

GA. BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Committee

The DBHDD Division of Developmental Disabilities contracts with a private vendor to maintain an independent committee of experts within the area of developmental disabilities and applied behavior analysis. The Behavior Analysis Peer Review Committee (BAPRC) provides the following services as requested by the Division: advocates best practice standards in the field of applied behavior analysis, insures that behavior support services embody the ethical standards of this field, offers technical assistance to regions and/or provider agencies, conducts on-site visits with approved behavior providers in residential and day service settings, conducts trainings, and advises the Division of Developmental Disabilities concerning matters of policy, systems, and procedures. The PRC committee is composed of eight individuals who hold a doctorate degree from a graduate program specializing in the field of behavior analysis and who have extensive experience in developmental disability services.

One of the most prominent functions of the BAPRC is to conduct on-site visits with behavior support and community services providers delivering behavior services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The general purpose of the visits is to provide guidance and technical assistance to regional field offices, behavior providers, and provider agencies. This guidance focuses on ways of improving behavior support services to individuals with developmental disabilities. These visits have a distinctly constructive style, in which the BAPRC works with behavior providers to identify those areas in which development will yield the greatest benefits. The goals are to: a) assess the status of those behavior services, b) make recommendations regarding the improvement of such services, and c) provide technical assistance in support of those recommendations.

In conducting on-site visits, the BAPRC functions differently from other bodies that survey or monitor various aspects of a provider agency's operation. Instead of authority, the BAPRC brings expertise in behavior support services to its role. Furthermore, its members are professional peers of those who are responsible for delivering behavioral programming services. The team's overarching interest is in assisting providers in improving their behavior supports services. Toward this end, the committee's activities while on site are primarily for the purpose of guiding its recommendations, training and technical assistance in this area.

The team approaches each provider and its various sites with appreciation for their unique features. Although the BAPRCs goal of helping providers achieve sound behavior support services does not vary from one provider to another, the on-site visit teams recognize that there are many idiosyncratic factors that must be taken into account when working with a particular behavior provider and provider agency that guide the team's assessment and assistance.

Benefits of Participation

The BAPRC is comprised of leading experts in the field of applied behavior analysis. The experience and knowledge that they bring is invaluable. They use their expertise to identify areas within the provision of behavior support services that could be improved to enhance the lives of the individuals being served. Behavior providers and provider agencies that participate in this process also access ongoing training and follow-up from their Regional Behavior Analysts. These visits/consultations not only benefit the agency and behavior provider but also serve to benefit the region and the state as a whole. The committee

reports on the state of behavioral services within the region and state. The goal is to use these reports and subsequent recommendations to enhance the quality of behavior support services.

PREPARATION FOR A CONSULTATION

Each consultation is coordinated by the Regional Behavior Analyst, and along with the regional field office identifies potential behavior providers each year. The Regional Behavior Analyst, Manager of Statewide Behavioral Services, and the BAPRC chairperson then finalize the agencies for the review based on size, geography, time, and needs. The Regional Behavior Analyst coordinates with each provider agency and behavioral professional selected.

Selected providers identify any potential dates for visits that may be problematic within a particular time period. Dates that would not be good for a visit include days those key personnel may be unavailable or whenever special events (such as trainings or special events for participants) are scheduled. The BAPRC is interested in observing staff and individuals during their regularly scheduled activities. Key personnel that need to be available are relevant supervisors, management, and behavior professionals.