- Identify the technological options that facilitate Student Voice through the presentation and hands-on exploration.
- Discuss the benefits and challenges of providing an online platform that encourages all voices to be heard.
- Define digital literacy and how to implement tools that facilitate this skill through interactive discussion.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

066: Scientist Practitioner: Integrating Science into Practice

Presenter: Elbert Blakely

Description:
Many graduate programs in behavior analysis use the science practitioner model of training students. I will first review the history of this training model to provide a proper context. Next, I will discuss a scientist practitioner model that is being tested at Florida Tech in conjunction with two clinics in the Orlando area. In this model, scientific inquiry is integrated into clinical practice. The results of these inquiries are used, then, to guide clinical practice. For example, I will review the stimulus control analysis technique, as well as brief investigations of error correction and assessing the potential reinforcement value of prompting. Flow charting will also be introduced. I will show examples of flow charts that can depict programmatic procedures such as schedules of reinforcement, prompting and fading, and error correction. Finally, organizational processes and procedures designed to encourage integrating scientific inquiry into practice will be discussed.

Objectives:

- Design a stimulus control analysis.
- Create a flowchart procedure using color coding.
- Identify at least 3 ways that science could be used to answer an important question.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

067: Supervision Practices and Perspective Taking (BCBA Course)

Presenter: Linda LeBlanc

Description:
This presentation explores the intersection between supervision practices and perspective taking skills. The supervisory process can benefit from supervisors a) taking their supervisees perspective and b) teaching their supervisees to compassionately take the perspective of their clients and families. Each of these supervision practices is reviewed with specific skill targets and teaching strategies.

Objectives:
- Define perspective taking behaviorally
- Identify curricular targets for supervisees related to compassion
- Identify at least one teaching strategy for establishing perspective taking and compassionate care skills for supervisees.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASH, BACB, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

068: The Trouble and Danger Associated with "Ignoring" a Student's Behavior

Presenter: Tim Vollmer

Description:
Historically, many behavior intervention plans and other behavioral recommendations have suggested that adults should "ignore" the student's behavior. However, there are several reasons that "ignoring" can be either impossible, contra-indicated, dangerous, or some combination. The presenter will review evidence of possible difficulties and will provide suggestions for behavioral interventions that do not require ignoring.

Objectives:
- Describe at least one reason that "ignoring" is either impractical or potentially dangerous.
- Describe how differential reinforcement can be implemented without ignoring.
- Describe alternative language to use in place of the instruction to ignore.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

069: Connecting DLM Essential Elements to Career Education and Work Standards

Presenter: Kaylee Wynkoop

Description:
All students — including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities — deserve access to high-quality instruction aligned with the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work. They also need meaningful opportunities to develop a personalized Career Portfolio that showcases their progress and potential through relevant, individualized artifacts.

This session will offer practical strategies for aligning instruction based on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills with the Career Education and Work Standards. Participants will leave with actionable ideas for designing instruction and portfolio artifacts that reflect student strengths, support diverse learning styles, and prepare learners for future training or employment opportunities.

Objectives:
- Identify connections between Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements and the Career Education and Work Standards.
- Plan instructional activities that align Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills with meaningful Career Portfolio artifacts.
- Create examples of individualized Career Portfolio artifacts that reflect student learning and growth related to DLM Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

070: The HOW and WHY of Youth Engagement

Presenter: Natasha Fletcher, Hayley Penn, and Hunter Steinitz

Description:
This session is guided by key principles that ensure meaningful engagement and impactful learning. We will discuss the value in prioritizing a youth-centered approach, youth voices, and youth experiences in and out of the classroom. This session emphasizes the value in key youth engagement principles including empowerment and advocacy, inclusivity and accessibility,

collaboration and peer support, as well as touch on practical application of tools from PaTTANs Youth Engagement Specialists (YES).

Objectives:
- Discuss the value of youth engagement.
- Discuss practical, real world examples.
- Identify PaTTAN YES' youth engagement publications.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

9:30 am to 9:45 am: Break

9:45 am to 11:15 am

071: SMoRRES: A Communication-Partner Education Program

Presenter: Jill Senner, Matt Baud

Description:
Research supports the use of partner-augmented input as an intervention strategy for individuals who use AAC. There are multiple benefits of modeling AAC, but how can this be done effectively at school and home? Inservice style trainings rarely result in AAC modeling in the natural environment. This presentation will introduce an evidence-based communication-partner education program which is embedded within naturally occurring family routines in the home and classroom.

Objectives:
- Identify 3 benefits of partner-augmented input
- List 3 benefits of partner instruction
- Describe 3 elements of successful communication partner training programs

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

072: Conversation Fluency to Kids Who Need It Most: A Call to Research, Practice, and Outcomes

Presenter: Landria Green

Description:

Teaching social conversation skills to learners with autism requires more than just a curriculum—it demands intentional practice, cultural awareness, and real-world relevance. This session offers practitioners practical tools and strategies to design and implement effective, equity-centered social skills instruction.

Participants will explore how positionality (the practitioner's own background, beliefs, and assumptions) and preparation (training and awareness) influence intervention outcomes. We will address how social communication expectations vary across contexts—classrooms, playgrounds, communities—and how practitioners can adapt instruction accordingly.

Through case examples, evidence-based frameworks, and a take-home roadmap, attendees will gain actionable insights focused on
- Embedding active listening and perspective taking as key elements in instruction
- How to teach select outcomes related to learner conversation fluency
- Removing practitioner barriers often rooted instructional design

This session bridges research and clinical practice with a commitment to centering the learner—ensuring learners aren't just taught to "fit in," but are equipped to connect meaningfully on their own terms.

