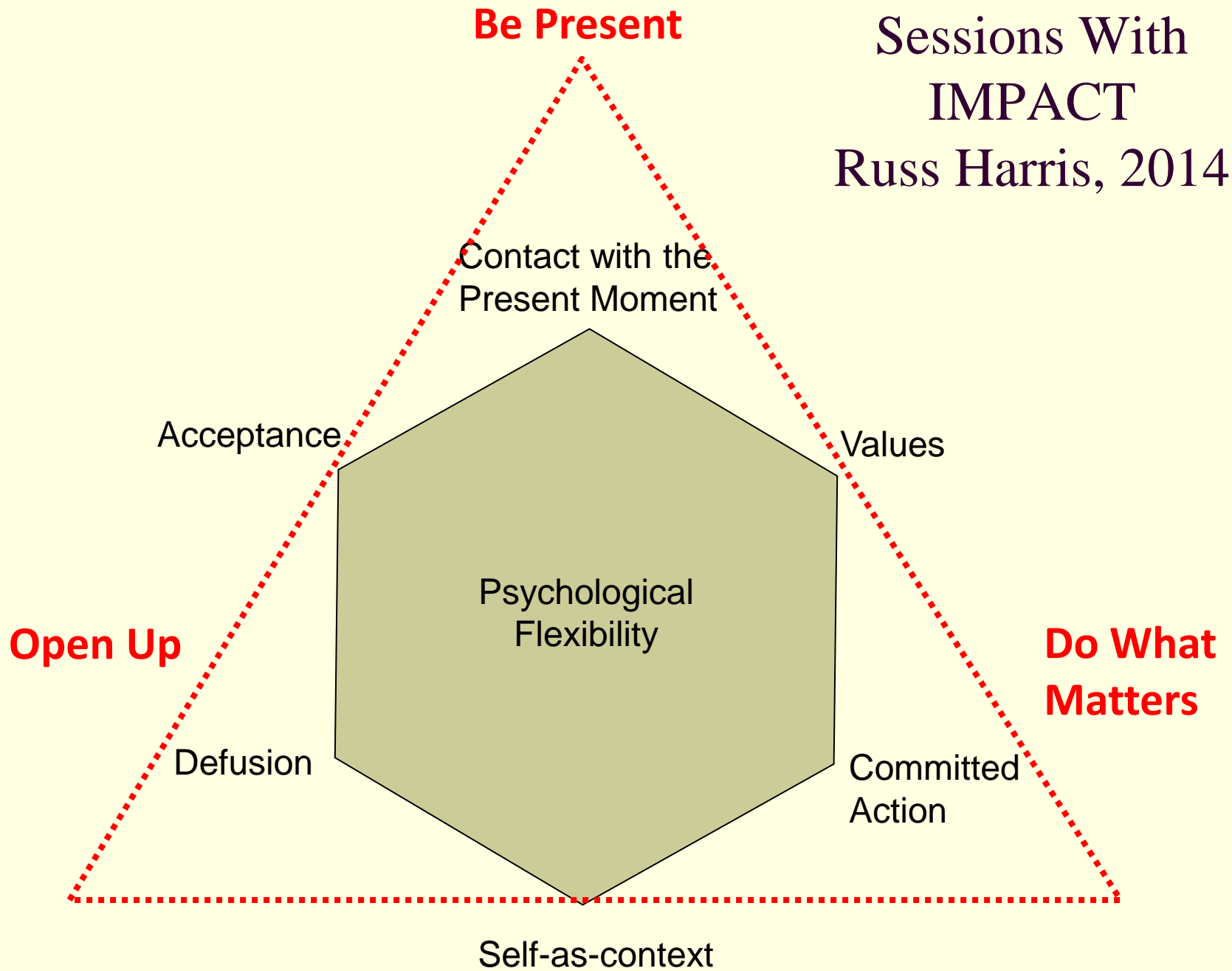


Sessions With  
IMPACT  
Russ Harris, 2014



# Workshop Aims

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1. Interpersonal focus
2. Technique => Process
3. Fluidity & flexibility

# Workshop Content

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- The Choice Point
- S.L.O.W.
- The 4 IMPACT 'Questions'
- The Triflex
- 'Function-Spotting' => Ubs & Wubs
- The 4 Horsemen

- My challenges
- Your challenges

# What Is Confidence?

- ‘Com fides’

# How To Build Confidence

- Leave your comfort zone
- Make mistakes
- Make room for anxiety & self-doubt
- Competence precedes confidence
- Actions of confidence come first, feelings of confidence come later

