

The IHD-AzUCD's role in Expanding Service Options in Arizona by Licensing Behavior Analysts

Children and adults with developmental disabilities and challenging behavior require quality services from experts who are skilled in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). The Institute for Human Development (IHD) at Northern Arizona University (NAU) offers a Graduate Certificate in Positive Behavior Support to prepare professionals to use ABA to help people improve the lives and behavior of persons with disabilities. Until recently, however, there were few behavior analysts in Arizona and even fewer opportunities for them to be reimbursed for their services.

In Arizona, persons served through the Division of Developmental Disabilities system and those served through the Department of Behavioral Health Services receive behavioral health services from Behavioral Health Providers (BHPs). But, only certain licensed professions qualified as BHPs: psychologists, professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, social workers, and substance abuse counselors. None of these professions are required to be skilled in ABA and unlicensed behavior analysts did not qualify as BHPs.

IHD's Dan Davidson assisted in the ad-

vocacy needed to: 1) License behavior analysts, and 2) Ensure that licensed behavior analysts are included in the list of eligible BHPs. The primary leader in this effort was Intermountain Centers for Human Development (Dave Giles, CEO), who also provided the necessary financial support. Additional assistance came from the behavior analyst community in Arizona, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, and the Association for Professional Behavior Analysts.

Success for the passage of the licensing law is also due to the tremendous work of the advocates for the autism insurance law (Steven's Law), which required insurance providers in Arizona to cover behavior therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In order to require an insurance company to cover ABA services it was necessary to address the issue of what qualifies someone to be an ABA professional. With this insurance law present in the minds of the state legislators, passing a licensing law for behavior analysts was made easier.

Since the passage of the initial licensing law in 2008, and its subsequent amendments in 2011:



1. There are nearly 70 behavior analysts licensed in Arizona and the number continues to grow.
2. Persons in need of behavior analysis services can now be granted the public protection that licensing offers.
3. Persons in need of a BHP skilled in behavior analysis now have the option to request the services of a Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA).
4. The NAU Graduate Certificate in Positive Behavior Support continues to train professionals who go on to become licensed behavior analysts.

For information about NAU's Graduate Certificate in Positive Behavior Support, go to <http://nau.edu/SBS/IHD/Programs/Positive-Behavior-Support/>.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Trina D. Spencer

Dr. Trina D. Spencer joined the IHD team in August, 2011 as the Research Coordinator and quickly ignited enthusiasm for research across NAU and in the Flagstaff community. She brought with her a strong research agenda that aims to prepare young children from diverse backgrounds for kindergarten. Through early identification and preventative language intervention, she hopes to reduce the number of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with language and reading disabilities. Her research involves validating an intervention system (including assessment) to promote the language development of children with disabilities as well as children who are at risk for language-related disabilities.

Building upon previous assessment development, Dr. Spencer initiated a study in Flagstaff Cooperative preschools to validate a language progress monitoring instrument. She hopes to work with approximately 100 typically developing preschool-aged children to document proper narrative language development and to improve the identification of children with disabilities or children who would benefit from language intervention.

In collaboration with the Flagstaff Unified School District preschool special education program, Dr. Spencer is conducting a study with six preschoolers with developmental disabilities. Dr. Spencer and her research team provide one-on-one language intervention in the students' classroom twice a week. The intervention involves the use of preschooler-themed stories to teach storytelling fundamentals and complex language features. The procedures include brightly colored pictures and icons to teach the parts of stories and

stick drawings to promote children's own personal storytelling.

Dr. Spencer is also working in three Head Start classrooms providing multi-tiered language intervention. In this project, all children receive a large group intervention and children who do not make adequate gains will be selected to receive the storytelling intervention in small groups of four children. The IHD research team will deliver the small intervention in the children's classroom and differentiate the intervention for each child based on his/her unique language needs. Innovative assessment procedures are used to identify children who need the more intensive small group intervention and even those who need one-on-one language intervention.

