



ABA Provider Experience

Britt W. Sims, PhD, BCBA, LBA



Introduction



 www.integratedbehaviorsolutions.com

Britt W. Sims, PhD

Credentials

BT → BCaBA → BCBA
PhD from Texas Tech
University

Licensure

Board certified behavior
analyst (BCBA) through
BACB; Licensed Behavior
Analyst (LBA) in Texas

ABA Experience

ABA provider since 2007;
Started Integrated Behavior
Solutions, Inc in 2011 to provide
ABA services for children

About Me

Military spouse
Father of 7 kids

Specializes in treatment of
severe challenging
behaviors



Integrated Behavior Solutions, Inc.

Clients

34 clients
ages 2-17;
20 TRICARE
(59%)

Staff

23 employees (6 BCBAs,
3 supervisees); 1 non-
clinical practice manager

Location

Initially provided in-home ABA, but
moved to clinic-based services in 8300
sq ft center with home/community
support by BCBAs (upon approval)

Insurance

Accepted only TRICARE until 2013 when TRICARE
issues/changes necessitated need to expand; now
accept Blue Cross/Blue Shield and United Health Care
in addition to TRICARE

Timeline



2011

**TRICARE Access for ABA
Excellent**

Company started with **<90%**
TRICARE Clients

Functioned with only certified
providers (BCBA or BCaBA),
ADFM's only

2013

**Program Change with ECHO,
Basic, and Pilot – Disrupted Access**

Forced company to change
therapy models, interruptions in
remits, mass denials,
delays/denials in authorizations

Kept seeing current TRICARE
clients, but began accepting
new clients with other
insurances

2021

**TRICARE Operations Manual
(TOM) Updated – Drastic Impact
to ABA Access due to Increased
& Unclear Provider Requirements**

Drastic changes made without
guidance for implementation resulted
in delays in remits, increased
workload without compensation, etc.

Remits slow or paused from Nov
2021 (notice of 1st audit) and Jan
2022, but we continued to see
clients. Chose a business loan over
bankruptcy

2023

**More TOM Revisions without
Notifications – Continues to
Result in Confusion**

Additional TOM revisions
(C-132, December 22, 2023)