## **A – Antecedents**

Situation  
Thoughts  
Feelings

## **B – Behaviour**

Something an organism does

- Public
- Private

## **C- Consequences**

Immediate outcomes that either increase or decrease the behaviour

**If consequences => INCREASE in behaviour, they are 'REINFORCING'**

**If consequences => DECREASE in behaviour, they are 'PUNISHING'**

**PUNISHMENT vs REINFORCEMENT**

**POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT – 'access something you want'**

**NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT – 'avoid something you don't want'**

**DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT**

## A – Antecedents

### ‘TRIGGERS’

Situation  
Thoughts  
Feelings

**Present Moment,  
Defusion,  
Acceptance**

**Situation:** alone in house at night, tired  
**Thoughts & Feelings:**  
‘I have no friends’ ‘I wish I had a social life’  
Sadness, loneliness, Anxiety, boredom  
Urge to smoke dope

## B – Behaviour

Something an organism does

- Public
- Private

**Values &  
Committed action**

Smokes marijuana

## C- Consequences (reinforcing)

### ‘PAYOFFS’

immediate outcomes that maintain the behaviour

Feeling of relief; painful thoughts, feelings, urges disappear

**Workability  
payoffs VS costs**

### **Costs:**

Addiction worsens; stays home more & social isolation increases; more feelings of loneliness and sadness

**DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT  
OF A MORE WORKABLE BEHAVIOUR**



# Functional Analysis: 3 Questions For Any Unworkable Behaviour:

---

## **B- BEHAVIOUR:**

What is the person doing?

## **A- ANTECEDENTS ('TRIGGERS'):**

What situations, thoughts, feelings immediately precede the behaviour?

## **C – CONSEQUENCES reinforcing it ('PAYOFFS'):**

What immediate outcomes of the behaviour maintain it over time?

# 9 Common Reinforcing Consequences (payoffs)

---

1. I avoid/escape an unpleasant situation/event
2. I avoid/escape unpleasant thoughts/feelings
3. I feel good
4. I gain attention
5. I get my needs met
6. I feel like I am 'problem solving'
7. I feel like I am 'making sense' of things
8. I feel powerful or in control
9. I feel like I am right - 'in the right' or 'doing the right thing'

**WORKABILITY:  
payoffs VS costs**

# **Put more simply: Reinforcing Consequences (payoffs)**

---

**Access something you want**

**‘positive reinforcement’**

**Behaviour under ‘appetitive control’**

**Avoid something you don’t want**

**‘negative reinforcement’**

**Behaviour under ‘aversive control’**

**'AWAY'**

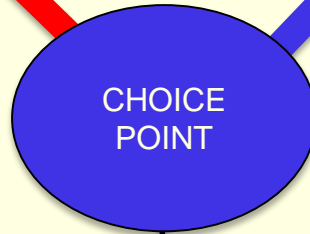
Acting ineffectively, behaving unlike the person you want to be

**'TOWARDS'**

Acting effectively, behaving like the person you want to be

**Unworkable**

**Workable**



CHOICE POINT

**'HOOKS'**

Thoughts, feelings, emotions  
memories, urges, sensations

**'HELPERS'**

Values, strengths, skills  
'Unhooking' skills (mindfulness)

Challenging Situation

# ‘Away’ & ‘Towards’ Moves

---

In Bull’s Eye and Choice Point, ‘away’ = *away from values*

In Matrix, away = away from pain

Huge difference!!!!

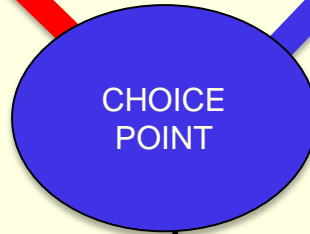
‘Away from values’ moves can be motivated by many other things than moving away from pain, e.g. fusion with rigid rules, or fusion with desire for power/success/fame etc.

Remember: experiential avoidance is a subset of problematic fusion

Unworkable action

COMMITTED ACTION

SKILLS & STRENGTHS  
PROBLEM SOLVING  
GOAL SETTING  
ACTION PLANS  
SKILLS-TRAINING



Remoteness from values

VALUES

CONTACTING THE PRESENT & ACCEPTANCE

Experiential Avoidance

NOTICE, NAME, ALLOW, MAKE ROOM

Fusion with reasons, rules, and judgments

CONTACTING THE PRESENT & DEFUSION

Fusion with conceptualised self

NOTICE & NAME

Fusion with past or future

Fusion with feelings, urges, sensations, emotions

Challenging Situation

# ‘Away’ & ‘Towards’ Moves

---

Mine? Yours?

