

VABA DEI SPECIAL EDITION

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1 | 12/2024



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE VABA DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER!

Hello, VABA Members!

We're thrilled to bring you the inaugural edition of our DEI Committee newsletter. Here, you'll find updates on our committee's mission, current projects, and upcoming events tailored to support a more inclusive and equitable community in behavior analysis across Virginia. We value your input and would love to hear what content you'd like to see in future newsletters! Feel free to send your suggestions to dei@virginiaaba.org.

OUR MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

MISSION

Promoting inclusive, equitable, and just contexts for all individuals and groups within the science and practice of behavior analysis across the Commonwealth of Virginia.



VISION

To advance, prioritize, and incorporate equitable systems for the practice and dissemination of behavior analytic processes throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

DEFINITIONS

Our definitions of Diversity, Equity, Equality, Inclusion, and Belonging are living concepts, designed to grow and evolve as VABA deepens its understanding of these principles. We recognize the importance of adapting our perspectives to foster a more inclusive environment. As you read these definitions and examples, we encourage reflection on your personal experiences and the unique perspectives you bring to our community.

DIVERSITY

Diversity acknowledges each person's unique experiences shaped by their background and identity. It includes various ideas, opinions, and perspectives influenced by race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and more. Diversity also recognizes how differences, inequities, and the dynamics of power and privilege impact individual experiences.

Example: A BCBA ensures the materials reflect a wide array of cultural identities while preparing resources for a client

EQUITY

Equity means treating people fairly and providing everyone the same opportunities to grow and succeed. It involves identifying and removing barriers so that each person can access necessary resources. Equity considers historical contexts, working to level the playing field for all, particularly for those from traditionally marginalized backgrounds.

Example: An organization surveys employees at the beginning of the year to learn about their holiday preferences across various beliefs, creating a fair time-off schedule that accommodates everyone's needs

INCLUSION

Inclusion ensures that everyone feels welcomed, respected, supported, and valued within a community. An inclusive environment embraces each person's unique experiences, fostering a sense of community.

Example: A training video on ABA principles for RBTs includes diverse pronouns and gender identities, emphasizing inclusivity in the content.

ACTIVE DEI PROJECTS

We are excited to share the projects we're currently working on, each designed to enhance DEI efforts within VABA and the broader behavior analysis community in Virginia.

- **Expanding Definitions of DEI:** We are developing clear, tailored definitions and examples that align with VABA's mission to ensure all members have a shared understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our work.
- **Membership Demographics Analysis:** By analyzing demographic information from our membership, we aim to identify areas for improved outreach and representation, ensuring VABA is an inclusive space for all practitioners.
- **Training on Culturally Responsive Practices:** Beginning in January, we'll offer two CEU opportunities focused on Culturally Responsive Practices in Supervision and Neurodiversity-affirming Care. Stay tuned for more information on how to register!
- **Building a Trauma-Informed Network:** We are establishing a network to connect members practicing Trauma-Informed, Collective Response, and Restorative Practices. If you or someone you know would like to be included, please contact dei@virginiaaba.org.



MEET THE DEI COMMITTEE

We believe it's essential to celebrate our members' achievements and efforts in DEI. Each quarter, this section will spotlight VABA members and their contributions toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you know of someone making an impact, please let us know!



KATHERINE RHOADES, BCBA, LBA

Katherine is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) based in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. She began her career as a Special Education teacher, providing academic and behavioral interventions while completing her post-graduate ABA certification at George Mason University. Katherine

now works as a Program Supervisor with Compass Behavioral Solutions and is an adjunct professor and doctoral student at Endicott College. Her practice and research focus on neurodiversity-affirming approaches, emphasizing choice, client preferences, and assent.



ERICA RODRIGUEZ, BCBA, LBA

Erica is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) servicing the Hampton Roads area. Erica completed her Master in Education in 2016 from George Mason University and became a BCBA in 2017. She has 12 years of experiences working with children and adults with developmental disabilities in clinic and in-home settings.

Erica's practice focuses on inclusive-compassionate care. She is currently a Lead BCBA at EMG Consulting. Erica is also the co-chair of VABA's DEI Committee, and an active member of VABA's Award Committee.



SARAH DIGIOIA, BCBA, LBA, IBA

Sarah is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and former Certified Special Education Teacher. She has over 25 years of experience serving individuals with developmental disabilities in schools, clinics, and the community. Sarah's interests include adolescent and adult populations, problem behavior, supervision and training and organizational behavior management. Sarah is the current administrative director for the Virginia Association for Behavior Analysis and works as an independent consultant providing supervision, training, and organizational behavior management for schools. Sarah is a facilitator for the Cool Aspie Club of Alexandria, a social group for adults on the autism spectrum.

WANT TO JOIN?

If you'd like to know more about the VABA DEI committee or you're interested in joining please contact dei@virginiaaba.org.

All are welcome!



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND WELLNESS

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RESOURCES

Featured Article

For this month's read, we recommend [Suarez et al. \(2024\)](#): A Laboratory Evaluation of the Effects of Empathy Training on Racial Bias. This article explores how empathy training can influence racial bias, providing insights that are directly applicable to DEI initiatives in behavior analysis



UPCOMING EVENTS

VABA CEU EVENTS:

Cultural Humility in Supervision 1/22/2025 at 12pm - 1 supervision CEU
Neurodiversity Awareness in ABA 2/19/2025 at 12 pm - 1 general CEU

COMING
SOON

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE TO COME
FROM THE DEI COMMITTEE!

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Website

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