

Harnessing the Power of the Present Moment

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Objectives

- Understand the two major modes of mind and their impact on our quality of existence
- Demonstrate and practice components of change oriented interviewing
- Appreciate and assess your mindfulness skills and present moment escape moves
- Learn the components of the five phase model of present moment interventions
- Develop skill with each component through observation and direct practice



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Disclosure

Dr. Strosahl and Dr. Robinson disclose that they have a financial interest in some of the materials used or discussed in this workshop, to wit:

- Royalty payments related to sales of “Inside This Moment”; “In This Moment” and “Brief Interventions for Radical Change”



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WHERE WE LIVE

<p>RESTLESS MIND</p> 	<p>QUIET MIND</p> 
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RESTLESS MIND

- Evolved as a function of language
 - Instills order and predictability
 - Allows us to create cause and effect relationships
 - Allows us to compare and categorize things
 - Allows us regulate behavior via symbolic means
 - Allows us to evaluate impacts and protect us from damage
 - References to the past and future only

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RESTLESS MIND

- Gobbles up processing space like a memory intensive software program
- Displays “output” at a constant rate
- Is the first message on the screen
- Is incredibly useful much of the time
- DOESN’ T DO THE PRESENT MOMENT!
 - It regards attention to the present moment as a competitor for finite brain resources

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Quiet Mind

- Quiet mind contains all non-verbal forms of knowing (acceptance, inspiration, intuition, enlightenment, mystic experience)
- Promotes direct contact with experience, public and private, and experiential integration
- Promotes well being and interconnectedness
- Supports perspective taking
- Allows compassion for self and others
- Is the doorway to radical acceptance and change



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RESULTS OF PRESENT MOMENT DEFICITS

- Fusion with Restless Mind dominates experience of being alive
- Symbolically constructed rules govern behavior to an excessive extent (experiential avoidance, sensation seeking, and rule governed behavior)
- Behavior becomes disconnected from it's real world consequences (inflexibility, resistant to change)
- Behavior becomes excessively regulated by culturally instilled morals, conventions (weaker connection to values)
- Being AWARE (centered) is the CENTRAL "pillar" of FACT



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THE MOMENT TO MOMENT DIALECTIC OF THE MOMENT

- There is an ongoing war for "bandwidth" between Restless mind and Quiet mind, which the human can observe
- One mode of mind "draws" the other mode, therefore, it is not possible to simply "stay" present
- Moment to moment, your attention shifts between these two modes of mind. You can elongate these intervals through mindfulness (attention control)
- We seek to help the client develop flexible moment-to-moment allocation of attention between Restless mind and Quiet mind



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SOME COMMON ESCAPE MOVES

Busy bee

Busybody


Worrier

Numster


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Setting The Stage

- Create an expectancy for a powerful life changing conversation
- Use change oriented interviewing skills to control the pace
 - Pace of suffering is slow and convoluted
 - Pace of radical change is brisk, but not pressured
- Use in session assessments to create some level of self-reflective awareness (where are we at right now as we speak?)
- Direct most of your attention to observing what is going on in the client and what is going on inside of you (TEAMS)


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Five Facet Model

ATTENTION
INTENTION

• OBSERVE

• DETACH


ACT



• DESCRIBE

• LOVE YOURSELF

MINDFULLY




Strosahl & Robinson, 2014. *In This Moment: Five Steps to Transcending Stress*

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FIVE FACET MINDFULNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE COMPLETE THEN DISCUSS WITH PARTNER

**Strosahl, K. & Robinson, P. (2015). Inside This Moment: A Clinician's Guide to Promoting Radical Change in ACT.*




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Five Facets Crosswalk

In This Moment (self-help)	Inside This Moment (professional book)
OBSERVE	NAME
DESCRIBE	NOTICE
DETACH	LET GO
LOVE YOURSELF	SOFTEN
ACT MINDFULLY	EXPAND

USED IN KEY FOR FFMQ-SF




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FIVE FACETS OF PRESENT MOMENT PROCESSING

NOTICE

- Enlist top down attention rather than bottom up attention
- Activates brain circuitry related to somatosensory self-awareness and perceptual organization (this allows you to be aware of what is going on in your body and in your environment)
- Three basic actions
 - Orient
 - Focus
 - Shift



