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Maximizing Care in Applied Behavioral Analysis

The Benefits of Streamlined Scheduling
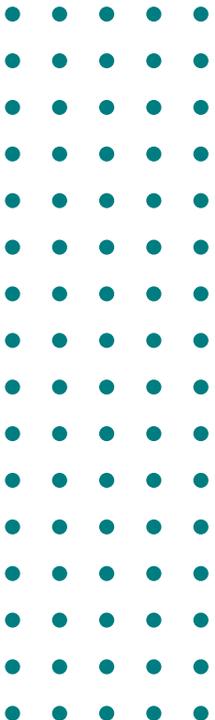
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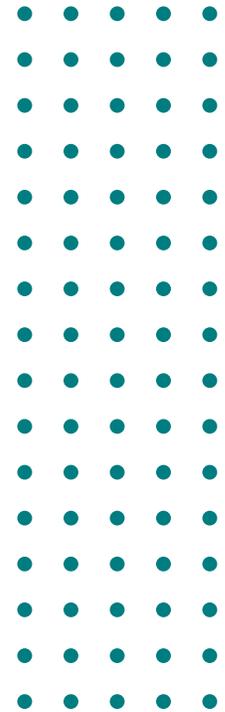
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Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been on the rise.

According to <u>government the data</u>,[1] the prevalence of ASD in 8-year-old children in 2020 rose to 1 in 36 children from what was reported ten years earlier in 2010 (1 in 68). In 2000, the prevalence of the condition among children of the same age was even much lower at 1 in 150.

Applied behavioral analysis (ABA) is an effective treatment for ASD. Unfortunately, the rising demand for autism services, especially ABA services, has contributed to a <u>shortage of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA)</u>[2] and other clinicians.

The shortage of clinicians in ABA clinics is compounded further by high staff turnover due to the <u>demanding nature of ASD therapy</u>.[3]

1. Data & Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html
2. As Autism Diagnoses Increase, Shortage of ABA Therapists Remains a Problem; New Government Study Finds 1 in 40 American Children Has Autism. Cision PR Newswire. https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/as-autism-diagnoses-increase-shortage-of-aba-therapists-remains-a-problem-new-government-study-finds-1-in-40-american-children-has-autism-300773869.html
3. Why People Quit Your Company and How Behavior Analysis Can Slow the Revolving Door at ABA Service Providers. Behavior Science in the 21st Century. https://bsci21.org/why-people-quit-your-company-and-how-behavior-analysis-can-slow-the-revolving-door-at-aba-service-providers/

Generally, clinics offering ABA services face multiple challenges, including:

Finding highly-trained ABA therapists

The current workforce of qualified ABA specialists is hardly enough to keep up with the rising demand for the services.
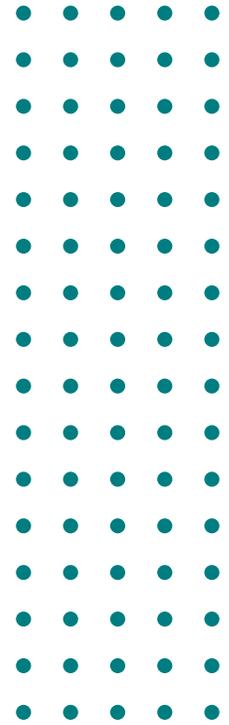
Risk of burnout in staff

The job of a BCBA or RBT can be very satisfying and rewarding. However, it comes with its own unique challenges. Without thoughtful scheduling, the risk of burnout due to work-life imbalance is ever apparent.

Maintaining consistency

ABA clinics must manage their schedules to guarantee consistent treatment. They must also collaborate with the parents and teachers of ASD learners to ensure they're implementing the treatment strategies consistently and accurately.

Care team collaboration

Effective behavior change requires collaborating with parents and teachers. They need to learn the proper techniques to handle a learner's behavior outside therapy sessions, as consistent reinforcement is essential for sustained progress.

Telehealth limitations

According to a <u>report from the BPC</u>,[4] telehealth has proven beneficial in many healthcare areas. It can reduce the physical burden on clinicians, synonymous with in-person sessions. Additionally, On the other hand, clients can benefit through reduced therapy costs. It also opens up opportunities for clinics to reach more clients. However, most ABA techniques require in-person sessions to be effective.

<u>ABA scheduling software</u> helps clinic directors, owners, and other administrative team members overcome some of the above challenges and accommodate the demand, leading to effective service delivery. Generally, streamlined schedules maximize value in behavioral health.

If you have been wondering what clinics stand to gain from ABA scheduling software, continue reading for a detailed explanation, including its benefits to clients and clinicians.

