

## How to be a Savvy Behaviour Interventionist

You are stepping into an entry-level job that can lead to a robust career. We want you to know how to assess if you are receiving quality training, adequate supervision and accepting positions that give opportunity for growth.

You can learn about career options on the [ASN Careers Page](#), and you can connect to other BIFs through the [BI Facebook group](#). It is good to share concerns and ideas with your peers or with ASN staff.

The following are some important points to be aware of:



### Contract Work vs Being on Payroll

Most BIs are considered contract workers primarily because they work short shifts, work for more than one family and have some say in their availability. Sometimes BIs also bring their own bag of reinforcers or rewards and games. You would thus be self-employed, and you must send in your own CPP payments, EI payments, and taxes. You can also write off any expenses like car expenses, clothes used for work, reinforcers, etc.

If you only work for one family, have strictly set hours and work more than 10 or 15 hours per week, you might prefer to be an employee. Then the family needs to remit their CPP, EI, and taxes. You would be entitled to vacation pay of 4%.

Make sure you know whether your job is contract work or employment work before starting.



### Qualified supervisor:

Any team you are joining should be supervised by a Board-Certified Behaviour Consultant (BCBA). There may be a Junior/Intern/BCaBA also involved, but that person and the whole team should have regular contact and supervision by a BCBA. If you are unsure if your supervisor is a BCBA, you can look them up by name on the [BACB Registry](#). BCBAs who are registered in BC to work with clients under six can also be found on the [RASP](#) list. The ASN hosts a Facebook group which serves as a job board for BIs working on home teams called [ABA Therapists in BC](#). We require every posted ad to include the first and last name of the supervising BCBA.



### Sufficient Training:

Before you are expected to run 1:1 sessions with your client, you should receive comprehensive and customized training from the consultant and/or the lead BI. This includes the basics of ABA (principles and terminology), as well as specific protocols and behaviour plans for your student. You should receive ongoing feedback and skill evaluation during your training. You should feel confident and ready before working alone. It should be clear to you who you can contact if you have questions or concerns. The chain of communication and decision-making should also be transparent. Every team is somewhat different in this way. Emails, phone calls, texts, and note writing are all acceptable forms of communication, as long as everyone who needs to know is in the loop and you can expect timely responses. If making shift changes, it is recommended to put these in writing, even if agreed upon verbally, so that you have a record of what was discussed.

### Ongoing Supervision:

You should have ongoing and regular contact with the BCBA and/or Junior Consultant who supervises your team. Usually, this happens in the form of regularly scheduled team meetings and session observations (overlaps). The frequency varies based on the intensity of the student's program and need. The contact should be sufficient to maintain a quality intervention with consistency between all the team members and keep the programs moving forward. You should receive constructive feedback and adequate answers to your questions. You should feel supported, respected, and listened to.

### Robust Programming:

The program you are implementing should be tailor-made for your client. It should address the priorities identified by the family, developmental goals, and problem behaviours. Programs often include activities both at the table and away from the table, and sometimes also in the community. Programs address a wide variety of skills, including academics, communication, self-help, fine/gross motor, and social/play skills. There should be ongoing data for every skill being taught, and this data should be reviewed regularly by the Consultant.

### Opportunity for growth:

This is a field with great opportunities. When you are ready, you should be able to talk to the family you work for or the BCBA who supervises you about career advancement. You might be able to take on more responsibility on the team, including admin work, or train to become a lead BI. With experience, there may be opportunities to work in a school or preschool as a Support Worker or EA, in a teaching home, an adult community inclusion program, or other public sector jobs. Your team should encourage you and support you in finding these opportunities if this is something you want to pursue. If you are a psychology student and have experience as a lead BI, you may consider approaching your supervising BCBA about becoming a junior consultant. They can guide you towards the right programs and education while offering supervision and support with this process. See all the career options on the [ASN Careers Page](#)

### Reasonable and ethical contracts:

Considering the vast opportunity for growth in this field, be very aware of the commitments you are asked to make. If you work for an agency, instead of a parent, will they sign off on hours when you are ready to move on? Are they supportive of your goals to become an ABA Support Worker or a BCaBA? As well, don't be tempted to take on a supervisory or lead role before you are ready or trained sufficiently. It is reasonable for a family or agency to ask for a commitment (assuming you have made it past the training or trial period) and to expect a certain amount of notice if leaving the team. Supervising BCBAs should be willing to validate your supervision to advance in this field. Ask ahead of time if the BCBA is willing to do this

### Considerations:

Like any job, you need to find a good fit for yourself. Wage and hours are usually top of mind, but might be balanced with getting supervision from a respected consultant in the field. Location should also be a strong consideration. If you are working only a few hours at a time, you should minimize your commute to no more than 15 minutes. If shifts are longer, then working further away may work for you, but it must

be sustainable so that you can stay committed to your client. Agencies may offer more hours or better starting wages, but make sure that you are not trading this for a higher quality experience and future opportunity as detailed above.



#### Ongoing Communication:

Remember to communicate with your supervising BCBA and family about your situation. If you have exams, changing family circumstances, or other personal circumstances, you may find that families can accommodate requests for temporarily altered or decreased hours. It is a good idea to discuss this as far in advance as possible, just as families should give you a heads up about any schedule changes or changing circumstances that may affect the child or your job. As well, your family should be willing to give you a letter of recommendation if you have given at least two weeks' notice when leaving the team. A month's notice is even better. It will likely take that long or longer to train a new BI to replace you.



#### Join the Community:

It can be very helpful to connect with other Behaviour Interventionists and create a community of support. While remembering to follow ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality for your clients and their families, you can ask questions relevant to your work. Join the [Facebook group](#) and connect with [BC-ABA](#) to learn about ongoing educational opportunities.