



[contextualscience.org/wc2025](https://contextualscience.org/wc2025)

## Program Detail • Thursday • July 17

Thursday Morning 7:00 AM

### Morning Yoga Session

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

John Powell, Private Practice

I'm a certified yoga teacher with 20 years of practice and I currently teach on an ongoing basis. This will be an intermediate level practice for people already familiar with the asana practice.

Thursday Morning 8:00 AM

### Children, Adolescents, and Families SIG

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Borgne**

Chris McCurry, Private Practice  
Sean O'Dell

This meeting is for all those interested in research and clinical work benefiting youth and their families. We will discuss ways we can support one another in this work through trainings, peer consultation, and other means in the coming year. All are welcome.

### Brief Interventions SIG

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bayside A**

Bruce Arroll, MBChB, Ph.D., University of Auckland

This is the inaugural meeting of the Brief Interventions SIG. All are welcome.

### Supervision & Consultation SIG

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Nottaway**

Sarah Pegrum, Private Practice

Join us for our first meeting of the Supervision & Consultation SIG in-person meeting. The Supervision and Consultation SIG's mission is to enhance the quality of supervision and consultation practices by fostering a collaborative community for professionals. We are dedicated to supporting individuals in supervisory roles through shared knowledge, resources, and ongoing education. By promoting the integration of CBS processes, we aim to facilitate the values-based and contextually sensitive functions of supervision, empowering supervisees to deliver services with fidelity and competency while also considering their wellbeing and ultimately improving client care. We strive to reduce isolation among clinicians, clarify essential competencies, and disseminate effective practices in supervision and consultation. Those providing or interested in supervision and consultation are welcome to attend.

### Trauma SIG Meeting

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Laurie Gallo, Ph.D., Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
Brooke White, Ph.D., Full Circle Health and Wellness

This is the inaugural meeting of the Trauma SIG. The Trauma SIG is dedicated to alleviating human suffering by promoting psychological flexibility in individuals affected by trauma, as well as naming and engaging the broader contextual and structural forces that contribute to, and maintain, the experience of trauma. We are committed to supporting the advancement of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and other CBS based psychotherapeutic approaches in the treatment of various forms of trauma related suffering. This includes 1) Supporting research and clinical initiatives designed to integrate ACT with trauma-informed care and other evidence-based trauma treatments 2) Fostering open dialogue with like hearted ACBS community members who are doing this work, and 3) Empowering professionals to address trauma in diverse social-cultural contexts. We aspire to bridge scientific research and clinical practice through collaboration, inclusivity, community building, and a shared commitment to healing trauma-related human suffering from individual, systemic, and structural perspectives. All are welcome!

### **Work Out Your Conference Wobbles: Applying ACT in Real Time**

**Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting** • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Shane O'Neil-Hart, LCSW, Lyra Health

Conference attendees commonly encounter a range of unwanted internal experiences, such as anxiety and self-critical thoughts, and may engage in repertoire-narrowing behaviors including social comparisons, withdrawal, or excessive alcohol consumption. As practitioners, we recognize these patterns in our clients, yet may lack awareness when the same processes are operating within us and leading us away from values-based engagement. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), an exposure-based approach, privileges working with these experiences and behaviors as they occur, so the best way to work on your conference wobbles is at the conference itself! In this experiential workshop, using a Self-Practice/Self-Reflection (SP/SR) approach, participants will deepen their mastery of ACT while gaining practical tools to stay open, aware, and engaged throughout this socially and intellectually rich event.

### **Veterans Affairs (VA) ACT SIG**

**Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting** • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Wyatt Evans, Ph.D., ABPP, VA North Texas Health Care System  
Carter Davis, Ph.D., VA Palo Alto Health Care System

The Department of Veterans Affairs ACT Special Interest Group's (VA ACT SIG) mission is to promote the clinical practice and research of ACT within the VA by creating an open, collegial, and supportive environment for all VA clinicians and researchers (interns, fellows, and full-time staff) to learn, practice, and study ACT. All are welcome to attend our SIG meeting to hear updates on ACT dissemination, training, and research efforts within the VA. This meeting will provide an opportunity for current VA staff members to network and discuss possible collaborations on ACT-related projects. Additionally, we welcome trainees (e.g., grad students, interns, postdocs) who are interested in careers at the VA and opportunities to bring their ACT expertise to this setting.

## **Thursday Morning Plenary 9:00 AM**

### **1. The Idionomics Revolution: Rethinking Evidence in Evidence-Based Psychological Care**

**Plenary** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Processes of change, ACT Processes

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Baljinder K Sahdra, Ph.D., Australian Catholic University



On average, ACT-related processes like acceptance and valued action promote well-being. However, the "normal" effect offers limited insight, and viewing individual differences merely as statistical "error" around a group mean diminishes the rich diversity of human experience. Despite this, our evidence-based "best practices" still rely primarily on group means from randomized controlled trials to guide clinical practice. How can we move away from deficit-focused models of mental "disorders" and beyond methods that measure diverse people against statistical norms? How can we develop evidence that honors human diversity and gives equal weight to individual experiences alongside group-level findings to advance personalized psychological care? This talk will showcase pioneering research in idionomics that bridges the gap between group-level findings and individual experiences, offering fresh perspectives on ACT processes and inviting us to reconsider what constitutes "evidence" in evidence-based psychological care.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the role of idionomics in bridging the gap between group-level findings of processes of change and individual experiences.
2. List where to find freely available tools for analyzing intensive longitudinal data using an idionomic lens.
3. Analyze what constitutes "evidence in evidence-based psychological care."