4. The Future of Telehealth After COVID-19. BiPartisan Policy Center. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/future-of-telehealth/

How to manage schedules for client success

ABA scheduling software helps optimize client schedules. Streamlined schedules eliminate errors and inefficiencies synonymous with manual scheduling, leading to increased efficiency and better client experience.

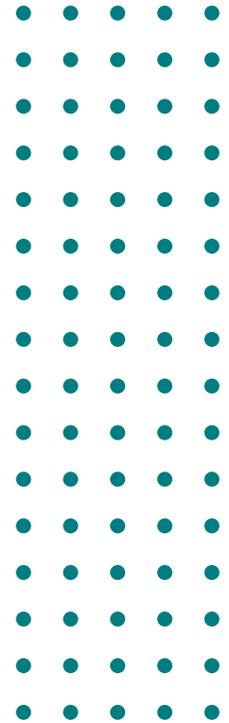## Here are ways software helps manage schedules for client success:

Customize treatment to the client's specific needs

Every client has unique needs. Some may be in school and available only for certain days or specific hours. Others may require a clinician who can speak a particular language. Scheduling software enables you to take into account each client's specific needs and customize the service accordingly.

Match client preferences

Some clients may have specific preferences e.g. preferring to work with a clinician of a particular gender. The software makes it easier to track client preferences and match them with the ideal coach.
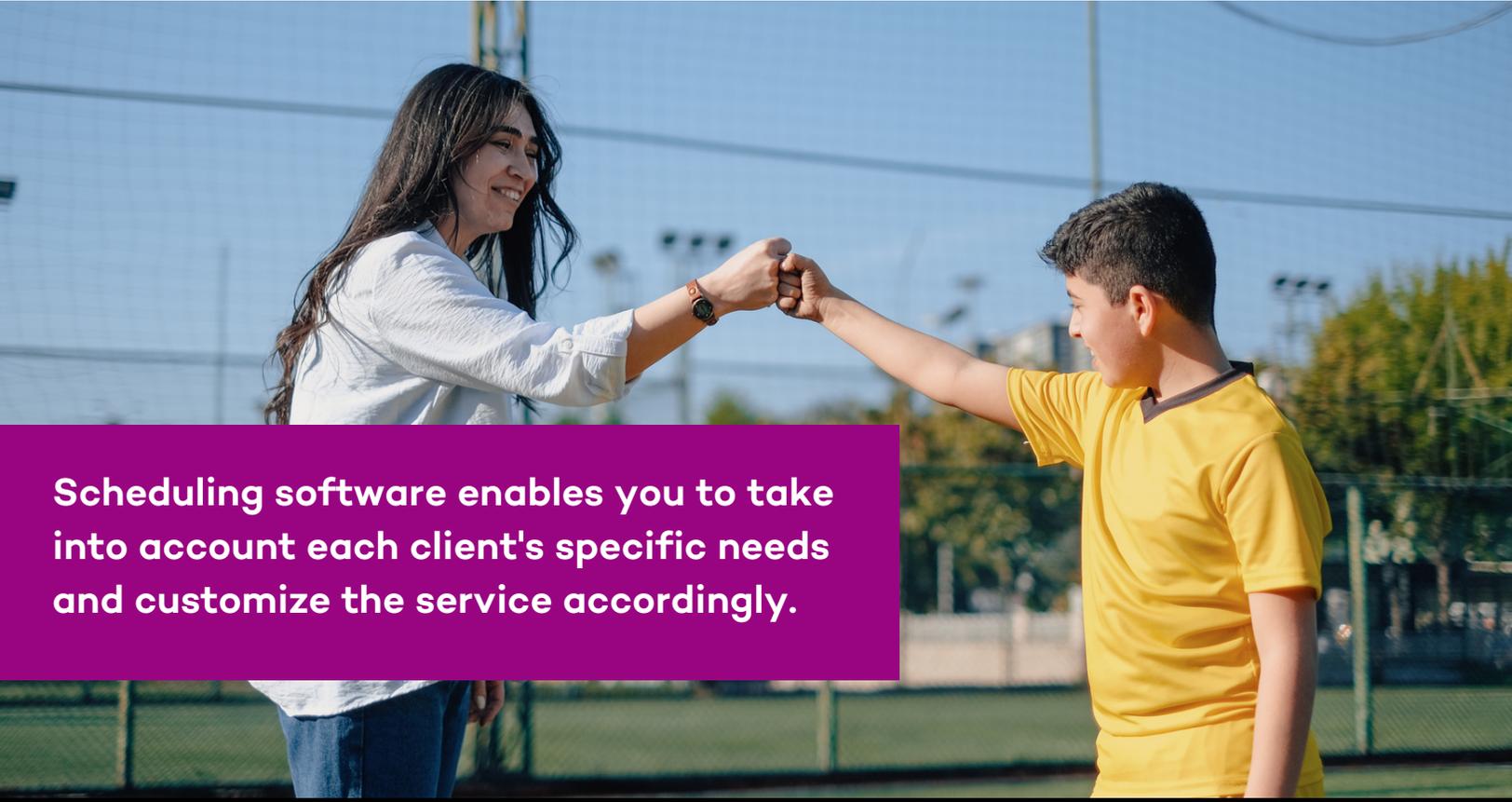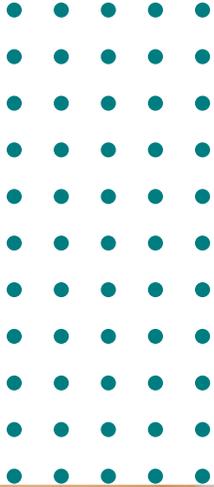
Eliminate scheduling errors

