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The SBAA Quarterly

The official publication of the Somali Behaviour
Analysis Association (SBAA)

Issue 001

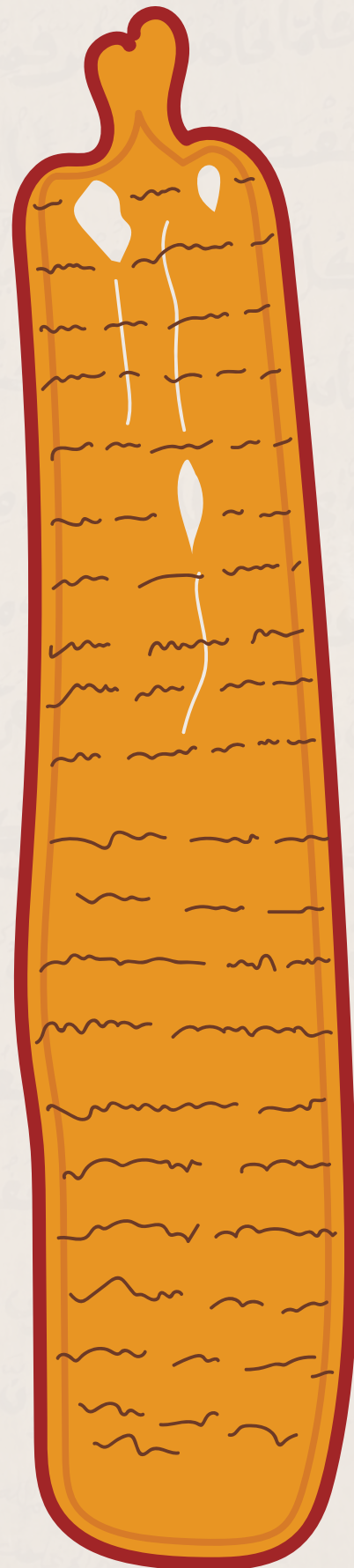




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Editor's Note

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the SBAA Quarterly, the official publication of the Somali Behaviour Analysis Association (SBAA).

As a co-founder of SBAA, it is both an honour and a deeply personal milestone to introduce this first issue as its editor. SBAA was created out of a shared vision: to support, connect, and uplift Somali professionals, students, families, and allies within the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). For many of us, entering this field meant doing so without seeing ourselves reflected in the professionals, resources, or conversations shaping the work. This publication is one step toward changing that narrative.



The SBAA Quarterly was designed to be more than a newsletter. It is a space where culture, community, and science intersect. In this issue, you will find stories that highlight our members, spotlight students and organizations, explore ABA around the world, and center neurodiversity and culturally responsive practice. Each section reflects SBAA's commitment to ethical, inclusive, and community informed behaviour analysis.

As our first issue, this publication represents a beginning. I hope it sparks connection, reflection, and collaboration—and that future issues will feature your voices, experiences, and insights. Whether you are new to the field, well-established in your career, or a community member seeking understanding and advocacy, you are a valued part of this community.

Thank you for being here and for believing in the work we are building together.

With gratitude,

Ikram Buralle

Co-Founder, Somali Behaviour Analysis Association

Editor, Inaugural Issue – SBAA Quarterly

Organization History: Introducing SBAA

The Somali Behaviour Analysis Association (SBAA) was founded in response to a growing need for representation, community, and culturally responsive practice within the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). While Somali individuals and families are increasingly impacted by ABA services, Somali professionals and culturally grounded perspectives have remained underrepresented in the field.

SBAA was established to bridge this gap. The organization brings together Somali behaviour analysts, students, allied professionals, families, and community members with a shared commitment to ethical practice, cultural humility, and advocacy. At its core, SBAA recognizes that effective behaviour analysis must be informed by the cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences of the communities it serves.



Mission

To promote evidence-based interventions, education, and research that support individuals with behavioural challenges, developmental disabilities, and mental health needs.



Vision

To empower professionals, caregivers, and organizations with the knowledge and tools needed to foster positive behavioural outcomes through culturally informed and responsive approaches.



Meet The Team



Rahma Farah

Co-Founder, Somali Behaviour Analysis Association (SBAA).

I co-lead SBAA's strategic direction, partnerships, and community outreach, ensuring our work remains culturally informed, ethical, and accessible to Somali families and professionals internationally.

