

SMALL STEPS QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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SMALL STEPS QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Scope of Practice for Behavior Analysts

Behavior Analysts do not diagnose mental health conditions. ABA therapists are trained to identify the function of behaviors through a process called a Functional Behavioral Assessment. We also trained to conduct various adaptive behavior assessments (i.e., skill assessments) to measure skill strengths and weaknesses to inform comprehensive ABA treatment plans.

Clinicians working at Small Steps practice within the scope of practice for Behavior Analysis under guidelines from the Behavior Analysis Certification Board, which are available upon request, or on the BACB's website at www.bacb.com. Small Steps assures services will be rendered professionally and ethically consistent with accepted ethical standards. Individualized treatment plans only utilize evidence-based practices, we do not offer interventions that are not considered evidence-based.

Training and Quality Assurance

Oversight by Governing Boards

The Behavior Analysis Certification Board (the BACB) is the primary certifying organization in the world of Behavior Analysis and each certified member of the Small Steps team has completed the rigorous coursework, field experience hours and Board testing required to call themselves a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA), or Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). Each of our team members is bound by the BACB's Code of Ethics and their pledge to protect and uphold the integrity of the field of Behavior Analysis.

Additionally, Small Steps recognizes the qualifications from the International Behavior Analysis Organization (IBAO) and the Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Certification Board (QABA) and Supervisors and/or Therapists may be certified under one/both of these organizations. Small Steps takes its commitment to these standards very seriously and is constantly working to ensure compliance among its own team members and to continue to promote compliance among all members of the ABA community.

Supervision

Small Steps follows the supervision guidelines from the respective governing boards. In ABA "supervision" can and should come in many forms, whether face-to-face with the Therapist and your child, via individual and/or team meetings, ongoing trainings, video observation, or live video observation.

All Therapists receive weekly individual supervision. Additional, Supervisors and Program Director perform regular group supervision and oversight. Students and Therapists who attend mainstream lessons will be observed in the mainstream classroom as well.

Training

If upon hiring, one of our Therapists is not already a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) or equivalent, Small Steps requires they achieve certification within the first 3 months of employment and will provide the required supervision and support to achieve this. Ensuring that each of our team member is able to work effectively, ethically, professionally and confidently is paramount to the success of our programs.

Professional Boundaries

We value the relationships we develop with our clients and families. It is through these collaborative and cooperative relationships that we are able to work as a team. In order to maintain healthy, professional relationships with our clients and families, we adhere to the following:

- If you need to communicate with one of our staff members, please call or email the Supervisor with your query.
- Communication between staff and caregivers should be kept on topic and take place at appropriate times during the designated times (e.g., end of school day). Therapists must adhere to other duties at the end of the school day; parents are requested to keep conversations to 10 minutes maximum at the end of the school day.
- We value balance between work and personal lives. Calls should be placed and returned during normal business hours.
- Any questions that are clinical in nature (e.g., how is my child progressing) are directed to clinicians on your team (Supervisor, BCBA, Program Director).

Parent Interactions with Staff and Dual relationships

The nature of our business can often be personal because we are all working so intensely with each other on a frequent basis. For this reason, we mandate that parents maintain a respectful relationship with staff members but not a personal relationship. Parents acknowledge that any relationship outside the clinical service or therapeutic service is completely inappropriate. Under the code of ethical conduct for clinical services and behavior analysts, we are not allowed to work with you in any other capacity except as your Supervisor or behavior therapist.

A dual relationship is any time two people have more than one relationship (for example: an RBT attends the same gym as their client's parent). Small Steps staff are trained to never engage in any dual relationship with clients that can be exploitative or personal in nature, and to discuss dual relationships as they arise with their Supervisor. It is important to acknowledge that multiple relationships are not always unethical, avoidable, or unexpected. We encourage families to consider any risks to the client and family before engaging in dual relationships with those they have a current or former professional relationship with. Dual relationships include, but are not limited to, babysitting, exchanging of services of goods, friendships, entering into business relationships, intimate relationships, etc. This pertains to past and present employees. Small Steps staff are not permitted to engage in these types of dual relationships.

At times staff may leave our company for various reasons. In those instances, we do not encourage families to hire or have dual relationships with our past staff members. Due to the confidentiality we hold with our staff members and parents, we cannot go into detail on why a staff member left the company.

Gift Giving Policy

We really appreciate that a family, at times, especially over the holidays, like to express their gratitude for the staff that provide services to their family through gift giving. However, per our professional codes of conduct, all employed staff and all trainees are not able to accept gifts of cash including store/other gift cards. Staff may accept a card, or small gift of a value of not over 50aed. Please feel free to have your child express their gratitude in other ways, such as cards, donations to charities, etc.