Objectives:
- Describe at least three practices needed in individualizing social communication practices across learner populations.
- Apply at least three evidence-based strategies to teach conversational turn-taking, topic maintenance, and perspective-taking.
- Analyze barriers to social communication development that stem from intervention design rather than learner deficit.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

073: FAMILIES TO THE MAX: Collaborative Partnerships in the Home, School and Community

Presenter: Jill Houseal, Nikki Huggan

Description:
FAMILIES TO THE MAX will discuss the importance of building collaborative partnerships in all areas of a child's life. The concepts of presuming competence and having high expectations will be explored in ways that support student success through the sharing of F2MAX's Maximizing Principles, Optimal Practices, and family stories.

Objectives:

- Identify concepts that can be applied in their daily interactions to foster and create collaborative partnerships
- Identify opportunities in every arena of a child's life and discuss how presuming competence helps to ensure their success
- Describe how to apply F2MAX's Maximizing Principles and Optimal Practices to ensure access to grade level, general education curriculum

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

074: Crafting Early Childhood Behavior Goals: What's in Yours?

Presenter: Samantha Riggleman, Johanna Higgins

Description:
Writing high-quality behavior goals for young children requires a balance of developmental appropriateness, clarity, and alignment with meaningful outcomes. This session will provide educators, specialists, and service providers with practical tools and strategies for developing behavior goals that are observable, measurable, and grounded in functional, age and developmentally appropriate expectations. Through guided examples, video modeling, and collaborative activities, attendees will gain confidence in writing goals that are both rigorous and realistic for early learners.

Objectives:
- Identify the components of a high-quality, measurable behavior goal appropriate for young children.
- Use assessment data and observations to inform the development of individualized behavior goals.
- Write behavior goals that promote functional, socially significant skills aligned with developmental needs.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

075: Overview of Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University

Presenter: Ryan Palm

Description:
This session will begin with an introduction to support programs for neurodivergent students at the college level. There are many programs at 100+ schools throughout the country, and we will cover the basics of what types of programs are offered and how to find them. We then will dive

in and cover one program in detail - the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University (AIM) and use it as an example for many of the fundamentals discussed in the first part of the presentation. We will provide practical strategies for attendees on how to help students prepare for the college transition, and some innovative opportunities being offered at Mercyhurst to assist in this process.

Objectives:
- Identify the primary types of support programs for neurodivergent college students.
- Identify strategies useful in helping neurodivergent high school students prepare for the transition to higher education.
- Discuss the support and programming available at one of the country's oldest and largest autism support programs at the college level.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

076: What Did You Learn in School Today: Teaching Skills for a Lifespan

Presenter: Willow Hozella

Description:
This session will focus on designing instruction to teach skills that will be beneficial for students with autism across skill levels following graduation from formal educational settings. The analyses provided will eschew chronological age as a focus for instruction and focus on the student's current level of verbal behavior and other mastered skill areas when designing instruction. Case study data and instructional sequences will be presented for teaching a variety of skills across early, intermediate, and advanced learner profiles.

Objectives:
- Identify component and prerequisite skills when designing instructional programs.
- Describe methodologies for teaching a student to transport aided AAC devices.
- Identify instructional targets for post-graduation that allow a student to be more independent (e.g., transporting with a communication device, safely teaching the use of rideshare apps).

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

077: Youth Engagement Now (YEN)

Presenter: Natasha Fletcher, Hayley Penn, and Hunter Steinitz

Description:

This interactive session introduces participants to the Youth Engagement Now (YEN) project and provides a practical roadmap for embedding youth voice in disability advocacy and systems-level work. Through lived experience, tools, and real-world examples, attendees will explore how to empower young adults with disabilities to become self-advocates and leaders in shaping their futures. Discover how to transform youth engagement from an abstract goal to an integrated, actionable strategy that strengthens your organization's impact. Whether you're just starting or refining an existing effort, you'll leave with clear steps and resources to use immediately.

Objectives:
- Define the core principles of meaningful youth engagement and the role of adult allies in supporting youth with disabilities.
- Identify organizational barriers to youth involvement and develop actionable strategies to overcome them.
- Describe the YEN framework and apply engagement strategies that honor youth lived experience and promotes leadership, inclusion, and self-advocacy.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

11:15 am to 12:30 pm: Lunch

12:30 to 2:30 pm

078: Creating an Interprofessional Practice (IPP) for AAC Assessments in Schools

Presenter: Jill Senner, Matt Baud

Description:
Effective practices in AAC assessment and intervention require the collective expertise of a multi-disciplinary team that recognizes the importance of family-centered practice. However, this can often be a challenge for busy school professionals with limited access to families. In this session, interprofessional practices in AAC assessment will be discussed. A tool developed by one suburban special education cooperative to encourage participation of all stakeholders will be introduced.

Objectives:
- Describe interprofessional practice (IPP).
- List at least 4 team members that should be included in AAC decision-making.
- Identify strategies for including all stakeholders in school-based AAC assessments.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

079: Measuring Pain and Discomfort as Variables Influencing Severe Behavior

Presenter: Tim Vollmer

Description:
In prior presentations, Dr. Vollmer has shown evidence that pain and discomfort states can contribute to the occurrence of severe behavior, such as self-injury and aggression. In the current presentation he will provide strategies for repeated and ongoing measurement of possible pain and discomfort states. Measurable variables include but are not limited to bowel movements, ear and sinus infections, body temperature, urinations, and sleep, among others. In addition, strategies for measuring behavior in the context of possible pain and discomfort states will be discussed.

Objectives:
- Identify at least two potential states of pain or discomfort that might interact with severe behavior.
- Describe at least one measurement system for pain and discomfort variables.
- Describe at least one way to measure behavior in the context of pain and discomfort states.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

080: Core Instructional Practices for Working with Students with Challenging Behavior

Presenter: Ashley Harned, Jennifer Shade, Christy Winski, Cindy Sheehan, Rachel Bixler

Description:
Teachers and administrators often struggle with offering a balance of quality instruction while establishing behavior management systems that result in all students having success. In this session, a review of effective instructional strategies and procedures for the delivery of high-quality instruction for students across all settings will be provided. The focus will be on evidence-based interventions applicable to students of all instructional levels and in all settings that include direct instruction, establishing instructional control, teaching cooperation skills as well as communication skills and academic content. Emphasis will be placed on effective instruction methodologies, school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), token economies, behavior contracts, self-monitoring checklists, implementation of positive behavior support plans and behavioral skills training for increasing staff performance.