Thursday Morning 10:30 AM

## 2. Working with therapeutic ruptures from an ACT perspective

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Supervision and training, Therapeutic relationship

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services  
Manuela O'Connell, Lic., Private Practice

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), rooted in behaviorism and functional contextualism, interprets ruptures as instances of insensitivity to the function of behavior within relational dynamics. When the bond between client and therapist ruptures, it typically involves the therapist exhibiting insensitive behavior, undermining connection and trust. The therapist's conduct in such instances alters the relational context, triggering avoidance, fusion, and other inflexible responses in the client. Depending on the therapist's response, a detrimental cycle of mutual influence may ensue, further damaging the therapeutic relationship. However, when addressed effectively, an ACT therapist can recalibrate the context for resolving ruptures. By discerning the functions of present behaviors, repairing the rupture entails transforming inflexible responses into learning opportunities of flexible ones. This facilitates reestablishing a secure and connected therapeutic context, allowing the therapeutic alliance to be reestablished. This workshop will delve into therapeutic ruptures and repairs through the lens of the ACT model, utilizing a combination of didactic, experiential, and role-play exercises to facilitate understanding and application.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the ACT perspective on therapeutic ruptures, focusing on insensitivity to behavioral functions, and analyze their impact on the therapeutic alliance.
2. Identify and address client and therapist behaviors contributing to ruptures, transforming these moments into opportunities for relational growth and psychological flexibility.
3. Demonstrate effective rupture repair techniques through role-play and experiential exercises, and assess their impact on therapeutic presence.

## 3. Under Pressure: Help high-achieving clients live intentionally & flexibly, in a culture that glorifies productivity

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM



Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Organizational / Industrial psychology, Stress, burnout, eating disorders, perfectionism

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Borgne**

Debbie Sorensen, Ph.D., Private Practice, Denver Colorado

Paula Freedman-Diamond, Psy.D., HumanKind Psychological Services

Do your clients struggle with eating disorders, perfectionism, chronic stress, and/or or burnout? In a culture that glorifies hustle and insists it's possible to look flawless while doing it all, it's no wonder so many people are under pressure! (Freedman-Diamond, 2024; Sorensen, 2024; Grant, A., 2008; Jack & Dill, 1992) This workshop will explore the contextual effects of the dominant culture in keeping clients stuck chasing unattainable ideals, and help clinicians work effectively with these clients by integrating contextual behavioral science with the Intuitive Eating framework. Participants will learn evidence-based strategies for helping clients to 1) identify internalized cultural narratives that are driving unhelpful behavior patterns, 2) recognize the experiential control cycle that leads to burnout and perfectionism, 3) differentiate rule-bound vs. flexible and values-driven motivations, 4) intentionally turn toward values and bodily signals (instead of external pressure) for guidance, and 5) set effective boundaries - with the outside world and their own inner critic - to protect their wellbeing from pressure to achieve and produce.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify indications of burnout and chronic stress.
2. Explain the roles of wellness and hustle culture in contributing to experiential control, cognitive fusion and attachment to the conceptualized self for high-achieving, perfectionistic clients.
3. Demonstrate how to use clinical interventions from ACT and Intuitive Eating to increase psychological flexibility with high-achieving, perfectionistic clients.

#### **4. Introduction to psychedelic integration**

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Strategic planning*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Professional development, Psychedelics, Non-ordinary states of consciousness

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Eugen Secara, Ph.D. (C), Babeş-Bolyai University

Ioana Ivan, M.A., Babeş-Bolyai University

This workshop will provide a condensed integration journey featuring hands-on exercises and a brief theoretical background for psychedelic integration work. It is based on a 4-day ACT-based intensive workshop on psychedelic integration (BEYOND EXPERIENCE). Participants will learn about the MIND Integration Modalities Model (which includes Remembering, Structuring, Expressing, Sharing, and Practicing) and how these modalities can be combined with the three ACT response styles (Open, Aware, and Engaged). The exercises can be applied to any intense, extraordinary or transformative experience, regardless of whether it was pharmacologically induced or not. Therefore, they offer experiential learning regarding the process of integration, which is also suitable for psychedelic-naïve participants. After selecting an experience to work on, the participants will be guided through the process of remembering. They will then debrief in small groups and develop meaning-facilitating scaffolds for their experience using input from their peers. They will use these scaffolds to elaborate values-guided actions and practices. Creative expression practices will be employed to facilitate the retention of insights and their implementation.