Do a choice point worksheet on yourself

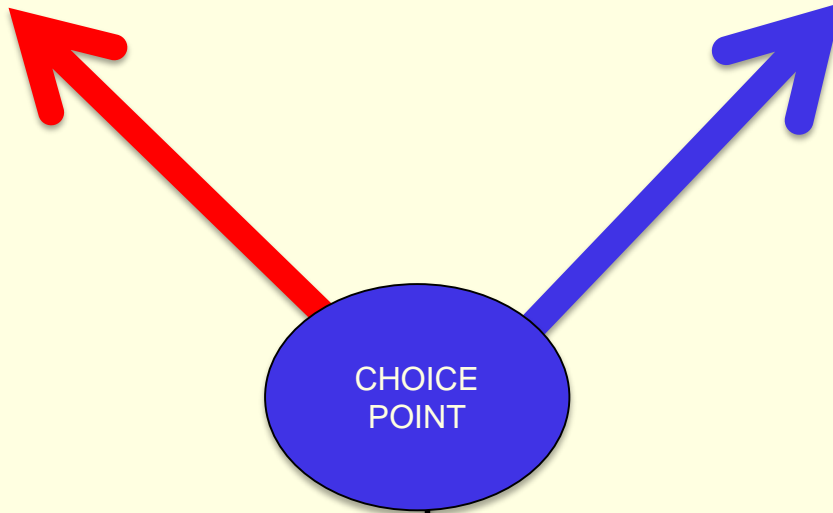
Challenging situation = *specific* client behaviour,  
happens *in session*

**'AWAY'**

acting ineffectively, moving away from  
behaving like the person you want to be

**'TOWARDS'**

acting effectively, getting closer to  
behaving like the person you want to be



CHOICE  
POINT

**'HOOKS'**

Thoughts, feelings, emotions  
memories, urges, sensations

**'HELPERS'**

Values, strengths, skills  
'Unhooking' skills (mindfulness)

Challenging Situation



# S.L.O.W.

---

- Slow down
- Lean in
- Open up
- Warmly illuminate

**Gating**

**Skating**

**Baiting**

**Stating**



# The 4 Horsemen: Gating

---



# The 4 Horsemen: Gating

---

=> Locking up/holding back emotions

Biting lip, clenching teeth, breathing heavily, looking away, going silent, shifting position in chair, changing body posture (e.g. folding arms, putting hands over eyes), leaving the room, reaching for tissues, rituals, shrugging, fidgeting, digging nails into palms, forced or inappropriate laughter, etc.

# The 4 Horsemen: Skating

---



# The 4 Horsemen: Skating

---

=> Skating over painful events

*Nothing much happened, can't recall, it was okay,  
that's old news, don't go there, fine, no worries,  
next, moving on, oh you know what it's like, why  
dwell on it, it's over and done, who cares?*

Rapidly changing the topic

# The 4 Horsemen: Baiting

---



# The 4 Horsemen: Baiting

---

- => Behaviours that 'hook' us and pull us 'off-track'  
Aggression, blaming, interrogating, insulting,  
undermining, accusing, going silent, etc.
- *You don't understand/care/know what it's like!*
  - *You're only here for the paycheck!*
  - *Why won't you help me? You don't believe me!*
  - *You're just like all the others!*



# The 4 Horsemen: Stating

---



# The 4 Horsemen: Stating

---

Stating rules, reasons and judgements as if they are absolute facts or immutable laws

*Should/ Shouldn't/Have To/Must/Ought/Right/Wrong/Can't  
Because/ Won't Until/ Shouldn't Unless/ Always or Never/  
Everyone or No one/ All or Nothing/ Black or White*

A = B; If C then D; No E unless F, Never do G, Always do H

If he does L, then I will do M

I can't do P because I feel Q

I shouldn't have to R unless S

Life is W, Men are X, Women are Y, You can't trust Z, He never does F, She always does G, The Universe is H

***AND THAT'S HOW IT IS!***

# The 4 Horsemen: In Yourself

In pairs: how does gating, skating, baiting, stating - show up for you, in session?



# Exercise : 5 mins Case

## Conceptualisation

---

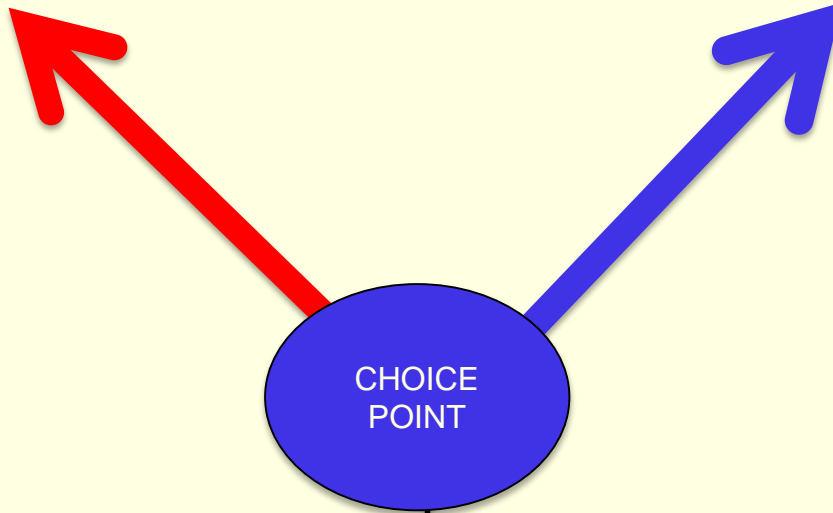
- Fill in the choice point for a client - a broad, general, overview – 5 mins
- Any of the 4 horsemen – gating, skating, baiting, stating - showing up in session?
- Share it in pairs - 2 mins per person