Only aware because of a
Facebook group

Still processing new revisions

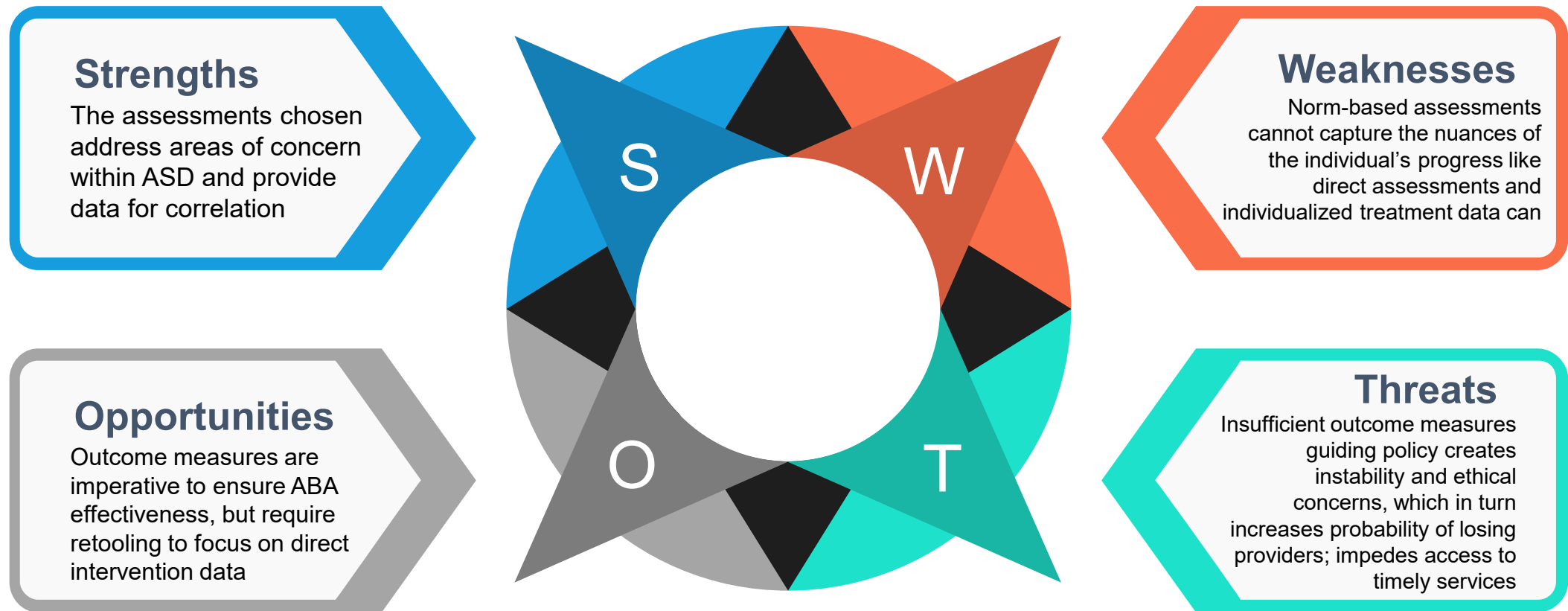
ABA Treatment Planning

Industry Standards of Care



ACD guidelines restrict the access to socially significant domains (e.g., ADLs, pre-academics, etc.) and settings that are **CRITICAL** for independent living.

