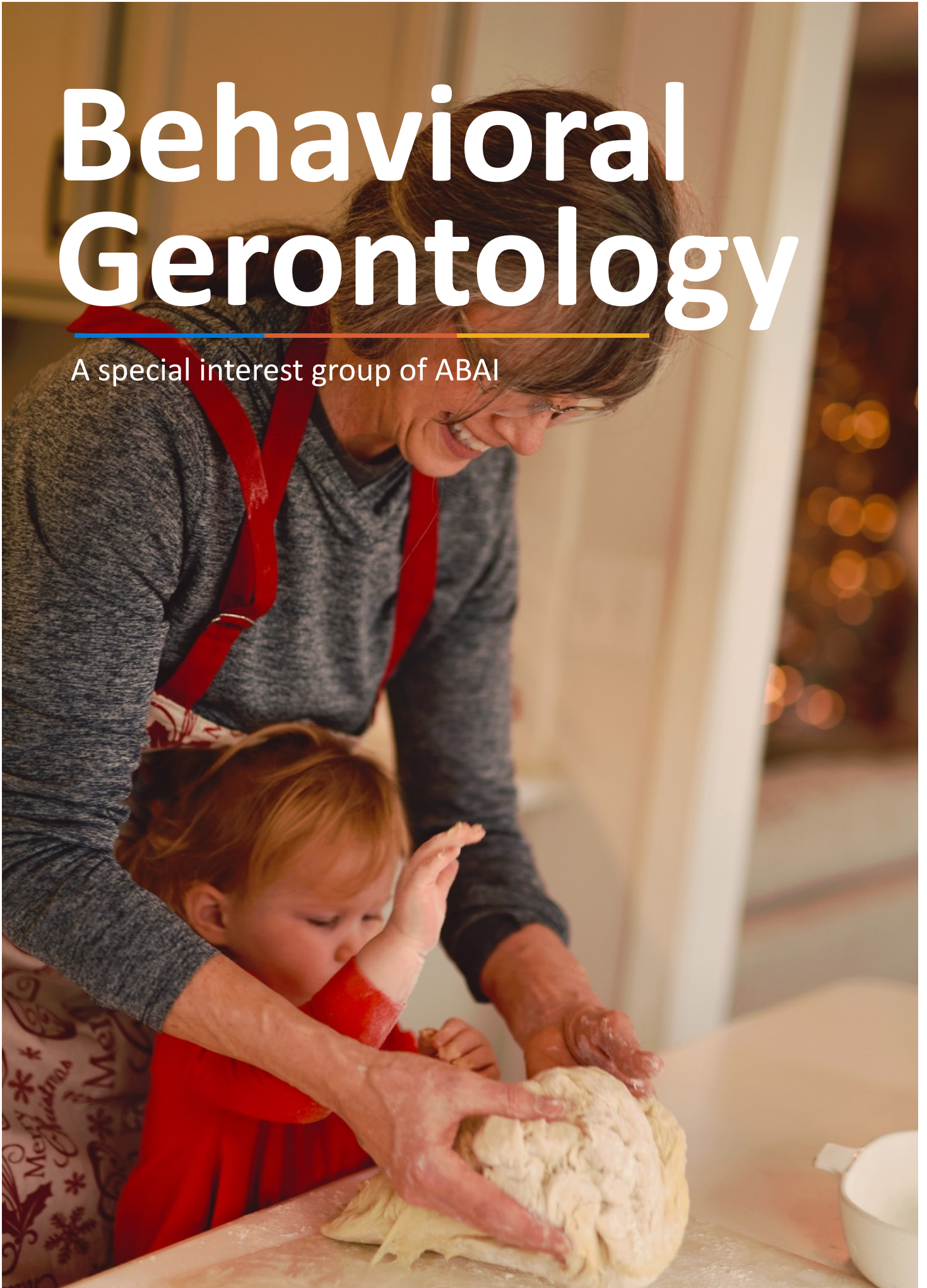


Behavioral Gerontology

A special interest group of ABAI



Fall 2021

Hello and welcome to your Fall 2021 Behavioral Gerontology SIG Newsletter.

There's been a lot happening behind the scenes over the last six months in the BG SIG.

At the ABM in May this year, Dr Claudia Drossel stepped down as the chair for the BG SIG. Claudia has provided the SIG with many years of expert leadership and her influence has been far reaching. I am sure I speak for behavioural gerontologists around the world in extending a sincere thank you for all her hard work, expertise and passion that she has freely given to the SIG in her time as chair.

I would like to introduce you to your new BG SIG executive committee members for 2021/22. I will be stepping in the role as Chair and Jacqueline Pachis has taken over as publicity officer. Sam Zohr is our membership secretary and Hanna Steinunn Steingrimsdóttir is our international representative. We are looking for anyone interested in contributing to the SIG to get in contact with us- we are always looking for more support!