**'AWAY'**

acting ineffectively, moving away from  
behaving like the person you want to be

**'TOWARDS'**

acting effectively, getting closer to  
behaving like the person you want to be



**'HOOKS'**

Thoughts, feelings, emotions  
memories, urges, sensations

**'HELPERS'**

Values, strengths, skills  
'Unhooking' skills (mindfulness)

Challenging Situation

# It Doesn't Work!!!!!!

---

What do you mean, it doesn't work?

What were you expecting it to do?

=> ***'Hands as thoughts and feelings'*** exercise

(Copy me) Imagine your hands are your **thoughts and feelings**

Imagine in front of you is everything that matters: the people, places, activities you love etc (give examples). And also the **problems/challenges** you need to face/deal with, and the important tasks you need to do. (give examples)

Now (copy me) see what happens when we get all caught up in our **thoughts and feelings**

Notice 3 things: 1) How much are you missing out on? 2) How disconnected and disengaged are you; how difficult to stay focused, keep your attention on the task? 3) How difficult is it to take action, to do the things that make your life work? (give examples)

Now (copy me) slowly separate from your thoughts & feelings

What's your view of the room like now? How much easier is it to engage and connect; to keep your attention focused on the task at hand? Move your arms around: how much easier is it to do the things that make your life work (give examples)

Notice these things (i.e. hands) haven't disappeared. If you can use them, do so. Many thoughts and feelings give us valuable information we can make good use of. But if you can't make use of them, just let them sit there; they will come and stay and go in their own good time..

## **INFORMED CONSENT (see page 16)**

- ACT is a very active form of therapy/coaching – not just talking about problems.
- Learning skills to handle difficult thoughts and feelings more effectively, so they have less impact and influence over you
- Clarifying your ‘values’: what kind of person you want to be, how you want to treat yourself and others, what you want to stand for in life, what gives you a sense of meaning or purpose
- Taking action: to solve problems, and do things that make life better
- I want you to leave here at the end of each session with a plan of action – something you can do in between sessions that will make a difference
- *NB Modify this as needs – e.g. in grief work, this would sound very different*



# IMPACT – Interpersonal Mindfulness Processes in ACT

---

**Hayes, Strosahl, Wilson – 99**

**Three levels to track a session:**

- 1. Psych flexibility and psych rigidity happening in session**
- 2. Reports of psych flexibility and psych rigidity happening outside**
- 3. Interpersonal**

# IMPACT – Interpersonal Mindfulness Processes in ACT

---

**FAP = Functional Analytic Psychotherapy**

**ACT & FAP => Massive overlap**

**Biggest difference: FAP = Purely Interpersonal**

**Also, FAP ‘sits on’ the underlying model => sits  
equally well on top of traditional CBT as on ACT**

# ACT & FAP

***Disclaimer: I don't know much about FAP!***

***I have only attended a 1-day workshop, where I spent much of the day protesting to the trainer, 'This is just ACT!'.***

***And whenever I suggested an ACT move, the trainer would say, 'That's FAP!'.***

***Based on that limited experience, my opinion is that FAP is already contained within ACT.***

***My apologies to any FAP enthusiasts who are offended by that.***

***After this workshop, if you read enough transcripts of ACT therapy sessions from virtually any ACT textbook, you will see these interpersonal processes are all there – especially in Mindfulness For Two and Getting Unstuck In ACT***

***With IMPACT my aim is to make these interpersonal ACT processes much more explicit and practical.***

# Setting Up Sessions #1- Permission To Press Pause

---

*Can I have permission to 'press pause' from time to time - so if I see you doing something that looks like it might be really helpful or useful, I can point it out, and get you to really notice it? And can I also 'press pause' if , I see you doing something that looks like it might be making your problems worse, so we can address it?*

# Setting Up Sessions #2 – Trying New Things

---

*I mentioned already that part of this approach includes learning new skills to handle thoughts and feelings more effectively. Is it okay if at times ask you to try some of these things in session?*

*At times I might ask you to do an exercise that seems **a bit awkward or uncomfortable**, and you are always free to say no. I'm only going to suggest these things if I think they'll be helpful to you.*

# Setting Up Sessions #3 – Setting An Agenda

---

*Are you okay if we take a couple of minutes at the start of each session to establish a focus or an agenda for the session? To pick one important problem or area of life that we can make the main focus of the session, in order to come up with an action plan to improve it?*

*=> The reason for this, is it makes our work much more efficient. If we are trying to deal with several different problems at once, it's very hard to deal effectively with any of them.*

# Setting An Agenda & Staying ‘On Topic’

---

- Once client agrees, set an agenda – e.g. use the ‘bull’s eye’ and pick a quadrant to work on – or ask the client to nominate a single problem, goal, or aspect of life to focus on.
- Every time the client goes off topic: “Can I press pause for a moment – and get you to notice how your mind is pulling you off track here? Is it okay if we come back to the main topic for now? If we have time, we can address this other issue later.”

