

## NYSABA Legislative Committee Parent/Caregiver Media Talking Points and Guidelines

Speaking to the media about public policy and health-care matters can be intimidating. To assist in preparing parents and caregivers to effectively communicate to the media how the scope restriction on Behavior Analysis in New York State has impacted their families, the following guidelines and suggestions have been created.

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Prior to speaking to a media outlet, consider preparing answers to the following questions and scenarios:

If your family member is not diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

- ✚ Does your family member sometimes engage in concerning, challenging behavior that make it difficult for him or her to participate in family and community activities?
- ✚ Has your family member fallen behind in skills like language/communication, socialization, self- help skills, or in other areas?
- ✚ Did your family member lose behavior analytic services when New York State enacted the licensure law (2014), restricting the scope of practice of Behavior Analysis to working only with individuals diagnosed with Autism?
- ✚ Has your family member been denied services as a result of the scope restriction on Behavior Analysis?

If you answered yes to any or all of the above questions, **your family member may benefit from the expert support of a Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA)**. LBA's are highly-trained, well-qualified professionals who have earned a Master's or Doctoral degree, taken relevant coursework, completed rigorous supervision, and passed written examinations.

LBA's analyze behavior and teach others (including family members) how best to support the individual. This includes not only reducing problem behavior, but also teaching new skills. The supports provided by an LBA are recommended for many disorders, including Down syndrome, ADHD, TBI, and more.

New York State wrote the licensure law in such a way that **LBA's are only allowed to treat individuals who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder**, unless the LBA is employed by an "exempt" setting.

**THIS MEANS THAT IF YOUR FAMILY MEMBER DOES NOT HAVE A DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM, HE OR SHE CANNOT EASILY ACCESS THE EXPERTISE OF AN LBA AT HOME AND IN MANY OTHER PLACES.**

If your family member has been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder:

- ✚ Provide examples of how he or she has received behavior analytic services in the past or is currently receiving services.
- ✚ Was the person delivering services certified and/or licensed? Why is this important to you?
- ✚ If services were delivered by a teacher or psychologist or someone else not certified and licensed and your family member did not improve, describe the experience.
- ✚ Explain why adequately trained behavior analysis services are critical to your family member's ~~current~~ well-being, access to least restrictive environment and participation in your family life.
- ✚ Describe what might happen to your family personally if your family member cannot access a well-trained behavior analyst. Will you need to move? Will your family member ultimately be placed in a group home? Will your other family members be at risk? Will your family member need medication?
- ✚ As an advocate for all individuals with disabilities, explain why it is important to you that individuals not diagnosed with ASD also have access to the behavior analytic services they need.

## General Tips for Meetings and Phone Calls

- ✓ Remain calm, be polite. Do not bully or demand.
- ✓ Tell your personal story. Families have the greatest impact.
- ✓ If the person you speak with agrees to co-sponsor the bill, thank him/her and follow up your call with a hand written thank you note.