

Expanding Your Scope of Practice and Competence

- Walk with an early career BCBA as she explores expanding her scope of competence.
- Guidance to determine what would help increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities in the area of executive functioning as a behavior analyst

<u>Steps</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Example</u>
1. <i>Determine the basics of your new interest area and why it is important to you.</i>	Brainstorm and Basic Research- what do you know and what do you want to know? What is important to you? What is important to your clients?	<i>I keep seeing “executive functioning” in many of the comprehensive diagnostic evaluations I have to review now that I am working in schools. It looks like EF has many skills and are linked to a few different diagnoses or differences. Teachers often report differences in the ability of these students to focus and I notice the kids I work with seem to really struggle with task completion and planning when I see EF skills mentioned in documents I review.</i>
2. <i>Review for Scope of Practice</i>	Is your new area of interest related to tasks on the BACB Task List, Test Content Outline, an ABA subspecialty area, and/or the Seven Dimensions? Is this area within the practice area as defined in your states licensing or	<i>On review, it looks like EF skills are linked to observable and measurable behaviors and they are also linked to adaptive behavioral functioning. I can see a link to the seven dimensions. I can also see EF skills are associated with</i>

practice laws and regulations for behavior analysts?

If yes → continue

If no → stop.

If the new area you are interested in is not related to the BACB task list and it is unclear if your state defines the area within your legal scope of practice, seek consultation to explore your interest and idea and clarify how your interest could be aligned to behavior analysis practice within your state.

References:

Association of Professional Behavior Analysts. (2026). *Licensure of ABA practitioners*. <https://www.apbahome.net/licensure-of-aba-practitioners>

Baer, D. M., Wolf, M. M., & Risley, T. R. (1968). Some current dimensions of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 1(1), 91-97. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.1968.1-91>

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2017). *BCBA task list (5th ed.)*.

neurodevelopmental disorders, are listed under clinical behavior analysis subspecialty, as well as behavioral analysis in education. In my state, my practice area includes adaptive behavior and I may be able to better help different clients if I learn about EF skills. Let me see what's out there.

	https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BC-BA-task-list-5th-ed-240830-a.pdf Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2022). <i>BCBA test content outline (6th ed.)</i>. https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BC-BA-6th-Edition-Test-Content-Outline-240903-a.pdf Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2020). Recommendations for respecializing in a new ABA practice area. Littleton, CO Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2023). Applied behavior analysis subspecialty areas. Littleton, CO. Morris, C., Donovan, M. T., & Switzer, E. J. (2024). The Scope of Practice of Applied Behavior Analysis in State Licensure Laws. <i>Behavior analysis in practice</i>, 17(3), 773–782. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-024-00915-3	
3. <i>What are the knowledge,</i>	Generally speaking, what are the facts, information, and concepts that are needed in	<i>Looks like I already know many of the procedures and strategies to support behavior</i>

<i>skills, and abilities in your new interest area?</i>	this area? What tasks are needed in this area? What would successful knowledge and skills look like? The Multidimensional Model of Competence (Brodhead, 2018) ● Procedures and Strategies ● Populations ● Settings Brodhead, M. T., Quigley, S. P., & Wilczynski, S. M. (2018). A Call for Discussion About Scope of Competence in Behavior Analysis. <i>Behavior analysis in practice</i>, 11(4), 424–435. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-018-00303-8	<i>change, but EF skills seem to be conceptualized across disciplines I am not as familiar with. It could be that my procedures would work well but I need to better understand these differences to see if my strategies would need to be adapted. My current population would be my middle school students and a big difference for me is these students are in general education and have complex language. This is different than my training background of early intervention autism. Common diagnoses I see now are ADHD, ODD, as well as ASD or a new category for schools - OHI. I think I want to know more about how EF skills are important to my students as well as increase my skills in working with older students with complex language in a school setting.</i>
4. <i>Rate your current competence.</i>	The Multidimensional Model of Competence (Brodhead, 2018) <i>“Confidence refers to one’s estimation of the likelihood of effectiveness based on past experience, knowledge of the literature, and availability of resources.”</i>	<i>Based on Brodhead’s domains of competence, I would rate myself as “medium” in the procedures and strategies needed for the behavioral problems I notice associated with EF skill differences. I would rate myself “low” in populations</i>

	<u>Domains of Competence</u> Prior cases, training, experience that is similar? Are you familiar with the current literature regarding this new area within the field of ABA? Are you familiar with the current literature regarding this new area outside of the field of ABA? Do you have access to the resources needed?	<i>and settings as I am new to schools and older children with complex language. I would rate myself “low” for confidence in treatment success as I haven’t had many past experiences with looking at behavioral differences through an EF lens nor am I as familiar with the research and there are definitely differences with my past training and what I think could be helpful now.</i>
5. <i>Determine the first areas you would like to improve your competence</i>	It can be overwhelming when working to increase your scope of competence - start small - but start!	<i>I think as a first step - I want to know more about EF skills both within and outside of ABA. I also wonder who are other BCBA’s who are interested in this?</i>
6. <i>Determine resource types that fit your learning needs, time, budget, and delivery method.</i>	Literature Books Asynchronous CEU Live CEU Workshops Supervision and Consultation Groups	<i>I am tight on time and money right now with my new job but I can definitely check out some articles, find well known books in the area and take a CEU to get started. I think I will also reach out to the special education teacher and school psychologist and get their recommendations and ideas also.</i>

	Networking Micro Credentials Certifications	
7. <i>Identify individualized resources within the behavior analytic community for your new topic</i>	Once you have thought about the resources that will work best for you within the constraints of your life, begin searching for availability of training and resources within the ABA community.	<i>I reached out to my old supervisor as well as searched with AI assistance and found two interesting resources to start learning more about EF - looks like Adel Najdowski, a BCBA-D has written the book Flexible and Focused and I can also see a CEU with her that looks like a good starting point.</i>
8. <i>Identify resources outside of the behavior analytic community</i>	At the same time, expand your scope of competence by understanding new topics from perspectives outside of ABA.	<i>When I talked to the special education teacher, she raved about the book Smart but Scattered. The school psychologist is happy to meet with me to walk me through some of her measurement tools also.</i>
9. <i>Engage with your chosen resources. Capture and contrive opportunities to talk about and use your new KSAs</i>	Give your attention and time to the resources you have selected. Practice using your new knowledge, skills, and abilities as soon as possible. Sharing your interest in learning can help you connect with others who share your interest.	<i>The meeting with the school psych was really helpful! We picked a student to collaborate and co-develop the upcoming annual IEP goals. Reading Flexible and Focused as well as completing the CEU, helped give me a broader understanding of possible assessment and</i>

<i>within supervision or learning communities</i>		<i>intervention areas that are within my ABA scope of practice but that are a little different for me. I think collaborating on IEP goals to ensure the goals are behaviorally based and able to be measured as well as co-developing an intervention individualized to the needs of a learner with EF differences is a good place to start.</i>
<i>10. Continue on your learning journey</i>	The beauty of what we practice is there is always more to learn.	<i>I have collaborated on a few cases for IEP goals and I am looking at classroom management strategies that work best for my students...I wonder what else is out there?</i>

If this was useful to you, I'd love to hear from you. If you disagreed with something (or think I missed something important) I'd love to hear that too! I hope this keeps the conversation going.

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