

## Autism Center Reflection

Please complete the attached form after your rotation at the autism center. This assignment must be turned in based on the syllabus due date. Please do not include any client specific information on this form. Be sure to protect the client's personal health information (PHI).

1. What is Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)? Please indicate your source.

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) is a type of behavior therapy for individuals with autism and other behavioral disorders (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). ABA has been highly researched and its overall goal is to help individuals increase positive behaviors and decrease negative ones (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). This is primarily accomplished through positive reinforcement of positive behaviors and this helps individuals to improve their social interactions and learn new skills (Cleveland Clinic, 2023).

2. How does ABA apply to the clients that you saw today?

ABA is a very flexible program and can be adapted to meet any child's individual needs (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). At the Light House, each child had a very specific therapeutic behavior plan set in place for them based off of their unique needs which was really great to see. The children at the Light House struggle with communication and social skills and ABA helps them to improve their language, attention, and academic skills. Many of the children also have problematic behaviors such as self-harming when they are frustrated and ABA is being used to decrease those behavior problems and replace them with healthier responses.

3. Give one example of ABA that you saw applied today at your clinical site.

Positive reinforcement is one of the main pillars of ABA and I saw that used very frequently with the children at the Light House. They were verbally praised for positive behavior every time they did something good. There were lots of individual ways that good behaviors were being positively reinforced. Another example I saw was a child's therapist was working on manners and would not respond to the child until they nicely tapped on her shoulder for attention and then the therapist would greet the child with a big smile and gladly hear whatever the child had to say. This was being done because normally the child would hit or smack the therapist for attention so they were trying to work on a more helpful behavior like nicely tapping on the shoulder instead.

4. Give one example of how you can use ABA in practice.

I love the idea of using the concept of positive reinforcement from ABA in practice. I think it is something that can be used with people of all ages. I think it could be especially helpful when we are trying to get patients to make lifestyle changes to better their health. As nurses we can offer praise when they choose healthier meal trays or when they actively engage in physical therapy.

5. Discuss positive reflections from the day.

Going into the day I sort of thought it was going to be like a regular daycare center, but the facility was so much more than that. It was amazing that each child had their own therapist one-on-one with them the whole day. Even better was the fact that every child had a very unique behavioral plan set in place to help them improve their communication and behavioral skills. The staff was very well trained and did much more with the children than just play with them and you could see how great the program was for the kids in enriching their lives. I could easily see how they play a “nursing” role. They even do a thorough shift report to the next therapist coming in to care for the child.

6. Discuss negative reflections from the day.

The only thing that I found sort of negative at the Light House was a lack of space that was solely meant to be calm and quiet. I feel like we talk a lot in class about the importance of maintaining a low stimulus environment for patients, but the Light House was definitely very, very high energy with a lot always going on around the kids. I couldn't help but wonder if that would contribute to unwanted behaviors because of all of the stimulus around the kids.

### **Reference**

Cleveland Clinic. (2023, August 16). *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)*. Cleveland Clinic.  
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/25197-applied-behavior-analysis>