Cultural Awareness

Small Steps recognizes and respects the value of cultural diversity and will strive to ensure that the ethnic or cultural customs, practices, and beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability, and/or community of our clients is respected. Considering the multiple nationalities and cultures represented across the UAE, we recognize that our team may not be fully versed in all cultural differences. Please make sure to communicate to the Program Director if you have any concerns regarding these matters.

Operating Hours and Communication

Small Steps office is open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Small Steps Inclusion Program operates services year-round, except the last 2 weeks of December, and the 2nd and 3rd weeks of July. Small Steps does not schedule sessions or make up sessions outside of regular business hours. Small Steps staff will be unavailable to answer calls after operating hours and will return your call at the earliest possible opportunity during operating hours. There may be times we respond with a notification stating we may need more time to respond.

Client Responsibilities

Small Steps can only work effectively when clients fully inform us of their concerns. We will need your full cooperation as we try to understand the various behaviors that are problematic for you. We will be asking a lot of questions and making a few suggestions and always need your total honesty with us. We will be showing you data as part of ongoing evaluation of treatment and expect that you will attend to the data and give us your true appraisal of conditions.

Caregiver Engagement and Participation

Providing effective treatment to families requires a partnership between the child, treatment staff, and caregivers. This partnership involves many elements, including effective communication, mutual respect, clear boundaries, and clearly defined roles.

Although every treatment team member plays a role on the team, caregivers play a key role.

Caregiver Commitment

In order to ensure effective implementation of the treatment plan/programming, Small Steps requests the following commitments:

- Active participation in training regarding the child's programming.
- Adherence to the child's treatment plan.
- Communication via email (phone if necessary) with the Case Supervisor on your child's team if unsure about how to implement a program/protocols.
- Communication via email (phone if necessary) with the Case Supervisor on your child's team from the parent/caregiver if there is a concern that a program/ protocol is not being implemented correctly or working effectively.
- Meeting with the BCBA on your child's team at least once per month

Parent Participation

When parents or guardians participate fully in their child's program, they should see more progress from their child and have a better understanding of how to respond to various issues. The Supervisor will provide reasonable support and training to parents in order to ensure that behavioral interventions can be followed through in the home as appropriate. With the support of the Supervisor, Parents will learn how to embed their child's individual goals within the family's daily routines. Intervention plans will be communicated to parents each Term. Our partnership with the family is critically important to us, as we believe that this partnership is instrumental in the success of our clients.

Failure for a parent/caregiver to engage in this partnership with us through the lack of their involvement in treatment sessions at the required level, as determined at the outset by collaboration between the caregiver and clinician, may result in reduced progress. Also, we collaborate with parents and caregivers on issues during intervention; including how to set up the environment to best support the client's learning and how to limit access to items that may interfere with learning. Parent support and partnership with these issues will ensure the best success of treatment

Recommendations for Services

Our clinicians are dedicated to providing your family with the appropriate level of recommended services. In addition, they are trained to provide ongoing analysis of your child's measurable goals in order to recommend the correct number of therapy hours for each client. We are committed to providing you and your family with 100% of the recommended hours, as your child's progress and outcome for services is directly linked to this factor. Should these hours drop below the appropriate level, your clinical team will discuss with you the importance of maintaining the prescribed amount of hours weekly. Each child responds individually to the intervention process and learns at a

different rate and ways. Small Steps is dedicated to providing effective treatment, but cannot make guarantees regarding individual client progress or outcomes.

Psychological/Educational Assessment

The Small Steps Program Director clinician may ask or recommend you to complete psychological and/or psychoeducational measures (e.g. questionnaires, behavior rating scales, personality measures, etc.) in order to inform treatment planning, make educational recommendations, and/or evaluate the outcome or efficacy of treatment. While outcomes from these measures will be discussed with you and integrated into the overall treatment plan, any assessment protocol can only be released to professionals/clinicians who are trained to interpret such information and will only be released to such an individual with your written consent.

Attendance Policy

One of the most critical aspects to intervention is consistency of implementation. In the same way that pharmaceutical prescriptions are only effective if taken in the manner prescribed, the same is true for intervention services. Please make every attempt to ensure regular attendance.

*Please inform Small Steps in the morning if your child cannot attend school on a given day.

Staff Cancellations

A substitute staff will be provided in the event that one of our team members is absent. Substitute therapists will be assigned by the Supervisor based on their judgment of pairing, staffing needs, and other considerations.

Wellness Policy

To minimize the spread of illness, the Small Steps wellness policy requires that a session be cancelled and rescheduled if the client or staff displays one or more of the following symptoms and guidelines listed below. The client or staff must be free of infection and other symptoms, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours before resuming program sessions. Sessions may resume when the incubation and contagious period is passed and the client or staff is well enough to resume normal activities. If the client or staff becomes ill during a session, the session will be immediately canceled.

- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Temperature greater than 37 C.
- Respiratory problems - severe coughing, rapid breathing, croup, or whooping sound after coughing
- Thick discolored discharge from nose
- Rash or infection of the skin
- Evidence of lice, including nits
- Communicable diseases - Conjunctivitis (pink eye), influenza, measles, chicken pox, strep throat, etc.