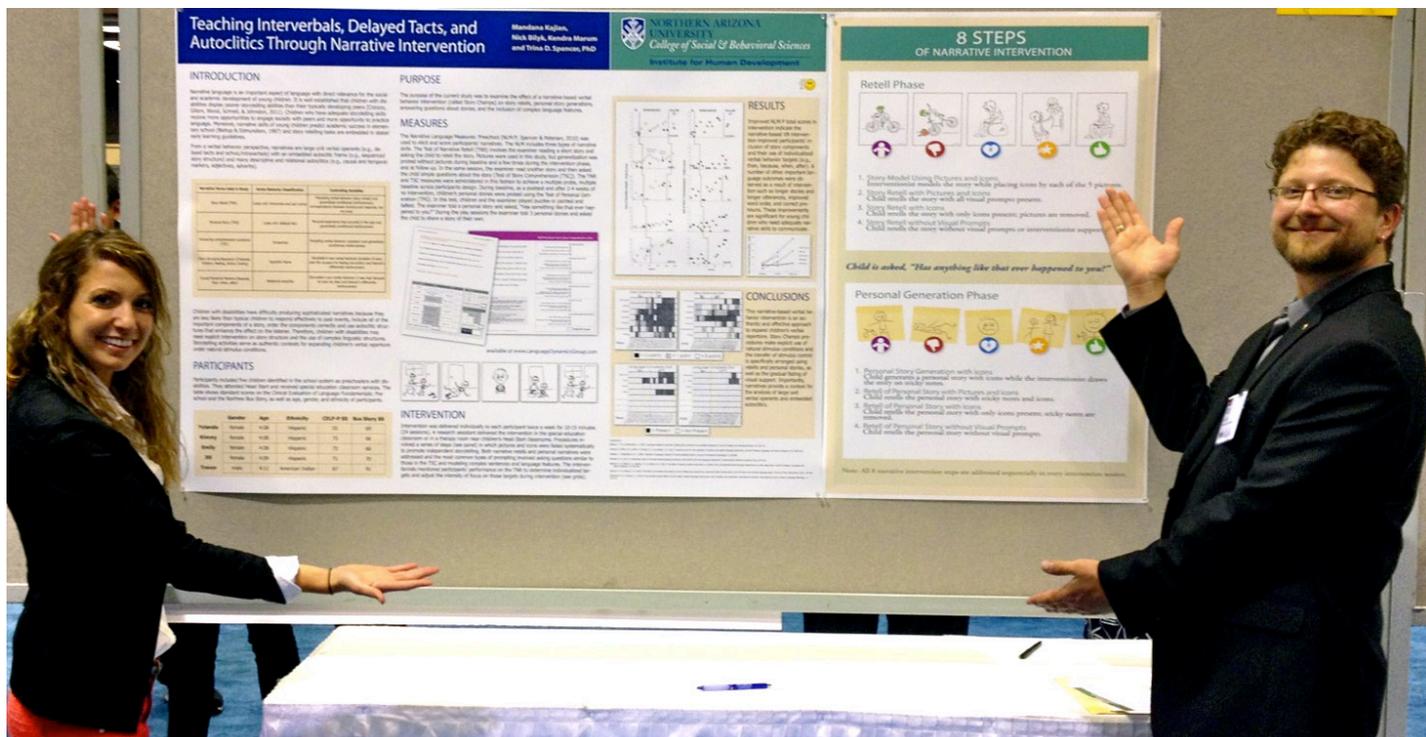
Because her ability to impact large numbers of children depends on the size of her research team, Dr. Spencer has actively sought partnerships with the NAU Psychology and the Speech Science and Technology departments. These departments have many bright, motivated students with promising graduate careers in human services. Dr. Spencer has recruited a number of undergraduate and graduate students to take part in her research projects. Currently, she has 6 active volunteer research assistants (graduate and undergraduate students) and two coordinators (one undergraduate student and one graduate student). Research assistants have the option of enrolling in Dr. Spencer's Disability Research Internship course (DIS 485) for credit. Student volunteers receive valuable training in research methods, direct supervision from Dr. Spencer, and extensive practice working directly with children for assessment and intervention. While many research opportunities for students are restricted to data entry,



Dr. Spencer's lab offers a wider range of experiences. Research assistants work on projects that fit into their class schedules. When possible, projects will be designed to give students opportunities based on their interests.

As momentum builds, Dr. Spencer hopes to expand her projects to include social communication interventions for children with autism and to support education and human service organizations' capacity to integrate research into practice. She would also like to collaborate with other NAU departments to offer research experiences for more students.

ABAI student committee representative presents IHD research at national convention



As a first time conference attendee I wasn't sure what to expect at the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) conference, held in Seattle, WA over memorial day weekend. My mentors, Dr. Andrew Gardner and Dr. Trina Spencer, prepared me with their personal experiences from past ABAs. Based on their experiences I had an idea of how the five-day conference would flow yet I wasn't sure that my experience would be the same.

