Increasing Data Collection Consistency at Fairview Behaviour Consulting Inc.

For Jackie Pun, Directing Behaviour Consultant

Fairview Behaviour Consulting Inc.

Vancouver, BC

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English 301

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Abstract

In Applied Behaviour Analysis, having consistent and good session data is crucial for consultants to design programs that best fit the client's needs. In Fairview Behaviour Consulting Inc, it was observed that some programs created are not aligned with their clients' progress. Therefore, improving data collection consistency is crucial in creating programs that best fit the client's needs. This report explores causes to this issue and offers recommendations. The methods of research include reviewing clients' past session data and conducting surveys with behaviour interventionists (BIs) and parents. To better understand plausibility of the recommendations, an interview with Ms. Pun, the directing behaviour consults (BC) of Fairview Behaviour Consultant Inc was conducted. Results showed that the average percentage of success that each BI records can vary 21-24%. Survey results indicate that there is a lack of communication and support for BI. As for solutions, BIs agree with puting program information online and having bi-weekly meetings, but not recording sessions. Surveys with parents showed that most parents agreed to all solutions. There is some disagreement in putting program information online due to information security concerns. In the interview, Ms. Pun strongly agrees to having BIs record parts of sessions. She agrees to posting program information online as a long term solution due to concerns about information security. She disagrees to biweekly meetings due to difficulties to match schedules and limited funding. Recommendations to improving data collection consistency are:

1. Put program information online
2. Have BIs record parts of their sessions
3. Implement bi-weekly team meetings

Introduction

Special needs care is a rising trend and Applied Behaviour Analysis is also an increasingly popular intervention method. Applied Behaviour Analysis is a type of intervention that "increase[s] behaviours that are helpful and decrease[s] behaviours that are harmful or affect learning" ("Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)"). A key feature to Applied Behaviour Analysis is that it "is a flexible treatment [that] can be adapted to meet the needs of each unique person" ("Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)"). In Fairview Behaviour Consulting Inc, intervention for a client involves a behaviour consultant (BC) and a team of behaviour interventionists (BIs). Behaviour interventionists (BIs) mainly run programs designed by behaviour consultants (BCs) and records data for consultants to use in reference to program adjustments. In order to create programs that tailor to the client's needs, data from past sessions are vital.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide solutions to tackle the issue of inconsistent data collection amongst the teams. As sessions are run individually and the compilation of data occurs at the monthly team meetings, the issue becomes apparent during team meetings when the data shows consistent successes with one interventionists and consistent incorrect trials with another. This affects the behaviour consultant as it leads to inaccurate judgements on whether programs need to be altered or not. Furthermore, clients would receive inconsistent requirements which also increases the time it takes to correct unexpected behaviours. Specifically, inaccurate data collection affects Ms. Pun because situations of programs being too difficult or too easy have occured before causing those sessions to be ineffective and subsequent alterations are required. In order to mitigate ineffective sessions, solutions are needed to improve data collection consistency.

Methods

This report employed surveys, an interview and client data to better understand the causes of data collection inconsistency and opinions on proposed solutions. Two surveys were distributed, one for the parents and one for the behaviour interventionists. The surveys use a 5 point Likert scale on multiple choice questions. The interview was conducted with Ms. Pun. Prior conducting surveys and interviews, three clients' data for the past three months have been reviewed. As a behaviour interventionist that currently work with these clients, consent has been given to access program information and past session data. The research sample consisted of 6 behaviour interventionists and 6 parents are selected as they are the parents of the three clients. The interventionists also currently support one of the three clients. Thus the current issue and proposed solutions would have a direct impact on them. In consideration to confidentiality, survey and interview questions had not asked about specific programs or mentioned client names.

**Scope of Inquiry**

The scope of inquiry is to determine whether proposed solutions to improve data collection consistency is desired and possible. The report will look at 3 months of past session data to determine the degree of data collection inconsistency amongst each team of BIs. The surveys and the interview examined causes to data collection inconsistency and opinions on proposed solutions.

