

## ACT Workshop The basics and beyond...

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## ACT Goals

Two major goals:

1. To foster acceptance of unwanted private experiences which are out of personal control.
  
1. To facilitate commitment and action towards living a valued life.

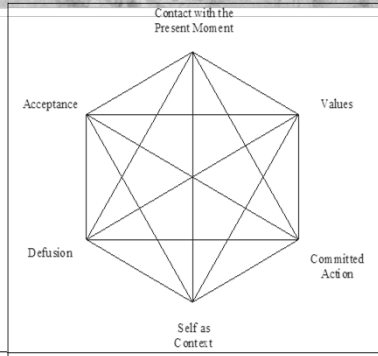
## ACT Case conceptualization

1. People experience painful private events (thoughts and feelings) that are unavoidable parts of living (primary pain).
2. People tend to avoid or block those painful private events (experiential avoidance).
3. As a result of experiential avoidance, people get locked into cycles of programmed behavior: pain...avoidance...pain...avoidance (psychological inflexibility).
4. The consequences of experiential avoidance are called secondary or "dirty pain."
5. ACT targets the secondary, "dirty pain."

## ACT- Definition in a nutshell

- 1. Accept thoughts and feelings.**
  
- 2. Choose Actions.**
  
- 3. Take Action.**

## ACT - Hexaflex



## Acceptance of emotions

"For after all, the best thing one can do when it's raining is to let it rain."

*-Henry Wadworth Longfellow*

## Contact with the Present Moment

- ◆ Inner – and – outer shuttle.
- ◆ Mindful breathing.
- ◆ Mindfulness of daily activities.

## Acceptance of emotions (1)

- ◆ One hard thing exercise (difficult time in life)
- ◆ What's the emotion you most avoid in life (Exercise)
- ◆ Uninvited guest metaphor.
- ◆ Emotional exposure (handout).

## Defusion of thoughts

"I used to think that the brain was the most wonderful organ in my body.

Then I realized what was telling me this."

*-Emo Phillips*

## Defusion – Observing

Past, present, future

Taking minds for a walk

White room

Skill building exercises:

Mindful focusing

## Defusion of thoughts

Key elements:

Observing

Labeling

Letting go  
of thoughts

## Defusion - Labeling

Skill building exercises:

- I'm having the thought that
- Now my mind is having a..... Thought
- Mindful labeling
- Role play...

## Defusion – Letting go imagery

Skill building Exercises:

Leaves on the stream

Balloons/clouds

Trains/boats

Billboards

Computer pop-ups

## Defusion – All together

- Observation
- Labeling
- Letting go

## Defusion – Letting go imagery

Physical - letting go

Turning hand

Conveyor belt

- Role play
- Group activity: count thoughts

## Defusion - Distancing

Skill building exercises:

- Thank your mind
- Titchener's repetition (negative label repetition)
- Card carrying
- Wearing signs

## Defusion – round robin therapy

## Defusion – 4 key questions

- How old is this thought?
- What's the function of this thought?
- What's the workability of this thought?
- Are you willing to have that thought and still act on your values (do what matters)

## Self-as-a-Context

"If you wake up at a different time, in a different place, could you wake up as a different person?"

-Chuck Palahniuk

## Self-as-a-Context (1)

### Key concepts:

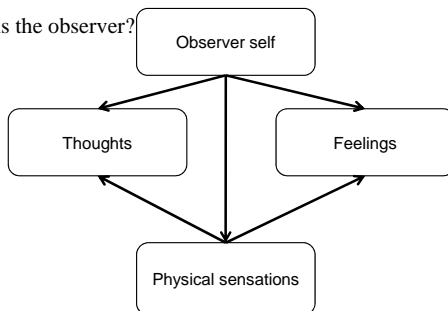
- ◆ Self-as-a-context is the self that observes the experiences, that watches without becoming what is thought and felt.
- ◆ This self is in the context of the experience but is not the experience.
- ◆ Sky metaphor.
- ◆ Movie screen metaphor.

## Self-as-a-context (3)

- The Observer exercise.

## Self-as-a-context (2)

Who is the observer?



## Values

“For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue...as the unintended side-effect of one’s personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself.”