Educational Objectives:

1. Articulate a CBS conceptualization of non-ordinary states of consciousness that includes but is not limited to psychedelic experiences.
2. Create a multi-step integration plan using the five MIND integration modalities.
3. Adapt existing therapeutic repertoires to implement integration plans.

## 5. How REBT Principles and Practices Can Make the PBT Alphabet Soup Tastier

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, RFT / RGB / language, A process-based view of certain Second Wave interventions

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Hank Robb, Ph.D., ABPP, Private Practice

Daniel J Moran, Ph.D., Touro University

Adopting a Process-Based approach can include practices that are valued for their practical utility and empirical support even if they are associated with so-called "Second Wave" CBT, in this case Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT).

This workshop will explore foundational REBT analytic tools, including the ABC model, where "B" represents Belief—a type of behavior distinct from mere "thought" as well as REBT techniques used to delve into relational networks, such as the "Downward Arrow Method." The workshop will also discuss the REBT idea of "Activating Events" and "Consequences" in a functional analytic manner and highlight how therapists can help untangle a client's complex emotional patterns, such as being depressed about feeling anxious or being angry about being depressed. This workshop will also demystify the recursive nature of anxiety, such as feeling anxious about being anxious.

Additionally, this workshop will include experiential exercises by using creative REBT techniques like "Rational Songs"—which can be understood as a unique form of cognitive defusion—will be introduced and explored for their potential to enhance therapeutic outcomes.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate how to differentiate between disputing thoughts and disputing beliefs.
2. Describe how emotional, behavioral, or cognitive Consequences in the ABC model of REBT can become Activating events with their own emotional, behavioral or cognitive consequences.
3. Demonstrate on how to use humor in the form of "rational songs" as a defusion technique.

## 6. Expanding the Frontiers of Relational Frame Theory: Conceptual Innovations and Empirical Advances in Complex Human Behavior

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: RFT / RGB / language, Professional development, Academics or education, Behavior analysis, Health / behavioral medicine, Emergent Learning Instruction, IRAP, ASD, Complex Verbal Behavior, Complex Stimulus Control

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Richard E Laitinen, Ph.D., Educational and Developmental Therapies, Inc

Celia Heyman, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Capella University / FTF Behavioral Consulting

Miguel Rodríguez-Valverde, Ph.D., University of Jaén

Mónica Hernández-López, Ph.D., University of Jaén

These five papers collectively advance our understanding of complex human behavior through innovative applications and theoretical expansions of Relational Frame Theory (RFT) and the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP). Empirical studies demonstrate the utility of RFT-based instructional methods for teaching advanced scientific concepts, reveal novel insights into cross-modal correspondences using IRAP, and explore the interplay of language, meaning, and perceptual interference in an audio-visual Stroop-like paradigm. Additional research investigates auditory versus visual relational responding in the context of body image and implicit attitudes, linking IRAP performance to clinical correlates such as body dissatisfaction. Finally, a theoretical synthesis integrates Assembly Theory with the HDML model of RFT, offering a robust framework for understanding relational complexity, compositionality, and causality. Together, these contributions highlight the versatility of relational approaches in capturing nuanced aspects of cognition and

behavior, while pushing the boundaries of conceptual and methodological tools within contextual behavioral science.

- *Assembly Theory and the HDML Model of RFT*

Richard E. Laitinen, Educational and Developmental Therapies, Inc

Today we're going to consider the synthesis of Assembly Theory and the HDML model of RFT as a robust framework for (1) analyzing the complexity, dynamics, and causality underlying relational processes, and (2) opening new avenues for theoretical and conceptual refinement and practical applications. When applying Assembly Theory to the Hyper-Dimensional, Multi-Level (HDML) model of Relational Frame Theory (RFT), it is essential to examine the interplay between the principles of complexity, compositionality (the principle that the meaning or function of a complex system, structure, or expression is determined by the meanings or functions of its constituent parts and the rules used to combine them), and causation in both frameworks. Below is a conceptual integration that respects those aspects of both theories:

- *An Evaluation of an RFT-Based Model of Instruction to Teach Measurement: RFT SIG Sponsored*

Celia Heyman, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Capella University / FTF Behavioral Consulting

Thomas Szabo, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Vanderbilt University

Dana Reinecke, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Developmental Disabilities Institute

Behavior analysis is an advanced subject matter and using nonequivalence framing is critical for understanding concepts in the natural sciences and for complex problem-solving. While emergent learning instruction has demonstrated efficacy in tightly controlled settings for advanced learners, ecological validity is still in question. This study evaluated the effects of using a systematic arrangement of instruction based on relational frame theory (RFT) to teach several relational networks pertaining to measurement. The asynchronous instruction was disseminated via the Qualtrics technology to eight participants. A multiple baseline design across stimulus sets was used to evaluate the emergence of derivation across relational networks and the application of those relations on novel examples. Emergence of derived relations across networks was evident throughout the training. The dosage of direct instruction needed to meet generalization criteria to stop training was found to be idiosyncratic. Six out of the eight participants did not need to complete the entire training to meet generalization criterion. This translational study demonstrated the power of RFT and how it can be harnessed to teach complex skills repertoires.