# Setting Up Sessions #4 – Team Building

**Optional:** Bring this in if:

- a) the session becomes about relationship issues
- b) there is interpersonal conflict or tension
- c) problematic client behaviour in session makes it hard to work together



# Setting Up Sessions #4 – Team Building

*Is it okay if I press pause at times and get us to look at what's happening here in the room, in the way that you and I are interacting with each other?*

*So I can get you to notice things that you're doing that seem helpful and things that seem unhelpful, in terms of us building a strong team/alliance?*

*And can I ask you at times to try out new skills or strategies here in the room with me, so that you can then take them and use them in your relationships with other people outside this room?*

# Setting Up Sessions #5 – Permission For Honest Feedback

*Optional:*

*Bring this in if and when you suspect or know the client  
will react negatively to honest feedback*

# IMPACT: Interpersonal Mindfulness Skills In ACT

---

*The 4 questions:*

- *What's going on?*
- *What's showing up?*
- *How's this working?*
- *How can you use this?*

**Literally, these are more than just 'questions'  
Include observations, comments, self-disclosure**

# IMPACT Questions go both ways

---

*I notice ....*

*What do you notice?*

*This is what's showing up for me ....*

*What's showing up for you?*

*How's this working for you (towards or away)?*

*How's this working for me (towards or away)?*

*How can you use this? How can I use this?*

# Exercise in pairs: play around with the first 2 IMPACT questions –p6

---

*What's going on? (Public behaviour)*

*What's showing up? (Private behaviour)*

*Use questions, comments, observations, & self-disclosure*

# Exercise in pairs: play around with the other 2 IMPACT questions –p6

---

*How's this working? (Towards or away?)*

*How can you use this?*

*What is one specific thing you will do?*

# Contact With The Present Moment

What's going on?  
What's showing up?

## Acceptance

What's showing up?  
Notice it, name it &  
Allow it

## Values

How's this working?  
Towards or away?

Psychological  
Flexibility

## Defusion

What's showing up?  
Notice it, name it

## Committed Action

How can you use this?  
Specific actions

## Self-as-context

There's a part of you  
noticing everything that's  
going on and showing up,  
and all your towards &  
away moves

# THE WHOLE ACT MODEL RESTS ON ....?

---

## Workability

Is this working to make  
life rich & full?



# IMPACT: interpersonal level

---

## Workability

Is this working to build a strong team/alliance?

# IMPACT: Interpersonal Mindfulness Skills In ACT

---

*'Ubs', 'Wubs', and 'Rubs'*

**Ubs** - **Unworkable Behaviours** happening in session

**Wubs** – **Workable Behaviours** happening in session

**Rubs** – **Reports of Behaviours**, happening elsewhere

# Common Ubs & Wubs

---

**Almost any behaviour could be workable or unworkable, depending on the context.**

**Broadly speaking .... generalising ....**

**Common *unworkable* behaviours (Ubs) in session?**

**Common *workable* behaviours (Wubs) in session?**

# For each of the following client behaviours, come up with:

---

a) context where it functions as a Wub, we want to reinforce

b) context where it functions as an Ub, we want to redirect

- client cries
- client says 'You're an idiot'
- client says, 'Yes, I'll definitely do that. I feel so inspired'
- client says, 'You're a great therapist. This is really helping'
- client says, 'I feel like punching you'
- client goes silent
- client says 'This is a waste of time'
- client says 'Aha! There's my not good enough story again!'

# Our Aim In ACT:

---

*Instigate, model & reinforce psychological flexibility*

*“Redirect Ubs & Reinforce Wubs” =>*

*Technical: ‘differential reinforcement’*

*Can’t know for certain what will be reinforcing.*

*Make an educated guess & observe the results.*

# How Might We Reinforce Wubs?

---

*attention, curiosity*

*-approval, positive regard*

*-acceptance, respect*

*-empathy, compassion*

*-openness, vulnerability*

*-caring, understanding*

*-others?*

***NB many things that reinforce  
Wubs, also reinforce Ubs!***

**Be Present**

What's going on?  
What's showing up?

How's this working?  
How can you use this?