Data Section

Analysis of Client Data

For the three clients, program information and session data in the past three months have been collected. Most of the programs are recorded in number of successful trials and unsuccessful trials for the session and then the percentage of success is calculated. For this report, each client's success percentages were averaged for each program then compared amongst the three BIs that each client has. For each client, the program with the most inconsistent success percentages amongst the three BIs were plotted in the graphs below.
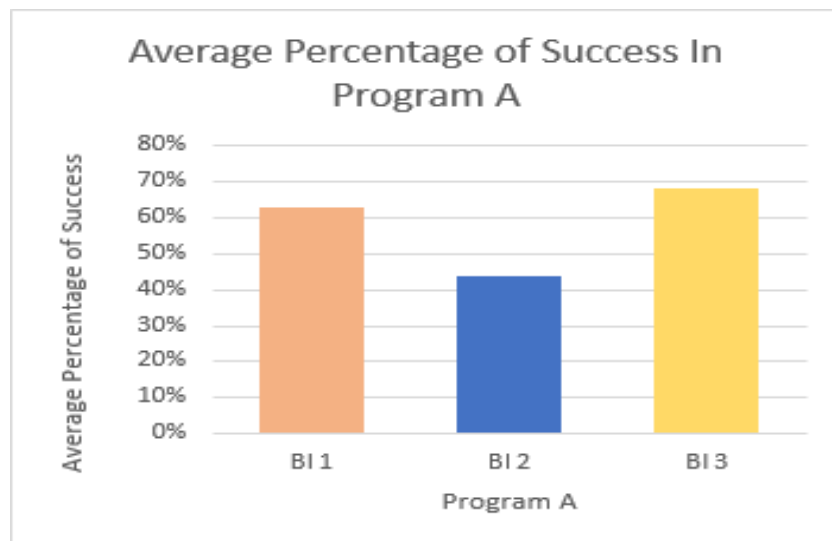
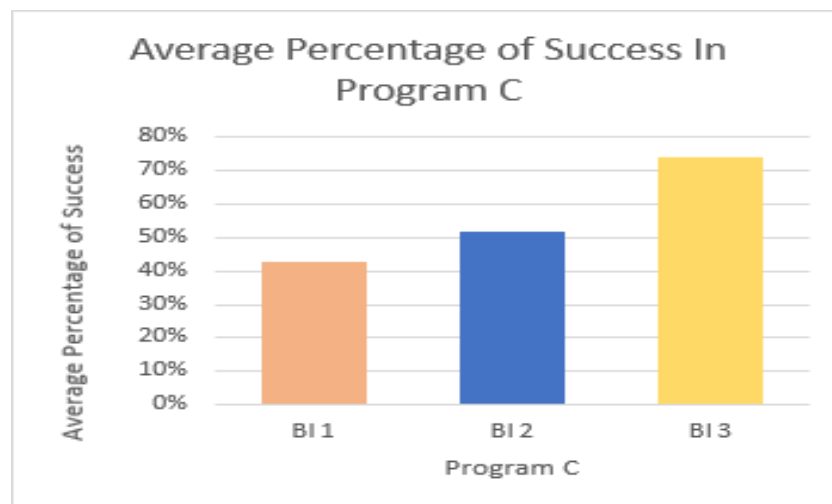**Figure 1. Average Percentage of Success in Program A.**