Objectives:
- Define and list strategies for establishing cooperative learning environments.
- Identify effective instructional techniques for teaching academic and behavior skills.
- Identify strategies for prevention, de-escalation and reduction of problem behavior.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

081: Evidence-Based Practices in Action: Translating Fluency-Based Instruction with Verbal Operants

Presenter: Laura Auman, Ashley Olson

Description:
This session explores the practical application of fluency-based instruction within the framework of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behavior. Participants will gain an understanding of how verbal operants—such as imitation, tacts, and echoics—can be systematically taught and reinforced using fluency-based strategies. Fluency measures both accuracy and speed, and research suggests that the degree to which a skill is fluent may predict how well it is retained, generalized across settings, and how easily and reliably it can be used over time. Through real-world examples, data-driven outcomes, and classroom implementation tools, attendees will learn how to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Objectives:
- Provide examples of different types of fluency-based instruction.
- Describe the importance of fluency-based instruction in the classroom.
- Identify ways to use fluency-based instruction in their instructional setting.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

082: Teaching Reading to Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism

Presenter: Kathleen Whitbread

Description:
Research over the past decade has demonstrated that students with intellectual disabilities (ID) and autism benefit from the same proven literacy interventions that are effective for other struggling readers; however, there is a significant research-to-practice gap in the field. Students with ID and autism are routinely denied scientifically-based reading interventions based on the outdated belief that this population of children is unable to master foundational literacy skills, including phonics and phonemic awareness. This presentation will examine the most current research on teaching students with ID and autism to be proficient readers, including the specific

scope and sequence of skills that begins with print awareness and progresses through the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The session will focus on evidence-based, practical assessment and intervention strategies specifically tailored to the unique learning needs of students with ID and autism, including those who use Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC).

Objectives:
- Identify and describe the five essential components of an effective reading program: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency.
- Describe 3 or more techniques for adapting common literacy assessment measures to meet the unique needs of students with ID and autism, including those who use Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC).
- Identify at least 2 methods for increasing the explicitness of instruction to meet the learning needs of students with ID and autism.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

083: Looking at the Whole Student: Comprehensive Supports for Individuals with IDD in the Classroom and Community

Presenter: Lydia Ocasio-Stoutenburg

Description:
 This session challenges the ways that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are often engaged in the classroom, moving from very limiting and often rote ways of teaching and learning to supporting their holistic needs. This session recognizes students with IDD as people with an embodied experience that has often been viewed through a deficit lens. Instead, we call on practitioners, families, advocates, allies, and other critical supporters to engage in collaborations that recognize the whole student. We will describe key, practical strategies for becoming an important co-advocate.

Objectives:
- Identify some of the current ways in which students with IDD learn and are supported in schools which are attached to beliefs
- Describe some of the impacts this has on students, families, and practitioners
- Learn and apply some tools for promoting and enhancing the holistic needs and well-being of students with IDD in the classroom, through the efforts of a whole school community

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

084: Inclusive Recreation Program with Elementary Age Students

Presenter: Samantha Riggleman

Description:
This session will explore the design, implementation, and impact of an inclusive recreation program developed for elementary-aged students with and without disabilities. Grounded in evidence-based practices and real-world application, the rec. program aims to promote social interaction, physical activity, and a sense of belonging among all participants. The presenter will share practical strategies for creating inclusive environments, collaborating with schools and families, and using structured play and sports to support developmental and social-emotional goals. Case examples, video clips, and hands-on activities will be provided to envision how to adapt and apply similar programming in your own setting.

Objectives:
- Identify key components of a successful inclusive recreation program for elementary-age students.
- Describe strategies to support participation and engagement for students with diverse needs during recreational activities.
- Apply methods to promote meaningful peer interactions and social skill development in inclusive play and sports settings.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

085: Swinging from the Chandelier: Finding Joy in the Journey Through Autism

Presenter: Sandy, Ben, and Dan Hartranft

This presentation offers a powerful and personal look into one family's journey with autism—told from multiple perspectives. When Ben was diagnosed with autism at age 2, his parents began a path filled with both challenges and unexpected joys. Now an inspiring advocate and speaker, Ben's story has touched thousands. Alongside him, his brother Dan shares a unique and heartfelt viewpoint, exploring what it was like to grow up in the shadow of both autism and his own dyslexia diagnosis.

Through the combined voices of Ben, Dan and his parents, this session will dive into the family dynamics shaped by autism, the unspoken experiences of siblings, and the resilience, growth, and love that bind families together. Designed for parents, caregivers, educators, and professionals, this presentation will offer valuable insights, emotional connection, and practical tools to support individuals and families navigating autism.

Objectives:

- Explore the impact of autism on the entire family unit, including parents, siblings, and extended family by sharing lived experiences, personal growth, and the transformative power of advocacy and acceptance.
- Discuss the emotional and practical challenges faced by siblings of individuals with autism, and how they develop responsibility, empathy, and resilience.
- Identify effective strategies and support systems to help families overcome common challenges in daily life.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

086: Introduction to the CVI/AAC Framework: A Decision-Making Tool for Individuals with CVI

Presenter: Tara McCarty, Dawn Sowers

Description:
This session will introduce attendees to the CVI/AAC Framework, a decision-making and data collection tool for determining aided AAC solutions for individuals with cerebral/cortical visual impairment. The session will introduce the three domains of the framework and provide examples from the exemplary case that the original publication was based upon (Wilkinson et al., 2023).