- *Examination of crossmodal correspondence with an auditory-visual Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (AV-IRAP)*

Miguel Rodríguez-Valverde, Ph.D., University of Jaén

Rocío Rodríguez-Valdés, B.Sc., University of Jaén

Carmen Latorre-Sevilla, B.Sc., University of Jaén

Mónica Hernández-López, Ph.D., University of Jaén

We present two studies that pioneeringly adapt the IRAP to examine cross-modal correspondences (i.e., strong non-arbitrary auditory-visual stimulus relations). Study 1 examines the kiki-bouba effect (i.e., spontaneous matching of pseudoword kiki with a spiky shape, and pseudoword bouba with a rounded shape). 76 undergrads completed an IRAP that in each trial presented one of two auditory stimuli (kiki or bouba) and one of two visual stimuli (spiky or rounded shape). During consistent blocks participants responded True to the combinations kiki-spiky and bouba-rounded, and False to kiki-rounded and bouba-spiky (the opposite in inconsistent blocks). Responding was faster in consistent blocks ( $D-IRAP = .238$ ;  $t(75) = 10.833$ ;  $p < .001$ ), confirming the robustness of the effect. In Study 2, 36 undergrads completed a similar IRAP where auditory stimuli were a high-pitched and a low-pitched pure tone. Participants were faster to respond to trials that confirmed the high-pitch/spiky shape and low-pitch/round shape correspondence ( $D-IRAP = .25$ ;  $t(35) = 5.50$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

These results open an avenue for RFT-based research on the role of non-arbitrary sound-shape correspondences in human language.

- *Using an auditory-visual Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (AV-IRAP) to examine the Stroop effect*

Mónica Hernández-López, Ph.D., University of Jaén

Celia Carrascosa-Leiva, B.Sc., University of Jaén

Alejandro Sánchez-González, B.Sc., University of Jaén

Miguel Rodríguez-Valverde, Ph.D., University of Jaén

Some results observed with the IRAP are difficult to explain merely in terms of label-target stimulus relations. In this study we used a novel AV-IRAP that adapted the Stroop task in order to manipulate Crel and Cfunc properties. 72 native Spanish speakers completed an IRAP with two auditory labels (the words

Green or Red, pronounced in Spanish), and two visual targets (the word GREEN written in red, or the word RED written in green). For half of the participants the targets were written in Spanish (for the remainder they were written in English). In meaning-consistent blocks, participants had to match the auditory stimulus with the meaning of the written target. In color-consistent blocks, participants had to match the auditory stimulus with the actual color in which the target was written. Participants in the native-language condition responded faster during meaning-consistent blocks [a Stroop-like effect: D-IRAP= 0.28;  $t(36)= 6.61$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $d= 1.087$ ], while participants in the foreign-language condition responded faster during color-consistent blocks [D-IRAP= -.13;  $t(34)= -3.88$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $d= .667$ ].

- *Categorization of pictures of differently-sized bodies with the AV-IRAP. Comparison of auditory and visual labels*

Miguel Rodríguez-Valverde, Ph.D., University of Jaén  
 Martina Rial-Bissoni, B.Sc., University of Jaén  
 Julia M. Garvín-Rubiales, University of Jaén  
 Silvia Moreno-Domínguez, Ph.D., University of Jaén  
 Mónica Hernández-López, University of Jaén

The implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP) has been widely used in body-image studies. This study employs a novel adaptation of the IRAP that allows for the presentation of auditory stimuli. 91 female college undergrads had to categorize pictures of female bodies from two different sets (underweight and overweight models) upon the presentation of two emotionally laden labels (the words Thin and Fat). Half of the sample was presented with auditory labels and the other half with visual labels. During consistent blocks participants had to match the underweight pictures with the label Thin and overweight pictures with the label Fat, and the opposite during inconsistent blocks. Participants in both groups were significantly faster in categorizing the pictures consistently, without producing significant differences across trial types (an absence of a single trial type dominance effect). There were no significant differences across groups, with very similar patterns of responding both with the auditory and the visual labels. D-IRAP scores correlated significantly with measures of body dissatisfaction, eating disorder symptoms, internalization of the thin ideal, and body mass index.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the benefits of emerging learning instruction and the use of RFT to build instructions.
2. Analyze the effects of different sensory modality stimulus presentation on IRAP performance.
3. Analyze the influence of Crel and Cfunc properties over auditory-visual IRAP outcomes.

