

ACT in Organisations

Workshop

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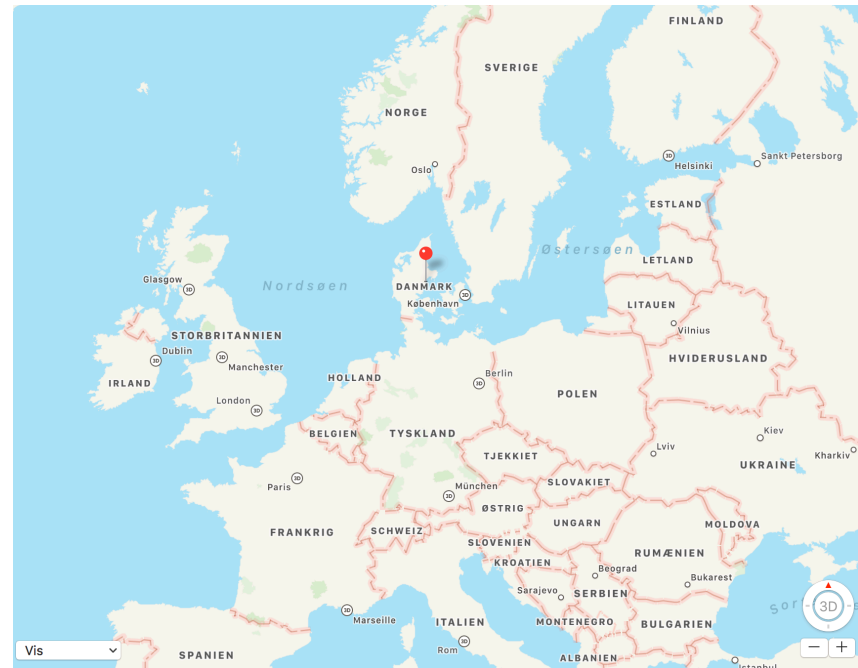
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ACT as organizational frame & model

- Background from OBM – Organizational Behavior and Management
- As many others theories and models ACT is developed from the individual perspective to the organizational perspective
- Key elements:
 - Behavior (analysis of)
 - Reinforcement (classical and operant conditioning)
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (2.wave)

ACT from the individual to the Organization

- ACT has traditionally an **individual focus**
 - Frank Bond and others has however worked with the individual in the organization in relation to reducing stress and increase performance development.
- As organizational psychologist **the organization is "the object" in focus**
- Organization looked upon as an individual client seeking help and, in the same way as clients are motivated for assistance:
 - internal: "I need help" → "We need help"
 - external: "You must do something" → "Our compagny must do something otherwise something goes really wrong"

In dialogue with the person next to you

- What kind of suffering in an organization have you yourself experienced or can imagine?

5 min

Two kinds of suffering in organizations

- From inside:
 - bad working condition,
 - poor job satisfaction,
 - bad cooperation
 - increased stress and conflict,
 - low efficiency,
 - waste of resources,
 - employee escape

Two kinds of suffering in organizations

- **From the outside**
 - loss of customers
 - loss of appropriations
 - falling market / demand
 - fierce competition
 - requirement for great savings
 - the threat of closure

The same starting point

Based on general principles in the ACT, where the purpose is:

To develop *psychological flexibility*

But now applied in organizations

Key Elements in ACT

- Mindfull: being present/aware
- Accepting: it is as it is – and be with it
- Workability: not right or wrong – but ”what works”
- Commitment to values in the organizations
- Being aware of fused ”noise” that hamper
- Promoting behaviors and strategies that ”works” within the terms of the goals and values in the organisation

Organization is the object!

- **External behavior:**
 - products, services, marketing, cooperation with the surroundings, logo etc. → external behavior toward the outside world.
- **Internal behavior:**
 - structures, roles, procedures, functions, narratives, hierarchies → internal behavior

Is rarely "in harmony" and "without contradictions"

- **In order to identify and understand:**
 - examine, question, describe, mirrors, co-analyzing, give and get feedback

Case 1 : Kodak

"The best analog film in the world"? – (external context)

- Declining sales of the product
 - recognition of the problem
 - fused with "only when we are the most capable in the world we will survive"
 - rule "be better", work on quality
 - short term; increased motivation
 - longer-term: "solution will be part of the problem"
- Similar to the perfection problem in the individual.