Background

I am a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), UKBA(cert), and International Behaviour Analyst (IBA), with a Master's in Applied Behaviour Analysis. I am also the Founder and Director of Prospering Minds Consultancy, where I support families, schools, and professionals in behaviour, regulation, and sleep using evidence-based, family-centred approaches.

Why SBAA Matters to Me

SBAA exists to bridge the gap between science and community, both within the diaspora and across Somalia and Somaliland. I am passionate about ensuring Somali families everywhere have access to accurate, respectful, and culturally grounded information about behaviour, autism, and mental health.



Our work at SBAA ensures that cultural understanding and ethical, evidence-based practice go hand in hand."

Meet The Team



Suaad Jama
Neurodiversity Advisor

Suaad Jama is an architectural designer, independent researcher, and neurodiversity advocate whose work explores the intersection of spatial design, culture and neurodivergent experience. Late-diagnosed as neurodivergent, her perspective examines how environment and sensory design shape wellbeing, particularly within Somali communities and through Soomali dhaqaan (cultural heritage). Her research-led design practice develops culturally responsive, evidence-informed solutions that support inclusion and mental wellbeing. As SBAA's Neurodiversity Advisor, Suaad provides lived experience and strategic guidance to help shape inclusive programmes and environments that empower neurodiverse individuals and families.

Why SBAA Matters to Me

My late neurodivergent diagnosis reframed how I interpret spatial environments and institutional support, making SBAA's practical, community-led approach to inclusion especially significant to my work and values.



Neurodivergence has changed how I see spaces, support, and community."

Meet The Team



Nasteya Mahamud

People and Partnerships Coordinator for the Somali Behaviour Analysis Association (SBAA).

My role is to build and maintain strong relationships with members, partners, and stakeholders, support recruitment and engagement of professionals and volunteers, and coordinate partnership initiatives and people-focused programs that advance the Association's mission and impact.

Background

I am a trainee behaviour analyst with a master's in applied behaviour analysis, currently I am collecting my competencies to qualify as a UK Certified Behaviour Analyst and an International Behaviour Analyst. I work privately with clients in mainstream settings, delivering evidence-based behavioural support tailored to individual needs.

Why SBAA Matters to Me

SBAA matters deeply to me because it brings together my commitment to evidence-based practice and my belief in culturally responsive care. The role of the SBAA is to increase understanding of the Somali population being supported, ensuring that behaviour analytic services are informed by cultural knowledge and community context.



Evidence-based practice is strongest when it meets culture and community."

Meet The Team



Ikram Buralle

Co-Founder, Head of Communications, Media, Operations & Finance.

My role within the organization is to oversee and integrate the strategic direction of communications and media while ensuring the smooth execution of daily operations and financial sustainability.

Background

I am a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), a Registered Behaviour Analyst in Ontario, and an International Behaviour Analyst. I have supported persons with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals since the start of my undergraduate studies. Currently, I work as a Workplace and Parenting Coach, supporting individuals and families through evidence-based practices grounded in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) principles.

Why SBAA Matters to Me

SBAA matters to me because it brings together my professional expertise and my

responsibility to give back to the Somali community. Too often, Somali families face barriers to accessing behavioural services that are both culturally respectful and evidence-based. Through the Somali Behaviour Analysts Association, I am committed to supporting families, advancing representation within the field, and building systems of care that are rooted in understanding, dignity, and empowerment.



SBAA matters to me because it brings together my professional expertise and my responsibility to give back to the Somali community”

