

## **Diversity and Representation in ABA Service Provision - Reflections and Recommendations for a More Inclusive, Neuroaffirmative and Effective Field**

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### **Abstract:**

The **importance of diversity and representation** in **Applied Behavior Analysis** (ABA) services has garnered increasing attention in recent years. This presentation explores the **benefits** of considering **cultural, ethnic, and individual diversity** in the design and delivery of ABA interventions, drawing on recent literature to highlight the significance of these factors in **improving client outcomes** and **fostering more inclusive practices**.

Researchers and practitioners have been discussing the importance of cultural competence and cultural humility in ABA, arguing that therapists' awareness of their own cultural biases and the cultural backgrounds of their clients leads to **more effective, respectful interventions** and strengthens the therapeutic relationship by **building trust and rapport**.

Part of this is achieved through representation, which is critical in reducing disparities in access to services and improving engagement among underrepresented populations.

This presentation will discuss **practical strategies for integrating diversity into ABA service delivery**, such as culturally relevant assessments and interventions, training for behavior analysts on cultural humility and culturally sensitive practices, and the importance of diverse representation in the ABA workforce. By emphasizing these principles, ABA practitioners can **promote more equitable, effective, and respectful services**, ultimately improving outcomes for all clients.

### **About the Speaker:**

Valeria Parejo holds a Master's degree in ABA from the Florida Institute of Technology, is a certified BCBA and QBA Behavior Analyst, and is a PhD candidate in Integrated Behavioral Health at the Cummings Graduate Institute for Behavioral Health Studies. With 20 years of experience, Valeria has worked in a variety of areas, including assisted living with adults with developmental and psychiatric disorders, ethics coordination, supervision and mentoring, consulting in schools and clinics, and teaching ABA in English and Portuguese. She is also a clinical evaluator and consultant in OBM and people management. 😊

