



# RBT Ethics Code (2.0)

The RBT Ethics Code (2.0) replaces the RBT Ethics Code (2018). All RBT applicants and certificants are required to adhere to the RBT Ethics Code (2.0), effective January 1, 2022.

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# Introduction

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) exists to support the certification needs of the profession and to protect consumers of applied behavior analysis (ABA) services by setting and managing professional standards. The BACB promotes ethical behavior in the profession by establishing the requirements for becoming a Registered Behavior Technician® (RBT®), the ethics standards described in this document, and the procedures for addressing professional misconduct. The RBT Ethics Code (2.0), hereafter referred to as the RBT Ethics Code, applies to RBTs in all of their behavior-technician activities across settings (e.g., home, clinic, community) and modalities (e.g., via phone, email, text, video conference, in person). The RBT Ethics Code does not apply to RBTs' personal behavior unless that behavior clearly poses a risk to the health and safety of clients, stakeholders, and coworkers.

The RBT Ethics Code is enforced under the BACB's [Code-Enforcement Procedures](#). All RBT applicants and RBTs must agree to follow this code and all BACB requirements for RBTs. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of the standards in this code is not an excuse for failing to comply with them. RBTs must also follow the applicable laws and requirements of other relevant entities (e.g., employers, licensure boards).

RBTs must practice under the direction and close supervision of an RBT Supervisor and/or RBT Requirements Coordinator, who are responsible for all work RBTs perform. Both of these roles are referred to as "supervisor" from this point forward. Because of this requirement, RBTs must seek support from their supervisor and other appropriate individuals in their workplace when interpreting and applying the RBT Ethics Code and when addressing an ethical dilemma. In these instances, RBTs prioritize following the law and placing the interest of clients first.

RBTs must be familiar with the four core principles that are the foundation of the RBT Ethics Code and the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#). Those principles are that RBTs benefit others; treat others with compassion, dignity, and respect; behave with integrity; and ensure their own competence. RBTs can learn more about how to uphold those principles in the introduction of the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#).

RBTs have a duty to inform the BACB of potential ethics violations by other BACB certificants, and their supervisors have specific obligations to those they supervise (see Section 4 of the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#)). Therefore, RBTs should be familiar with the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#). In the event of a suspected ethics violation, RBTs attempt to resolve the issue by first bringing it to the attention of their supervisor. RBTs document all actions taken to address the ethics violation (e.g., list of actions taken, relevant dates, parties involved, a description of the outcome) and save all relevant documentation. If the matter cannot be resolved directly, RBTs report it to the appropriate authority (e.g., supervisor, employer, licensure board, law enforcement). If the matter involves a violation of the RBT Ethics Code or the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#) and is not resolved with the support of their supervisor, RBTs report the matter to the BACB.

## Enforcement of the Code

The BACB enforces the RBT Ethics Code to protect clients and stakeholders, RBT certificants and applicants, and the ABA profession. Complaints are received and processed according to the processes outlined in the BACB's [Code-Enforcement Procedures](#).

*A note to RBT Supervisors and RBT Requirements Coordinators: It is critical that you are familiar with the RBT Ethics Code and take an active role in providing ongoing support to RBTs in relation to the RBT Ethics Code and the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#).*

# RBT Ethics Standards

## Section 1—General Responsibilities

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**1.01** RBTs are honest and work to support an environment that promotes truthful behavior in others. They do not lead others to engage in fraudulent, illegal, or unethical behavior. They follow the law and the requirements of their professional community (e.g., BACB, employer, supervisor).

**1.02** RBTs conduct themselves in a professional manner, are accountable for their actions, and make an effort to follow through on work and contractual commitments. When commitments cannot be met, RBTs work with their supervisors to address the situation in the best interest of clients.

**1.03** RBTs only provide services under their RBT certification within a clearly defined role under close, ongoing supervision.

**1.04** RBTs are never employers of their supervisor. RBTs who are also trainees (i.e., accruing supervised fieldwork toward a future BCBA or BCaBA certification application) may separately contract for those supervision services.

**1.05** RBTs do not knowingly make false, misleading, or exaggerated statements about their qualifications or behavior-technician services. They provide a current and accurate set of relevant credentials to employers and supervisors upon request.