### 7. The role of social connection in the clinical setting: Theoretical and empirical studies using FAP

Symposium • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Social Connection

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Daniel W.M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri - Kansas City

Discussant: Felipe Corchs, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo School of Medicine

Ilana Falcão de Arruda, M.D., Department of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo

Jennifer Truitt, B.A., University of Missouri-Kansas City

Glenn M Callaghan, Ph.D., San Jose State University

Many human problems have been related to social disconnection and loneliness (Holt-Lunstad, 2021). Among all problems addressed by Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP), reinforcing instances of intimate connection is purported to promote clinical improvement (Kanter et al., 2017). This symposium presents theoretical considerations and two sets of empirical data investigating this perspective. We begin with a discussion of theoretical assumptions using an interpersonal behavior therapy to understand reciprocal interactions involving vulnerability and social reinforcement in therapeutic and natural community environments. This is followed by presentations on two empirical studies investigating the proposed behavioral approaches. The first is a clinical trial examining whether FAP-enhanced behavioral activation (BA) is more effective than standard BA in addressing loneliness and depressive symptoms among LGBTQ+ adults, as BA alone may decrease isolation, but not necessarily loneliness, whereas FAP could address loneliness more directly by promoting intimate connection. The second study presents a naturalistic investigation of FAP's social connection model in



psychotherapeutic processes, assessing within-session events related to it and clinical outcomes weekly, to examine the longitudinal relationship between these variables.

- *Vulnerability and disclosure in human interactions from an Interpersonal Behavior Therapy framework*

Glenn Callaghan, Ph.D., San Jose State University

This presentation focuses on an Interpersonal Behavior Therapy (IBT) framework to understand important reciprocal interactions that involve vulnerability, disclosure, and social reinforcement in both therapeutic and natural community environments. Vulnerability and disclosure are described in the context of an idiographic assessment of a person's history and current context, as well as specific skills that allow this behavior to be effective with others. The discussion centers on identifying a person's ability to discriminate their intentions as well as the conditions when expressions of vulnerability could be more effective with others. A person's behavioral repertoire for disclosure and ability to discriminate the impact of their behavior will be discussed as well as the importance of identifying competing contingencies that may surround this behavior that would likely affect its future occurrence. Moreover, we will discuss an IBT assessment of a repertoire to respond to other's disclosures in reciprocal interactions that would facilitate connected relationships. The presentation will close with the importance of client safety in engaging in vulnerable behaviors both with therapists and others in their community.

- *Evaluating the Role of Social Environment in Behavioral Activation with a Sample of LGBTQ+ Young Adults Experiencing Loneliness and Depressive Symptoms*

Jennifer K. Truitt, B.A., University of Missouri - Kansas City

Daniel W. M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri - Kansas City

LGBTQ+ young adults may be at increased risk of loneliness and depressive symptoms. Research indicates that loneliness may lead to the development of depression. Based on Ferster's functional analysis of depression (1973), which suggests low levels of positive reinforcement results in depression, there are two paths by which loneliness contributes to depression: (1) isolation may result in an absence of social positive reinforcement, and (2) interactions may not be meaningful and thus may not reinforce behavior. Treatments for depression such as Behavioral Activation (BA) and Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) may address these targets (Maitland & Neilson, 2023). BA increases activity and may implicitly decrease isolation, whereas FAP prototypically results in more meaningful social interactions (Maitland & Gaynor, 2012) and, when combined with BA, may address both paths by which loneliness leads to depression. No study has investigated the effects of these treatments as interventions for loneliness and resulting depression. This study addresses this gap in the literature by comparing BA and FAP-enhanced BA as interventions for LGBTQ+ young adults who experience loneliness and depressive symptoms.

- *Investigating FAP's social connection model in real psychotherapeutic processes: a naturalistic study*

Ilana Falcão de Arruda, M.D., Department of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo School of Medicine

Natasha Hayamizu, M.A., Department of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo School of Medicine

Anna Carolina Ramos, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Universidade de Santa Catarina

Alessandra Villas-Bôas, Ph.D., Private Practice

Jonathan Kanter, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Washington

Felipe Corchs, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo School of Medicine

Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP)'s model of social connection - operationalized as a repeated sequence of vulnerable self-disclosure and responsive listening, leading to an enhanced connection between individuals - has been gaining empirical support in the past years, primarily from laboratory-based studies, non-clinical populations and single-subject designs (Kanter et al., 2020). We present early findings from an ongoing naturalistic study investigating the dynamics of this model and its relationship to clinical outcomes in psychotherapy. Clients beginning therapy at two academic centers, where therapists with different levels of experience receive supervision across psychodynamic, analytic-behavioral, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, complete pre- and post-session questionnaires weekly, assessing between-sessions general clinical outcomes and within-sessions events related to FAP's model. None of the therapists have received specific training in contextual therapies and they are not made aware of the object of our investigation. To our knowledge, this is the first naturalistic investigation of these constructs in a psychotherapeutic setting, made especially valuable by the broad variety in participants' backgrounds, aligning with the need for data-driven insights in clinical practice.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the importance of noticing or discriminating the context in which they disclose or express vulnerability.

2. Explain how behavioral activation and FAP can enhance depression outcomes by addressing the social environment.
3. Describe the dynamics of FAP's model of social connection in behavioral terms.

## 8. Histories of harm: Factors associated with acknowledgement of nonconsensual sexual experiences

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Processes of change, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Sexual Violence

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Discussant: Amie Zarling, Ph.D., Iowa State University

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Positive Development, Inc.