Parents acknowledge that if their child exhibits any of the symptoms outlined above, they should inform Small Steps that the child will not attend school. Make up sessions will not be provided.

Parents acknowledge that in some instances sessions will be cancelled until we have written permission from a doctor saying their child is well enough to resume therapy sessions. This is for the child's well-being along with the well-being of the staff.

Please notify the Supervisor of any illness that your child, you, or other children in the home may have. We will also contact you if any therapist has any illnesses. In the case that your child's session will be cancelled due to illness of a staff member you will be contacted immediately.

Inclement Weather Policies and Procedures

The following statements pertain to the policies and procedures regarding appointments and or travel during inclement weather. Inclement weather is defined as weather that has the potential to cause injury or harm if and when traveled in. In such circumstances, Small Steps will follow the school cancellations.

Video Recording Policy and Consent

As a part of our clinical practice, sessions may be video recorded or available for viewing via a live stream camera, which is available for viewing only by Small Steps Management Staff. These recording(s) will be used for clinical review of client progress and ongoing supervision. The recordings will be the property of Small Steps and may be stored as a part of the client record.

- The parent/caregiver may consent for video recordings to be used for additional purposes such as educational and training resources to be used within and outside of the company. However, if the parent/caregiver objects to allowing video recordings for educational and training purposes, it will not jeopardize their relationship with Small Steps.
- The parent/caregiver may consent for video recordings to be used for additional purposes such as educational and training resources to be used within and outside of the company (i.e. Social Media). However, if the parent/caregiver objects to allow the use of video recordings for educational and training purposes, it will in no way jeopardize their relationship with Small Steps.
- The parent may consent for photographs of their child to be used for additional purposes such as marketing and publicity. However, if the legal guardian objects to allow the use of photographs for publicity purposes, it will in no way jeopardize their relationship with Small Steps .

Observation Consent

Small Steps requires prior written consent by the parent, for an individual external to the Small Steps team or school Inclusion Team to observe the student. Parents of one student, may not directly observe any other student withing the Small Steps program.

Assignment of Staff

Small Steps stands by the level of training and expertise of its entire staff. All staff assigned to provide intervention to your child have been trained to provide quality care within our professional boundaries. Small Steps reserves the right to change staff providing intervention, in order to best meet the needs of the client. All clients will be made aware of permanent changes in staff in advance whenever possible; however please note that occasionally situations arise in which advance notice may not be provided. We are not always able to guarantee specific staff.

Transition Criteria

Individuals who exit Small Steps program, leave for a variety of reasons; which range from conflicting schedules and goals to completion of services. Small Steps clinical staff considers a variety of factors (including a review of the client's treatment data) when determining whether a transition from services may be appropriate. The following instances may warrant a discharge from Small Steps intervention services:

- Complete outcome of service: The client's referred excesses and deficits have been addressed and remediated. All problem behaviors identified at entry of service have been addressed and are exhibited within typical ranges. The child is functioning within normal limits for his or her age and demonstrates evidence that he/she will continue to acquire new skills under natural, non-therapeutic conditions.
- Achieving age-appropriate ranges of development on standardized testing in the areas of diagnostic criteria, cognition, language (basic speech and language as well as a pragmatic language), social problem solving, executive functioning, and adaptive skill functioning.
- The client has met his long-term goals and objectives and there is no need to develop new ones.
- Services are deemed no longer appropriate due to minimal progress over a substantial period of time.
- There has been no reasonable improvement in 3 months and it has been determined that further improvement is unlikely with continuation of treatment, and another intervention would benefit the child.
- Family's decision to terminate, due to various reasons including disagreement regarding the child's program.
- Failure to comply with Small Steps policies and procedures.
- The client's needs are such that they cannot be adequately addressed by Small Steps clinical staff. In such cases, Small Steps will assist in finding an appropriate program for the child.
- Failure to make payment for invoices as per agreement.

Grievance Procedure

We make every effort to ensure that our staff are caring, respectful and partnering with our families. We encourage parents to discuss concern regarding services with the assigned Supervisor, or BCBA the purpose of resolving a concern. A meeting may be scheduled with the parent, staff, BCBA, and the designated management staff to assist in reaching a resolution.

We recognize that at times our families and clients will need to provide us with feedback concerning our staff. As appropriate, please follow this grievance procedure:

1. Please communicate with your assigned Supervisor about concerns pertaining to the direct service provider, clinical program, or other. In the event there is not a satisfactory resolution reached with the Clinical Supervisor, the client may appeal the matter to the Program Director, or if you have concerns about the Clinical Supervisor, please proceed to STEP TWO.
2. Please communicate with the Program Director about any concerns about your Supervisor or about any concerns that you have elevated to the Supervisor that have not been addressed adequately.