Left to loosen

**'The ACT Bicycle'**

Right to move

**Open Up**

**Do What Matters**

Center to balance

# Redirect an Ub => any combo or variant of ...

---

- Can I *press pause, shine a light* on what's happening here?
- Do you notice .....?
- Here's what I notice ....
- What's showing up for me right now is ....
- What's showing up for you?
- Is this a towards move or an away move?
- What's that like for you?
- How do you think this is affecting us as a team?



# Reinforce a Wub => any combo or variant of ...

---

- Would you be willing to try doing something different here?
- Do you notice how/what you are doing differently, now?
- I notice ..... What do you notice...?
- What's that like for you? What's showing up?
- For me, it's like ... What's showing up for me is ...
- Thank you. That means a lot to me.
- Is this a towards move or an away move?
- How do you think this is affecting us as a team?
- How could you use this, outside this room – when, where, who, what? What difference might it make?
- Is it okay if we do more of this sort of work in our sessions?

# Exercise: try out the lingo

---

- Practise Ub-Redirections and Wub-Reinforcers that rely on self-disclosure
- A reads the first statement, B reads the second, etc.
- *Not a role play!*
- Aim: play around with the language of self-disclosure; get a feel for it.
- *Modify as desired.*
- Note phrases you like
- Brainstorm other possibilities

# Positive Reinforcement of Wubs Through Self-disclosure

- That means a lot to me
- Thank you, I really appreciate that.
- I really appreciate your willingness to work with/trust me on this
- That deeply touches me. That makes my heart sing. That moves me.
- I feel moved/humbled/ inspired/privileged.
- I feel much more engaged and connected with you now.
- Before, it felt like there was a barrier between us, and now that seems to have lifted. Do you notice that?
- I appreciate your: honesty, openness, courage, trust, commitment, willingness etc. What's that like for you?

# Positive Reinforcement of Wubs Through Self-disclosure

- I can see how hard this is for you, and I really appreciate the effort you're making.
- I feel like we're a much stronger team now. What you're doing here is building the team. Do you sense that?
- I feel like we're really working together now. Before I felt like I was an obstacle in your way.
- When you listen/respond/pay attention to me like this, I feel like you care about what I have to say/I feel like you care about building the team/ I feel like you're working with me rather than against me.
- Wow! I have to say, that inspires me. This is a beautiful moment.

## ***Redirecting Ubs Through Self-disclosure:***

***"I'm willing to be wrong about this", "Am I reading that right?", "I'm not sure, but it seems to me like ..."***

You seem really disengaged, bored, disinterested, angry, resentful.

I'm noticing your body posture here – slumped/clenched fists/arms crossed/frowning/ rolling eyeballs.

When you do this, it seems like you really don't want to work with me/ you really don't trust me on this.

When you do this (aggressive behaviour), I feel anxious, like I need to protect myself from you.

- When you do this ('closing down' behaviour), I feel saddened/a bit helpless – because I really do want to help and I don't feel like I can get through to you or work effectively with you while you keep doing this.

## ***Redirecting Ubs Through Self-Disclosure:***

I feel really disconnected from you right now. Are you sensing that too?

- When you keep interrupting me/talking over me, I feel a bit frustrated, and I also feel like you just don't care about what I have to say, like it just doesn't matter to you.
- It feels like there's a barrier between us. Do you feel anything like that?
- It looks like I've lost you here. Your thoughts and feelings seem to have hooked you
- I doesn't feel like we're a team here. It feels like we're in conflict/ not cooperating/ not on the same side. Do you sense that?
- I feel like I'm an obstacle in your way. Am I imagining that?

# Why Don't We Address Problematic In-Session Behaviours?

---

- What are your hooks that stop you?

## Contact With The Present Moment

Can I *press pause*, please. I'd like to shine a light on something that's going on here that seems a bit problematic.

### Acceptance

I'm feeling pretty anxious about it. My heart's racing.

### Values

But my aim in here is to help people live better lives – so if I ignore this, I'm not being true to myself and I'm doing you a disservice.

### Defusion

My mind's telling me you'll be upset or angry, or think I'm rude, or make a complaint about me, or this will damage our relationship.

### Committed Action

So even though I'm feeling really nervous, I'm going to tell you what I've noticed.

### Self-as-context

Non-judgmentally describe the specific behaviour.  
Follow with a 'How's This Working?' question or comment  
And then a 'What's showing up?' question or comment

Psychological  
Flexibility



# It doesn't work!!

---

“I've tried mindfulness before and it doesn't work!”