In route to Seattle, my travel partner and I marked all of the presentations and speakers we were eager to see in the 300-page ABAI program. We ended up attending different presentations each day and sharing what we learned in the evening. I was fascinated by all the research topics being presented and found myself in symposia on areas of applied behavior analysis that I never knew existed. At first I was

surprised and a little overwhelmed when I saw how broad the field of Applied Behavior Analysis is. My initial feelings changed as I attended more presentations and networked with more individuals in the field. By the end of the conference I was excited to see the variety of career options I have to choose from.

Not only did I expand my knowledge of familiar areas of research but I also broadened my understanding of the field in general. I was fortunate enough to be able to present two posters with two other students from Northern Arizona University at ABAI. It was an amazing experience to present the research we conducted during my senior year at NAU. It was especially gratifying when distinguished ABA researchers attended our posters and showed a great deal of interest in the studies we presented.

As the ABAI student committee representative for NAU, I had the opportuni-

ty to chair a panel session, in which seasoned behavior analysts spoke on issues of behavior analysis and cultural and linguistic diversity. This was one of the most nerve racking and rewarding experiences I have ever had. It was my first time public speaking in a setting outside of the classroom and I feel like it was an essential experience for my future career.

Another lesson I learned from my first conference experience was the importance of networking with others in the field. Networking with students and faculty from other institutions gave me the opportunity to disseminate the research I participated in at the Institute for Human Development, learn about other similar studies and programs that are being implemented in schools in different regions of the U.S., and learn about my options for graduate training.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Karen Applequist

As one of the two tenured faculty in the IHD, what do you see as your role here?

“When I was hired for my current position, in 1995, it was described as a full-time tenure-track appointment to the College of Education (COE) with half of my load dedicated to the IHD-AzUCD. It was my understanding that the position was created to develop and implement more formalized university training through the IHD-AzUCD and to expand training in the area of early intervention/early childhood special education through the College of Education. I have worked hard on both initiatives over the last 17 years, facing some challenges in achieving complete success.”

“My work here at the IHD is entirely different from my work at the COE where I am the only faculty member in my specialization. The IHD-AzUCD is very fortunate to have an extremely dedicated cadre of staff involved in pre-service training. I see my role as a facilitator, helping staff to build programs and meet academic requirements established by the university. I advocate for courses and programs and continue to struggle, along with my colleagues, with long-term sustainability of our certificates and minor. As the Coordinator of Pre-service Training, I also recognize that our efforts must extend beyond NAU. Several projects have a statewide focus including **SELECT**, the Disability Experience Module and our association with the new Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (**LEND**) coordinated through the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Arizona that includes stu-

dents from all three state universities. Further, I represent the IHD-AzUCD in the National Training Director’s Council of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).”

You are one of the longest-employed persons here at the IHD. What are your most memorable moments?

“There are many, as I have been at the IHD since 1978 (with the exception of a two-year absence when I moved to North Carolina to complete coursework for my doctorate). Many of my memorable moments pertain to children and families I have interacted with over the years. One child, whose parents were told he would never walk or talk, comes to mind. He had just transitioned from early intervention (then 0-5) to a self-contained special education classroom in the public schools. I was making a follow-up visit and the teacher told me that the day before he had picked up a chair, threw it at another child and yelled “**** ***”. Both his teacher and I were elated that he was communicating with his peers; although, some obvious adjustments would be needed.”

“I also have many fond memories of colleagues here at the IHD-AzUCD, many who have departed. I still remember how six of us who were working for a project (NACES) conducting evaluations across northern Arizona crammed into a small Lakeside motel room in an effort to save money. Being stacked in there like cordwood was perhaps too much togetherness that night!”

“The work environment was very different here when I arrived and it has changed in significant ways over the years. I remember when Rich arrived



here and how nervous staff were in anticipation of his arrival. I also remember the warm autumn day when the IHD-AzUCD staff relocated to the home of Larry Gallagher in Camp Verde to celebrate Rich’s 25th anniversary with IHD-AzUCD.”

What would you like people to know about you outside of work?

“I have always enjoyed exploring the backcountry of the southwest. I love to hike and camp and try to get a hike in every Sunday. I consider myself an environmentalist, interested in protecting our world for future generations. I love to read and now have a Kindle Fire that enables me to read books in both traditional and electronic forms. I try to stay informed about national, state, and local issues and usually turn to the Daily Show for political analysis. I am an amateur artist, still learning the basics.”

New AzUCD Five-Year Award

The Institute for Human Development (IHD) has recently learned that it has been awarded a new five-year grant (2012-2017) from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) for a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). This award is the sixth UCEDD grant awarded to IHD since 1990 and continues the work of IHD's Arizona University Center on Disabilities (AzUCD). The focus of this new grant is based on the premise that "access to community and attitudes of the general population toward persons with disabilities can be major facilitators or inhibitors of inclusion and self-advocacy". Specifically, that inclusion is inspired by access and attitude.