This graph shows that BI 1 had an average success of 63%, BI 2 had an average success of 44% and BI 3 had an average success of 68%. This graph indicates that BI 2 had an exceptionally low average success rate in this program compared to the other BIs. This graph also shows that BI 2 and BI 3 have a success percentage average that differs by 24%.
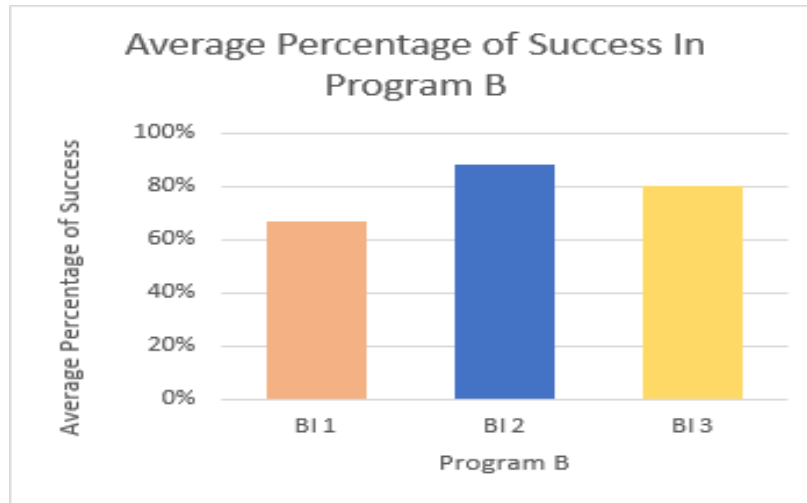
Figure 2. Average Percentage of Success in Program A.

This graph shows that BI 1 had an average success of 67%, BI 2 had an average success of 88% and BI 3 had an average success of 80%. BI 1 had a much lower average success rate in this program. The difference in success percentages between BI 1 and BI 2 were 21%.

Figure 3. Average Percentage of Success in Program C

This graph shows that BI 1 had an average success of 43%, BI 2 had an average success of 52% and BI 3 had an average success of 74%. The difference in success percentages are 22%.

Program data from three clients suggests that BIs collect data in an inconsistent manner and that some BIs judge success trials easier. Furthermore, the difference between the BIs that yields the lowest and highest scores range from 21-24%. Although this is averaged data, the difference of 21-24% is significant because when a program reaches a success percentage of 80% in three consecutive sessions, the program will be adjusted to be more challenging. Hence, the discrepancy of 21-24% could determine whether a program to be adjusted or remained, resulting in clients having programs that does not match their level of need.

Analysis of BI Surveys

This survey included 6 BIs, 2 from each of the 3 clients that are part of this report. The BIs are all university students and the sample consisted of 5 females and 1 male participant.
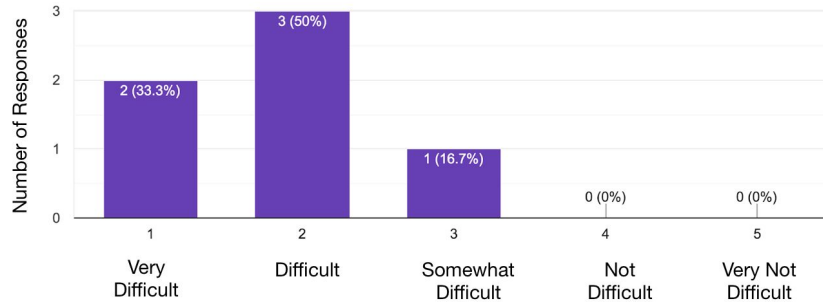
Number of Team Meetings Arranged in the Past 6 Months
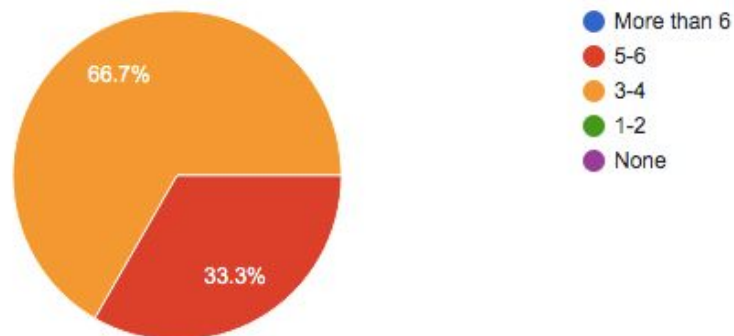
Figure 4. Number of team meetings arranged in the past 6 months

This graph indicated that within 6 months, only 2 BIs (33.3%) responded that there were 6 meetings arranged while the other 4 BIs (66.7%) indicated that 3-4 meetings were arranged.

