

KNOWLEDGE

3 MYTHS ABOUT ABA THERAPY YOU SHOULD KNOW

MYTH #1

ABA is an experimental treatment

ABA is an evidence-based practice that has a substantial amount of peer-reviewed research demonstrating its effectiveness for increasing appropriate behaviors and decreasing problem behaviors.

MYTH #2

ABA just uses food and toys to bribe kids

Practice within the field of ABA is driven by the concept of reinforcement. Reinforcement is when a stimulus is paired with a desired behavior. Practitioners use reinforcement to alter a person's behavior through contingency planning.

Example: A student who is working on remembering to raise their hand before speaking might receive a verbal praise for doing so. The teacher has established that the student likes, and is motivated by, verbal praise. The result is the pairing with the desired behavior will work to make the behavior more likely to occur going forward.

MYTH #3

ABA is focused on punishment

The term punishment is often misunderstood - it refers to adding or removing a stimulus with a goal of decreasing the frequency of the behavior. Punishment is one potential treatment that may be used in ABA therapy, but only when the behavior of concern warrants use and other less intrusive measure have failed. Punishment must adhere to the ethical guidelines set forth for all behavior analysts to follow.

