



Spirituality in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Workplace

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Abstract

The research focuses on the integration of spirituality into the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, with the objective being on championing principle, caring about sympathetic, alleviating turnover, and cultivating a supportive workplace. The objective of the research is not to focus on religious doctrinarism, but to show open-mindedness, in which the frameworks display a worldview of then Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, such as, rewarding employment, solidarity, and harmonized principles. This research explains high pressure, and high maintenance disposition of the employees and management of working in a spiritual led Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The results of the feedback obtained from employees and management, frequently display the increased rates of exactingness, to engage in spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, which could lead to empathy fatigue for employee, management, and staff churn. The research explains the overlooking of Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs). The emotional needs and spiritual needs of the employee, management, and staff lines up with company standard operating procedures in regards to spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The research focus on engaging in conduct metrics, which means that religious doctrine does not define spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The result of the research shows the equipping of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace with a quest for purpose, sense of belonging and sense of integrity and sense of autonomy, while equipping the employee, management, and staff with the tools of the trade to be able to work in a spiritual Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace.

Keywords: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA,) Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs), workplace spirituality, spirituality.

The syncretism and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in the workplace involves balancing Evidence Based Practice (EBP), professional boundaries, and moral compromise. The mix opinions in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) communities, has led professional to question cultural context, which is the shaping of the environment as well as an individual's behavior in regards to the shaping of the individual spirituality, while focusing on the ethics, religious background and social convictions in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The clients play a part in the maturity of the spiritual level in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, such as, cultural responsiveness (respecting and understanding spiritual background), cultural variables (focusing on treatment goals), and cultural values (shaping daily lives). A big mistake was made by researchers in assuming

Social Skills Training (STT) did not connect with spirituality in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, instead of focusing religion (values infusion) or spiritual beliefs (faith integration), which violates many Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) policies and procedures.

The Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace should not mix clinical billable hours with spirituality, because religious syncretism has no place in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), every attempt should be made to prevent distinct belief systems and the blending of one or two new beliefs regarding spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. In addition, maintain professional boundaries and prevent the establishment of cultural framing or values aligned goal setting. Disregarding professional boundaries can have a great impact upon billing guidelines (CPT Codes), Payer Policies (Medical Necessity), or reimbursement criteria (Billing Units), because lack of focus on professional boundaries can lead to the neglect of Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT), Behavior Conditioning (behavior modification or conditioning), or even Skill Acquisition Training (the structure of teaching).

Professional boundaries mean cultural competence (diverse groups interactions), cultural responsiveness (adapt therapy that suits a family interest), or culture humility (the checking of personal biases through self-checking). Spirituality should not spill over into the workplace and cause disrespect to an individual's cultural background or family religion. However, it would be wise to support a member of management or employee's participation in local community activities involving spirituality or even support and respect an employee or member of management family traditions that may or may not cross over into the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. Professional boundaries may even include employee or member of management taking time to meditate, or pray in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace seeking to find understanding and a piece of mindfulness, by seeking their spiritual support. Believe or not researchers have found that this can actually assist the employee or member of management maintain emotional regulations, giving the individuals patience during high stress moments, in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace.

Literature Review:

According to Dik, Daniels, & Alayan (2024), emphasis on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace is very limited, when it comes to literature regarding Spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, referencing organizational psychology and the alignment with clinical practice. Dik, Daniels, & Alayan (2024) communicate that spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, can connect to the local community and provide a sense of purpose and community engagement. It was also emphasis that spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace enhances job satisfaction and employee's well-being.

According to Lianto (2023), spirituality at work involves three primary dimensions, such as, socially significant target skills and goals that improve an employee's daily work life (Syahir, Abidin, Sa'ari, and Abdul Rahman, 2025). Social Validity, such as the results of an intervention, involving goals and procedures fit the employee (Belwalkar, Vohra, & Pandey, 2018). Committed action, such as, behavior staying consistent with employee life values, referencing the term from Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) remained a focal point (Blutia, Mukherjee, Kumar, & JHA, 2025).

According to Buccilli, Alan, Baha, Shahzad, Chisvo, Ennabe, & Weinand (2024), the highest demanding and emotional client behaviors and example of employee fatigue centers around in-home sessions, school sessions, clinical sessions, and Applied Behavior Analysis workplaces. Difficulty in instilling spirituality into home sessions and school sessions may violate the BABC Ethic guidelines versus in clinical and workplace sessions, however, nurturing spiritual growth in in home or in schools setting does not mean that a specific religion or spirituality should be promoted, instead the focus could be a motivating operation, a function of behavior, or even a reinforcer for purpose and connection. The use of structural Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) principles can be framed as, (1) improving quality of life or even social significance, (2) assisting Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) in the connection of daily, monthly, and yearly behavioral support strategies more wide-ranging or encompassing, and (3) encouraging meaningful behavioral growth that may impact a client's quality of life.