-Viktor E. Frankl

## Values (1)

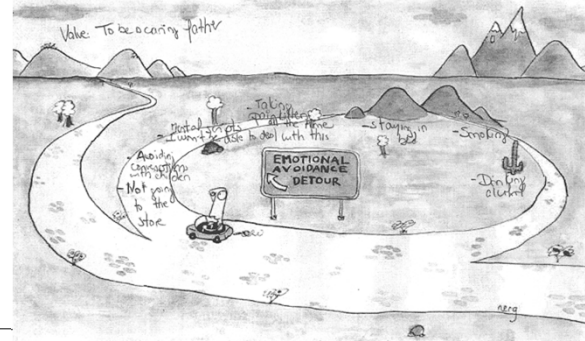
### Key concepts:

Values are life directions, not goals.  
Values include intentions.

### Experiential exercises:

- ◆ Values questionnaire: (handout)
  - Rating: I=importance; A= Action.
  - Write down intention & barrier.
- Tombstone (handout)

## Values (3) Emotional avoidance detour



## Values (2)

- ◆ Values path (exercise).
- ◆ Emotional avoidance detour (handout).

## Values (4)

- ◆ Monsters in the bus (exercise)
- ◆ Monster in the bus (handout).

## Committed action

"Do or do not; there is no try."

-Yoda

## Committed action (2)

Experiential exercises:

- Values compass (handout).







## Committed action (1)

Key concepts:

- ◆ A promise to oneself to do a specific thing at a specific time: it's always behavioral!
- ◆ A behavioral commitment in the face of painful barriers:
  - Cognitive (judgments, what if thoughts).
  - Emotional..
  - Physical.

## Values compass

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Value: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

 Week of: _____	 Week of: _____
 Week of: _____	 Week of: _____
 Week of: _____	 Week of: _____



## Committed action (3)

- Willingness: Pen exercise (100% willingness).
- Public commitment: importance of verbal commitment; set time, place, specific behavior (experiential exercise).

## Applying ACT: Creative Hopelessness (1)

What have you tried?	Results Short-term	Results Long-term	What does this tell you?

## ACT Order of treatment (1)

1. Assess the real problem:  
Clean vs. dirty pain.
2. Identify client's past coping strategies:  
Explore the workability of each strategy (creative hopelessness).
3. Creative hopelessness  
(Role-play a client)

## Applying ACT: Creative Hopelessness (2)

What have you tried?	Results Short-term	Results Long-term	What happens to your life?
Pain killers	Some relief	“out of it” Still in pain	Can't function
Ruminate on pain; what to do about it.	Stop working; more anxious	Feel helpless; obsessed with pain	Difficulty connecting

## Applying ACT: Creative Hopelessness (3)

Experiential exercises:

1. Monsters in the bus.
2. Values path.
3. Rope metaphor.
4. Trash can metaphor.
5. Chinese finger traps.

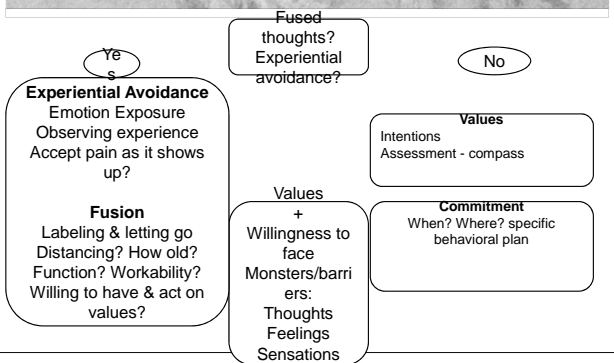
## Order of treatment

7. Identify client's barriers "monsters:"  
Thoughts, feelings, behaviors.
8. Identify interventions to deal with those barriers/monsters:  
Thoughts: Mindfulness/Defusion/Acceptance.  
Emotions: Mindfulness/Emotional Exposure/Acceptance.  
Avoidant behaviors: workability: Task training.
9. Create exposure situations:  
In-vivo exposure to real life situations.

## Order of treatment (2)

4. Re-conceptualize the problem:  
Client learns that feelings, thoughts, physical sensations cannot be controlled (the real problem is avoidance).
5. Set treatment goals: Treat the avoidance response.
6. Identify client's values/behavioral intentions.

## Treatment choice:



## Treatment choice:

- Group exercise: round robin role play (DP & BP)
- Dyadic role plays (DP/BP)