(Copy me) Imagine your hands are your **thoughts and feelings**

Imagine in front of you is everything that matters: the people, places, activities you love etc (give examples). And also the **problems/challenges** you need to face/deal with, and the important tasks you need to do. (give examples)

Now (copy me) see what happens when we get all caught up in our **thoughts and feelings**

Notice 3 things: 1) How much are you missing out on? 2) How disconnected and disengaged are you; how difficult to stay focused, keep your attention on the task? 3) How difficult is it to take action, to do the things that make your life work? (give examples)

Now (copy me) slowly separate from your thoughts & feelings

What's your view of the room like now? How much easier is it to engage and connect; to keep your attention focused on the task at hand? Move your arms around: how much easier is it to do the things that make your life work (give examples)

Notice these things (i.e. hands) haven't disappeared. If you can use them, do so. Many thoughts and feelings give us valuable information we can make good use of. But if you can't make use of them, just let them sit there; they will come and stay and go in their own good time..

# While waiting for the workshop to start, discuss with the person nearest you:

*There is no 'one size fits all' response. Consider:*

In what context might you disclose you're feeling anxious?

In what context might you NOT do so?

In what context might you disclose your thoughts are very similar to the client's thoughts?

In what context might you NOT?

In what context might you tell your personally relevant story?

In what context might you NOT?

In what context might you apologise for making a mistake?

In what context might you NOT?

**Be Present**

What's going on?  
What's showing up?

How's this working?  
How can you use this?

Left to loosen

**'The ACT Bicycle'**

Right to move

**Open Up**

**Do What Matters**

Center to balance

# Gentler ways to get clients present?

---

What are you noticing now?

What's showing up for you?

What are you aware of?

And what else? And what else? And what else?

Can I get you to notice ....

Can you notice what your mind is saying?

# Gentler ways to get clients present?

---

What are you noticing in your body?

Let's come back to what we're doing here, right now; to what this work is about

I've lost you; you're back

You seem distant/disengaged/distracted

I feel disconnected from you

# Gentler ways to get clients present?

---

Let's come back to what we're doing here, right now; to what this work is about

Can we take a moment just to notice what is happening here, between you and me?

I'm noticing X, Y, Z ... and I wonder if you are, too?

# Gentler ways to get clients present?

---

Do you notice how:

- Your mind keeps hooking you
- Your attention keeps wondering
- Whenever I ABC, you tend to DEF



# Gentler ways to get clients present?

---

Can we just pause for a moment, and

- Take stock
- Notice what's going on
- Let the dust settle
- Take a moment to center ourselves
- Drop anchor

# *I NOTICE ...*

## *I Feel X When You Do Y*

---

I notice I feel anxious when you clench your fists and raise your voice like that

I notice I feel under pressure, and nervous, and uncomfortable, when you say things like 'I fired my last therapist'

I notice feel really awkward when you go silent like and stare out of the window like that; and sad, too; because I really want us to be a team here, and when you won't speak, it's virtually impossible to do that.

---- and I'm wondering if this is the effect you want to have?

---- what effect do *you* think this has, in terms of us being a team?

---- is this a towards or away move?

# Disclosing Inner Conflict

---

I'm a bit torn right now/ being pulled in two directions/ noticing some conflict within myself

Part of me wants to do A, and part of me wants to do B

On the one hand I want to C, and on the other hand I want to D

I'm debating with myself whether or not to share with you how I feel about this.

Part of me says I should hold back, and part of me says I should speak up

I'm having mixed feelings right now. Part of me feels A and part of me feels B

I'm noticing some confusion in myself because I'm getting conflicting messages from you: on the one hand X, on the other hand Y

# Inner Conflict Exercise

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Client says something provocative to ‘bait’, e.g. you don’t care about me

Therapist: I’m noticing some conflict within myself. Part of me wants to address what you just said – reassure you, or try to convince you that’s not true, etc. And another part of me wants to stay focused on the main issue here/ on doing this exercise/ on exploring this questions, and not get side-tracked. Is it okay with you if we stay on track here for now, and come back to what you just said a bit later?

# Inner Conflict Exercise

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Client is frustrated when therapist keeps refocusing on an exercise or process or question

Therapist: I can see you're frustrated. And there's a part of me that just wants to please you here – answer your questions/change the topic/address your concerns, to ease your frustration. And there's another part of me that really wants us to stay with this exercise/question/process for a bit longer, before addressing that question/concern/issue. Is it okay if we just persist with this a bit longer, and then we can address the other stuff?

....One of the most useful skills you can learn here is how to have difficult emotions like frustration without letting them control what you do

## **EXPANSIVE AWARENESS EXERCISE**

- **I can see something very painful (e.g. thought/feeling/memory) has just shown up,** for you, and I want to help you handle it
- Push your feet hard into the floor
- Sit forward in your chair
- Push your hands hard together,
- **As well as this painful thought/feeling/memory,** notice your body in the chair – hands, feet, back
- **Also** look around – notice 5 things you can see
- **And** notice 3 or 4 things you can hear
- **And also** notice you and I, working together
- **So there is a painful thought/feeling/memory here**
- **And** your body in the chair
- **And** a room around you
- **And** you and I working together

# Mindful, Values-Guided Problem-Solving

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Mindful: Drop anchor/ grounding/ centering

Values: What do you want to stand for?