According to Lawande & Venkatesh (2025), in an effort to promoting and or focusing on client's social validity, one much give attention to ensuring Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs) connection of daily behavioral support strategies are completed or followed, in addition, Value driven guidance should be clinically oversights empathetically by fostering or mentoring through human centered practices, this will support and improve team cohesion, and encourage leadership to give more emphasis on altruistic vision. More emphasis, my leadership in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace should be given to holistic well-being, prioritizing intrinsic human worth or even mutual respect to each other. This will allow the workplace to encompass person centered humanistic goals, not centered on models that mirror supervision deeply rooted ethical or relational values, but centered on managing invisible workloads, reducing workplace burnout and turnover, and promoting sustainable practices.

Spiritual Culture of the ABA Workplace:

Evaluating how well the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace is you must first evaluate the volume and temperature to determine how well compassionate care is being managed, as well as, the well-being and cultural humility. Ensure that the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace environment reflects a positive, strong, and healthy culture directly affects the move of the Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and workplace retention. When balancing the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, take into consideration that a progressive ABA workplace value is an assent based practice and neurodiversity affirming practice that centers around three particular areas, (1) objective prioritizing, in which the focus is on meaningful life skills, open and unforced communication, and elf determination, (2) naturalistic approach, in which treatments plans are up to date, target instructions are accurate, and the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is current, all goals are on target and that all of them respect the caregivers cultural norms and daily routines, and (3) compassionate care, in which the focus is on eliminating overly restrictive interventions as well as coercive restrictive interventions, while focusing on building strong rapport and of course empathy.

One of the highest turnover issue in a Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace involves staff support and work environment, therefore, a positive spiritual workplace culture, automatically enables management to take strong positive concrete steps to support the Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and the Register Behavior Technicians

(RBTs), by focusing on goals performance improvement, providing on regular basis broader professional counseling, monthly review task list competencies, develop soft manageable skills, foster daily, monthly, yearly confidence and remain in compliance with the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) standards. Setting boundaries is a key part of work life balance, in which availability is defined. Once availability is defining the employee now have an understanding of work hours (billable versus non-billable), time off, and understanding that it does not benefit to engage with communications outside of business hours, however, you maybe in a position that requires you to be on call at moments notice. Maintaining an active collaborative feedback loop create communication lines that gives ongoing transparent dialogue between the caregiver, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs), which can also lead to two-way stakeholder dialogue.

Its importance for leadership in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, to understand and engage in cultural sensitivity, because activity understanding the different cultural background of the Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Register Behavior Technicians (RBTs) that works for you, will help you shaped the workplace culture. Healthy and strong workplace helps to build healthy and clear clinical mindfulness, allowing leadership in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to stay fully engaged and alert to any and every real time changes, as well as behavior or mood changes by employees, management, and client in the workplace environment. Ensure that tools of the trade and resources as readily available for employees and leadership, some Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace utilizes resources such as, tangible learning and sensory tools, diagnostic and curricular assessments and assessment toolkits, toys, visual aids, and digital practice management software. In addition, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace utilizes assessments and curricula (ABLLS-R and AFLS), learning and sensory tools (visual supports, sensory equipment, and instructional materials), and data and staff support (data collection software and parent training guides).

Employees, Management, and Spirituality in ABA Workplace:

A good and strong healthy Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace with employees and management engage, usually adjust to spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) by adjusting to spirituality in the workplace thru the balancing of professional ethics and strict scientific behavioral facts, by using a great deal of self-humility and very little personal pride. It's important for leadership to stay on task while working in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, limiting the acceleration of negative opinions and mixed thoughts on spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), which can lead to arguments among the staff that may or may not lead to faith comments crosses ethical lines of another employee religious or spiritual beliefs, therefore, its very important to maintain a strong and healthy ABA workplace.

A good practice will be to set basic and easy to understand Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace policies and procedures, that integrates workplace spiritual understanding and clinic practices from spiritual teachings and personal religious teaching and training, that does not belong in a workplace setting. The workplace policies and procedures should have a section that trains employees, management, and leadership to acknowledge and respect diverse backgrounds without altering scientific programming. The creation by leadership of inclusive spaces that limits employees and management from

feeling pressure to conform to a specific belief system is paramount to a healthy and strong Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace if employees and leadership feel valued for their well-being, you are one step closer to a good and strong healthy Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. A strong and healthy workplace, may mean that you have a strong and healthy leadership staff, whom can assist in translating individual personal values, and groups values into interpersonal sensitivity, tolerance, and reciprocal support. Ensure and that treatment plans remain measurable and objective preserving the basic foundation and strict ties to the belief that behavioral science rather than subjective faith be follow, however, when it comes to the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace spiritual should be a focal point.