Errors are not uncommon with manual scheduling. For instance, a clinician might be free in one session and have two clients erroneously booked for the following session. If there aren't other clinicians available to handle the extra client, rescheduling can be frustrating for them. Or there could be an available clinician who doesn't match the client's preferences or needs.

Convenient communication

Scheduling software makes it easier to communicate with clients and prepare them for any planned changes. For instance, if their therapist has a scheduled vacation, they get the notification well in advance. This is important because a sudden change in routine can disorient them.

Scheduling software enables you to take into account each client's specific needs and customize the service accordingly.

How to manage schedules for clinician success

Staffing is a major challenge in the industry. High employee turnover and lack of highly qualified therapists not only affect service delivery but clinician success as well.

In a <u>study</u>[5] on the impact of inconsistent staffing on service delivery, the participants expressed having challenges working with new and untrained staff, especially due to their impact on the quality of service.

Unfortunately, as Daniel B. Sundberg, PhD, a behavior analyst, puts it <u>in this article</u>,[3] employee turnover comes with the territory of ABA therapy.

Whenever someone leaves, the remaining staff takes up their workload, which can be overwhelming before a replacement is found and trained to handle the clients.
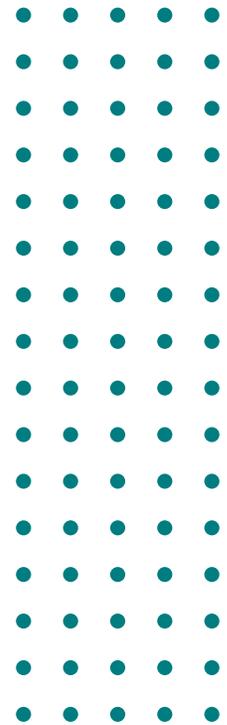
3. Why People Quit Your Company and How Behavior Analysis Can Slow the Revolving Door at ABA Service Providers. Behavior Science in the 21st Century. https://bsci21.org/why-people-quit-your-company-and-how-behavior-analysis-can-slow-the-revolving-door-at-aba-service-providers/
5. Inconsistent Staffing and Its Impact on Service Delivery in ASD early-intervention. National Library of Medicine. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28254668/
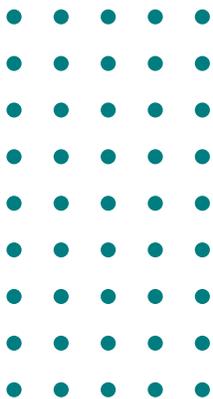
Besides affecting employees' productivity, turnover also hurts clinics. You can lose 15% and up to 200% of the employee's annual salary when they leave. For the average behavior therapist, this can be around $5,000, or more for highly skilled therapists like Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA).[3]

There are multiple reasons why therapists quit, including poor training and supervision and general job dissatisfaction. Changing the staff scheduling system is an effective way of reducing turnover. It can help improve retention not just for ABA therapists but other staff members, including clinical supervisors and intake and administrative personnel.

ABA organizations can lose 15% and up to 200% of the employee's annual salary when a team member leaves.

