

Dr. Elle Kirsten

Invited Presentation

Maps of Meaning: A Journey to Fluency, Derived Relations, and Putting Thoughts-on- a-Cloud"

Relational skills training interventions are increasingly popular among basic and applied relational frame theory (RFT) practitioners. In particular, RFT has shown that arbitrarily derived relational responding (ADRR) is operant behavior and that the operant acquisition of various patterns of relational framing is crucial to cognitive and linguistic development. This talk reviews an RFT-based language assessment and training protocol for teaching higher-level language including analogical and deictic relations to children struggling with complex language comprehension. Analogical relational responding is a critical skill in the development of verbal and intellectual repertoires, and is key to understanding metaphor, an experiential tool often used in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to increase emotion regulation. Evidence of emergent humor, sarcasm, and perspective-taking will be shared, and the barriers to measuring language coherence, complexity, derivation, and flexibility will be discussed.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to: (1) Describe why it is necessary to implement RFT-based language interventions to teach complex language; (2) Describe arbitrary relational responding; (3) Describe the utility of combining RFT-based language protocols and ACT interventions to tackle emotion regulation in children struggling with language comprehension.

Speaker Bio:



Elle Kirsten, PhD, BCBA, LBA is the Founder & Director of Compassionate Behavior Analysis, PLLC and works as a clinician at the New England Center for OCD & Anxiety in New York.

Elle Kirsten is originally from South Africa (always a Springbok!) but she grew up in Hong Kong and currently resides in New York City (since 2011) with her wife and two dogs. She completed her PhD in relational frame theory (RFT; Psychology) at the National University of Ireland, Galway; her MSc in Psychology (applied behavior analysis) at the University of Auckland; and her HonsBSc in Psychology at the University of Toronto. Elle has been working with children since 2002 and is a Board Certified and New York State Licensed Behavior Analyst (BCBA; LBA). Her research and clinical interests are in testing and training meaningful and functional language (RFT), and in helping children get ‘unstuck’ from their thoughts so they can find meaning and joy in their lives (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, ACT). Elle has presented her clinical work and academic research at numerous conferences, and she has published several articles and book chapters about RFT and complex language development. Elle loves animals (especially dogs), water skiing/wakeboarding, surfing, snow skiing, MMA, and walking in forests, jungles, and flowery **gardens**.