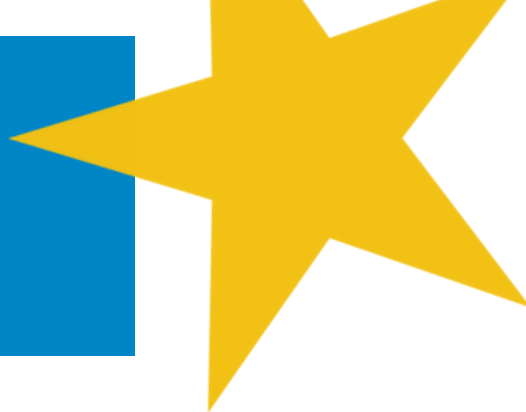


Dr. Sarah Pelangka

10:15 - 11:30AM



Maladaptive Behavior” and Disability: Why it is Unethical to Write Behavior Plans to Target Skill Deficits

In my work as an educational advocate across the country, I have seen a lot of behavior plans!! Given that I happen to also be a behaviorist, I dissect them. The pattern I have come to see is that schools want students to conform to traditional school expectations: comply, be a “good listener”, do your work. Any student who falls outside of those norms is deemed a behavior problem. This talk will delve in to all that is wrong with the current school-based behavior system and how we can work to support educators in better understanding “behavior”. With disability comes deficits and a skill deficit does not equate to maladaptive behavior. We will discuss how to identify which is which and how to support the two in an ethical manner.



Dr. Sarah Pelangka is both a professional in the field and a sibling of a sister with autism spectrum disorder. Dr. Pelangka is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctorate (BCBA-D), as well as she received her Ph D in Special Education and Disabilities Risk Studies from UC Santa Barbara. Having worked in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), as well as special education (SPED), for 20+ years, Dr. Pelangka has come to meet hundreds of families, and has attended just as many IEPs.

Dr. Pelangka’s primary work is in the area of advocacy. As an advocate, Dr. Pelangka works to ensure families feel supported and educated throughout their special education journey. In addition, Dr. Pelangka consults with districts to offer behavior supports, behavior assessments, and staff trainings. Dr. Pelangka also offers private and independent assessments.