ABA Around the World



Hana Hassan

Board Certified Behavior Analyst

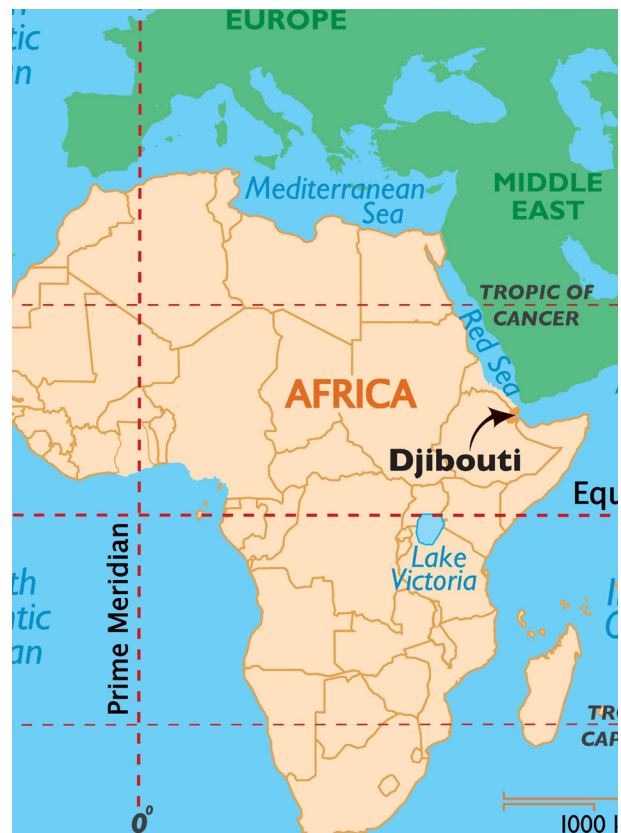
Interview Questions:

01



Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your work in ABA?

I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and I've been working in ABA for almost five years, mainly with children on the autism spectrum and their families. I earned my bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Houston and later completed my master's in behavior analysis at Simmons University. My work has always been very hands-on, working directly with kids, supporting caregivers, and helping teams apply ABA in ways that are realistic and meaningful in everyday life.



ABA Around the World

Interview Questions:

02



What inspired you to pursue ABA?

What first drew me to ABA was very personal. My sister works as a speech-language pathologist in the field, and through her, I started learning more about how therapy could truly impact a child's ability to communicate. Later, I took a small summer job at an ABA clinic, and that experience really stayed with me. Seeing how quickly some children made progress, sometimes in ways their families had been told were not possible, made me realize this was the field I wanted to be in.



03



What is a project or initiative in your country that you're especially proud of, and what makes it unique?

One project I'm especially proud of is the work I've been doing in Djibouti that combines autism awareness with direct behavioral support. Alongside starting a behavior consulting service, a large part of my work has focused on educating families and communities about autism in a context where understanding and acceptance are still limited. This has meant having many one-on-one conversations, offering caregiver guidance, and introducing ABA in a way that feels respectful, accessible, and culturally grounded.

ABA Around the World

Interview Questions:

04



What advice would you give to Somali ABA professionals or students who want to connect internationally and grow in the field?

For Somali ABA students and professionals, my advice is not to be afraid to be the first to do things differently. People may be resistant at first, especially when ideas are new, but the more you advocate, educate, and stay consistent, the more progress you begin to see.

05



Is there anything else you'd like to share about ABA in your country or your experiences?

ABA in my country is still in its early stages, but there is growing awareness and real hope. Being part of that growth has been deeply meaningful to me.



Being part of building autism awareness and behavioral support in Djibouti has been deeply meaningful to me."

Student Spotlight



01

Can you tell us a little about yourself and what you're currently studying?

My name is Bella, and I currently work in a preschool setting. I support a group of eight children through weekly curriculum planning and structured activities, while also providing one-to-one support to four autistic babies within the setting. Through this work, I am actively transitioning into the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and building hands-on experience.

02

What led you to study Applied Behaviour Analysis?

My interest in ABA grew naturally through my work in early years education and through encouragement from a close friend in the field, who felt this path strongly aligned with my strengths. After learning more about ABA, I realised it reflects my values, particularly the importance of early intervention, compassion, and evidence-based support. This is a field I am genuinely excited to grow into.

03

What were you doing before pursuing ABA?

Before exploring ABA, I worked in childcare and early years education, where I developed strong skills in planning, observation, and supporting children with diverse needs.

Student Spotlight

04

What has been the most meaningful or surprising part of learning ABA so far?

What has been most meaningful so far is understanding how intentional, consistent support can make a lasting difference in a child's development, especially during the early years. This has deepened my commitment to pursuing ABA.

05

What advice would you give to other Somali students who are curious about ABA but unsure where to start?

For Somali ABA students and professionals, my advice is not to be afraid to be the first to do things differently. People may be resistant at first, especially when ideas are new, but the more you advocate, educate, and stay consistent, the more progress you begin to see.



