

OVERVIEW

Clinical behavior analysis is the application of the conceptual and methodological tools of behavior analysis to treat problems that have traditionally been characterized as mental disorders. Clinical behavior analysts work in universities, hospitals, outpatient clinics, as well as in primary care and residential settings. Common problems addressed through clinical behavior analysis include depression, anxiety, stress, relationship discord, substance misuse, chronic pain, disruptive behavior, impulsivity, inattention, tic disorders, and sleep disturbance, among others. Interventions involve understanding clients' thoughts, feelings, and actions—all of which are viewed as behavior that must be understood in context—thereby necessitating descriptive functional analyses of their environmental antecedents (distal and proximate, verbal and nonverbal) and consequences (immediate and delayed, verbal and nonverbal). Common modalities and forms of clinical behavior analysis include acceptance and commitment therapy, behavioral activation, behavioral parent training, community reinforcement, comprehensive behavioral intervention for tics, contingency management interventions, dialectical behavior therapy, functional analytic psychotherapy, integrative behavioral couples therapy, and stimulus control therapy for insomnia.

LEARN MORE

Initial Publication

Ferster, C. B. (1972). An experimental analysis of clinical phenomena. *The Psychological Record*, 22, 1-16.

Recommended Reading

Dougher, M. J. (Ed.). (2000). *Clinical behavior analysis*. Reno, NV: Context Press.

Fisher, J. E., & O'Donohue, W. T. (Eds.). (2006). *Practitioner's guide to evidence-based psychotherapy*. New York: Springer Science.

Guinther P. M., & Dougher, M. J. (2013). From behavioral research to clinical therapy. In G. J. Madden (Ed.), *APA handbook of behavior analysis: Volume 2* (pp. 3-32). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Harvey, M. T., Luiselli, J. K., & Wong, S. E. (2009). Application of applied behavior analysis to mental health issues. *Psychological Services*, 6, 212-222.

Additional Resources

- ▶ [Clinical Behavior Analysis Special Interest Group](#)
- ▶ [Association for Contextual Behavioral Science](#)