3. Why People Quit Your Company and How Behavior Analysis Can Slow the Revolving Door at ABA Service Providers. Behavior Science in the 21st Century. https://bsci21.org/why-people-quit-your-company-and-how-behavior-analysis-can-slow-the-revolving-door-at-aba-service-providers/

The following topics describe ways that software can help manage schedules for clinician success:
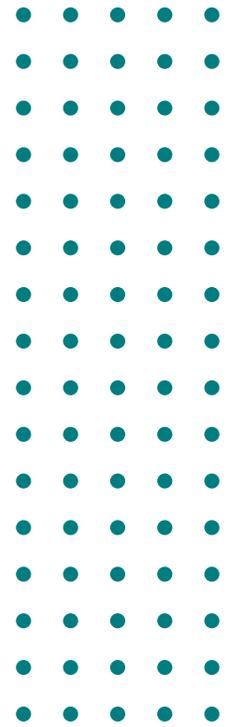
Efficient job matching

Scheduling software organizes all data together for efficient job-matching. For instance, if you offer in-home sessions, you can match employees with clients closest to their location.

Let's say an employee attends to a client at location A in the morning, and two other clients are scheduled for the afternoon session at location B (two miles away) and location C (ten miles away). In this case, it would be more convenient for them to attend to the client in location B than the one in location C.

Human resources support

Scheduling software allows you to capture and track important employee details, which can affect client schedules, like time off and vacation.
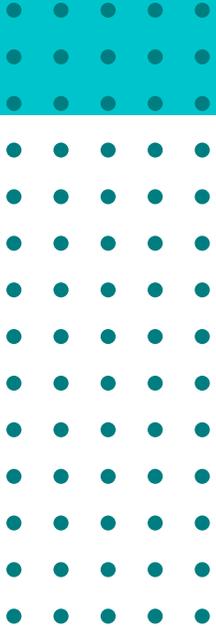
Thanks to automatic notifications, you're not caught off guard when an employee is taking time away. Scheduling software can enable you to plan in advance and avoid last minute scrambles, which can affect employee morale and overall job satisfaction.

Track training

Poor training is one of the reasons for therapist turnover. This has a negative ripple effect as the remaining team has to keep taking up additional workloads and training new therapists every time a team member leaves. ABA scheduling software supports effective training by enabling you to track training hours. This improves training accuracy and eliminates disruptions leading to better outcomes.

How to manage schedules for clinic success

Client and clinician success achieved thanks to ABA scheduling software culminates into clinic success. Whether your clinic provides in-office or in-home services, or you have a hybrid model, you can benefit from using scheduling software in multiple ways, including:
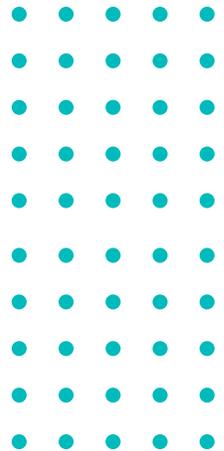
Track licensing

Scheduling software allows you to manage therapist licensing with ease. Licensure requirements vary from state to state. If you have clients in different states, you can easily match them with the therapists licensed in that state. Insurance also requires a certain licensing level to cover services.

For instance, some services allow registered behavior technician (RBT) licensing, while others only qualify for compensation if rendered by a BCBA. The software enhances scheduling by enabling you to match a client to a therapist with the required licensing.

