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**Dr. Sarah
Pelangka**

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
January 24 | 25, 2025

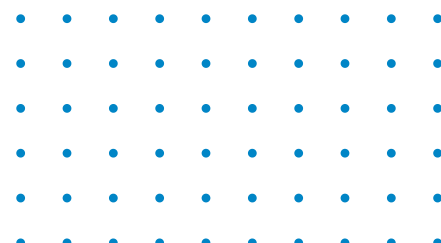


Maladaptive Behavior” and Disability: Why it is Unethical to Write Behavior Plans to Target Skill Deficits (FRIDAY)

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.

IEPs and Socialization: My Soap Box for Why Writing Goals for the Student with an IEP is Only Half of the Battle (Saturday)

Growing up with a sibling on the autism spectrum allowed me to see first-hand how difficult it is for many individuals with autism (specifically) to build and maintain healthy peer relationships. My sister was my reason for entering the field of ABA and what I was taught was all wrong. I have never been afraid to question anything or anyone so early on, I recognized that teaching social skills to the person with autism alone was not in and of itself going to resolve the social dilemma; there are two halves to every relationship, right? My graduate research focused on peer psychoeducation; specifically, informing peers directly of what is going on and how they can be a better friend. In this talk, I will briefly review my personal research and share my philosophy on how we can work to promote healthier, sustainable, positive relationships across all peers - neurotypical and neurodivergent. Let’s undo the stigma and create more inclusive mindsets from an early age!

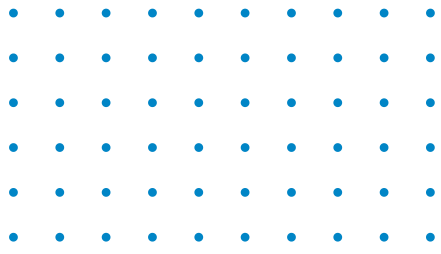




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Dr. Sarah Pelangka is both a professional in the field and a sibling of a sister with autism spectrum disorder. Dr. Pelangka is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst - Doctorate (BCBA-D), as well as she received her Ph D in Special Education and Disabilities 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.