Level of Difficulty to Running New Programs

Figure 5. Difficulty in running new programs when absent to previous meetings

This graph shows that 2 BIs had found it to be very difficult while 3 BIs found it somewhat difficult to run new programs when they were absent from previous meeting. Only 1 participant found it somewhat difficult.
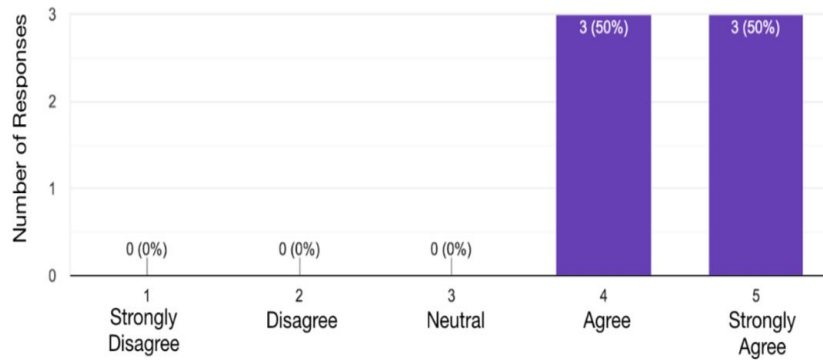
Most Common Communication Methods Used in the Team
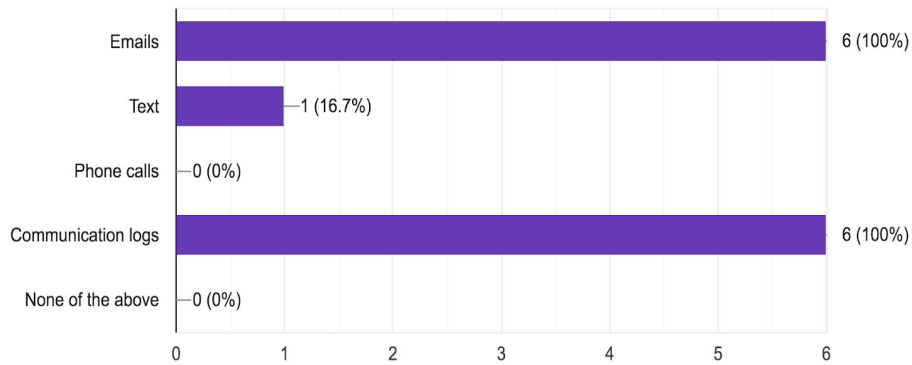
Figure 6. Common communication methods used in the team

All participants responded that written communication logs and emails were used beyond team meetings. There is 1 participant that uses texting as a communication tool.

Agreement To Post Program Material Online

Figure 7. Agreement to post program material online

For this proposed solution, there were 3 participants that agree and 3 participants that strongly agree to posting program information online given that it is secured with passwords. None of the participants had disagreed to this solution.

Agreement to Recording New Programs
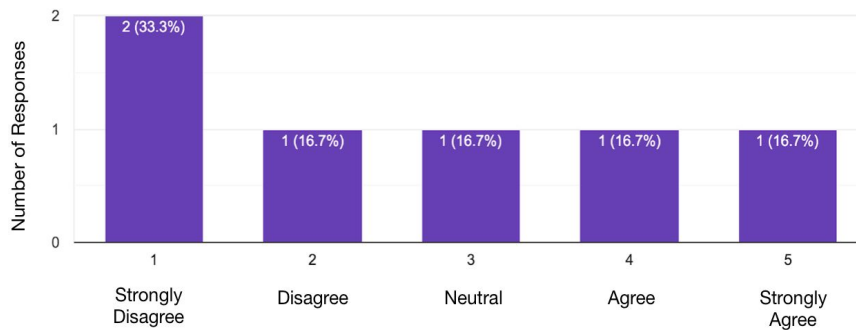
Figure 8. Agreement for BIs to record themselves running new programs

For the second proposed solution, 2 participants strongly disagreed and 1 participant disagreed to recording themselves running new programs. However, there were also 1 participant that was neutral, 1 participant that agreed and 1 participant that strongly agreed.