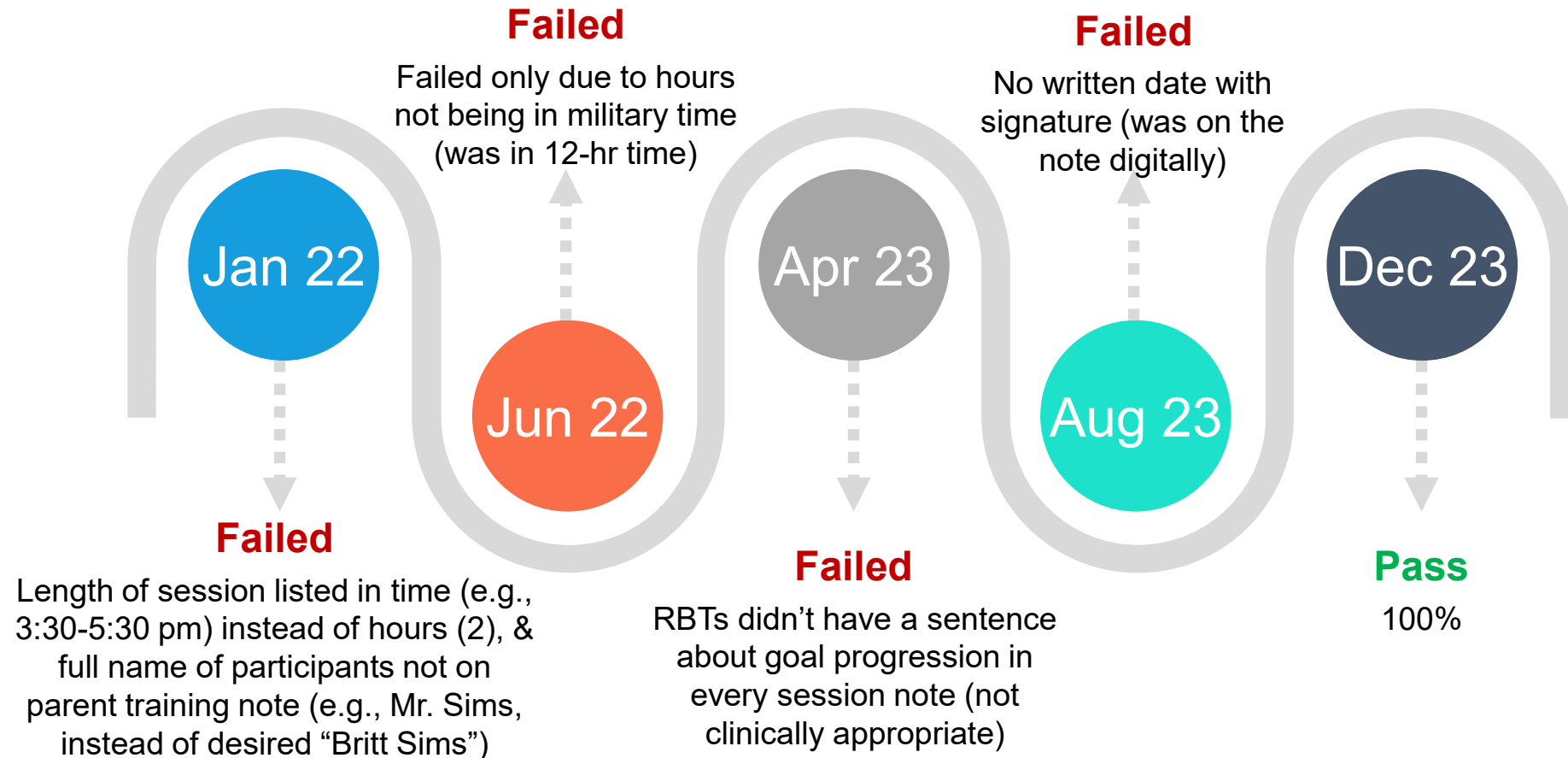
S.W.O.T. for ACD Outcome Measures



* Authorization for ABA services is contingent on these measures being completed by parent and provider

The Audit Loop

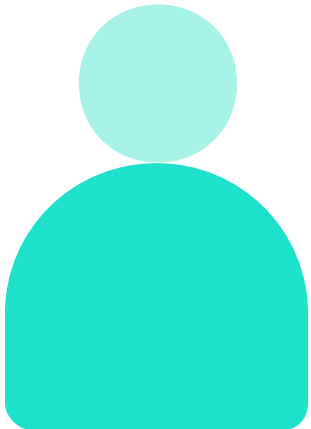
On every audit: 100% pass on billing and clinical content,
but failed due to changing criterion of non-clinical minutia



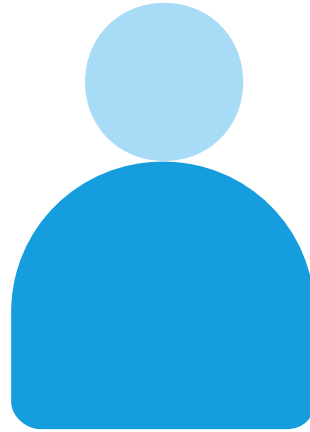
Specific BCBA Impact Statements



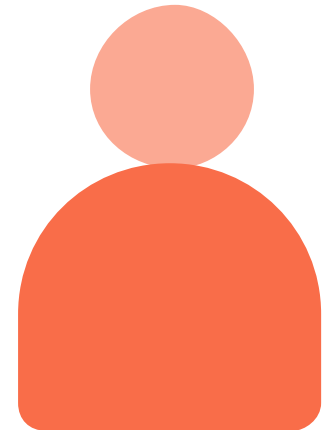
"TRICARE is deciding whether these children need services based on assessments that are not meant to drive treatment! They are not making their decisions based on the data they require us to take and the data that shows the progress these kids are making. In addition, the people making these decisions have no idea what we do, how we do it or why we do it. They need to make some kind of effort to understand this population and why these services are so important. "



"TRICARE restricts what we can work on and where. If the problem is in the school, let me in the school, because if you don't, the behavior will never stop because intermittently reinforced behaviors are the hardest to extinguish! If ADLs evoke problem behavior, we should be able to work on those ADLs to decrease that behavior. If my client bites the dentist, we should be able to work on desensitizing them to the dentist so they don't remove the doctor's digits!"



"I think TRICARE makes it as hard as possible to run providers off and save money. It's exhausting, but these families are worth it."



S.W.O.T. for ACD Effectiveness

Strengths

ABA coverage for TRICARE family members



Opportunities

The design has the potential to improve ABA quality if managed more adaptively and with improved communication

Weaknesses

Increased provider requirements focused on irrelevant details (and not reimbursed) instead of quality, access, and family benefits; ABA is managed by a contractor instead of in-house like other therapies

Threats

Reduced access to ABA services from less providers taking TRICARE, so decreased access to care