Jacqueline has been working tirelessly on creating the new BG SIG website. We are grateful for

the huge response effort she has put in in getting the website up and running. You can read more about the new website in the article on page 4 of this issue.

In this issue we also have a member spotlight with Andrew Buchanan who is working with older adults with Prader-Willi, a feature about our work in behavioural gerontology in the UK, and details from The Florida Coalition of ABA and dementia.

Over the next few months we are keen to get our members onto the new membership system through ABAI. Please remind your friends and colleagues to renew their BG SIG membership in their ABAI portal this year!



Dr Zoe Lucock, BCBA-D,
BG SIG Chair

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THE NEW BG SIG WEBSITE

Our New Website

Hi BGSIG! As the newly appointed publicity officer for the BGSIG, my first item of business has been to update our website. I can now officially add “Amateur Graphic Designer” to my CV.

The BGSIG website features a new look and offers some new and exciting stuff for its members. Our website offers information about the BGSIG and how to get involved as well as consumer resources such as continuing education opportunities, and lists of professional organizations and journals relevant to behavioral gerontology.

A new and exciting addition to the website is the BGSIG Blog. Our blog will feature writings from the BGSIG community and provide a platform to share important topics and the experiences of those working and conducting research in the field of behavioral gerontology. If you are interested in writing a blog post for our website, we are eager to hear from you!

Lastly, the new website has a member’s only page that is exclusive to paying members of the BGSIG. This page will feature training materials including

relevant publications in behavioral gerontology, podcasts, and video presentations from past ABAI conventions.

If you haven’t already, [check out our new and improved website!](#)

We want to hear from you! Please contact us if you have ideas for how to improve our website or if there is content you want to see more of.

Best,

Jacqueline Pachis, M.A., BCBA
BGSIG Publicity Officer



**Andrew
Buchanan,
M.S., BCBA**

Member Spotlight

Andrew Buchanan is a BCBA who provides behavioral support with adults diagnosed with intellectual disabilities. Andrew received his master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis and Organizational Behavior Management from Florida Institute of Technology. There, Andrew started to engage in behavior analysis specific to persons diagnosed with dementia. Andrew conducted research under Dr. Celeste Harvey and worked at a residential living facility under Dr. Maranda Trahan.

Andrew fell into this line of work by happenstance. Like most behavior analyst, Andrew started to work with individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. When accepted into the FIT graduate program, Dr. Harvey told him that her line of research was within the realm of behavior gerontology and Andrew jumped at the opportunity.

Currently, Andrew is working at the Arc of Alachua County in Gainesville, Florida with individuals diagnosed with Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS). "Prader-Willi syndrome is a multisystem disorder with an estimated prevalence in several studied populations of 1/10,000–1/30,000. It is characterized by severe hypotonia with poor suck and feeding

difficulties in early infancy, followed in later infancy or early childhood by excessive eating and gradual development of morbid obesity unless eating is externally controlled.

Motor milestones and language development are delayed, and all individuals have some degree of cognitive disability (Cassidy et al., 2011)." This is also a population in which some individuals may develop some signs and symptoms of early onset dementia. For example, Andrew has a client who has been diagnosed with dementia-nonspecified, in his 50's, and starting to shuffle when he walks. Crossing planes with respect to dementia can be rather difficult and increase the likelihood of falls. For more information on PWS, visit www.pwsausa.org.

Andrew's professional and clinical interests include verbal behavior specific to Alzheimer's disease and related dementia's (ARD), and working with adults with a comorbidity (e.g., ARD and an intellectual disability).

Andrew enjoys mentoring students and figuring out ways to help individuals that have lack of behavioral support. When Andrew is not working, he enjoys anything outdoors such as hiking, climbing, and kayaking.

**“In the end, it's
not the years in
your life that
count. It's the
life in your
years”**

- Abraham Lincoln

Positive Ageing Consultancy & Training



ABA services for older adults are non-existent in the UK outside of research programmes. Because of this, I was pleasantly surprised during my PhD research when I found that care providers for older adults were consistently eager to have our support and overwhelmingly keen to access more. Unfortunately, there were no behaviour-analytic services I could refer them to because there were none!

To change this, we decided to launch Positive Ageing Consultancy & Training (PACT), which is the UK's first BCBA-led behavioural gerontology service provision. We officially launched in June this year and are keen to offer support to not only older adults in need of support in the UK, but also create more resources for behaviour analysts

who are working in or want to move into working in behavioural gerontology across the world.

We have been frustrated trying to find CEU trainings that specifically cater to those interested in applying ABA to older adults, so we figured others must be too. We launched our Introduction to Behavioural Gerontology course in June and have been pleasantly surprised by the number of BCBAs that want to learn about this niche area. We are working hard to create our next series of trainings that focus on working with older adults with dementia from a behavioural perspective.