Case 2: "We have no stress" (inner context")

- Employees and management **fused** with the statement:
"No weakness, no stress"
 - avoidance of reporting symptoms of stress
 - short-term "Pull yourself together "
 - longer term growing problem without being able to handle
 - attributed is: "stress is whining," "customers are delicate / tricky"
 - long sick leaves, manufacturing weakness, increased conflicts, competent staff leaving
 - reluctance recognition of reality hampers good workability
- So - similar to individual avoidance

Fractal Model

- A fractal is:
 - is a natural phenomenon or a mathematical set that exhibits a repeating pattern that displays at every scale.
 - If the replication is exactly the same at every scale, it is called a self-similar pattern (Wikipedia)
- to see the structure of the sectional elements identical to the structure of the whole

Hexaflex – core questions # 1

- **Acceptance:** What are our conditions, and how do we choose to relate to them?
- **Fusion:** What assumptions do we have, and how do they seems to "work" in the short term, but may hamper in the longer term?

Hexaflex core questions # 2

- **Contact with the present moment:** What feelings, worries or hopes arouse when focusing on: "the difficult situation we are in right now?" Or "the conflict we are in right now?" Or forward "the change we stand in front of?"
- **Self-as-context:** "When we see ourselves in a "not judgmental way" - what do we notice? And what of this does or does not match our values? "

Hexafleksen core questions # 3

- **Values:** Do you live the stated values? Are our values still relevant or should we adjust them or assign new values?
- **Committed action:** Are there actions we don't do to avoid pain (problems/conflicts)? What actions would effectively support our values in the long run?

The Hexaflex in Organisations (Bond et. Al)

Hexaflex	Organizational inflexibility	Organizational flexibility
Acceptance	avoidance or suppression of difficult conditions	openness to the problems and conflicts
Defusion	judgmental and rigid practice with weak "workability"; processes do not work as intended	Flexible viewing and stable "workability" processes perform the functions they need
Contact with the present moment	Unclear data and unflexbile attention	clear and flexible monitoring awareness
Values	the absence of clear values and group decisions	clear values and goals that are chosen by the group
Committet Actions	inactivity, impulsivity and persistent avoidance	active actions that support the values and goals
Self as context	weak and vague awareness of perspective and context	aware of their own and others' perspectives and context

Acceptance

- Try to describe a situation where your organization is in trouble with a urgent change?
- With ACT in mind and the core process Acceptance, how will you work with it?
- 10 min

Defusion

- Has one of you as a current (or previous) employee had an assumption that you now will recognize as a "fusion" in an ACT-sense?
- How did you experience that this fusion reduced workability in your organization?
- Short interview and a total of 10 min

Here and now

- Imagine that you work in a department where you are told that the department in six months from now are going to move to another town 70 km away?
- How will you work with – “here and now” processes
- 10 minutes

Self-as-context

- Imagine an institution that works with young people, where there is a harsh and negative tone towards the young people but also among colleagues.
- How could you work with the proces "self-as-context" in the institution?
- Find 2 or 3 examples
- 10 minutes

Values

- Do you in your organization have a "declared value", which is not being complied or acted on?
- How does it affect your working condition?

Dialogue in 10 min

Committed actions

- Try to identify one or two "committed actions" which is in line with the goals and values in your company. Identify some which are difficult in terms of cost, energy and anxiety.
- Dialogue in the group – 10 min

Terminological flexibility

- Therapy doesn't work as a concept in corporates
- maybe
 - From ACT to ACM?
 - **Acceptance and Commitment Management**
 - Or ACD
 - **Acceptance and Commitment Development**

References

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Thanks!

Thank you

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Have a nice day 😊

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