

## **What is ABAI? How is it related to #StopTheShock?**

ABAI is the Association for Behavioral Analysis International, the governing body of ABA practitioners. ABAI accredits ABA programs, which means they give the power to continue to do ABA based on meeting certain standards. **ABAI has continued to endorse the Judge Rotenberg Center, and allows them to sponsor and present at their conferences.**

ABAI's decision to give JRC a platform at their conference reflects a continued pattern of complicity in the torture of the very population that they claim to serve. **One of the JRC's presentations at this conference specifically focuses on the merits and ethics of the electric shock device.** This means that ABAI is more than complicit in the abuse taking place at the JRC: they are actively endorsing these practices.

ASAN staunchly opposes ABA and ABAI.

ABAI's endorsement of the abuse taking place at the JRC is one of many long standing problems in the field of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). ABA was founded by O. Ivar Lovaas, and uses the same principles as anti-LGBTQ conversion therapy. Lovaas created a form of conversion therapy using the same techniques he used in ABA. Conversion therapy for LGBTQ individuals has since been condemned as a form of torture, and survivors describe conversion therapy and ABA as having similar traumatizing consequences. Yet ABAI routinely ignores the voices of autistic self-advocates who challenge the harmful methods that ABA practitioners use every day. By hiding behind the claim that ABA is "evidence-based," ABAI continues to avoid accountability for ABA's abusive history and current practices. While ABA is fundamentally flawed, a focus on the Judge Rotenberg Center will have a direct and immediate impact on the worst of the offenders.

It is long past time for ABAI to address the profound, ongoing, and systemic ethical problems fundamentally infused throughout their field. **Until ABAI denounces the reprehensible torture of disabled students at the Judge Rotenberg Center, removes the JRC as a sponsor, vendor, and presenter, and bars them from future conferences, we must not let them rest.** Autistic people have a right to respectful, ethically sound, and person-centered supports and services; not torture.

## **What can we do about it?**

This year, the ABAI conference is being held in Boston from Thursday, May 26 through Monday, May 30th. **Let's flood their conference hashtags, #ABAIBoston #ABA2022, with the truth about the JRC and ABA, and demand that ABAI denounce the JRC and remove them as a sponsor, vendor, and presenter.** Use the hashtag #StopTheShock to let them know that their active endorsement of torture will not go unnoticed. Check out our [updated fact sheet](#) for more information about the Judge Rotenberg Center.