

Public Policy Article Guide

Article: Why Public Policy Matters: A Call to Action for the Everyday Behavior Analyst by Bethany Coop, Emily Ice, Alexandra Tomei, and Rebecca Urbano-Powell

Brief Summary

This article emphasizes the importance of public policy work for behavior analysts to ensure the field's growth aligns with best practices. The authors suggest that behavior analysts need to be better storytellers to move away from some of the field's troubled past and toward more effective dissemination. Additionally, they argue that behavior analysts need to be more involved in and have a deeper understanding of standards of care, medical necessity, provider agreements, licensure, and service documentation. The article also provides actionable steps an "everyday behavior analyst" can take to engage in advocacy efforts. These include improving communication, collaborating with others, understanding medical necessity definitions, and advocating appropriate regulation. The article concludes with steps for behavior analysts to engage in advocacy and shape the field's future.

Key Takeaways

- 1.Importance of Public Policy Advocacy:** Behavior analysts must engage in advocacy to ensure the field's growth aligns with ethical and evidence-based practices. Without strong advocacy, policy makers' "misperceptions" can lead to restrictive or flawed regulations which limit our ability to practice and the quality of care we can provide.
- 2. Effective Storytelling:** Providers should improve their communication skills to disseminate the science of behavior analysis effectively, reduce misperceptions, and build relationships with policymakers and stakeholders.
- 3. Standards of Care:** Familiarity and alignment with Generally Accepted Standards of Care (GASC) is essential for ensuring ethical service delivery and credibility when supporting advocacy efforts.

4. Medical Necessity: Providers must understand and align their documentation with medical necessity requirements, as defined by each payer, to create legally defensible treatment plans and advocate for consistent standards across funding sources.

5. Differences Across Settings: Clear distinctions between medical and educational ABA services are necessary to avoid duplication and ensure effective collaboration between providers in different settings.

6. Licensure and Credentialing: Advocating for licensure and credentialing worldwide is critical to protect consumers, ensure provider competence, and regulate the field effectively.

7. Expanding Access: While the field of ABA has become closely linked to autism intervention, substantial research supports its efficacy across numerous diagnoses and domains. It is imperative that behavior analysts counteract this narrow perception and promote the application of ABA to address the needs of underserved populations

Discussion Questions

- Why is public policy advocacy important for the growth and ethical practice of behavior analysis?
- How can anyone be an advocate for behavior analysis?
- How can effective storytelling involve public perception of behavior analysis?
- Why is licensure important for the ethical growth of the field?
- How can behavior analysts prevent pigeonholing of ABA as solely autism-focused?

Reference

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