Cassidy Boudreaux, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Karly Daigle, University of Louisiana Lafayette

Wesley Malvini, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Nonconsensual sexual experiences (NSEs), across their many forms, predict the development of psychological distress. Despite the significance of NSEs, however, people vary in the degree to which they acknowledge them with mixed results. NSE acknowledgement using sexual violence labels can lead to less victim-blaming, which could have implications in legal and clinical settings (Sasson & Paul, 2014). However, NSE acknowledgment has also been linked to undesirable individual outcomes such as increased post-traumatic and depressive symptoms (Cleere & Lynn, 2013; Lipinski et al., 2021). Additionally, increasing acknowledgement of perpetration of NSEs (PNSEs) could have significant downstream beneficial effects for those involved (Laxminarayan, 2013). This symposium provides a contextual perspective on behaviors, processes, and demographic factors that may influence whether or not a person chooses to acknowledge an NSE history, as survivor, perpetrator, or both. Further, we provide strategies to advance research methodology and clinical treatment, including differential trajectories for gender and sexual minoritized populations.

- *Self-labeling of Nonconsensual Sexual Experiences varies as a Function of Gender Identity, and Inflexibility, and Sexual Myth Acceptance*

Wesley Malvini, B.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Nonconsensual sexual experiences (NSEs) may take many forms, including rape and sexual assault. NSE acknowledgment has been linked to several positive (Valdespino-Hayden et al., 2022) and negative outcomes (Layman et al., 1996). A person's ability to acknowledge their NSEs may be in part due to the extent they accept myths about sexual aggression (AMASA; Watters & Yalch, 2023). However, AMASA does not fully account for NSE acknowledgement (Reed et al., 2019), such that research on possible moderators is necessary. The primary aim of this study was to advance the literature by examining psychological flexibility (PF) and inflexibility (PI), as potential moderators of the relationship between NSE acknowledgment and AMASA. Additionally, we examined differences in acknowledgment across gender identities. AMASA and gender identity both significantly positively predicted degree of acknowledgment. Furthermore, there was a negative relationship between acknowledgement and PI. The current study provides data on two psychological constructs that may serve as target areas for developing interventions to support people with NSE histories, as well as furthering our understanding about acknowledgment across gender identities.

- *Differences across people who have been sexually harmed and those with a dual role history*

Karly Daigle, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Wesley Malvini, B.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Nonconsensual sexual experiences (NSEs) have been linked to increased post-traumatic stress (PTS) and depressive symptomatology (Tarzia et al., 2018) and may also predict engagement in perpetration of nonconsensual sexual experiences (PNSEs; Meadows et al., 2022). Rape myth acceptance (RMA)–beliefs that foster a culture that denies or reduces the effects of sexual violence while blaming those affected –is

a strong indicator of perpetration (Yappa & Quayle, 2018), though it has not been directly associated with NSE histories. People with NSE histories often do not label their experiences as sexual violence (i.e., are unacknowledged; McKie et al., 2021). However, minimal research has explored the overlap between experiencing and perpetrating sexual harm, with no studies considering how NSE perpetration histories might contribute to how NSEs function. This study examines differences in PTSD and depressive symptoms, NSE acknowledgment, and RMA between people with only a history of NSEs and those with a history of both personal harm and perpetration. Findings will be discussed in terms of implications for improved research and intervention development for these populations.

- *Prevalence of Perpetration and Associations with Acknowledgment, Psychological Distress, and Past Harm*

Cassidy Boudreaux, University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Wesley Malvini, B.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

In a recent sample of people with histories of perpetration of nonconsensual sexual experiences (PNSE), the entire sample (n = 305) also endorsed past harms (i.e., dual nonconsensual sexual experiences), complicating existing understanding of what it means to be a "perpetrator". Increasing acknowledgement of PNSE histories, including among those with other NSEs, could have significant downstream beneficial effects for those who have been harmed, and potentially on those who have perpetrated (Laxminarayan, 2013). It is unclear, however, what predicts PNSE acknowledgment and how acknowledgement impacts outcomes related to perpetration. Chi-square analyses and ANOVAs will be conducted to assess differences in tactics used during perpetration, acceptance of myths about sexual aggression (AMASA), and posttraumatic stress and depressive symptoms as a function of acknowledgment status. Better understanding the factors that are associated with PNSE acknowledgment could be essential to developing preventive and rehabilitative interventions to increase PNSE acknowledgment and more effectively treat people with dual NSE histories (e.g., see Anderson et al., 2023).

- *Nonconsensual sexual experience acknowledgement and psychological symptomatology: Gender minority versus majority intervention points*

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Group  
 Wesley Malvini, B.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Nonconsensual sexual experiences (NSEs) can cause significant difficulties that interact with different aspects of identity to predict long term outcomes. Although the literature has identified variance in post-NSE outcomes between binary genders, there is limited research exploring differences in varied gender categories. Gender predicts if a person acknowledges their own NSEs using sexual violence labels (Lipinski et al., 2021). Further, NSE acknowledgement's relationship to psychological sequelae shows gender-specific outcomes (Anderson et al., 2021; Cleere & Lynn, 2013). Non-acknowledgement may buffer the negative impacts on psychological functioning (Valdespino-Hayden et al., 2022) as a temporary avoidance strategy (Rousseau et al., 2020). Three Gaussian Graphical Models (a network analysis) will be run to compare cisgender men, cisgender women, and all other genders in an NSE sample on post-traumatic and depressive symptoms, and the dimensions of PI and PF. These sub-processes could emerge as critical target areas for developing interventions to support people with NSE histories while considering varied gender identities.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Assess potential differences in the functions of sexual violence acknowledgment.
2. Contrast differences in gender minority and majority NSE trajectories and potential barriers and pathways to treatment using the ACT model.
3. Analyze the relationships between a person's role in NSEs, potential resulting psychological sequelae, and clinical presentation (e.g., psychological inflexibility) and routes to individualized treatment pathways.