**1.06** RBTs provide behavior-technician services only after their supervisor confirms that they have demonstrated competence. They work with their supervisor to continually evaluate their competence. If an RBT identifies that they are being asked to do something that goes beyond the scope of their certification and/or competence, they immediately inform their supervisor or other appropriate individuals at their place of employment and document this communication.

**1.07** RBTs work directly with their supervisor to ensure that they are culturally responsive in their work. They actively work to evaluate their own biases and ability to work with individuals with diverse needs/backgrounds (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) and obtain any needed training in these areas under the direction of their supervisor.

**1.08** RBTs do not harass or discriminate against others (e.g., clients, coworkers). They behave toward others in an equitable and inclusive manner regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, immigration status, marital/relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or any other basis proscribed by law.

**1.09** RBTs are aware that their personal biases or challenges (e.g., mental or physical health conditions; legal, financial, marital/relationship challenges) may impact their ability to effectively carry out their behavior-technician services. If their biases or challenges may impact services, they take steps to resolve the issue (e.g., developing an action/care plan, reporting to their supervisor, refraining from working with clients until the issue is resolved, reporting to the BACB) and document these actions.

**1.10** RBTs avoid multiple relationships with clients, coworkers, and supervisors. Multiple relationships occur when there is a mixing of two or more relationships (e.g., friend, family member, employee/employer) that may result in conflicts of interest and risk of harm to the client. If RBTs find that a multiple relationship has developed, they immediately inform their supervisor, work to resolve it, and document these actions. If the multiple relationship involves their supervisor, RBTs should report it to their supervisor's manager or other appropriate entity (e.g., human resources, BACB) and document this communication.

**1.11** Because the exchange of gifts can lead to conflicts of interest and multiple relationships, RBTs do not give gifts to or accept gifts from clients, stakeholders, or supervisors with a monetary value of more than \$10 US dollars (or the equivalent purchasing power in another currency). A gift is acceptable if it functions as an occasional expression of gratitude and does not result in financial benefit to the recipient. Instances of giving or accepting ongoing or cumulative gifts may rise to the level of a violation of this standard if the gifts become a regularly expected source of income or value to the recipient. If an employer has a stricter policy regarding gift exchange (e.g., prohibiting gift exchange), RBTs follow that policy.

**1.12** RBTs do not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with current clients, stakeholders, or supervisors. They do not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with former clients or stakeholders for a minimum of two years from the date the professional relationship ended. They do not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with former supervisors until the parties can document that the professional relationship has ended (i.e., completion of all professional duties). They do not receive supervision from individuals with whom they have had a past romantic or sexual relationship until at least six months after the relationship has ended.

## Section 2—Responsibilities in Providing Behavior-Technician Services

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- 2.01** RBTs do no harm and work to support the best interest of their clients. They are knowledgeable about and comply with mandated-reporting requirements.
- 2.02** RBTs follow the direction of their supervisors, accurately implement behavior-technician services, and accurately complete all required documentation (e.g., client data, billing records).
- 2.03** RBTs conduct themselves in a professional manner during all work activities (e.g., delivering services, receiving training or supervision). They take action to improve their performance following feedback from supervisors.
- 2.04** RBTs do not use unfamiliar interventions or provide services to unfamiliar client populations unless they have received proper training.
- 2.05** RBTs implement restrictive or punishment-based procedures only when included in a documented behavior-change plan and after their supervisor has verified their competence.
- 2.06** RBTs direct any questions or concerns that they or others (e.g., caregivers, coworkers) have about their behavior-technician services to their supervisor.
- 2.07** RBTs take necessary actions to protect clients when they become aware that a client's legal rights are being violated or that there is risk of harm to a client. In these instances, RBTs report the matter to their supervisor, follow organization policies, and document these actions. In some instances, RBTs may need to contact relevant authorities (e.g., law enforcement, BACB, licensure board).
- 2.08** RBTs protect the confidentiality and privacy of their clients, stakeholders, and others in the workplace by following all related requirements established by the BACB, employers, and the law (e.g., privacy laws, licensure requirements). RBTs maintain confidentiality when interacting with client information and records.
- 2.09** RBTs do not share identifying information (e.g., photos, videos, written information) about clients on social media or websites.
- 2.10** RBTs only discuss confidential client information under the direction of their supervisor unless allowed by law for a valid reason (e.g., protecting the client or others from harm). RBTs only share necessary client information in their job-related communications (e.g., emails, documentation).