My path into ABA grew naturally from early years education and hands-on work with autistic children.”

Neurodiversity Corner

An interview with a Neurodivergent Somali Sister

01

How would you like to describe your way of thinking or experiencing the world?

I experience the world very deeply and internally. My way of thinking is reflective, intuitive, and emotionally attuned, but also fast moving. My mind often feels like it's running at 100 miles a minute, constantly connecting ideas, emotions, and possibilities and I genuinely love that about myself. I notice details others might overlook tone, shifts in energy, unspoken feelings and I tend to process experiences long after they happen. Because of this, I value my own space deeply. Having time alone to reset, think, and create isn't a luxury for me, it's essential. My personal space is where my thoughts settle and where I feel most myself.

02

What has your experience been like as a neurodivergent person in Somali spaces (family, school, community, or faith spaces)?

As a neurodivergent person in Somali spaces, my experience has been complicated. In family and community settings, there is often an expectation to be resilient, adaptable, and emotionally strong, with little room for sensitivity or rest. Needing space, boundaries, or time to regulate can be misunderstood as being distant, antisocial, or "too sensitive." In school and faith spaces, structure and conformity were prioritised, while internal struggles were rarely acknowledged. I learned early on to mask meeting expectations even when it meant ignoring my own needs.

Neurodiversity Corner

An interview with a Neurodivergent Somali Sister

03

Are there any strengths, interests, or ways of thinking that feel connected to your neurodivergence?

At the same time, my neurodivergence is closely tied to my strengths. It fuels my creativity, my love for creating, and my ability to imagine experiences from start to finish. I'm a deep thinker, an intentional listener, and someone who leads with care. My fast moving mind allows me to create, connect, and love with sincerity and I now see that as a gift rather than something to soften or hide.

“

My mind moves fast, connects deeply, and feels fully – and I genuinely love that about myself.”

Organization Spotlight: Dhoodaan



Dhoodaan is a community-led initiative focused on raising awareness and advocating for Somali children with speech delays and developmental challenges. We are currently in our early stages laying the foundation for something long-term and meaningful within the community. Although we are just beginning, this first year has already shown us how urgent and necessary this work is.

In a short period of time, Dhoodaan has reached many families across different spaces, listening to their concerns and experiences around speech delays, late diagnosis, and lack of accessible information. These early connections have reinforced a simple truth: many families want to support their children but do not know where to start. That gap is where Dhoodaan places its focus.

At this stage, Dhoodaan does not provide

full early childhood development or clinical intervention services. Instead, our work is intentionally simple and doable. We focus on awareness, education, and advocacy—helping families recognize early signs, understand the importance of early support, and reduce stigma around speech and developmental differences. We aim to make information accessible, culturally relevant, and supportive rather than overwhelming.

Through community conversations, outreach, and collaboration with professionals, Dhoodaan works to build trust and open dialogue within the Somali community. Our goal is to create a strong foundation where families feel seen, informed, and empowered, and where future support systems can grow. The impact we've seen in such a short time confirms that even early efforts matter—and that this work cannot wait.

Upcoming Events

Podcast Feature: *Behaviour Speak with Ben Reinman*

Catch SBAA featured on Behaviour Speak with Ben Reinman, where we explore culturally responsive practice, neurodiversity, and the importance of representation within behaviour analysis. Stay tuned for the episode release and highlights.

SBAA Launch Event — Autism Acceptance Month

In honour of Autism Acceptance Month, the Somali Behaviour Analysts Association (SBAA) is proud to host its **first-ever community event** in London at the beautiful **Culture House**.

This landmark gathering centers Somali voices, expertise, and lived experience in conversations about autism, communication, and family support. Our goal is to foster culturally informed understanding of autism and neurodivergence within the Somali community, while offering practical,

accessible guidance for families, carers, and professionals.

The event will feature short, impactful talks from Somali professionals across key disciplines, including behaviour analysis, speech and language therapy, education, and allied health, alongside parents and carers. Speakers will share their professional journeys, insights, and culturally responsive approaches to supporting autistic and neurodivergent children and adults.

Location

Culture House
5A Uxbridge Rd, London
W12 8LJ, United Kingdom

When

Saturday, April 25, 2026
Doors open: 12:55 PM
Event time: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Ticket Cost

£7





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