Behavior Analytic Training and Spirituality in ABA Workplace:

According to West, Assemi, Ragulan, & Houmanfar (2004). Whenever you have strict professional ethics and guidelines, and the balancing of empirical science, with the attachment of cultural responsiveness in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace it is an ingredient for a perfect stew called integrating spirituality and traditional behavior analytic training. Research have shown that the core approaches to handling this perfect stew includes, cultural responsiveness, cognitive flexibility, and professional boundaries. The criteria pertaining to behavior analysts being trained to respect the spiritual values, client diversity and religious values are still intact. Violating the natural science of behavior is not an option, you must factor in the client and or family spiritual and contextual preferences. Spiritual explanations should be used in any shape or form as a functional behavior treatment, because interventions must at any cost remain grounded in behavioral principles and evidence-based.

The behavior analytic training should be rooted in relational frame theory a good method to be used by the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace would be Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT). The Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) can be used to help resilience building, adaptability, and values aligned. Breathing exercises are very effective tools to use when regulating emotions during intense sessions, types of techniques; flower and candle breathing, box breathing, belly breathing, or five finger breathing. Grounding exercise are also very effective tools to use when regulating emotions during intense sessions, types of techniques; cognitive grounding, sensory grounding, and physical grounding. Clinical programming must have that separation between spiritual practices and personal religious, it should be the goal of leadership in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace to maintain this separation, ensuring that leadership model professional rapport, while at the same time maintaining overt staff interactions to behavioral science and organizational policies.

Environmental Contingencies in a Spiritual ABA Workplace:

Three term contingency with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace and includes workplace spirituality as an antecedent, which includes ethical practices, spiritual leadership, and organizational values alignment acting as triggers that fosters community among employees, leadership and clients, which involves a deeper sense of meaningful work, and results in the employee's and leadership thru ethical frameworks, altering an internal state, involving spiritual practices in a Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The behavior impacts of spirituality in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace involves, proactive support, clinical boundaries and ethical alignment. The consequences of

combining spirituality in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace includes from a positive perspective, higher engagement, better resilience, and less turnover, and from a negative perspective, alienation, workplace conflict, and loss of focus. If the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace attempts to analyze the environmental arrangements, they can design settings that nurture professional ethics and staff well-being, such as aligning daily, monthly, or yearly clinical work with a deeper sense and stringer focus of meaning and ethical responsibility toward the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace employees, leadership, and management.

Operational Challenges in a Spiritual ABA Workplace:

Spiritually integrated system level barriers or operational challenges in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace are often references traditional health care barriers such as, organizational obstacles, systems breakdown, workforce constraints, staff attrition, ethical predicaments, moral conflicts, or spiritual burnout with idiosyncratic philosophical assumption tensions. High retention usually triggers when spiritual messaging in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace clashes with clinical practicality or evidence-based practice (EBP). Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplaces may often lean on a shared spiritual mission to levitate lack of pay for Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs), in an effort to eliminate lack of matching pay with competitors. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplaces try to stay away from practitioners who questions the merging of secular science and spiritual frameworks.

There may be times when boundaries are blurred or simply unclear when Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace supervisors act as spiritual mentors when they do not believe in spirituality in the workplace, which leads to unambiguous direction or regulatory exposure. Which could lead to the desire from organizational leaders in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace to alter or fade empirically validated independent variables to coordinate or shape with a specific holistic worldview or faith base. Regulatory exposure should be verified to prevent the coding or billing as clinical ABA services, spiritual or alternative interventions. References should be given to audit and documentation exposure (mismatched records, medical; necessity deficits, and expired authorizations), supervision and credentialing exposure (oversight gaps and credential tracking), and privacy and operational exposure (HIPAA Breaches and Employment Claims).

Disconnection between direct measurement and quantitative recording by narratives focused on spiritual progress gains or function can lead to unlicensed individuals (support staff, behavior technicians or Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs)), attempting to deliver spiritual guidance, spiritual directions, or spiritual counseling outside the defined support staff, behavior technicians, Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) or the Board Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBAs) scope of practice, when the scope of practice should consist of roles and restrictions (direct implementation, data collection, or prohibited), or supervision and regulation (mandatory oversight or state variation). The connection between spirituality and the workplace should be strong, strong enough to carry the unseen heavy weight of maintaining a spiritual atmosphere while managing severe or aggressive problem behaviors or seeking a higher purpose. Employees, management, or leadership should not fear that stepping back to support other beliefs in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

workplace signals a lack of dedication, faith, or alignment with the policies, procedures and mission.

Measurement, Data Analysis, and Spirituality in the ABA Workplace:

Spirituality is not a measurable defined scientific term or measurement category, that is often defined in behavior analytic terms, nevertheless, the intersection between Spirituality and ABA in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace involves, behavioral interpretation of spiritual actions, ethics and cultural responsiveness, and Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT). Spirituality is incorporated into ABA through cultural accommodation, consisting of, cultural and valued-based alignment (family values, reinforcement choices, and ethical debates, mindfulness or emotional regulations (mindful breathing, body scans, or grounding walks). The effect or consequence of spirituality on employee, management, and leadership in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace focuses on finding function, its function, and interrelatedness. The good leaders in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace focuses on self-reinforcement and natural reinforcement.