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FIVE FACETS OF PRESENT MOMENT PROCESSING

NAME

- Engage non-verbal components of present moment using semantic processing regions of the brain
- Reduces impact of pre-conscious approach-avoidance urges based upon feeling tone of stimulus
- Defuse negative cognitive appraisals by using descriptive language



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FIVE FACETS OF PRESENT MOMENT PROCESSING

LET GO

- Detachment is a specific form of attention rooted in unique brain circuitry (separate neural network from cognitive restructuring!)
- Deactivates “mind wandering”, ruminating, worrying circuitry and establishes a task positive network.
- Involves conscious act of denying personal relevance of whatever is in awareness (It’s here but it doesn’t apply to me)



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FIVE FACETS OF PRESENT MOMENT PROCESSING

SOFTEN

- Soft awareness activates unique brain circuitry seen in various types of meditation practices (Insula, ACC, DLPFC)
- Conscious expansion of awareness from self to all others like self creates sense of belonging instead of aloneness
- Self-compassionate stance overrides dominance of semantic processing and cognitive appraisal.



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FIVE FACETS OF PRESENT MOMENT PROCESSING

EXPAND

- **Repurposing:** Help client form generalized awareness that “things like this” pose no threat to self when re-contextualized as reflections of the personal relevance of “things that matter” (Flip Side of Pain)
- **Agency:** Activates components of executive control network and brain default network responsible for “visioning” (constructing mental representations of various future events, rehearsing responses)



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RADICAL CHANGE INTERVENTION CHECKLIST

1. Look for and Interrupt avoidance behaviors
2. Amplify suppressed or avoided mental experiences
3. **Notice:** Ask client to “hold still” and focus on present moment experience
4. **Name:** Ask the client to attach verbal labels to assist with discriminating among private events
5. **Let Go:** Encourage a non-reactive stance toward suffering
6. **Soften:** Encourage client to “hold” self-evaluative content softly
7. **Expand:** Ask the client to carry the avoided experience forward with a new meaning



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Role Play

- What verbal and non-verbal signs of avoidance show up?
- What does the therapist do with them?
- How does the therapist amplify client’s emotions?
- What facets of present moment awareness processing are evident?
- How did you recognize them?
- What might you have done differently?



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Skill: Detecting Avoidance

1. Look for in session avoidance behaviors
 - **Non-verbal clues:** Looking down/away, sighing, sudden change of facial expression, lip curling or biting, watery eyes, nervous movements
 - **Verbal clues:** Changing the subject, changes in rate of speech, forgetting questions, not answering questions, direct statements about avoidance (“I don’t let myself think about it”; “I just want this to go away”)



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Skill: Block Avoidance and Amplify Pain

- Gently and compassionately confront escape or avoidance behavior
 “I noticed that you just looked down and it seemed like you had tears in your eyes. Can you bring that back into the room right now?”
- Help the client focus in on the painful content with the intent of amplifying the experience
 “Can you just bring all of what is happening inside into your awareness, even allowing those parts that are scary and frightening for you to be here?”



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Skill Practice

Watch the role play and then practice this skill in brief 5 minute role plays with your partner:

Detect and interrupt the client’s avoidance behaviors
Amplify the suppressed or avoided experience

Client provides feedback to therapist after each role play



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Present Moment Processing: Notice

2. Ask the client to “hold still” and focus attention on present moment experience
 - **Non-verbal strategies:** Often, staying silent and maintaining soft eye contact will slow things down and allow the client to stay with you
 - **Verbal strategies:** Don’t use a lot of words as this activates busy mind. Mostly, offer words of encouragement (“That’s OK”; “Just notice what’s there; I’m here for you”) or alter the pace or function of what the client is doing (“Say this very slowly”; “Let’s try having you stand up and create a physical posture that represents what is happening”)



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Skill Practice: Notice

Watch the role play and then conduct a brief 5-10 minute role play with your partner”:

Goal: See if you can get the client to “hold still” and focus attention on avoided private experience; keep the client in that space when new avoidance behaviors appear

Client gives therapist feedback and then reverse roles



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Present Moment Processing: Name

- Ask the client to attach verbal labels to assist with discriminating private events.
 - **Non-verbal strategies:** Maintain commanding eye contact, forward leaning orientation, sometimes you can move your chair and sit beside the client
 - **Non-verbal strategies:** Use questions to elicit specific present moment experiences (“Can you describe what is showing up right now?”; “What feelings are present?”; “What kind of thoughts are there?”; “Are there any images or memories?” “What sensations are you aware of in your body?”)




