



The Insider

The University of Kansas
Life Span Institute at Parsons

www.parsons.lsi.ku.edu
Patty Black Moore, Editor

Digital Technology Skills Lead to Employment

Thirty-four individuals with disabilities are mastering digital technology skills relevant to employment. Sara Sack, Director, Assistive Technology for Kansans and her team received funds from the United Healthcare Foundation to select 75 Kansans with disabilities including mental health issues with interest in obtaining employment. The self-identified disabilities included 26 individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); 25 with cognitive impairments; 14 with orthotic injuries; 14 with chronic health conditions; 10 with traumatic brain injuries; and 4 who are legally blind.

Assistive Technology for Kansans staff developed an accessible training curriculum that was implemented in five locations across the state. Each participant received an electronic tablet to support the development of a plan with employment and behavioral health goals and access to resources through the use of digital technology. Goals addressed how to conduct online job searches, completion of online applications, completing a resume, as well as soft skills such as making appointments, setting reminders, and working with to-do lists. Behavioral health goals included managing stress, medication monitoring, and using electronic reminders for anger management. After successfully completing the four six-hour workshops, participants were able to keep their tablets. Data obtained through follow-up calls found 10 individuals were working full-time;



Pictured from left, Sheila Simmons, ATK Program Coordinator; Sara Sack, Assistive Technology for Kansans Director; and Tim Spilker, president of United Healthcare Community Plan of Kansas.

24 part-time; and 13 were interviewing three to six months after completion of the workshops. A wide variety of jobs were reported. A woman with multiple health issues is working as a substitute teacher two to three days a week since she is able to manage her schedule, appointments, and medication with her tablet, as well as, post online assignments and communicate with students and parents.

...continued on page 2

In this Issue...

- 1-2.....Digital Tech Skills & Employment
- 2.....Just the STATS; HR News
- 2.....Publication: Kathleen Hine
- 3.....Presentations
- 3.....Project News: Fire Safety Network
- 4-5.....Project Spotlight: Dean Williams
- 5.....Community Service: Christmas family

Continued from page 1

Another woman started her own home cleaning business and uses the tablet to schedule clients, stay on time for cleaning and personal appointments, and manage to-do lists specific to each client. A participant in western Kansas who is a veteran with physical disabilities and PTSD was able to enroll in the EMT training since he was comfortable taking the required online course assignments and tests. He is participating in the ride along

training with a local EMT service and has a job offer waiting for him when he completes training in a few months. Other individuals obtained positions in offices, shipping and inventory management, and food service. One is working with Kansas Rehabilitation Services and returned to college now that he is more comfortable with technology.

The workshop training curriculum and task specific videos are available on the ATK website, <http://atk.ku.edu/ipad-training>.

Just the “STATS” In FY 2015, LSI at Parsons’ faculty and staff gave presentations to 89 state, national, and international audiences in addition to 354 other training and outreach activities.

HR News

Staff Performance Evaluations



University of Kansas policy requires that employees receive a formal, written performance evaluation by his/her supervisor at least once a year and that time has come. You should have received a request from your supervisor to complete your evaluation for your work during the calendar year of 2015. In fact, if you haven’t started, begin immediately because the deadline approaches quickly. Participating in an annual self-evaluation offers an opportunity to discuss job expectations, work goals, and professional growth.



PUBLICATION

Hine, K. M., & Moore, K. J. (2015). Family Care Treatment for dispersed populations of children with behavioral challenges: The design, implementation, and initial outcomes of an evidence-informed treatment. *Children and Youth Services Review, 58*, 179-186. (Kathleen Hine, Ph.D., left)



PRESENTATIONS

Barker, M. R., Bridges, M. S., & Saunders, K. J. (2015, November). *A pilot investigation of the validity of the Dynamic Assessment of Phonemic Awareness via the Alphabetic Principle (DAPA-AP) with preschool and school-aged children.* Paper presented at the 2015 American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, Denver, CO. (*Kathryn Saunders, Ph.D., left*)

Saunders, K. J. (2015, October). *There's no such thing as an individual phoneme: Implications for reading instruction.* Invited presentation at the Fourth Sarasota Symposium on Behavior Analysis, Sarasota, FL. (In it's fourth year, the Sarasota Symposium honors Murray Sidman, who at 93, prefers not to travel so 20 invited presenters travel to Sarasota to participate in this elite symposium on behavior analysis.)

Williams, D. C., Yoo, H., & Valdovinos, M. G. (2015, October). *Behavioral mechanisms of drug action in IDD: Why should I care?* Invited address to the Mid-American Association for Behavior Analysis, Kansas City, MO. (*Dean Williams, Ph.D., above right*)

PROJECT NEWS

Fire Safety and Prevention Network for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

“People who are deaf or hard of hearing are less likely to take quick action due to an inability to hear traditional smoke alarms. Many of them have to be warned by family or neighbors so they are at greater risk of injury or death in a fire.” Elena Nuss, Kansas Fire Prevention Specialist.

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, seniors, and children ages 0 – 5 years are most vulnerable to injury due to a fire. Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) is

collaborating with the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) and other organizations that are part of the deaf community to disseminate accessible information on fire safety and prevention.