Over the last few months we've also been contacted by a number of ABA agencies who provide services for adults with disabilities, many of whom are entering older adulthood and

Positive Ageing Consultancy & Training

facing new challenges that come with the ageing process. We've been providing training for those providers (some of whom are as across the world in Australia!) on how to identify and support older adults with disabilities, particularly for those who develop dementia.

As behavioural gerontology is practically unheard of in mainstream older adults services in the UK, we have been impressed with the warm welcome we have received and the appreciation for the need of behavioural support in this population.

We are now working with social care services providing support for a number of clients across the North Wales region. We are thrilled to be providing services that are state rather than privately funded, as we strongly believe high quality ABA support should be free at the point of use not just available to those with the funds to afford it.

We would love it if you would consider supporting us, by liking us on [Facebook](#) or taking

our [CEU course](#) (more to come soon!). We also offer BCBA supervision and mentoring, lectures and training, and we also have some free resources on our [website](#) too.



[Emma Williams](#) BCBA & [Dr Zoe Lucock](#) BCBA-D.

Directors of PACT

Social Media Update

At present, the BG SIG has a Facebook page, a Facebook group and a Twitter account. Any Facebook user is able to join the Facebook group whether they are an ABAI/BG SIG member or not.

Any Facebook user can “like” the Facebook page and choose to “follow” the page to get updates in their news feed. Both the Facebook page and Twitter account regularly post links to articles that may be relevant to behavioral gerontologists. The following data is accurate as of September 27 2021.



Facebook Page

2,202 likes

2,338 followers

Facebook Group

561 members



Twitter

592 followers

Your 2021/22 BGSIG Committee



Dr Zoe Lucock
Chair



Dr Claudia Drossel
Past Chair



Jacqueline Pachis
Publicity Officer



Sam Zohr
Membership Secretary



Dr Hanna Steinunn
International Representative

*Membership is available through your ABAI portal account
Select 'SIG Membership' under the 'Shopping' tab.*

Florida Coalition of ABA and Dementia (FLOCAD)

The aging process is an inevitable one for all of us. Who among us wants to see a positive change in the way aging persons with dementia/neurocognitive disorders (NCDs) are treated with ABA services and change the trajectory of care? We did... and that's the passion behind our movement.

Dr. Julio Ventura and Mrs. Kim Harris are located in the sunny state of Florida. Each have individually worked in their respective fields to help ease the aging process for others in caring for this special population.

Dr. Ventura is a Neurologist and Mrs. Harris is a Physical Therapist. This duo connected with their passion and specialized training for NCDs. Dr. Ventura had realized at a point in his career that pharmacologic treatment for dementia could not be the sole remedy, as he had countless cases from frustrated caregivers presenting with behavioral concerns about their family members that he knew medication would not help.

The search to find information and research about ABA and BG SIG was challenging for this duo. Even when speaking with other BCBAs who work with the autistic population, they were not aware of behavioral gerontology and the major impact it could have for so many.

In speaking with other neurologists who are considered pillars of dementia research and treatment, it was evident that they also had no knowledge of ABA and had demonstrated skepticism. While researching, fate has led Dr. Ventura and Mrs. Harris to meet and discuss BG and ABA with Drs. Trahan, Baker, Barry, and Lucock. They have shared the amazing foundation and momentum they have in this field.

Dr. Ventura and Mrs. Harris are collaborating to create the Florida Coalition of ABA and Dementia (FLOCAD). This coalition will set the groundwork to help establish education (patients, their families/ caregivers and other behavior

Florida Coalition of ABA and Dementia (FLOCAD)

analysts), appropriate practice guidelines, and legislative change to ensure reimbursement for ABA services, specifically for NCDs. This process will take time, but they are confident that they can create a movement for change.

In addition, they are looking for BCBAs to join them in Florida to help establish ABA services specifically for NCDs. The goal is to create a model based on a comprehensive care center encompassing, not only, ABA services but physical, occupational, and recreational therapies with community resources for patients and caregivers.

ABA and BG are not cures for NCDs, but they can provide relief for patients and caregivers along with easing the

burden of a process that takes one's independence, dignity, and memories. We are new members to the ABAI and BG SIG, but we are excited to help bring light to the collective movement that you all have been and continue to work so tirelessly toward.

Dr. Ventura can be contacted at Jventura@risingabovedementia.com and Mrs. Harris can be contacted at Kharris@risingabovedementia.com.

ABAI Annual Conference

May 26 - 30 2022

We encourage all members to attend and consider submitting to present at ABAI this year on a topic related to behavioral gerontology.

The BG SIG will be presenting a monetary award to one student presentation in behavioral gerontology this year- more details to follow on our website over the coming months.

BOSTON