Manage payroll

The software organizes the data together, giving you a complete view of the schedules and hours worked by each therapist. This facilitates balanced scheduling and avoids matching clients with therapists who have exhausted their hourly threshold. Overtime is expensive, and minimizing the amount you have to pay for overtime is an excellent budgetary control strategy.
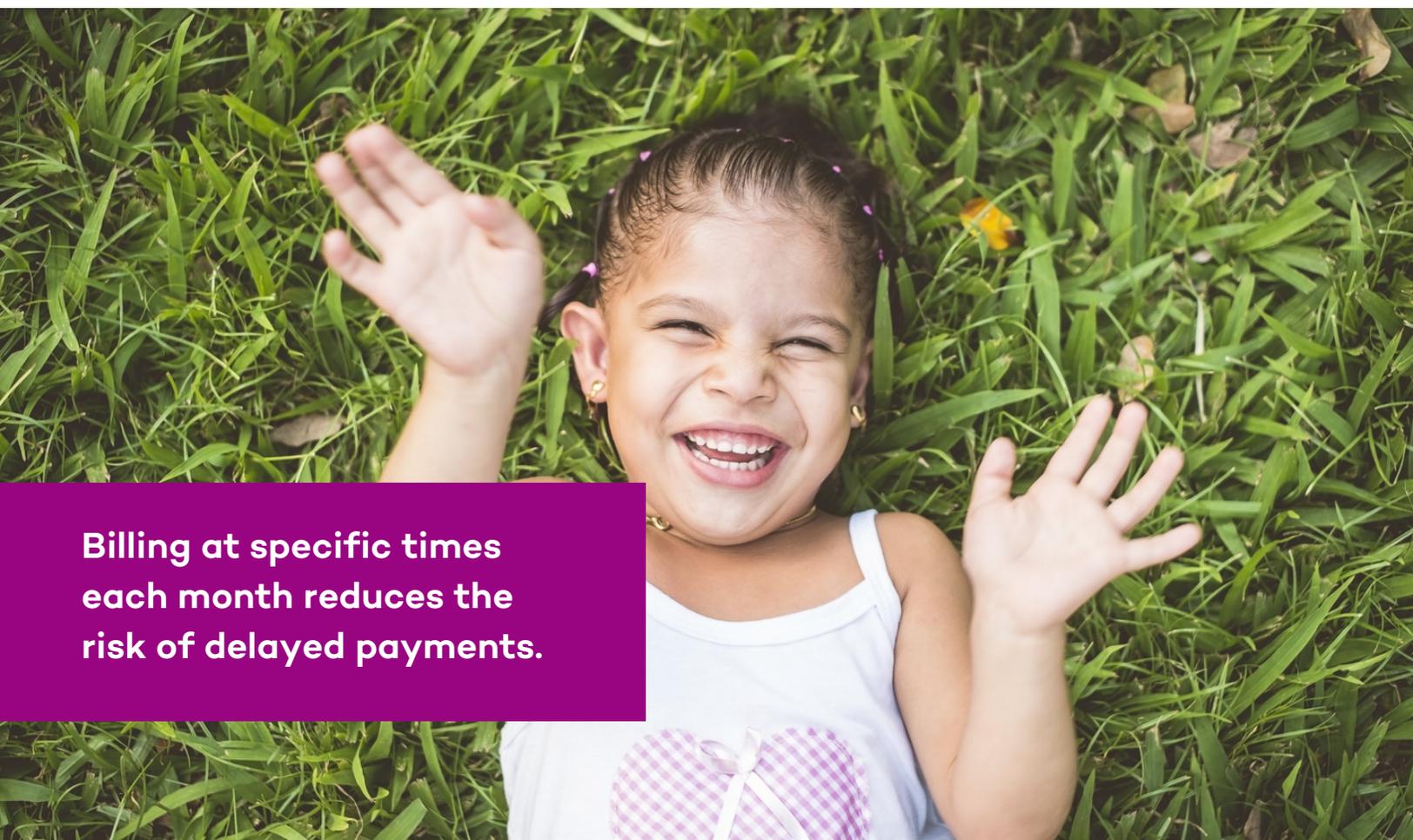
Improving billing

ABA scheduling software is a reprieve for clinics on matters of billing. It keeps track of the hours of service rendered and can automatically bill clients. Again, billing the clients at specific times every month reduces the risk of delayed payments. The software can also send reminders to clients who haven't paid, eliminating the need for manual follow-up.

Simplify reporting

The software simplifies the capturing and organization of client reports. As the records are in one place, the clinician can refer to past reports in every session, review client progress, and plan the best techniques and activities based on their progress.
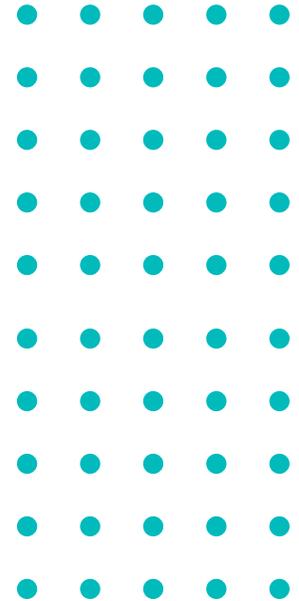
Billing at specific times each month reduces the risk of delayed payments.

Streamline scheduling to maximize value in your ABA therapy services

With the increased ASD diagnoses, the therapist shortage poses a huge challenge to an industry already plagued by high employee turnover due to the nature of the work involved. From finding highly-trained ABA therapists to securing cooperation from the care team, risk of burnout in staff, and telehealth limitations, ABA services present challenges to both clinicians and clinics.

However, leveraging ABA scheduling software can help maximize value in behavioral health. Clients can benefit from customized services, reduced scheduling errors, and convenient communication. Similarly, clinicians can get efficient job matching, better training, and HR support. Streamlined schedules can also boost ABA practice management by tracking licensing, managing payroll, improving billing, and simplifying reporting.

Let's talk about how to streamline your scheduling process today

Raven Health is a data-driven behavioral health platform built for modern clinicians. Our mobile first platform streamlines intake, scheduling, client sessions, and reimbursement processes. We are committed to helping clinicians spend more time with clients and less time on administrative tasks.

You can count on our platform to boost your team's job satisfaction, improve client sessions, and streamline workflows at your organization. For more information, request a personalized demo.