ATK staff has commitments from the KCDHH and Kansas Cultural Center to help develop an ongoing network that addresses the issue of fire safety among existing social organizations and clubs that are part of the deaf community. The partners have identified the Hays Deaf and Hard of Hearing Club, Silent Bible Baptist Church in Wichita, and a social organization in Liberal. If you know of an organization or a contact that might be interested in this effort, please contact Sheila Simmons, ssimmons@ku.edu, or Sara Sack, ssack@ku.edu, or call 620-421-8367.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Translational Analyses of Chronic Aberrant Behavior Across the Life Span 2



Dean Williams, Ph.D., Project Director

Kathryn Saunders, Ph.D., University of Kansas
Iser DeLeon, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
SungWoo Kahng, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
Thomas Hurley, University of Kansas
Kathleen Hine, Ph.D., University of Kansas

Funded by: Kennedy Krieger Institute under a grant from National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Collaborating Agencies: Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; University of Massachusetts School of Medicine, Kennedy Krieger Institute

Brief Summary

This project is designed to increase basic knowledge of the etiology and maintenance of severe, chronic aberrant behaviors (CAB) and develop treatments based on this knowledge. This research program will translate basic-research findings from laboratory studies of both animal and human subjects, first to more naturalistic settings and activities, and then to clinical-treatment settings.

The laboratory studies have shown, paradoxically, that schedules of positive reinforcement can, in some circumstances, be aversive. When relatively rich conditions of positive reinforcement transition to relatively lean conditions of positive reinforcement, subjects show prolonged, counterproductive disruptions in behavior (pausing). Further, if a means of escape from the situation is provided, subjects escape. That is, negative incentive shifts are aversive, and thus motivate maladaptive escape behaviors. It is important

to note that the relatively lean reinforcement conditions are not inherently aversive. It is the context that creates the aversiveness. In the laboratory, these findings have a great deal of generality. In the natural environment, schedules of positive reinforcement are ubiquitous. The present research program is the first to integrate these laboratory findings with the problem of chronic aberrant behavior.

In the clinic, a current, successful treatment strategy has been to identify the behavioral function of aberrant behavior on an individual basis (i.e. a functional analysis), and use this information to design treatment. Escape (negative reinforcement) has been shown to be a primary motive for the aberrant behavior of a substantial portion of treated individuals. Explaining, at a behavioral-process level, what makes certain activities aversive for some individuals has not been a primary goal of the treatment-oriented studies. Not surprisingly,

given its paradoxical nature, the notion that escape can be a side effect of positive reinforcement has not been applied to either basic or clinical research in this area. Note that we do not suggest that negative incentive shifts account for all of aberrant behavior, or even all of escape-motivated aberrant behavior. Our preliminary work suggests, however, such pausing and escape can provide a functional analogue to a clinically significant portion of aberrant behavior, in that conditions that generate long pausing may predict aberrant behavior.

This research is designed to test the utility of the conceptualization in predicting the occurrence of stereotyped and self-injurious behaviors in persons with intellectual disabilities (IDD). In keeping with the translational nature of the research program, studies have been conducted following the bench-to-bedside approach conducted in the laboratory, naturalistic, and clinical settings. In the naturalistic setting, three studies are being conducted for each of two CAB topographies (self injury/ aggression and stereotypy). These studies generally replicate laboratory

procedures, but with modifications to better reflect the conditions of reinforcement and behaviors found in natural environments.

Results have demonstrated that in tabletop tasks (sorting or matching objects) and in activities taken from participants' daily living activities (such as chores, academic tasks, and leisure activities) follow the laboratory findings closely. In the laboratory, we give large or small amounts of reward for completing a number of button press requirements, and button pressing is disrupted primarily in the transition from the large reward to the small reward. In tabletop and naturalistic tasks behavior is disrupted (non-compliance) and undesirable behaviors (e.g., aggression) primarily in the transition from high-preference to lower-preference activities. Thus, shifts from relatively rich conditions (high preference or large reward) to relatively leaner conditions (low preference or small reward) are a source of aversive stimulation for this population and in those individuals with chronic histories of aberrant behaviors, may elicit aggression and self-injury.

COMMUNITY SERVICE



The Life Span Institute at Parsons: Christmas family

The Life Span Institute at Parsons faculty and staff helped a family with a monetary donation at Christmas. The family we helped is a young, single mother and her three daughters: ages 11, 9, and 2. A series of events impacted the family's finances recently

including a parent's hospitalization, car repairs, and as a care provider, the mother lost a week's paycheck when her primary client required inpatient services.

Once again, Southeast Kansas Respite Services Project Coordinator, Diane Salyers, stepped in to help identify our Christmas family. Debbie Moody, Administrative Assistant, collected the donations. Diane and Laura Hanigan, Business Coordinator, delivered the gift. They report that the family expressed gratitude for the help to make their Christmas a special one and a BIG thank you to all.

Visit the KU Life Span Institute (LSI) at Parsons website at
<http://parsons.lsi.ku.edu/>

Additionally, The Insider is archived online at
<http://www.parsons.lsi.ku.edu/newsletters>

The University of Kansas prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender identity, gender expression and genetic information in the University's programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access, IOA@ku.edu, 1246 W. Campus Road, Room 153A, Lawrence, KS, 66045, (785) 864-6414, 711 TTY