Agreement to Bi-Weekly Team Meetings
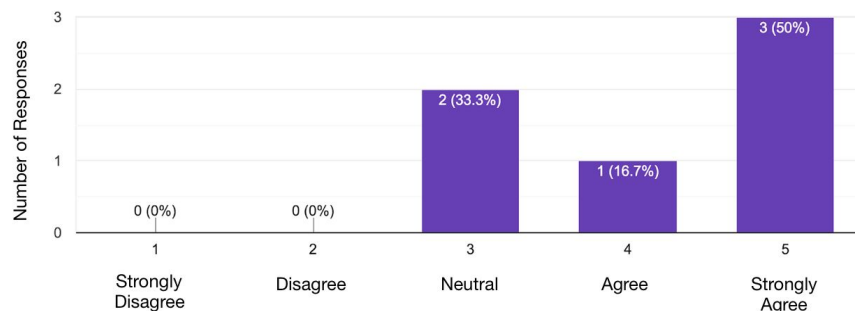
**Figure 9. Agreement to bi-weekly team meetings to better monitor progress**

For the third proposed solution, most participants agreed to having bi-weekly meetings. 1 participant agreed and 3 participants strongly agreed to having bi-weekly meetings. 2 participants responded neutral to this solution.

These survey results reveal that there is a weak communication amongst the team. According to figure 4, in the past 6 months, not every team has arranged 6 meetings when meetings should be every month. Based on the figure 13, even if there were 6 meetings, some BIs do not attend all meetings due to too much school work, schedule classes or feeling unwell (See Appendix 1). Furthermore, in figure 6, communication logs is claimed to be used by all BIs, however, information on written logs are offline and BIs are unable to access it outside of session time. Although emails are used, it is still insufficient as emails do not provide immediate support feedback. In conjunction to figure 5, where 3 BIs stated that it was difficult to run new programs when they are absent from previous meeting, the lack of immediate communication and materials being offline, is a cause to BIs being unsure. This uncertainty results to inconsistent data collection. In terms of proposed solutions, agreement mostly lies in the first and third proposal. The second proposal to record sessions has a varied response due to BIs being uncomfortable filming. (See Appendix 1)

Analysis of Parent Surveys

This survey included 6 parents from the 3 clients that are part of this report. This sample consisted of 3 females and 3 male participants.
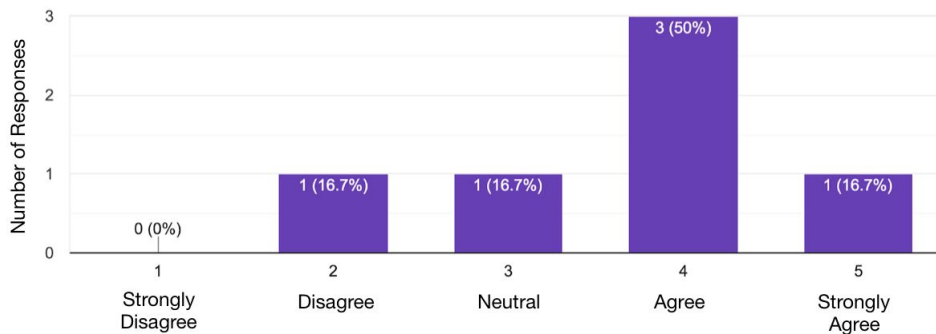
Agreement To Post Program Material Online
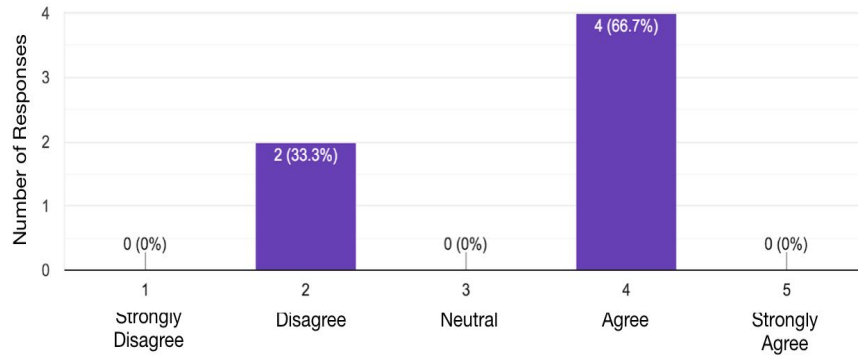
Figure 10. Agreement to post program material online