Objectives:
- Discuss visual behavioral characteristics of CVI that may impact aided AAC system design.
- List the three domains of the CVI/AAC framework.
- Describe three types of data that could be collected to support decision making according to the CVI/AAC Framework.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

087: Measuring and Changing the Frequency of Thoughts and Feelings of Inner Behavior

Presenter: Jared Van

Description:
This presentation introduces attendees to the concept of inner behavior, private events such as thoughts, feelings, and urges, as measurable, teachable, and modifiable using precision teaching methods. Drawing from over 40 years of charted inner behavior research and the presenter's dissertation work, participants will learn how to define and detect inner behavior

using the Pinpoint+ framework, measure it using frequency-based strategies on the Standard Celeration Chart, and implement interventions that increase fluent responding of desired private verbal behavior and decrease the frequency of unproductive or interfering inner responses.

Attendees will leave with practical tools that practitioners, educators, and families can use to support individuals, including those on the autism spectrum, in identifying, counting, and changing inner behavior that may affect learning, participation, and quality of life. Strategies include 1-minute timing procedures, all-day inner behavior tracking, See/Say and Think/Say interventions, and pairing inner behavior targets with overt behavioral outcomes. This session is designed for those interested in extending the principles of behavior science to the private domain in a data-driven and learner-centered way.

Objectives:
- Measure private behavior.
- Describe how to use evidence based interventions on negative inner behavior.
- Describe how to apply frequency building on inner behavior.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

2:30 pm to 2:45 pm: Break

2:45 pm to 4:45 pm

088: Finding the Right Fit: Individualized AAC Solutions for Unique Communicators

Presenter: Tammy Thompson-Cooke

Description:
No two communicators are alike — especially within the diverse population of learners with autism. This session explores the process of developing individualized augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems that integrate no-tech, low-tech, and high-tech tools, including speech-generating devices (SGDs). Participants will examine learner profiles, AAC competencies, and assessment strategies that inform feature matching and skill-building. Practical, research-based strategies for supporting successful SGD use will be shared, with an emphasis on balancing the skills of both students and staff for meaningful, functional communication outcomes.

Objectives:
- Identify learner profiles and AAC competency levels to guide individualized communication support planning.

- Analyze communication assessment data to match AAC tools, strategies, and features to individual learner needs.
- Apply evidence-based teaching strategies to support skill development and the successful use of speech-generating devices.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

089: Cooperation with IEP Teams (Highlighting OT/PT Services)

Presenter: Jen Hess, Beth Konde

Description:
Recognizing, embracing, and valuing the power team work brings to education, we will discuss strategies for successful collaboration between parents and multidisciplinary professionals of IEP teams. In order to unleash the boundless potential of each student, we will explore how integrating knowledge, skills, experiences and perspectives from all team members ensures a robust IEP, and addresses the student's full participation in his/her educational environment. We will review the roles of each team member and the possible contributions each of those members can make to IEP development. We will discuss how collaborative goal writing, data collection and progress monitoring is essential for successful IEP implementation. We will demonstrate how using a multi-disciplinary collaborative team approach addressing the challenges and celebrating successes together creates a nurturing environment that benefits both students and staff which leads to ultimate student success.

Objectives:
- Describe the roles of Occupational Therapy Practitioners (OTPs) and Physical Therapy Practitioners (PTPs) in educational settings and in IEP development.
- Discuss how OTPs and PTPs relate to other multidisciplinary professionals involved on the IEP team and demonstrate how we can collaborate for successful student participation.
- Identify strategies for collaborative goal development, data collection and progress monitoring for successful IEP implementation.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

090: Legacy of Function, PART 1: Applying Iwata's Work Across School and Community Settings

Presenter: Ashley Harned, Willow Hozella, Dr. Lori Chamberlain, Heather Matlock, Jessica Pavolic, Nicole Verbos

Description:
Dr. Brian Iwata's pioneering work in Functional Analysis (FA) redefined how we understand and respond to challenging behavior, laying the foundation for function-based practices that have shaped behavior analysis and special education for decades. This session honors his legacy by bridging research and real-world application across multiple contexts: schools, homes, communities, and clinical settings. Panelists—seasoned practitioners and educators—will share case studies and implementation strategies that highlight how Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and FA can be used effectively across diverse environments. Whether supporting a student in a classroom, a child at home, or a client in a clinic, the emphasis will remain on making the science of behavior accessible and actionable. Through a lens of practical application, the session will advocate for integrating function-based thinking into everyday decision-making, problem-solving, and instructional planning. Session one will focus on function-based interventions across environments. Mrs. Ashley Harned will highlight the core principles of Functional Analysis (FA) and Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)s. Panelist, Dr. Willow Hozella, Mrs. Heather Matlock, Mrs. Nicole Verbos, will share case studies and implementation strategies that highlight how Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and FA can be used effectively across diverse environments Everyone—not just behavior analysts— can learn to identify the function of behavior and use that knowledge to create positive, lasting change.

Objectives:
- Describe the core principles of Functional Analysis (FA) and Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Understand the importance of completing a Functional Analysis and the relevance across school, home, community, and clinical settings.
- Identify practical strategies for teaching and promoting function-based thinking among educators, caregivers, and community members to support meaningful and sustainable behavior change.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

091: Evidence-Based Practices in Action: Instruction with Lifelong Outcomes for MS and HS Students

Presenter: Leslie Moore

Description:
This presentation will discuss programming in a secondary level Life Skills/Autistic Support classroom. It will include information about a systematic way of teaching transition skills that promote independence in the students. It will also include inclusion and community based experiences that are linked to this instruction.

Objectives:
- Identify areas of need specific to transition-age students.
- Apply a systematic approach to teaching independent skills.
- Describe how to embed new opportunities for students outside the classroom setting that promote inclusion and independence.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

092: Using DLM Essential Elements and Linkage Levels to Deliver Standards Aligned Instruction

Presenter: Kaylee Wynkoop

Description:
All students — including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities — are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that meets their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living. Federal and state requirements also mandate that all students receive instruction aligned with grade-level academic content standards.

This session will offer practical, concrete strategies for using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements to design and deliver academically-based instruction tailored to students with the most significant disabilities. Participants will explore how to use the Essential Elements as a foundation for meaningful learning that promotes access, engagement, and growth.