IHD wishes to thank individuals with disabilities, family members and disability service agencies and providers for their participation in the development of the recent AzUCD application and their ongoing support and partnership in addressing the goals and objectives of the new AzUCD Five-Year Plan. We are especially appreciative of the valuable contributions provided by AzUCD Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members.



Comments of the Grant Reviewers:

"The focus on improving inclusion from the vantage point of promoting greater access and attitude is the strength of this application. The applicant's approach to conceptualizing the problems was really quite unique. Attitudes and access being the underlying and overall problem that needs to be address, and then those two issues are addressed with the more specific goal areas."

"This application embraces the importance of inclusion as the primary goal of its activities. The application clearly described the goal of the Center and provided supporting documentation. It is clear that the Center has a rich history and is focused on meeting the goal of the grant and the DD Act of 2000."

Launch of "Bridge Brief" – A Research to Practice resource

The Institute for Human Development (IHD), Arizona University Center on Disabilities (AzUCD), at Northern Arizona University has embraced evidence-based practice research and evaluation as a methodology for identifying disability practices that will most likely yield positive and successful outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families. In an effort to help bridge the research-to-practice gap among the disability disciplines, the IHD-AzUCD has launched a new electronically delivered evidence-based practice resource called "Bridge Briefs". Bridge Briefs will be published and disseminated quarterly. Please contact the Institute to assure you or your organization is on the Bridge Briefs distribution list.



SYNERGISTIC PROGRAMS



The relationship between the Institute for Human Development (IHD) and the Arizona University Center on Disabilities (AzUCD) often comes into question. The following paragraphs represent an attempt to clarify how the two programs relate and interact on behalf of individuals with disabilities and families.

The Institute for Human Development (IHD) at Northern Arizona University was established in 1967 by the Arizona Board of Regents as an interdisciplinary, disability training, community service and research program. In 1990 IHD received federal funding to join a national network of University Affiliated Program (UAPs). Today UAPs are known as University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities or UCEDDs and are administered federally by the newly established Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). There are 67 UCEDDs all total, at least one in every US State and Territory, with a few states having multiple UCEDDs. Arizona, for example, now has two: the center at NAU called the Arizona University Center on Disabilities (AzUCD) that was initially established in 1990 and the more recently funded Sonoran Center at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The mission and scope of work for IHD and the AzUCD overlap. The relationship is synergistic in that the programs and work of IHD supports and promotes the disability goals and objectives of the AzUCD. Conversely, the funding and guidance provided through the AzUCD expands and improves the capacity and successes of IHD. The AzUCD provides IHD infrastructure and program development resources that have allowed IHD to expand and more capably address its mission of disability training, research and service. The infrastructure framework, overlapping purpose, and expertise of IHD guide and support the development and successful implementation AzUCD's Five-Year-Plan activities.

WHAT OUR TRAINEES ARE DOING



Jessica Reese

Clinical Director Intermountain Centers for Human Development

"I am a 2006 graduate of NAU. I completed a Master's Degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Low Incidence Disabilities, a Graduate Certificate in Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and a Graduate Certificate in Early intervention. In March of 2007 I was Board

Certified in Behavior Analysis (BCBA), completing my clinical supervision under Dr. Daniel Davidson BCBA-D."

"I started my career with H.O.P.E Group L.L.C. as the Director of Behavior Consulting Services where I assisted in establishing the Behavior Consulting program for families with children diagnosed with Autism or a related diagnosis. I was provided with an opportunity to remain involved with the NAU Positive Behavior Support Program and taught classes in the certificate program. This was a wonderful experience and allowed me to interact with many talented professionals working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis."

"Since June of 2008 I have been working with Intermountain Centers for Human Development where I am currently the Clinical Director. When the licensing law passed for Behavior Analysts in Arizona, I was recognized as a licensed Behavioral Health Professional (BHP) by DBHS and AHCCCS, allowing me to independently supervise clinical treatment within the Behavioral Health system of care."

"There is a great need for licensed BHPs in the Behavioral Health field and I am very excited to be a part of expanding the scope of Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Support services in Arizona through supervising new and prospective BCBA's interested in working with individuals enrolled in Behavioral Health Services. The NAU Positive Behavior Support program provided me with a strong foundation to grow my professional career and I am forever thankful for the network of support I am able to access though being a graduate of this program. Go Lumberjacks!"



Community News Notes is a publication of the Institute for Human Development (IHD). The IHD is a research and training program located at Northern Arizona University and part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

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