For the first proposed solution, 4 participants agreed to posting program material online given secure passwords. However, 2 participants have disagreed to posting session material online.

Agreement to Recording New Program

Figure 11. Agreement for BIs to record themselves running new programs

For the second proposed solution, there was a variety of responses. 3 of the participants agreed to have BIs record their sessions. 1 participant disagreed while 1 participant strongly agreed. There was also 1 participant that responded with neutral.

Agreement to Bi-Weekly Meetings
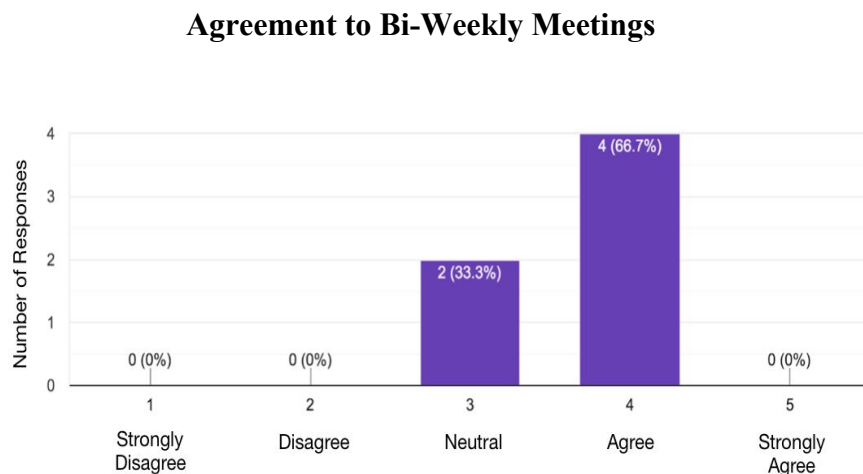
Figure 12. Agreement for bi-weekly meetings to better monitor progress

For this proposed solution, 4 participants had agreed to having bi-weekly meetings while 2 participants had responded with neutral.

The surveys completed by parents have shown a general interest to all 3 proposed solutions as the agree option has been chosen the most . However, there were 2 parents that disagreed to having program information online due to information security concerns (See Appendix 2). The second proposed solution to record sessions also has one disagreement as parents are worried it would be too distracting for their children (See Appendix 2).

Analysis of Interview

Ms. Pun has responded that team meetings are aimed to be scheduled monthly, however due to lots of scheduling clashes and limited funding, meetings often occur every one and a half months . In terms of communication, Ms. Pun said information about the client's session, successes or challenges are written in the communication logs at the end of every session. She uses it to review what has happened in the past month and BIs could refer to that to see what programs were more successful or needs extra help on. Emails are also a main mode of communication, but it is used mostly with parents to email them an updated program list after each meeting so it could be printed. However, BIs are not included in the email and they would be able to review

the program information during session. Emails are used with BIs as welll but usually for scheduling, such as monthly team meetings or asking for coverage. Ms. Pun also stated that inaccurate and inconsistent data collection is very impactful towards her judgement on future programs. A potential impact would be creating programs that do not meet the needs of the client. Another impact would be spending extra time revising programs because with some programs, extra training or materials are needed and when the programs do not fit the client's needs, sometimes, all the work needs to be redone. This snowballs to other issues such as increased fees for the family or unsatisfied parents when they observe their child struggling at programs or being on the same programs for a long time.