Objectives:
- Utilize DLM Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills to inform the design of meaningful lessons and instructional activities.
- Create instructional skills maps aligned with DLM Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills.
- Implement strategies for data collection and progress monitoring grounded in the DLM Essential Elements and Linkage Level skills.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

093: Overview of ODP Waivers and Presentation of ODP Gold Book

Presenter: Julie Mochon, Rochelle Troutman

Description:

Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) implements four (4) 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services waivers. Waiver programs allow states to better support eligible individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or autism (ID/A) to live in their own homes and communities. Join members of ODPs leadership team to explore waivers and learn about the Gold Book, a resource designed to assist people with ID/A and their families/caregivers, to better understand what services are available and how to access and navigate the system."

Objectives:
- Describe ODPs 1915(c) waivers.
- Discuss the services and supports available in Pennsylvania.
- Describe the Gold Book, a valuable resource for navigating the ID/A service delivery system.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

094: Practical Implications of Strengthening Echoics: Shaping Generative Verbal Behaviors

Presenter: Olga Meleshkevich

Description:
The echoic plays a foundational role in the development of trained and generative expressive and receptive verbal skills. During the multiple parts of this presentation, I will explain the role of echoic behavior in the development of generative verbal skills. First, in bi-directional naming, a child echoes the name of an object that a parent says and subsequently listens to themselves. This repertoire helps the child learn new words quickly. Second, echoic behavior supports combining learned words into phrases. If practitioners incorporate echoics into teaching receptive skills, they might not need to teach every instruction individually. Echoing instructions gives a child a strategy for understanding new instructions without needing to memorize each one. Third, an intervention designed to promote skills beyond the content of training is teaching a child to echo chains of words (e.g., cow, soup, hat), where the number of words matches the number of words in future instructions. According to the joint control hypothesis, a child will follow multi-word instructions if they echo the instruction word by word. I will show multiple videos demonstrating the building of generative receptive skills simply by extending the number of words a client echoes in a chain. Finally, I will demonstrate how echoics and self-echoics can be embedded into various teaching tasks, such as feature-function-class programs, instructions with transitions, visual tasks (e.g., arranging items in a logical sequence, latent imitation), and answering questions. Behavior analysts must design interventions that promote skills beyond those learned during training. Focusing on echoics will help children generalize language and adapt more independently.

Objectives:
- Teach and shape naming skills, one–word echoic, and self-echoic behaviors.

- Shape echoics consisting of two, three, and four words.
- Incorporate echoics into various tasks across a child's curriculum.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

095: Thriving and Motivation Via the Lens of Language (Plus a Little Positive Deviance)

Presenter: William Vicars

Description:
Improve your mindset, motivation, and overall well-being (and that of those around you) by actively choosing the language through which you shape your thoughts and feelings. Come explore how subtle shifts in the words or signs we use can boost motivation levels and fortify resilience. Shifting from negative or limiting patterns to more empowering ones allows us to transform our approaches and more readily overcome challenges. Language creates frameworks through which we perceive success, failure, and personal growth. Reframing situations using different language creates a new mental lens that often reveals new possibilities and perspectives -- allowing us to energize and inspire.

Objectives:
- Discuss strategies to increase resilience and ability to cope with challenges via narrative restructuring.
- Utilize question-framing to shift focus from negative or limiting perspectives to more positive and empowering ones.
- Define and apply positive deviance as a tool for forward progress.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

096: Application of the CVI/AAC Framework to Three Heterogeneous Individuals with CVI

Presenter: Tara McCarty, Dawn Sowers

Description:
This session will present application of the CVI/AAC Framework to 3 individuals with varying levels of visual function, language skills, and motor capabilities. Attendees will learn how the research team applied the framework across time through discussions with families and service providers to implement change to the environment, communication partner behaviors, and AAC system design.

Objectives:
- Compare between the various domains of the CVI/AAC Framework.
- Describe individual characteristics that impacted aided AAC system design for each of the three cases.
- Prepare a plan for utilization of the CVI/AAC framework.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

Thursday, July 31, 2025

8:00 am to 11:15 am (with 15 min break)

097: Panel: Bridging Communication and Behavior: Collaborative Practices for Meaningful Outcomes

Presenter: Heather Forbes, Tammy Thompson-Cooke, Stephanie Dille-Huggins

Description:
Effective communication is central to learning, behavior, and connection — and for many students, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems are the key to unlocking their voices. This interdisciplinary panel brings together an AAC specialist, a dual-certified SLP/BCBA, and a BCBA with personal insight as a Child of a Deaf Adult (CODA) to explore the intersections of communication, behavior, and AAC. Through case discussions, assessment frameworks, and evidence-based strategies, the panel will highlight how individualized, culturally responsive, and collaborative approaches can support meaningful communication for learners with complex needs.

Objectives:
- Describe and differentiate the roles of communication, behavior, and AAC within comprehensive intervention plans for diverse learners.
- Apply interdisciplinary assessment and problem-solving strategies to identify individualized AAC solutions that support both communication and behavior outcomes.
- Examine the influence of cultural, family, and personal experiences on AAC implementation and communication partner training.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

098: Implementing Transdisciplinary Strategies for Student Success Across Their Educational Lifespan

Presenter: Lori Bartleson, Kristen Chisholm, Denise Swensen

Description:
Team-based learning (TBL) is an active learning strategy where students work in small groups, to apply knowledge through a process of individual preparation, group discussion, and application exercises, fostering collaboration and accountability. In this session we will follow a student with special needs through his/her journey from early intervention to transition to adult services. Participants will read the case study before the course and be prepared to collaborate with peers in implementing a transdisciplinary model for a whole-team approach to supporting students' participation in school activities, developing meaningful goals, embedding interventions into school routines, and collecting data to evaluate success.