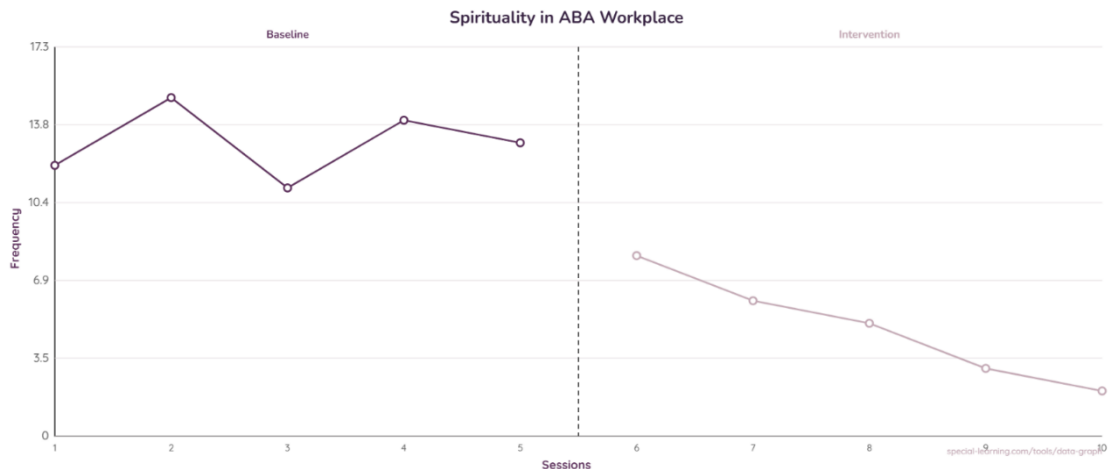
A spirituality grounded leader in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace may focus on the physical part of the employees and management, where burnout and compassion fatigue are high, the spiritually grounded leader focuses on the intrinsic motivation of their staff. The focus more than likely centers around, witnessing client progress, professional competence and mastery, altruistic purpose, and autonomy in the field. Because the things that happens in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace affects the client, regardless of location (home, clinic, or community). That's why bridging or closing gaps between the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace culture and clinical mission is critical to the development of spiritual growth such as, culture framing, emotional well-being, character and social goals, family alignment, and value aligned reinforcers. The measurement of Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT) in literature focuses on relationship and its frequency, in which the calculations are completed by using Pearson's correlation and aggression coefficients (to define the slope and intercept) to measure the direction and strengths. The research showed a practical significance pairing between spiritual leadership and organizational leadership. High Positive Correlation ($r = 0.40$ to 0.65).

Experimental Design in a Spiritual ABA Workplace:

In an effort to capture both the specific ways employees and management in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace, feel valued and motivation in high stress working environment, use the experimental design mixed method sequential explanatory design, because it relies on both, the quantitative phase, which are established surveys instruments used to collect baseline data across Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. The quantitative phase is immediately followed by a qualitative phase, in which interviews are conducted with high and low scoring leaders results from Phase I quantitative, to understand how Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace spirituality is form. It's also is ideal in combining measurable data with deep personal stories, such as spirituality in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplaces.

This research utilized the results from sampling totaling 150 participants, consisting of 80 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), and 70 Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) from 13 states. The participants consisted of 140 females and 10 makes from ABA service networks. The research consisted of the use of Fry's Spiritual Leadership Theory, the purpose of using Fry's Spiritual Leadership Theory, was to measure the core variables, in

addition to using Fry Theory, the Spiritual Leadership survey was utilized using the Spiritual Leadership Survey (SLS) scale. The multiple linear regressions graph below shows the results of a quantitative data analysis. The results show spiritual leadership dimensions predict ethical decision-making scores. Using thematic analysis to find recurring concepts regarding how executives rely on personal meaning or transcendent values when managing clinical contingencies in an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace.



Conclusion:

Research conclusion showed that Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace has a very slim chance (20%) of implementing spirituality into the workplace. The ultimate takeaway was how well the employees, management, and leadership adjusted to the implementation of spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace. Spirituality implementation left a calm feeling in the environment, which lead to the respecting of professional and personal boundaries and client centered evidence. Retention levels remained the same in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace with or without the implementation of spirituality in the workplace. Employees, managers, and leadership reported greater sense of purpose, deeper connection to coworkers, and higher compassion when treating clients. The focus of spirituality in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) workplace on holistic well-being and mindfulness lowered the everyday workplace stress and emotional exhaustion.

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