



Advancing Behavior Support: From Prevention to Treatment

Virtual Conference

Friday, March 20, 2026

Advancing Behavior Support: From Prevention to Treatment is sponsored by the WNY Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (WNYRCASD) and The Summit Center. The conference will provide evidence-based strategies for managing challenging behaviors in children with autism and related developmental disabilities. Through a blend of research-informed practices and real-world applications, attendees will strengthen their skills and increase their confidence so that every student can reach their fullest potential.

This virtual conference is divided into two sessions:

Session 1 (morning) consists of three presentations offering practical, evidence-based strategies for managing challenging behaviors in children with autism and related disabilities. Participants will explore proactive strategies for building supportive classroom environments, fostering positive student engagement, and reducing barriers to learning.

These presentations are tailored to teachers, therapists, and other helping professionals. They are also suitable for parents/caregivers.

Session 2 (afternoon) is an advanced two-hour presentation by Dr. Sean Smith, Ph.D. Dr. Smith will discuss the challenges of translating research into practice to treat severe behavior disorders. It will include a discussion of multiple ways to assess severe behavior and identify specific treatment procedures based on idiosyncratic variables.

To attend both the morning and afternoon sessions, you must log off after the presentations and log back in.

Cost: \$40.00 (*includes CEUs*)

Attend Session 1, Session 2, or both for the same price

Register at

nysrcasd.org/events/1581/registrations/new

PRESENTATIONS

OPENING COMMENTS

Presenter: David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

Clinical Director, The Summit Center's Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic
Co-Director, Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders

MORNING SESSION

Presentation 1: Proactive Strategies for Preventing and Managing Problem Behaviors

Presenter: Jason Robinson, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Associate Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, FL

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Robinson has not been compensated by the WNYRCASD or The Summit Center and has no other financial or nonfinancial disclosures to report.



Dr. Robinson is an associate professor of special education at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Northern Colorado and is a board-certified behavior analyst with a doctoral designation. Dr. Robinson's research interests include supporting teachers with addressing problem behaviors within their classrooms and enhancing student social skills necessary for their happiness and success as young adults. Before arriving at FGCU, he worked in elementary, middle, and high schools as a teacher, administrator, coach, and behavior specialist. He taught a variety of subjects, including math, reading, social studies, and science, which allows him to support a diverse population of teachers and pre-service teachers.

ABSTRACT

This presentation will provide educators with strategies for maintaining safety and protecting student dignity when working with students who exhibit escalated behaviors. These strategies include utilizing proactive behavioral interventions, implementing function-based behavioral interventions that address root causes of escalated student behaviors, promoting shared classroom governance, and adapting student-teacher interactions and classroom learning environments to decrease student agitation. Each strategy is described in practical detail using case study vignettes about students who exhibit escalated behaviors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify proactive, function-based behavioral interventions that can be included in the behavior intervention plans of students who exhibit escalated behaviors.
2. Apply the steps of a checklist for embedding choice-making opportunities into students' crisis response plans when working with students who exhibit escalated behaviors.
3. Differentiate between verbal and nonverbal communication methods that serve as de-escalators and re-escalators when working with students who exhibit escalated behaviors.

Presentation 2: The Constructional Approach to Challenging Behavior

Presenter: Stephanie H. Jones, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA

Assistant Professor, Salve Regina University, Newport, RI

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Jones is being compensated by WNYRCASD and The Summit Center and has no other financial or nonfinancial disclosures to report.



Dr. Stephanie H. Jones graduated with her Ph.D. in Psychology with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis from West Virginia University. She researches methods for enhancing the effectiveness of interventions that prevent and mitigate challenging behavior in applied and laboratory arrangements. Specifically, her research focuses on how to increase the accessibility of behavioral interventions for everyday implementers, like teachers and caregivers. She began teaching and conducting research at Salve Regina University in 2021 and is the principal investigator for the Translational Research and Applied Intervention Lab. Through her lab, she supports research engagement of students at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral training levels. She publishes in and reviews for several peer-reviewed journals such as the *Education and Treatment of Children* and the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

ABSTRACT

Approximately 12.5% of individuals with developmental disabilities engage in challenging behavior, some forms of which can result in physical harm or removal of educational and social opportunities. Historically, challenging behavior has been approached through many lenses, some of which have heavily focused on the reduction of challenging behavior through punishment. An alternative lens, the constructional approach, will be explored in this presentation and focuses on skill development for individuals engaging in challenging behavior. This presentation will explore the origins of the constructional approach, the implications of the approach, and practical strategies for individuals seeking to implement the approach.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will describe approaches to challenging behavior, including the constructional approach.
2. Participants will describe rationale for adoption of the constructional approach.
3. Participants will describe strategies to prevent and mitigate challenging behavior based on the constructional approach.

