

Tim: I'm someone who loves learning - Loves helping other people. I spent most of my career dedicating - Dedicated to helping people with intellectual developmental disabilities and primarily autism to live, healthy, independent lives to the maximum amount of their ability. It's something I love doing.

Wil: This is Tim Courtney, and like he said, he is a VERY interesting person. Tim has been a Behavior Analysis for over 16 years and still continues to commit to this career. Anyways, you may be wondering what a Behavior Analysis exactly is. According to the Behavior Analysis Certification Board, a Behavior Analysis is someone who applies the science of behavior. Pretty broad, right? Well that's because this isn't exactly what we're looking for.

Tim: I'm trained as a behavioral analyst. I Implement therapy called Applied Behavior Analysis therapy. It's an approach that's based upon the scientific process. You know we develop a hypothesis. Implement an intervention that was based on research, it's already been proven to be effective and then monitor closely to see if it works. If it works. We keep doing it or modify it so we get the desired outcome.

Wil: So now we understand half of what he does. He's an applied Behavior Analysis that helps monitor others behaviors and if need be, help modify the behaviors until they get the desired outcome(also known as ABA therapy). But what are they correcting and what is this "desired outcome". Well, Tim works at Little Star Center, a nonprofit organization that helps individuals with Autism.

Tim: Yeah. Little star is a nonprofit Organization that's mission is to create a new reality for individuals with autism. Really all individuals so we're focused on all age of clients. We Deliver ABA therapy which we've already been talking a lot about, where in five different locations across the state of Indiana. I've been there for 10 years. Went from a purely clinical position where I was supervising other clinicians and helping to right treatment and develop treatment to at this point where I'm just purely over operations,

Wil: Even though Tim has moved to a more operational position at Little Star, that does not deny his former experience as a clinician and that he has faced a lot of questions when dealing with what he does as a job. Even though I just described what his position and career is, I can't imagine that you don't have any questions so we're going to dive right into the nitty gritty of what Autism is. Autism, as described by Autism Speaks, is a broad range of conditions, characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. We now know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, and each person with autism can have unique strengths and challenges.

According to a study by the CDC, Autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children, and each one of these children not only have to deal with their conditions and challenges every day, but have to also face an extremely harsh and discriminative stigma.

The stigma Around intellectual developmental disabilities and autism I think a lot of times it's being overly focused potentially on people's disability and not focus as much as possible on the individual and their abilities. The ability pieces you know these are all people they have - They have a disability that that. That causes some challenges in their life and usually the challenges are related to social skills or understanding. The rules around social skills or you understanding how the - How to get their needs met

and how to communicate. They can acquire a lot of skills and learn a lot to be increasingly independent. But it definitely is. I would say a lot of the stigmas around being too focused on disability, not really understanding that these are people individuals first which is really important piece.

Wil: To put this into perspective, let's see how the stigma would appear on someone without autism. For example, let's say we have Joe. Joe is a really nice guy attending Carmel High School. He's never been late to a class and has REALLY good grades, especially in Math. However, Joe has brown hair. I know that in our society this is a common trait, but in this society, it's not only rare but it's almost a joke to have brown hair.

Everyday, Joe has to hear people laughing and joking about his hair, completely ignoring the fact that Joe, above nothing else, is a human being. Joe is a person, but due to his hair, he isn't really seen as one.

This is what individuals with Autism face everyday, and we haven't even mentioned what it's like with their different social and developmental challenges.

Wil: Tim isn't just a behavior analyst however, he's also a College Professor, specifically at the Florida Institute of Technology.

Tim: I'm adjunct faculty with Florida Tech. So it means I kind of work it was what's called the code structure so I help teach a curriculum that is helping people that are going through the coursework to become behavior analyst.

Wil: Tim helps raise and teach the next generation of Behavior Analyst's. However, the way he teaches is considered a little different to some other methods of teaching; Tim teaches completely online, and he loves it.

Tim: I think there are a lot of pros. I think the pros outweigh the cons of an online web based Program. In fact I'm a little bit jealous because people can go through the program, watch a video of a Top person in the nation talking about something and in real time can approach questions they can type their questions in they can... But the whole things being video so they can rewind stuff later that can Replay stuff back. I don't know that in comparison to the necessity of being in the room. I'm definitely someone that thinks technology is the way to go and if we can find ways. That are innovative that still allow the level of integration can increase your audience and can increase the reach of people that you can get to. I think that exceeds the level of what potentially you could get from - from an online like a brick and mortar or actual Classroom setting.

Wil: So... where is Tim going to be going from here? What are his plans and how will he further both his career as a Behavior Analysis and College Professor? Well, he actually has begun to focus on the business aspects of running Little Star.

Tim: Sure. Well I'm. I've become increasingly interested in the business side of therapy and Operations. You know, more Kind of how to ensure people have the correct training how to understand what the funding/paying kind of source needs as far as information and how to understand all the complexities around that and trying to understand more about the financial aspects of the business and my research interests are more focused on leadership and how to, you know... Train and supervise leaders and develop leaders. And. Also incentive systems. I'm really very interested in incentive systems, so how to, kind of, structure pay appropriately structure additional bonus incentives. That are really driven by Performance.

Wil: And Tim has already begun this process into becoming more Business centered. He obtained the title of COO at Little Star has begun to furthering the increase of Incentive Systems inside of the Little Star Organization. Even though he is becoming more business centered, his job is, and always will be, teaching and helping others learn, just as he wants.
This has been Wil Courtney from 91.3 WHJE, signing off.