

# The ACT practice for the mother of a child having Asperger syndrome disordered (ASD): Focusing on relationship with spouse

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Parenting a child with disabilities requires learning behavioral parenting skills, utilizing social resources and cooperating with family members. However, some verbal rules affect parents in the way that they decrease using appropriate parental skills, outreaching social resources and cooperating with family members. Therefore, it is very important to decrease the power of verbal rules and promote the expansion of behaviors toward outreaching and cooperating. The purpose of this presentation was to show the ACT practice for a mother of a child having Asperger Syndrome Disordered (ASD), and to examine the effectiveness of parental supports from the view point of ACT.

## Case

Yoko (an assumed name) is living with her husband (Taro) and two children. They are twins (one boy and one girl). Her son has ASD. Yoko and his son have been given a lot of advice from professionals (doctors, psychologists, and social workers). Yoko always followed the advice. Taro always listened to her, however, he did not follow advice. Taro often had trouble with his son. Yoko became depressed over four years and started taking medication from a doctor for depression.

Parents having children with disabilities should keep learning about the disability of their children. Parents should follow professionals' suggestions.

She was prepared for the worst things happening to her son. She brought a lot of clothes, medicines, and foods with her when she went out with him. She avoids asking Taro to take care of his son.

I should be a good mother of my disabled child. I keep learning about the disability. I have a lot of knowledge. I follow professionals' advice.

I used to be a bad mother. Because I often hit him.

Low marriage life value (intimate relationships)

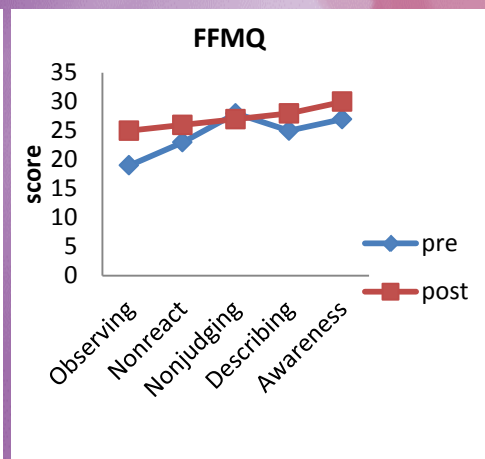
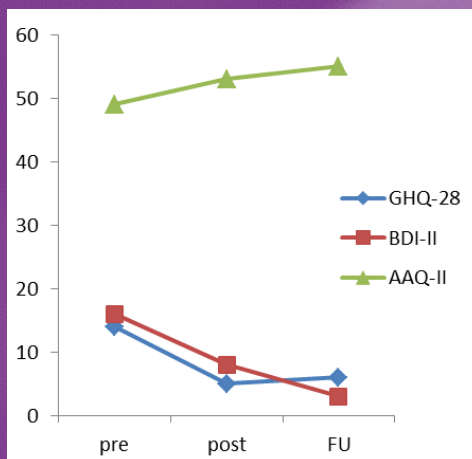
## Psychological Inflexibility

Depressed, inhibited emotion, lack of accepting yourself  
Emotion regulations

## Methods

An ACT session lasted for four hours in the form of one-on-one. An episode that happened the previous day was taken as an example of troubles which Taro often had with his son. Before the session, two outcome measures (BDI-II, GHQ-28) and two process measures (AAQ-II, FFMQ) were tested.

1. Observing and describing feelings and thoughts she had at that moment.
2. Describing what she was doing in detail.
3. Examining workability (Making Creative Hopelessness and Defusion); *Man in the hole* metaphor, *Chinese finger trap* metaphor, *Two Scales* metaphor, forgiveness
4. Exploring parental values
5. Examining another options; *Argyle Socks* Exercise



## Results & Discussions

Post-test revealed that both scores of BDI-II and GHQ-28 decreased. The score of AAQ-II increased four points, and all the subcategories of FFMQ changed positively. Taro did not have trouble with son less than before. Yoko reported she continued to do her valued behaviors. Relationship between spouses influences parental behaviors which include using social support and requiring other help. In this report, ACT is useful to change the relationship between spouses, and contributes to mental health care of mother.