Objectives:
- Discuss knowledge and concepts from the transdisciplinary model for a whole- team approach to support students' participation in meaningful school activities.
- Identify multidisciplinary intervention strategies and data collection methods to promote students' access and participation in meaningful activities.
- Apply team collaboration to case scenarios throughout student's educational journey, to include: developing meaningful goals creating participation-focused intervention plans embedded into school routines data collection to evaluate student's success

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

099: Ethics: Proactive and Practice Decision Making (BCBA Course)

Presenter: Linda LeBlanc

Description:
This workshop presents a proactive, practical approach to ethical decision making that is informed by history and a behavior analytic worldview. Each section of the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts is covered with an emphasis on the underlying values and importance of each standard, application of the decision making model to scenarios, and recommended prevention and intervention strategies designed to help the early career behavior analyst discriminate between proactive and humble approaches versus reactive and arrogant approaches to ethical dilemmas. Finally, the workshop focus on guidance for ethics in everyday practice focusing on a) strategies for continual refinement of your ethical knowledge and decision making; b) the role of ethics in self-management and self-care; and c) recruiting or creating communities of practice for ethics.

Objectives:

- Identify the core principles underlying the Ethics Code for behavior analysts.
- Identify their own propensities for responding to stressful ethical dilemmas.
- Identify the ethical implications of various self-management and stress management activities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

100: Legacy of Function, PART 2: Applying Iwata's Work Across School and Community Settings

Presenter: Dr. Lori Chamberlain, Ashley Harned, Willow Hozella, Heather Matlock, Jessica Pavolic, Nicole Verbos

Description:
Dr. Brian Iwata's pioneering work in Functional Analysis (FA) redefined how we understand and respond to challenging behavior, laying the foundation for function-based practices that have shaped behavior analysis and special education for decades. This session honors his legacy by bridging research and real-world application across multiple contexts: schools, homes, communities, and clinical settings. Panelists—seasoned practitioners and educators— will share case studies and implementation strategies that highlight how Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and FA can be used effectively across diverse environments. Session 2 will focus on function-based thinking infused in everything we do including a review of Dr. Brian Iwata Legacy, Mrs. Ashley Harned will review PaTTAN's Tier 3 professional development and customize technical assistance as part of Pennsylvania's State System of Support, Mrs. Jessica Pavolic will highlight IU training systems, case study and how Intermediate Unit 24 provides local education agencies Tier 3 professional development and customize technical assistance as part of Pennsylvania's State System of Support.

Objectives:

- Describe the why it is important to conduct Functional Analysis (FA) and Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Identify practical strategies for training staff in classroom settings and promoting function-based thinking among educators and in the school setting in order to support meaningful and sustainable behavior change.
- Advocate for the integration of function-based behavior support training within teacher preparation and higher education programs.
-

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

8:00 am to 9:30 am

101: Teaching More Complex Ways to Play to Young Children with ASD and Other Disabilities

Presenter: Erin Barton

Description:
This practical, strategy-focused session will explore how to intentionally teach more complex play skills—like object play, pretend play, and social play—to young children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Participants will learn how to assess current play levels, identify developmentally appropriate next steps, and use evidence-based strategies such as modeling, prompting, reinforcement, and peer-mediated interventions to expand children's play. Real-world examples, video demonstrations, and tools for embedding instruction into routines will be shared. Participants will leave with concrete ideas to support deeper engagement, flexibility, and enjoyment in play.

Objectives:
- Identify and assess levels of play in young children with autism and other developmental disabilities to determine developmentally appropriate next steps for instruction.
- Describe and apply evidence-based strategies—including modeling, prompting, reinforcement, and peer-mediated approaches—to teach more complex play skills such as object play, pretend play, and social play.
- Embed play instruction within daily routines across home and classroom environments to promote engagement, flexibility, and meaningful participation in play.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, Infant/Toddler, Inf/Tod CAT, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

102: Delay Tolerance Taught to a Learner with Smith-Magenis Syndrome

Presenter: Mariah deFreitas

Description:
Delay tolerance training teaches children to accept delayed access to a requested item or event without exhibiting challenging behaviors. Often, it is used when gradually fading the frequency of reinforcement following the acquisition of a functional communication response, or part of a more comprehensive skills-based treatment package. Typically, these interventions are used with children with autism, and applied in clinic settings or hospitals, and rarely in a classroom. Our purpose was to evaluate delay tolerance training with a unique population: a child with Smith-Magenis Syndrome. In addition, we applied the intervention in a classroom, in a specialized school for individuals with brain injuries and other neurobehavioral disorders. Our

aim was to establish a simplified approach that can be described in a way that would be intuitive and easily grasped by lay caregivers."

Objectives:
- Discuss why delay tolerance is crucial for emotional regulation and self-control.
- Describe how to implement structured strategies for building delay tolerance.
- Describe how to use positive reinforcement to strengthen delay tolerance behaviors.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

103: Impact of Inclusive Education Focused Short-Term Technical Assistance

Presenter: Brittany Seeley, Jordan Fagan

Description:
This workshop explores the role of short-term technical assistance (TA) in advancing inclusive education. Participants will learn how targeted, time-bound support can drive meaningful change in schools and districts, equipping educators and leaders with the strategies, resources, and tools needed to foster inclusive practices. Through real-world examples and interactive discussions, attendees will examine effective TA models, assess their impact on student outcomes, and identify key strategies for implementation. Whether you are seeking to improve access, instructional practices, or systemic change, this session will provide actionable insights to maximize the effectiveness of short-term TA in supporting inclusive education.

Objectives:
- Describe the key components of effective short-term technical assistance (TA) and its role in supporting inclusive education initiatives.
- Identify measurable outcomes and indicators of success for short-term TA in fostering inclusive practices within schools and districts.
- Apply strategies for implementing short-term TA to address specific challenges in inclusive education, ensuring sustainability and impact.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

104: Simple Shifts for Providing Accessible Educational Materials to Everyone

Presenter: Chris Bugaj

Description:
Educators are responsible for materials presented to and shared with the learners they support. In this session participants will be presented with a series of questions that can be used to

review educational materials. The participants will then discuss strategies for how to adopt a process of systematic material review. Strategies such as including accessibility guidelines into existing committees which review materials for safety, security, stability, and redundancy; using accessibility checkers to review custom and educator created materials, and inviting learners to review materials they've created to meet accessibility standards. Leave the session with a process for how to improve accessibility to help create a culture of inclusivity for everyone!