### 9. Applying ACT Principles with Neurodivergent Individuals

Panel • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Neurodiversity

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Southdown**

Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute

Jennifer Kemp, MPsych(Clinical), Adelaide Behaviour Therapy  
 Sarah Cassidy, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic  
 Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., C. Psychol. Ps.S.I., University College Dublin  
 Brett D Howard, Ph.D., APRN, Private Practice  
 Mary Anne Toledo-Tamula, M.A., Pediatric Oncology Branch, National Cancer Institute

ACT offers a uniquely flexible approach that can be employed to help neurodivergent individuals navigate personal challenges and build meaningful lives. This panel will consider how ACT can be applied to specific challenges regularly faced by neurodivergent populations (e.g., autistic people, individuals with ADHD, intellectual disabilities, or learning disabilities) such as cultivating meaningful, supportive connections, addressing sensory overload, developing emotion regulation skills, and alleviating persistent self-criticism. By building psychological flexibility and values-led behavior within a framework that embraces and validates individual differences, ACT strategies can help neurodivergent individuals move towards self-acceptance and celebrate their neurodivergence. While both clinicians and researchers have opportunities to support neurodivergent individuals, this must reflect the needs and priorities of these individuals. This panel will include clinicians, researchers, and medical providers who will reflect on their clinical, research, and lived experience. Panelists will explore how ACT and CBS approaches more broadly may be enhanced by applying neurodiversity-affirming principles, challenging normative expectations, and acknowledging the ongoing impact of stigma and discrimination, further identifying research priorities for the field.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how ACT principles can be applied effectively to address the specific challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals.
2. Explain how to adapt ACT approaches to integrate neurodiversity-affirming principles that challenge normative expectations and address the impact of internalized ableism and stigma.
3. List two potential pitfalls and ethical considerations for practitioners and researchers when applying ACT and CBS principles with neurodivergent individuals.

### 10. Doing What Matters In Times Of Stress: ACT and the World Health Organisation

**Invited** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, PTSD, Depression

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Russ Harris, MBBS, Psychological Flexibility P/L



In 2015, the World Health Organisation asked Russ to be the primary author of a 10-hour ACT-based group protocol, for use in refugee camps. Three RCTs based on this protocol, show that it not only reduces depression and PTSD, but also prevents the onset of mental health disorders in those at high risk. To support the protocol, Russ also wrote a cartoon-based ACT book titled 'Doing What Matters In Times of Stress' - and this is now the most commonly downloaded mental health resource on the WHO website. In this talk, Russ will describe the challenges of and lessons learned from writing these resources, especially with regard to making ACT simple, understandable, easy-to-teach,

and easy-to-do - for cultures all around the globe.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain how complex ACT concepts can be simplified in ways that make them practical for a large audience.
2. Discuss key ACT strategies for use in high stress situations.
3. Apply a simple, trauma-sensitive ACT practice for rapidly training mindfulness in any audience.

### 11. Embracing Artificial Intelligence: How AI Can Be Helpful for CBS Clients, Clinicians, and Researchers

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Strategic planning*

Categories: Mobile or digital technology, Artificial Intelligence

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Michael Bordieri, Ph.D., Murray State University

Jonathan Bricker, Ph.D., Fred Hutch Cancer Center

Cristóbal Hernández, Ph.D., Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez

Robert Johansson, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Stockholm University, Sweden

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) presents unique opportunities for clinicians, researchers, and clients within the context of Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS). This panel explores how AI can augment CBS-based therapeutic practices, offering innovative solutions to enhance clinical outcomes, improve accessibility, and deepen therapeutic engagement. Panelists will discuss the integration of AI in areas such as addictive behaviors, personalized intervention planning, real-time client feedback, and the automation of routine tasks, enabling clinicians to focus on core therapeutic processes. The session will also explore AI-powered tools that support clients' self-monitoring and skill acquisition, promoting behavioral flexibility and values-based living outside of the therapy room. Importantly, the discussion will address ethical considerations, including maintaining client privacy, minimizing biases in AI systems, the integrity and reliability of AI systems, and ensuring that technology complements rather than replaces the human connection central to CBS. By bridging cutting-edge AI advancements with CBS principles, this panel aims to illuminate how these technologies can be thoughtfully and responsibly utilized to benefit both clinicians and clients in pursuit of meaningful, values-based change.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe recent applications of AI in CBS clinical and research contexts.
2. Identify common ethical challenges and strategies to mitigate risk when using AI in CBS.
3. Describe the alignment of AI with current CBS priorities and discuss how AI might inform and be informed by future CBS developments.