For the proposed solutions, Ms. Pun agrees that online folders should be implemented but is also concerned about information security. She believes that it would be beneficial for BIs in the future, hence if there is a way to ensure information security, it would be possible to implement. For recording sessions, she strongly agrees to it. She believes it would greatly benefit BIs and they could receive immediate feedback without everyone being physically present. She suggests for BIs to record when there are new programs so BIs would remain focused upon the quality of the sessions. For the last proposed solution, she disagrees to having biweekly meetings. A lot of clients face issues with limited funding and older children are more susceptible as they receive less funding. As some clients have other therapists other than behaviour consultants and behaviour interventionists, she disagrees to implement more meetings. Furthermore, monthly meetings are already difficult to implement due to schedule clashes. Hence, she believes its more practical to strengthen the attendance to monthly meetings.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Overall, from surveys to BIs and the interview with Ms. Pun, data collection inconsistency is mostly due to lack of communication. Current modes of communication are mostly offline and emails are not used to convey program information to BIs. therefore BIs have a lack of support and feedback when faced with new programs. In terms of the proposed solutions, the first solution with creating online folders with passwords for program information had been agreed by BIs, Ms. Pun and 4 out of 6 parents. Most of them believe that creating online folders could increase communication. Despite so, disagreement to this solution are due to concerns about information security. For the second proposed solution of recording sessions, results were varied. Responses ranged from disagreement to strong agreement for both BIs and parents. Parents have disagreed with the concern of reducing session quality and the focus being on the cameras. BIs have disagreed mostly due to feeling uncomfortable filming. On the contrary, Ms. Pun was supportive of this solution and believes it would be beneficial in helping BIs receive more immediate feedback. The final proposed solution of bi-weekly meetings was opposed by Ms. Pun as she was worried about limited funding and difficulties to schedule meetings. Most parents, 4 out of 6 parents believe that meeting frequently could be beneficial. Most BIs agreed and strongly agreed that bi-weekly meetings would be beneficial despite many reporting absences to monthly meetings.

Recommendations

To improve data collection consistency when BIs are having sessions, three solutions were proposed:

1. Create an online folder secured with passwords. The folder should only contain program checklists, session data and communication logs online to prevent leakage of personal information.

2. Behaviour interventionists recording new programs for feedback. It is recommended to record if programs are new or if there have questions regarding their way of implementing a certain program.

3. Implement bi-weekly meetings. However, based on the results, it was not recommended due to concerns with limited funding.

Expected outcome

By implementing the first two proposed solutions, BIs would receive immediately feedback and could have access to program information prior visiting the client. By doing so, BIs could spend time reviewing notes from other BIs and not feel pressured to flip through the communication log or updated programs during sessions. Furthermore, BIs would be able to correct their methods of implementing programs immediately and not wait until the next team meeting for issues to be brought up. With information being available whenever needed and programs implementation methods corrected immediately, BIs are likely to have session data that are consistent, which would allow Ms. Pun to update programs accurately.

References

"Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)." *Autism Speaks*,

https://www.autismspeaks.org/applied-behavior-analysis-aba-0.

