

**Workshop for Manitoba ABA and St. Amant  
(Contact: Karli Pedreira)**

**Date:** June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Presenter:** Gregory P. Hanley, Ph.D., BCBA-D  
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**General Title:** Practical Functional Assessment and Treatment of Problem Behavior

**Logistics:** Full day; approx. 6 hrs. on task (e.g., 8:30-10:00, 10:15-12:00, 1:00-2:30, 2:45-4:00)

**Part 1**

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**Title:** Functional Assessment of Severe Problem Behavior: A Focus on a Safer, Faster, and Effective Process

**Abstract:** Behavioral intervention can be effective for addressing problem behavior like meltdowns, self-injury, and aggression, especially when a functional assessment of the problem is conducted to determine why the problem behavior is occurring. A number of myths regarding the functional assessment process, which appear to be pervasive within different research and practice communities, will be reviewed in the context of an attempt to develop new lore regarding the functional assessment process. Frequently described obstacles to implementing a critical aspect of the functional assessment process, the functional analysis, will be reviewed in the context of new solutions for overcoming them. Through lecture, interactive discussion, and role play, attendees should be able to conduct interviews to discover reinforcement contingencies that may be influencing problem behavior and then design and implement safe, fast, and effective functional analyses from the interviews to determine the legitimacy of suspected reinforcement contingencies. An iterative interview/analysis process will also be reviewed for situations in which initial analyses do not yield sufficient information to proceed to treatment.

**Objectives:**

1. An attendee should be able to describe the conditions under which the different types of functional assessment should and should not be used when attempting to understand why problem behavior is occurring.
2. An attendee will be able to describe multiple tactics to improve the safety and efficiency of the functional assessment process.
3. An attendee will be able to describe procedures for efficiently determining whether different topographies of problem behavior are influenced by the same reinforcing contingency.
4. Given the results of an open-ended interview, the attendee should be able to design an efficient, individualized (non-standardized) and synthesized functional analysis.

**Relevant Readings:**

- Hanley, G. P. (2012). Functional assessment of problem behavior: Dispelling myths, overcoming implementation obstacles, and developing new lore. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 5, 54-72.
- Hanley, G. P., Jin, C. S., Vanselow, N. R., & Hanratty, L. A. (2014). Producing meaningful improvements in problem behavior of children with autism via synthesized analyses and treatments. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 47, 16-36.
- Jessel, J., Hanley, G. P., & Ghaemmaghami, M. (2016). Interview-informed synthesized contingency analyses: Thirty replications and reanalysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1002/jaba.316
- Santiago, J. L., Hanley, G. P., Moore, K., & Jin, C. S. (2016). The generality of interview-informed functional analyses: Systematic replications in school and home. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, 797-811.
- Slaton, J. & Hanley, G. P., Raftery, K. (2017). Interview-informed functional analyses: A comparison of synthesized and isolated variables. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

**Relevant website:** <http://practicalfunctionalassessment.com/>

## Part 2

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**Title:** Treating Severe Problem Behavior: A Focus on Strengthening Socially Important Behavior

**Abstract:** The success of treatments for problem behaviors like meltdowns, self-injury, or aggression is largely dependent on whether the treatment is based on the function the problem behavior serves for the person with autism. But because of the seemingly obligatory focus on detecting the impact of single variables in good behavior analytic research, effective behavioral technology is often fractured across studies, resulting in a dearth of studies showing socially valid improvements in these problem behaviors and an absence of studies illustrating the treatment process from start to finish. In this session, an effective, comprehensive, and parent-validated treatment process for problem behavior will be described. The comparative research that underscores the importance of focusing on the skills of communication, toleration, and compliance will be reviewed. The logistics of implementing this treatment in a variety of contexts that differ in personnel will be discussed along with procedures for training parents and staff and extending the treatment into relevant contexts over realistic time periods.

### Objectives:

1. An attendee will be able to describe strategies for teaching individuals with severe problem behavior to engage in a generalized communication response and then procedures for differentiating the response so that a communication repertoire is established.
2. An attendee will be able to describe the key components of strategies for teaching individuals with severe problem behavior to tolerate both delays to and denials of reinforcers previously maintaining their problem behavior.
3. An attendee should be able to describe how compliance and leisure skills may be shaped during delays to the reinforcers that historically maintained problem behavior.

### Relevant Readings:

- Hanley, G. P., Jin, C. S., Vanselow, N. R., & Hanratty, L. A. (2014). Producing meaningful improvements in problem behavior of children with autism via synthesized analyses and treatments. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 47, 16-36.
- Ghaemmaghami, M., Hanley, G. P., Jin, S., and Vanselow, N. R. (2015) Affirming control by multiple reinforcers via progressive treatment analysis. *Behavioral Interventions*. 31, 70-86.
- Santiago, J. L., Hanley, G. P., Moore, K., & Jin, C. S. (2016). The generality of interview-informed functional analyses: Systematic replications in school and home. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, 797-811.
- Ghaemmaghami, M., Hanley, G. P., & Jessel, J. (2016). Contingencies promote delay tolerance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1002/jaba.333

**Relevant website:** <http://practicalfunctionalassessment.com/>

**Bio:** Dr. Hanley has been applying the principles of learning to improve socially important behaviors of children and adults with and without disabilities for over 25 years. He worked and trained at the Kennedy Krieger Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, was degreed at the University of Florida, was tenured at the University of Kansas, and is currently a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Behavior Analysis Doctoral Program and the Life Skills Clinic, both at Western New England University, and an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Dr. Hanley has published over 100 book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals in areas such as the assessment, intervention, and prevention of problem behavior, and evidence-based values. Dr. Hanley is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 25), past Editor of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, past Associate Editor of *The Behavior Analyst*, and current Editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.