## Section 3—Responsibilities to the BACB and BACB-Required Supervisor

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**3.01** RBTs comply with all requirements of the BACB and their supervisor, including, but not limited to, supervision, documentation of supervision, and audits.

**3.02** RBTs are honest and accurate in all communications with the BACB and their supervisor. If an RBT becomes aware that they submitted inaccurate or false information or documents to the BACB, they immediately contact the BACB to correct the issue. If an RBT becomes aware that they submitted inaccurate or false information or documents to their supervisor or employer, they immediately contact those parties to correct the issue and determine the need to self-report the situation to the BACB.

**3.03** RBTs do not cheat or help others cheat on RBT competency assessments or RBT examinations. RBTs follow the rules and requirements of the BACB and its approved testing centers, including, but not limited to, those related to falsifying information and the unauthorized collection, use, or distribution of examination materials.

**3.04** RBTs are aware of the events they need to self-report to the BACB and any other required entities (e.g., employer, supervisor). They self-report to the BACB within 30 days of the event or within 30 days of becoming aware of the event. RBTs are required to self-report to the BACB any event that might impact their ability to effectively carry out their behavior-technician services or comply with BACB requirements, including:

- legal charges and subsequent related actions;
- investigations by employers, governmental agencies, educational institutions, or third-party payers naming the RBT;
- disciplinary actions by employers (including suspensions and terminations for cause), governmental agencies, educational institutions, and third-party payers; OR
- physical conditions, mental conditions, or substance abuse that may impair the RBT's ability to safely provide behavior-technician services.

**3.05** RBTs do not misuse the intellectual property of the BACB (e.g., certification titles, examination content) or others (e.g., an employer's proprietary materials).

**3.06** RBTs named in a Notice of Alleged Violation or who receive a required action from the BACB (e.g., RBT Supervision Audit, Educational Memorandum, Notice of RBT Required Action, Disciplinary or Appeal Determination, Notice of Summary Suspension or Revocation) immediately share the document with their supervisor and work collaboratively to respond to any correspondence and comply with all BACB requirements.

**3.07** RBTs regularly (e.g., monthly) check their BACB account to ensure their personal information (e.g., name, email address, mailing address) is accurate. Within 24 hours of becoming aware of a change to their certification status (e.g., inactive, expired, suspended, revoked), RBTs report the change to their supervisor and subsequently comply with applicable BACB requirements related to practice, billing, and use of the RBT title.

# Glossary

## **Behavior-Technician Services**

Services provided under the direction of a BACB-required supervisor that are explicitly based on the principles and procedures of behavior analysis and are designed to change behavior in meaningful ways. These services include, but are not limited to, implementing behavior-change interventions and assisting with assessments and training.

## **Client**

The direct recipient of behavioral services. At various times during service provision, one or more stakeholders may also meet the definition of "client" (e.g., the point at which they receive direct training or consultation). In some contexts, the client might be a group of individuals (e.g., with organizational behavior management services).

## **Client's Rights**

Human rights, legal rights, rights codified within behavior analysis, and organization rules designed to benefit the client.

## **Conflict of Interest**

An incompatibility between an RBT's private and professional interests resulting in risk or potential risk to services provided to, or the professional relationship with, a client, stakeholder, supervisor, or coworker. Conflicts may result in a situation in which personal, financial, or professional considerations might influence professional judgment in the delivery of behavioral services or other professional activity.

## **Multiple Relationship**

A mixing of two or more of an RBT's roles (e.g., professional and personal) with a client, stakeholder, supervisor, coworker, or someone closely associated with or related to the client.

## **Scope of Competence**

The behavior-technician services and activities an RBT can accurately carry out.

## **Social Media**

A digital platform found through a web browser or application on which users (individuals and/or businesses) can consume, create, copy, download, share, or comment on posts or advertisements. Both posts and advertisements would be considered digital content.

## **Stakeholder**

An individual other than the client who is impacted by and invested in the behavior technician's services (e.g., parent, caregiver, relative, legally authorized representative, collaborator, employer, agency or institutional representative, licensure board, funder, third-party contractor for services).

## **Trainee**

Any individual accruing fieldwork/experience toward fulfilling eligibility requirements for BCaBA or BCBA certification.

## **Website**

A digital platform found through a web browser on which an entity (individual and/or organization) produces and distributes digital content for the consumption of users online. Depending on the functionality, users can consume, create, copy, download, share, or comment on the provided digital content.



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