

Ecological, momentary assessment of behavior and its context *a conceptual presentation*

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Background

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy teaches us to deal with all our experiences in the present moment, in such a way that we can behave according to our values. However, clients do have to get out of their lives and into our therapy-office to learn to work with ACT.

Momentary Assessment

Momentary assessment methodology includes multiple repeated (within-subject) mini-measurements of experience (mood, motivation, salience, self-esteem, stress) and context (stressors, situations, activities) at unselected random moments in the flow of daily life.

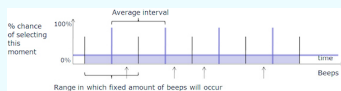


Figure 1a. Interval multiple measurements.

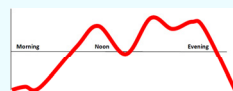


Figure 1b. Fluctuations affect.

Also known as the Experience Sampling Method, ESM helps clients to record the film rather than a snapshot of daily life, acquired in the natural environment of the client. ESM makes it possible to look at person-context interactions, in an ecologically valid manner. Because clients report their momentary experiences directly, there is also no problem with recollection bias.

Feedback

Clients also receive weekly feedback on this film of daily life, so they can learn about the long-term impact of activities and environment on their affective state. With proper instruction, this can lead to more value-oriented behavior and less behavior directed by the automatic pilot.

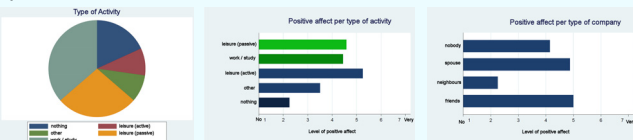


Figure 4. Feedback graphics for clients, about their reported behaviour and context.

Future: Momentary Intervention.

- Combining momentary assessment with ACT.
- Metaphors as a reminder for daily ACT-theme.
- ACT-exercises popping up randomly during the day.



Figure 5. ACT-metaphors illustrated; tug of war, checkerboard & valuecompass.

Objective

Introducing momentary behavioral assessment technology in the field of CBS, to provide a reliable method of assessing experience in its context. This assessment method is also usable on the level of clinical-intervention; getting ACT-training into clients daily life.

Momentary Assessment & ACT

Momentary assessment facilitates one of the three ACT-pillars; the pillar consisting of the self as context and being present in the moment. Because the client has to report his thoughts and emotions during the day in different contexts, one promotes the observer-point of view. It also aids the client focusing his attention on the present moment.

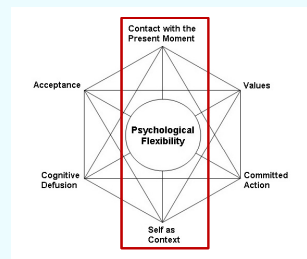


Figure 2. ACT-Hexaflex.



Figure 3. Tools for momentary assessment.

Results Momentary Assessment

Psychosis (Myin-Germeys et al., 2011)

Self-monitoring of both positive and negative psychotic symptoms is feasible, provides a much more detailed and fine-grained picture of symptoms, and reveals patterns of behavior that may be relevant for treatment.

Depression (Wichers et al., 2011)

Momentary assessment may expose manageable pieces of daily life behavior contributing to the depressive experience that patients can influence. The clinical application may stimulate a shift from passive consumption of treatment to an active role for patients.

References

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