Objectives:
- Evaluate educational materials using targeted review questions focused on accessibility and inclusivity.
- Identify specific strategies and tools, such as accessibility checkers, to systematically review and improve materials.
- Describe a practical plan for embedding accessibility considerations into existing review processes to foster an inclusive learning environment.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

105: Tweens to Teens: Partnership with Families to Support Secondary Transition

Presenter: Jessica Webster

Description:
Families entrust educators with the academic and social-emotional development of their children. Between middle school and post secondary, adolescents are experiencing at least three major school-based, academic transitions. Secondary schools mark a time when academic expectations increase and the team of educators expands, all while students and parents tackle the uncertainty of physical and social-emotional transformations occurring during adolescent development. As students start to exhibit more independence from their parents, as their communication patterns and behavior changes, parents may also assume or perceive changes in family engagement strategies with the school, leaving them feeling less connected. Research shows that strong parent engagement opportunities lead to strong academic outcomes for students. Therefore, we must unpack the needs of schools, students and families to provide a framework for equitable engagement around the transition between middle school through post secondary education.

During this session, we will explore the developmental needs of adolescents to better understand why this transition is so important and what we can do to strengthen the connection between home and school.

This session will learn effective frameworks and provide example tools and resources to empower proactive collaboration between educators and families with the aim of strengthening the secondary school experience.

Objectives:
- Discuss various ways families can engage in developmental appropriate ways during the different phases of their children's education
- Identify implications for practice through the lens of the adolescent brain
- Describe how to use evidence based resources to empower proactive communication between educators and families.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

106: Orientation and Mobility for DeafBlind Students: Communication As The Foundation

Presenter: Amy Parker

Description:
Access to safe and efficient mobility is deeply connected to both opportunities, people, and quality of life. For individuals with multiple disabilities or those who are deafblind, communication is intertwined with mobility. Come and explore how to create meaningful and motivating mobility lessons that integrate communication, concept development, tactile support, and assistive technology.

Objectives:
- Identify effective communication approaches to promote O&M for students who are deafblind.
- Describe the way preferences may be used to design motivating and meaningful mobility routines.
- Design mobility routines that include access, communication and tactile support as organizers for students who are deafblind.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

107: Youth Engagement/Youth Citizen's Advisory Council (YCAC)

Presenter: Krista Sloan, Natasha Fletcher, and Hayley Penn

Description:
PaTTAN's Youth Engagement Specialists are partnering with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Citizens Advisory Committees to establish a new initiative known as the Youth Citizens Advisory Committee (YCAC). This session will provide an in-depth overview of the committee's framework, purpose, and the benefits of joining. We will also discuss the committee's structure and offer detailed information on how to get involved, including the steps

for participation and the potential opportunities for growth and impact. Don't miss out on the chance to engage, contribute, and make a difference in your community!

Objectives:
- Describe YCACs purpose and framework.
- Describe committee structure and benefits of joining.
- Identify potential members.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

9:30 am to 9:45 am: Break

9:45 am to 11:15 am

108: Bridging Access: The Benefits and Best Practice of Captioning Services

Presenter: Kelly Gibat, Jaime Jannotta, Erin Hodnett

Description:
This professional development session will explore real-time captioning services as a related service for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Participants will gain an understanding of various captioning models, their key features, and how they support access to instruction. The session will include demonstrations of captioning tools, strategies for conducting effective captioning trials, and approaches to daily service delivery. Additionally, participants will examine considerations for managing captioning services within a school, district or IU, supporting captioning professionals through professional development, and integrating services into IEP documentation. Practical resources for training staff and educating IEP team members about captioning services will also be provided.

Objectives:
- Identify and compare at least three real-time captioning platforms or service models, describing their key features and benefits for K–12 students who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of captioning professionals and explain how they collaborate with IEP team members to support student access and learning.
- Implement at least one method for trialing captioning services with students, including the use of sample pre- and post-trial surveys and captioning candidacy rating form, for collecting data and documenting outcomes in Pennsylvania IEPs. 4. Access and apply at least three educational resources for training IEP team members and school staff on the purpose, function, and implementation of captioning services.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work

Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

109: Educational Neuro-Rehabilitation Classroom Strategies for Students with Acquired Brain Injury

Presenter: Brenda Eagan-Johnson, Maggie Lockovich

Description:
Districts are required to identify and academically support students who struggle due to the persisting effects of pediatric acquired brain injury that interfere with learning and behavior. A brain injury impacts academic performance, school activities, mental health, social relationships, and post-high school plans. The importance of school staff, healthcare provider, student, and family collaboration; initial academic adjustments; ongoing accommodations and modifications; as well as a guided IEP specific to working with students after experiencing a brain injury will be reviewed. Concrete neuro-rehabilitation learning strategies will be shared. Details regarding how the BrainSTEPS Brain Injury School Consulting Program supports students in Pennsylvania schools by bridging the existing research-to-practice gap while monitoring students from their time of referral until high school graduation.