Presentation 3: Teaching Communication Skills: Advances in Functional Communication Training

Presenter: Jeffrey H. Tiger, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Associate Professor, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Tiger is being compensated by the WNYRCASD and The Summit Center and has no other financial or nonfinancial disclosures to report.



Dr. Tiger is an associate professor of psychology at Marquette University as well as the owner/operator of Timshel Therapies, LLC., an outpatient-model clinic serving children and adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities struggling with chronic problematic behavior. Dr. Tiger has authored 63 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and has served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, *Behavioral Development*, and *Perspectives on Behavioral Science*. He was awarded the APA Division 25 BF Skinner New Researcher Award in 2012. In 2018, the Wisconsin Association for Behavior Analysis recognized him for Significant Contributions to the Practice of Behavior Analysis.

ABSTRACT

Functional Communication Training (FCT) is an evidence-based practice for individuals with intellectual disabilities that engage in severe challenging behavior. This treatment model involves identifying the

environmental contributors that occasion and reward challenging behavior, then teaching clients meaningful, equivalent replacement behaviors to better navigate these environmental challenges. Forty years of research has produced multiple refinements and variations of FCT, moving from proof-of-concept demonstrations in controlled environments to implementation by parents, teachers, and other professionals. This presentation will distill that research into usable techniques with a focus on teachers and school professionals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe common environmental triggers for challenging behavior in terms of their evocative events and reinforcing consequences.
2. Select an appropriate replacement behavior during FCT accounting for its match to behavioral function, the learner's capacity, and the cultural milieu in which the response will occur.
3. Identify and address the challenges posed in transition from initial, concentrated implementation of FCT to long-term, all-day support.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Presentation 4: Assessment and Treatment of Severe Behavior Disorders

Presenter: Sean Smith, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Clinical Provider & Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Smith is being compensated by the WNYRCASD and The Summit Center and has no other financial or nonfinancial disclosures to report.



Dr. Smith's training and clinical work focuses on the assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior of individuals diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr. Smith has helped start several university-based severe behavior programs, including programs at the Rutgers University Center for Autism Research, Education, and Services (RU-CARES); the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UF-CAN); and Upstate Medical University's Biobehavioral Health Inpatient Unit (BBHU). His research focuses on the assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior, factors affecting treatment relapse, and quantitative analysis of behavior.

ABSTRACT

Research on the assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior often makes the process seem relatively simple: Seemingly prescriptive procedures produce clear relations between independent and dependent variables. In practice, however, assessing and treating severe challenging behavior is extremely complex: Procedures need to be individualized while considering many variables throughout the entire process. This can make it difficult to translate the research we read into clinical practice, and it may often seem like the researchers simply do not recruit the same participants that are experienced in typical clinical settings. In this session, we will explore how practitioners need to think dynamically while synthesizing information from a variety of sources of research to achieve ideal clinical outcomes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify multiple severe behavior assessment methodologies and how they can be used to complement each other.
2. Identify that programmatic treatment progressions or specific treatment procedures need to be adapted based on idiosyncratic variables.
3. Identify the need for learning to translate research into clinical practice.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

MORNING SESSION

8:20 – 8:30 a.m. **Opening Comments**
David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

8:30 – 9:45 a.m. **Presentation 1: Proactive Strategies for Preventing and Managing Problem Behaviors**
Jason Robinson, Ph.D., BCBA-D

9:45 – 10:00 a.m. **Break**

10:00 – 11:15 a.m. **Presentation 2: The Constructional Approach to Challenging Behavior**
Stephanie H. Jones, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA

11:15 – 12:30 p.m. **Presentation 3: Teaching Communication Skills: Advances in Functional Communication Training**
Jeffrey H. Tiger, Ph.D., BCBA-D

AFTERNOON SESSION

1:15 – 3:15 p.m. **Presentation 4: Assessment and Treatment of Severe Behavior Disorders**
Sean Smith, Ph.D., BCBA-D

This conference is made possible by a grant from the New York State Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. For requests for accommodations, contact wnyrcasd@thesummitcenter.org or 716-629-3417.

