

## Abigail Koenig, Director, Colorado Autism Consultants

### Assessment for risk factors and progress monitoring:

- There may be something more appropriate out there, but it might be worth it to take a look at the parent-stress index (PSI). It can also be used to monitor progress in a pre and post-test manner. Here's a link: <https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/333>

- An area that it doesn't cover is the risk of school placement. While I don't have data specifically to back it up, from experience I see a lot of families that hit a tipping point when their kids start being sent home from school regularly, when the school starts calling law enforcement to handle crisis, or when their child has been suspended or at risk of expulsion. It increases the daily burden to the parent, often puts their ability to hold employment at risk, and has a ripple effect on multiple aspects of their lives and ability to maintain home placement.

- Another risk factor is recent parent divorce and custody adjustments within the family. If a parent is used to shared parent responsibilities and are recently given full single parent duties, I often see this time being a tipping point time. I think PSI might dive into this a bit, but I can't remember exactly how much.

### Provider qualifications:

- Most of the aspects that you spoke about with the home interventions are covered nicely with a BCBA/BCABA/RBT combination. Especially in the situation where we are considering clients being children with complex behavioral needs. I feel like having behavioral expertise that the BCBA/BCABA/RBT model provides is definitely ideal, although I think other exceptions could be appropriate. The main aspect about the position that really wouldn't be covered in this is understanding what services are available. Perhaps a crash course certification put on by the Department and available resources would be really useful - not only for this position but for a lot of service providers in general.

### What is missing?

- A common theme is lack of providers, and I feel like this could be better solved if there were an aspect of the new treatment codes that could cover training programs for the caregivers and others who regularly interact with clients with complex behavioral needs. By having a funding stream to train up local providers and provide ongoing oversight, we could really impact the ability of a client's natural community to have sustainable support systems that can prevent future crisis as well. This could be particularly impactful in rural areas, where providers are very difficult to find or where families would need to travel a long way to access a provider.

For example, if a child got CHRP funding due to being a crisis risk and they live in say, Cheyenne County, a BCBA or other provider could spend a solid week in the rural community training up the parents, caregivers, teachers, or other providers to be able to implement and support one another in the child's behavior plan and action plan, then provide ongoing support virtually to the care team as questions arise, and be able to follow up in person only when needed. It is cost prohibitive for providers to open locations in many rural areas, so having a funding option available to building capacity locally is a more cost effective approach and could help to reach areas of the state that currently have no access.

Given a funding option to do so, I would anticipate that there are many agencies with BCBA's, including my own, who would be willing to invest significant training into building capacity within other providers and communities to help rural communities to have a more sustainable network of providers that can deal with crisis.