Objectives:
- Describe how brain injury can interfere with cognitive function, emotional well-being, and academic performance
- Discuss effective academic supports that can be implemented at school to promote learning
- Describe the importance of a collaborative approach involving information provided by the teachers, healthcare providers, students, and parents/guardians, & how that information must be used to guide school-team educational decisions.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

110: ODP Supporting Families

Presenter: Candida Walton, Francine Hogan

Description:
Families are and will always be the mainstay in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. As the primary caregivers, the quality of life of individuals with disabilities is deeply tied to the well-being of their families. When we support caregivers, we support better lives for everyone. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) demonstrates its strong commitment to Supporting Families Throughout the Lifespan in multiple ways-including through its support of the PA Family Network. This session will explore the vital role of families, the importance of true partnership, and practical strategies for empowering and equipping families at every stage of

life. Throughout the session, we will highlight how ODP's commitment to families is reflected in its initiatives, including the work of the PA Family Network. This approach delivers a consistent, strengths-based message about the importance of high expectations, community connections, and the discovery of both formal and informal supports. Join us to explore how ODP's focus on lifelong family support and meaningful collaboration leads to stronger outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Objectives:
- Discuss how the right Information at each life stage can empower decision-making and planning.
- Discuss the importance of building Connections with peers and resources that reduce isolation and increase confidence.
- Identify Tangible Supports-from purchased items to community organizations-that enhance daily life, whether or not they are based on eligibility.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

111: Designing and Delivering Inclusive Experiences to Teach Literacy and Beyond

Presenter: Chris Bugaj

Description:
Join an engaging and hands-on session exploring practical strategies to design and deliver inclusive literacy experiences that cater to the diverse needs of all learners. Delve into evidence-based practices and innovative approaches that promote literacy development while ensuring accessibility and engagement for students with varying abilities. Learn how to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to create flexible and inclusive literacy lessons, utilize assistive technology and augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) tools to support students with disabilities, develop multi-sensory activities that enhance reading, writing, and comprehension skills, incorporate differentiated instruction techniques to meet individual learner needs, and foster a supportive and collaborative environment that encourages all students to thrive. Through interactive discussions, real-world examples, and practical exercises, leave with a toolkit of strategies to enhance literacy instruction and extend these inclusive practices across the curriculum. Whether an experienced educator or new to inclusive teaching, this session offers valuable insights and actionable ideas to empower every learner to succeed in literacy and beyond.

Objectives:
- Develop multi-sensory activities and differentiated instruction techniques to enhance reading, writing, and comprehension skills in all learners.
- Utilize innovative technology and augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) to support students with disabilities in their literacy development.

- Combine strategies with technology that can be used immediately with learners.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

112: Making a Good Thing Better: Transcription of Instruction to Establish Early Verbal Behavior

Presenter: Mike Miklos

Description:
The value of teaching early verbal skills for children lacking such competencies is well established. Obtaining great outcomes likely depends on how well individualized instruction is arranged and delivered. Direct instruction of basic verbal skills can be improved through use of effective monitoring of teaching practices. Examples of basic verbal skills include mands, tacts, echoics, and intraverbal responses as well as related skills such as imitation and match to sample skills. This session will provide an overview of a system to observe and record the teaching of basic verbal skills during structured individual instructional sessions to establish early verbal competencies. Feedback derived from such observations can be used to maintain instructional fidelity and assist teachers in making important instructional decisions. A specific coding system will be reviewed that documents type of trial, use of errorless and error correction procedures, and relative instructional success for children. The system has been frequently used by teachers and behavior analyst consultants in Pennsylvania and involves a transcription of teacher behavior.

Objectives:
- Identify and code specific types of instructional trials.
- Review transcription of instruction and summarize instructional performance.
- Discuss feedback to instructional staff derived from transcriptive process.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, BACB, OT, PSYCH, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

113: Orientation and Mobility for DeafBlind Students: Incorporating Touch and Teaming

Presenter: Amy Parker

Description:
Traditional O&M (orientation and mobility) techniques do not always include examples of how to work with students who are deafblind using touch to promote anticipation, spatial awareness, and engagement. In this session we will explore effective collaboration with teams and families to design meaningful person-centered O&M activities that incorporate the use of touch.

Objectives:
- Identify ways to incorporate touch to promote connection and spatial awareness.
- Describe tools that facilitate the students' use of touch for effective travel.
- Describe a planning process that includes families and other team members as collaborators for promoting O&M for students who are deafblind.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate

114: Combating Ableism (for Youth)

Presenter: Christy Cyktor

Description:
Have you ever been treated unfairly because of your disability—or heard comments that didn't sit right with you? You're not alone. In this empowering session just for youth with disabilities, we'll explore what ableism is and how it shows up in everyday life—at school, in public, online, or even in conversations with adults. You'll hear real stories from fellow self-advocates who've experienced ableism and found ways to push back with courage and pride. Together, we'll learn practical strategies to cope with and combat ableist comments or situations—whether that means speaking up, setting boundaries, or finding your community. This session will be interactive, honest, and supportive. Whether you're new to advocacy or already using your voice, you'll leave with tools to stand strong in who you are and know you're not alone in the fight against ableism.

Objectives:
- Define ableism and identify at least two examples of ableist language or behavior.
- Describe how ableism has impacted their own or others' lived experiences as young people with disabilities.
- Apply at least two strategies for responding to or coping with ableist comments or situations.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Basic/Foundational

11:15 am to 11:30 am: Break

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

115: One Kind Person Can Change the World - What Will Your Legacy Be?

Presenter: Ben Hartranft, Carole Clancy

Description:
Join us for an unforgettable closing keynote as Ben shares his inspiring journey through the world of autism—a story of courage, growth, and the power of human connection. Through humor, honesty, and boundless "Benergy," Ben will take the audience through his path from diagnosis to self-advocacy and success, highlighting the impact that just one kind, understanding person can make in someone's life. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - a landmark legislation that opened doors for millions of students - Dr. Carole Clancy, Director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education, will build on Ben's story and discuss the law's legacy and the work that remains. Dr. Clancy will highlight both the milestones achieved and the persistent challenges that remain within our educational systems. From navigating the challenges of the "adult cliff" to launching Benergy1 Presentations as a full-time speaker, Ben's story embodies resilience and hope. This keynote not only honors IDEA's historic progress but challenges us all to reflect on the legacy we leave behind for future generations.

Objectives:
- Describe the evolving process of building independence and creating opportunities for students with disabilities.
- Honor the 50-year legacy of IDEA and recognize its transformative impact on access, inclusion, and opportunity.
- Inspire participants to consider their own roles in leaving a legacy for students with disabilities.

CEU Credits: ACVREP, Act 48, ASHA, CRC, Infant/Toddler, OT, PSYCH, PT, Social Work
Expertise Level: Intermediate