Appendix
Appendix A: Survey Results with BIs

2. In the past 6 months, how many team meetings have you attended?
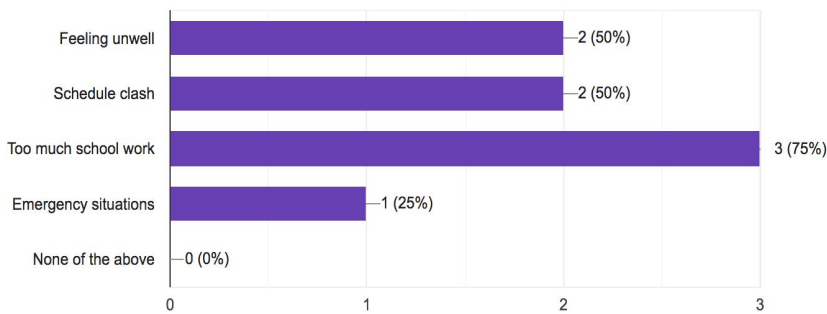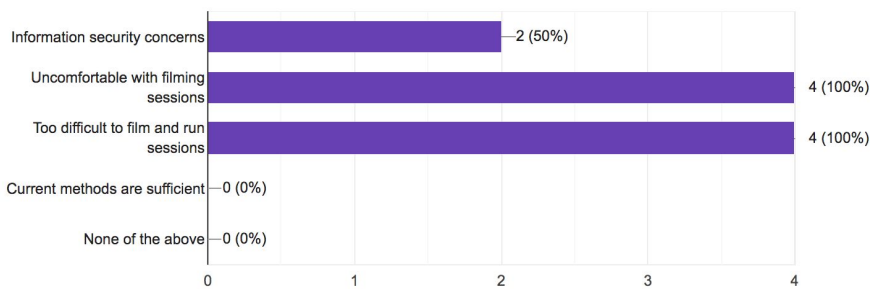
6 responses
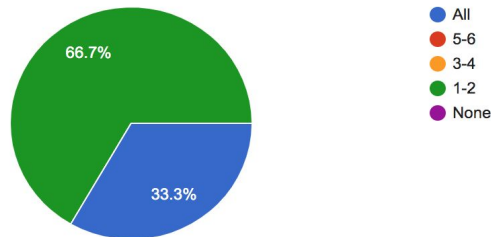
Figure 13. Number of team meetings attended

3. If you had not attended all the meetings, please select reasons for absence to the meetings:
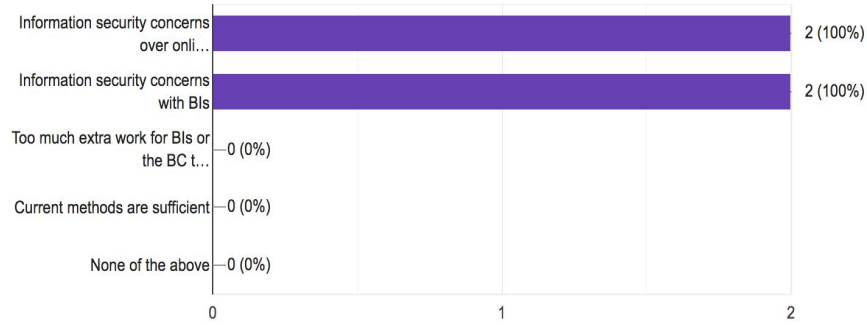
4 responses
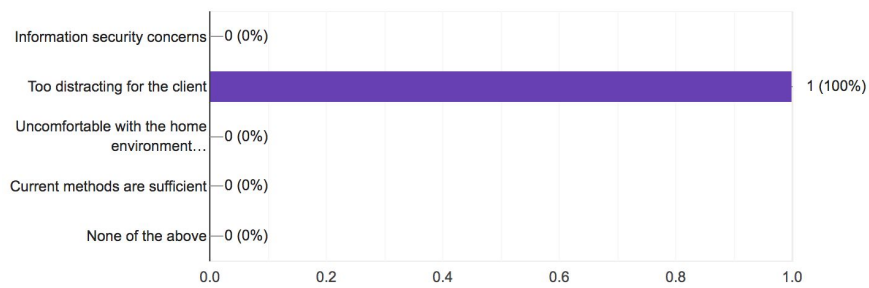

Figure 14. Reasons for absence to meetings

Figure 15. Reasons for disagreement to recording sessions

Appendix B: Survey Results with Parents

Figure 16. Reasons for disagreement to posting program information online

Figure 17. Reasons for disagreement to recording sessions