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Skill Practice: Name

Watch the role playclip and then conduct a brief 5-10 minute role play with your partner”:

Goal: See if you can get the client to attach labels to various thoughts, feelings, emotions or physical sensations that comprise the avoided experience. Suggest labels if client seems stuck but avoid getting into explanations, rationales, et.


Client gives therapist feedback and then



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Present Moment Processing: Let Go

- Try to encourage a non-reactive stance toward painful material
 - **Non-verbal strategies:** Make good eye contact; lean forward; maintain soft, low voice tone
 - **Verbal strategies:** Encourage client to simply let what is in awareness to just be there and avoid temptation to engage in struggle (“Would you be willing to just let that be here for now?” “No need to do anything at all with this. Just see it for what it is.” “If you notice yourself wanting to run away or struggle, just notice the urge and notice it pass.”)




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Skill Practice: Let Go

Watch the role play and then conduct a brief 5-10 minute role play with your partner”:

Goal: See if you can get the client to stay defused and non-judgmental in the presence of the avoided experience. If you notice the client attaching to something, promote a stance of just being like “teflon”

Client gives therapist feedback and then reverse roles



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Present Moment Processing: Soften

Encourage client to “hold” self-hating or self-rejecting content softly

- **Non-verbal strategies:** Lean forward, use soft eye contact, low but assertive voice tone and pace
- **Verbal strategies:** Encourage client to consider self-acceptance instead of self-loathing (“This is maybe the most painful thing you can run into; it is what you fear most about yourself. It might even feel like it will be the end of you if you make contact with it. Can you hold this like you would your own child, crying and unhappy?” “Would you be willing to have this imperfection or flaw and see it as a necessary part of you?” “Is it possible that many souls on planet earth are dealing with the same flaw that is troubling



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Skill Practice: Soften

Watch the role play and then conduct a brief 5-10 minute role play with your partner”:

Goal: See if you can get the client to soften into and practice emotional acceptance of something that is very painful. Try to avoid making this into a decision the client must make; rather it is a choice to move from self-hate to self-love for no reason at all.

Client gives therapist feedback and then reverse roles



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Present Moment Processing: Expand

• Help the client carry the feared, avoided experience forward with new meaning

- **Non-verbal strategies:** Again, assume a relaxed but focused conversational posture, maintaining soft eye contact
- **Verbal strategies:** Explore the connection between current suffering and values. (“If this thing isn’t something you must avoid like the plague, could it grow you as a wiser, bigger human being?” “What would you do differently in your life if you had the wisdom of your pain immediately available to you?” “What behavior would tell you that you were beginning to move your life in a different direction?”)



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Skill Practice: Expand

Watch the role play and then conduct a brief 5-10 minute role play with your partner”:

Goal: See if you can get the client to articulate an intention to live a life based on emotional acceptance, rather than avoidance. What would that look like in daily life? What behavior would tell the client that s/he was moving in that direction? Rate client’s confidence!

Client gives therapist feedback and then reverse roles



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IN SEARCH OF THE PRESENT...



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FACT PRESENT MOMENT BOOKS

in this moment.

FIVE STEPS to
TRANSCENDING STRESS
USING MINDFULNESS
and NEUROSCIENCE

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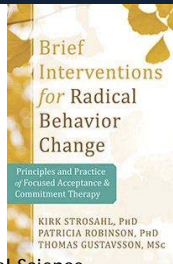
inside this moment.

A CLINICIAN’S GUIDE to
PROMOTING RADICAL CHANGE
USING ACCEPTANCE and
COMMITMENT THERAPY

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OTHER BOOKS ON FACT



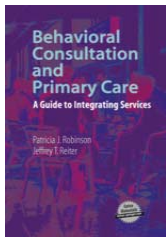
Association for Contextual Behavioral Science

<http://www.contextualpsychology.org/>

<http://www.newharbingeronline.com/real-behavior-change-in-primary-care.html>

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OTHER BOOKS...



Guides for using ACT in primary care

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