The Resilience Formula – 4 options

1. Leave
2. Stay & change what can be changed, guided by values
3. Stay & accept what can't be changed, and live by your values
4. Stay, give up and do stuff that makes it worse

Locus of control: what can you do with your arms, legs and mouth to influence the situation constructively?

# Dilemmas # 1: The Hard Facts

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1. There is no simple answer. If one choice was clearly much better then you wouldn't have a dilemma!
2. So we probably won't solve it in today's session!
3. No matter what choice you make, anxiety and doubt is certain.
4. There is actually no way *not* to choose.



# Dilemmas #2: The Practicalities

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1. Each morning: acknowledge today's choice.
2. Each morning: What do I want to stand for in the face of this? Live those values
3. Through the day: 'name the story', get present
4. Spend 5-10 mins each day MINDFULLY focusing on pros and cons of each choice – using a pen & paper, or computer
5. Self-compassion; may go on for a long time!



HEAR

SEE

TOUCH

FEELINGS

TASTE

THOUGHTS

SMELL

**SELF-COMPASSION**

**PAIN**

**VALUES & ACTION**

# Values/Committed Action

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If I could wave a magic wand so this story was like water off a duck's back – it loses all its impact – it has no effect on you any more ....

What would you do differently? How would you behave differently? What would you say differently? How would you interact differently with others? What would you start or stop doing?

If these 'unhooking' skills could help you to do that, would you be willing to practice them?

# The Resilience Formula

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4 approaches to any problem situation:

1. Leave
2. Stay & change what can be changed
3. Stay & accept what can't be changed & live by your values
4. Stay & give up & do stuff that makes it worse

# Committed Action

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*How can you use this outside this room? How might it help?*

What's ONE SPECIFIC THING YOU WILL DO?

When, where, with whom, in what situation?

What will it sound and look like? What difference will it make? What values will you be living?

Who will notice? What will they notice?

How realistic is this, 0-10? (If <7 pick something easier)

Opportunities to practice/rehearse? When & where?

What barriers/obstacles can you anticipate? How will you deal with them?

# The Seven Rs -Committed Action

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- *Reminders*
- *Records*
- *Rewards*
- *Routines*
- *Relationships*
- *Reflecting*
- *Restructuring*

# Barriers To Committed Action

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How will your mind try to talk you out of this?

How will you unhook yourself?

What difficult thoughts and feelings will show up?

Are you willing to make room for them, in order to live these values? How will you do that?

How realistic is this, 0-10? (If <7 pick something easier)

Let's make this win-win. If you do it, notice what you did, how you made it happen, & what difference it makes.

If you don't do it, notice what got in the way, so next time we can start the session by addressing the barriers.

# What Prevents Action?

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- **FEAR**
- **Fusion**
- **Excessive goals**
- **Avoidance of discomfort**
- **Remoteness from values**



# The Antidote

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- **DARE**
- **Defusion**
- **Acceptance of discomfort**
- **Realistic goals**
- **Embracing values**

# Next session: If client did it

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Immediately ask:

I'm bursting with curiosity ....

At the end of last session we talked about you doing X, Y, Z  
– how did you go?

If client did it, reinforce!!! What was it like? What difference did it make? What difficult thoughts and feelings showed up, and how did you respond? Etc.

# Next session: If client *didn't* do it

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Immediately ask:

I'm bursting with curiosity ....

At the end of last session we talked about you doing X, Y, Z  
– how did you go?

If client didn't follow through:

*Normalise!!!! Validate !!!! Self-compassion!!!!*

Then: 'So what got in the way? Can we make the first half of today's session about building the skills to overcome those barriers/obstacles, so they don't have to stop you next time?'

FEAR => DARE

# Next session: If client didn't do it

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Make it smaller, easier, simpler

Or make it completely different

Approximate, practice, rehearse *in session* as much as humanly possible

Come back to the seven Rs

Consider reminders from therapist: e.g. email, text

Repeat as needs

If necessary, discuss referral to a different therapist

# Self-compassion: 5 Elements

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1. Contact the present moment: notice & acknowledge your painful thoughts & feelings
2. Kindness: pursue the value of kindness towards yourself - in words, thoughts, imagery & action
3. Defusion: defuse from harsh judgmental self-talk
4. Acceptance: open up and make room for painful thoughts and feelings
5. Validation: validate your pain as a normal & natural part of being human, and something you have in common with all humans

# Kahlil Gibran – *The Prophet*

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*“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.*

*Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.*

*And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy;*

*And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.”*

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"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness" -- Confucius

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"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.