Cancellation Policy: If cancellation is received at least 48 hours prior to the start of the conference, the cost of the conference and CEUs will be fully refunded.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

ASHA, BCBA, CTLE, OT/OTA, PT/PTA, PSY, SOCIAL WORK CEUs are available. The cost of CEUs is included in the \$40.00 registration fee.

CEUs will be awarded separately for Sessions 1 and 2 based on attendance. Session 1 includes three presentations. You must attend all three to be eligible for CEUs. Session 2 is one two-hour presentation.



SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS: To obtain ASHA CEUs, participants must log in/out using their unique online seminar link and complete the learning assessment survey at the end of the conference. Registrants will receive a certificate of completion via email when the course has been successfully completed. Participants are required to attend all three presentations in the morning and/or the entire presentation in the afternoon. They must complete an ASHA CEU Participant Form and submit it via email. **No partial credit will be provided.** The morning session is offered for .35

ASHA CEU (Intermediate Level; Professional Area). The afternoon session is offered for .2 ASHA CEU (Intermediate Level; Professional Area)



OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL THERAPISTS: Participants who attend all three morning presentations will receive **TBD NYS Continuing Competency Units for OTs/OTAs and TBD NYS PT**

Contact Hours for PTs/PTAs. Participants who attend the afternoon presentation will receive **TBD NYS Continuing Competency Units for OTs/OTAs and TBD NYS PT Contact Hours for PTs/PTAs.** To obtain CEUs, participants must log in/out using their unique online seminar link and complete a required learning assessment survey and post-test provided by APOT. Registrants will receive a certificate of completion via email when the course has been successfully completed. APOT is recognized by the NYS Education Department Office of the Professions as an approved sponsor of continuing education for Occupational Therapists, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physical Therapists, and Physical Therapist Assistants. Associated Physical & Occupational Therapists, PLLC can be reached at apotcontinuinged@gmail.com or 716-874-6175.



ACE: The Authorized Continuing Education (ACE) program exists to make a wide array of continuing education (CE) events available to Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) certificants. ACE providers have been authorized by the BACB to provide Learning CE events for BCBA and BCaBA certificants. Participants who attend all three morning presentations are eligible for **3.75 ACE event CEUs. Those who attend the afternoon presentation are eligible for 2.0 ACE event CEUs.**



CTLE: The Summit Center is an NYS Department of Education approved provider of CTLE continuing education events for teachers and administrators. **3.75 learning CEUs will be provided for the morning presentations and 2.0 learning CEUs will be provided for the afternoon presentation.**



SOCIAL WORK: Daemen University, Department of Social Work and Sociology, is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0297. **Participants who attend all three morning presentations are eligible for 3.75 CEUs. Those who attend the afternoon presentation are eligible for 2.0 CEUs.**



PSYCHOLOGISTS: The Summit Center is a provider of CEU credits for psychologists through the NYS State Education Department Office of the Professions. **3.75 CEUs will be provided for the morning presentations and 2.0 CEUs will be provided for the afternoon presentation.** Provider number: PSY-0222.

Each organization/entity uses its own calculation to determine the number of CEUs based on contact hours. As with all continuing education opportunities, the attendee should verify CEU requirements by his/her professional organization and/or state licensure board.

ABOUT

The Summit Center is Western New York's leading provider of services for children and adults with autism and other developmental concerns. Programs include a special education school, pediatric

behavioral health clinic, intensive early intervention program, and adult and community programs. Visit TheSummitCenter.org for more information.

The Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrums Disorders (WNYRCASD) is a collaborative program of The Summit Center, University at Albany, and The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. The WNYRCASD is committed to providing information and practical strategies supported by scientific research – commonly referred to as evidence-based practice. Activities consist of workshops and resource materials that provide practical guidance to professionals and parents. For more information, visit TheSummitCenter.org/what-we-do/wny-regional-center-for-autism-spectrum-disorders.