

fixed it!

# The REALITIES of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

primer

## What is ABA?

© Jillian Enright, Neurodiversity Manitoba

NeurodiversityMB.ca

### 1. Based on very weak evidence.



Studies cited in support of ABA have significant design flaws and are not robust.

### 2. Increases forced compliance, conformity, and masking.

ABA has been shown to increase the risk of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicidality.

### 3. Decreases self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-knowledge, and access to community.

ABA and other conversion therapies rob Autistic children of Autistic role-models, Autistic identity, Autistic pride, and Autistic community.

### 4. Industry-driven and government-supported



ABA has a near-monopoly on the billion-dollar autism *industry*; it's essentially the only autism "*therapy*" covered by most insurance plans, including government-funded support.

### 5. Self-supervised and self-monitored

The BACB (Behaviour Analyst Certification Board) earns significant income through application fees, education and tuition fees, membership fees, conference registration, and certification & examination fees. The BACB is the same body which governs the conduct of its own membership--the very source of its income.



### 6. Widely available (because ableism... and capitalism)

Much like the cosmetic, fashion, diet, and self-help industries, the autism *industry* has convinced the public that there is something *wrong* with us requiring remediation.

Available



## References

McGill, O., & Robinson, A. (2020). 'Recalling hidden harms' : autistic experiences of childhood applied behavioural analysis (ABA). *Advances in Autism*, 7(4), 269-282. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AIA-04-2020-0025>

Reichow, B., Hume, K., Barton, E.E., & Boyd, B.A. (2018). Early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) for young children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD009260.pub3>

Sandoval-Norton, A. H., Shkedy, G., Shkedy, D., & Rushby, J. A. (2019). How much compliance is too much compliance: Is long-term ABA therapy abuse? *Cogent Psychology*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1641258>

Shkedy, G., Shkedy, D. & Sandoval-Norton, A.H. (2021). Long-term ABA Therapy Is Abusive: A Response to Gorycki, Ruppel, and Zane. *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders* 5, 126–134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41252-021-00201-1>

Strydom, A., Bosco, A., Vickerstaff, V., Hunter, R., et al. (2020). Clinical and cost effectiveness of staff training in the delivery of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) for adults with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour - randomised trial. *BMC Psychiatry* 20, 161. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02577-1>

Wilkenfeld, D. A., & McCarthy, A. M. (2020). Ethical Concerns with Applied Behavior Analysis for Autism Spectrum “Disorder”. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 30(1), 31–69. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.2020.0000>