**#ACTUALLYAUTISTIC REFLECTIONS ON #ABA ON TWITTER: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

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**Background:** Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is still a relatively new field and has been likened, by the autism community, to the practice of conversion therapy or normalisation (e.g., teaching autistic children to suppress self-stimulatory behaviour; training homosexual individuals to behave as heterosexuals). Hegemonic normalcy refers to pervasive notions within a society by a dominant class, to which members of society must conform — to behave in a ‘socially appropriate’ manner. Anyone outside of this is seen to be inferior and in need of changing. These attitudes are so embedded that they may not be noticed by those perpetuating them.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to explore my personal responses and reactions, as an autistic adult, researcher, and ABA practitioner, to a sample (n=50) of tweets about ABA coded for positive (i.e., indicating a supportive bias toward ABA) (N =147) sentiment and sub coded for statements of positive effects on ABA recipients in a previous study, for covert ableism and hegemonic normalcy (Malkin et al., under review).

**Method**: In this autoethnographic study, I will use reflexive journaling (i.e., recording thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of the researcher relating to the data and process.) and memoing (i.e., recording thoughts and ideas relating to thematic analysis) to explore my autistic perspective on previously coded “positive” (i.e., indicating a bias-toward aba) tweets. I will start with a reflexive journaling process to document my positionality as a researcher (i.e., an autistic adult researcher, graduate student, ABA practitioner). I will then systematically review a set of (n=5) tweets and reflexively journal after each set. Finally, I will use Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis using a Critical Disability Studies (CDS) framework to explore ableist-oriented themes from my journal reflections.

**Results**: The results from our previous analysis included a theme of hegemonic normalcy, which consisted of negatively coded tweets (i.e., tweets demonstrating a bias against ABA), calling out its hegemonic practices. Within the positively coded grouping, hegemonic normalcy appeared as covert statements, including words such as ‘healed’ ‘overcame’ ‘treated’ (Malkin et al., under review). In the present study, I will be examining statements of positive experiences of ABA for ableist connotations and reporting on my personal experiences.

**Discussion/Conclusion**: As technology has become more available, with it so to has accessibility and advocacy, giving voice to those in the disability community who have previously been spoken for or silenced. I believe that it of critical importance to review and acknowledge the past of ABA, the embedded ableism of society that infests practice and attitudes and seek to pave the way for a prosperous, inclusive, and respectful future. I think that it is important to examine my own lived experiences and their intersections with my understanding of ABA to enhance discourse between practitioners and the autism community. It is through a CDS lens that we, as researchers seek to better understand the lived experiences of those who have been affected by ABA so that we may learn from these experiences and ensure a more positive tomorrow.

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