## **12. ACT like a Coach: Ethics, Stance and Application**

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Professional development, Sports or performance-enhancing, Coaching

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Shane D O'Neil-Hart, LCSW, Lyra Health

Aprilia West, Psy.D., MT, PCC, Dr. Aprilia West

A growing body of research suggests ACT is effective both for promoting wellbeing and performance as well as addressing mental health challenges, making it a natural fit for coaching. Yet practitioners navigating this divide face practical and theoretical quandaries. The role shift from therapy to coaching isn't as simple as dropping the diagnosis – it requires a sophisticated understanding of scope and coaching-specific competencies.

This interactive presentation unpacks the "what, why, and how" of ACT coaching. We'll tackle the burning questions many practitioners face: What do ACT coaches do differently from therapists? How do coaches navigate working alongside clinical challenges? And what makes coaching its own unique art form rather than just "therapy-lite"? Through didactics, discussion, and case studies, we will explore the theoretical foundations of ACT as applied to coaching, clarify distinctions between therapy and coaching, and examine ethical and professional considerations for clinicians seeking to integrate coaching into their work.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe relevant research on psychological flexibility coaching.
2. Apply foundational ACT coaching competencies.
3. Utilize a framework for maintaining scope as an ACT coach.



### 13. Treating Shame and Self-Criticism Using Process-Based Approaches: Breaking Patterns and Introducing New Experiences

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Processes of change, Compassion-Focused Therapy, ACT, MBT, Shame, Self-Criticism

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Michaela B. Swee, Ph.D., ABPP, McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School

Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville

Elizabeth J. Lewis, Ph.D., McLean Hospital

Shame and self-criticism are associated with psychological problems across diagnoses, including anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and personality psychopathology (Cândeia & Szentagotai-Tătar, 2018; DeCou et al., 2023; Werner et al., 2019; Buchman-Wildbaum et al., 2021; Ritter et al., 2014). As such, effectively addressing shame and self-criticism may be helpful for alleviating multiple symptom clusters. This workshop will present techniques from three transdiagnostic approaches that can be helpful for highly critical, shame-prone individuals: acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Luoma & Platt, 2015), compassion-focused therapy (CFT; Gilbert, 2020), and mentalization-based therapy (MBT; Vogt & Norman, 2019; Choi-Kane & Simonsen, 2022). Three case studies will be presented to illustrate experiences of shame and self-criticism across three distinct clinical presentations: anxious perfectionism, complex posttraumatic stress, and vulnerable narcissism. Presenters will introduce the three case conceptualizations, each using a different theoretical orientation, and guide attendees through at least three specific experiential exercises that can be used to work with shame and self-criticism in ACT, CFT, and MBT. Presenters will facilitate a discussion with attendees around integration of these exercises into clinical practice.

Educational Objectives:

1. Define and identify common manifestations of shame and self-criticism in anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and narcissism.
2. Describe techniques of ACT, CFT, and MBT for treating shame and self-criticism.
3. Utilize compassionate embodiment, values exploration, and role-play exercises to shift patterns of shame and self-criticism.

### 14. A Process-Based Approach to ACT for OCD: Integrating the Six Core Processes for Enhanced Treatment

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, OCD

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Perry Leynor, LPC, Specialists in OCD & Anxiety Recovery (SOAR)

Findley Harris, M.A., Specialists in OCD & Anxiety Recovery

Marisa Mazza, Psy.D., choicetherapy

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is an empirically supported treatment for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) that complements traditional Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) (Twohig et al., 2018). While ACT is often recommended as an adjunct to ERP, suggested strategies for integration are limited and tend to focus on defusion and acceptance in the literature (Twohig et al., 2006). This session will highlight how all of ACT's six core processes can deepen case conceptualization and enhance the OCD treatment. By using functional assessment, clinicians can better understand the purpose of compulsions and tailor interventions that align with clients' values and treatment goals. Through practical examples and experiential exercises, this session will demonstrate how ACT provides a flexible, process-based approach that not only supports ERP but also helps clients build long-term psychological flexibility and meaningful lives beyond OCD.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate the application of the six core processes of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in the treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).
2. Analyze situations requiring the strengthening of behavioral repertoires through reinforcement contingencies.
3. Interpret OCD presentations using the framework of functional contextualism.

Thursday Afternoon 12:15 PM

**On Becoming a PRT**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Borgne**

Lou Lasprugato, Training Committee Chair  
Sarah Pegrum, Training Committee Member

If you are thinking about completing the application process to become a peer-reviewed ACT trainer, then this panel is for you. Being a peer-reviewed trainer (PRT) is an important way to be a part of ACBS and contribute to the dissemination of ACT. The panel includes training committee members who will share their experiences and discuss the steps in becoming a PRT. They can assist with answering whatever questions you may have, such as, "How long does it take?; What is the process?; What is the application like?; What if I am not a native English speaker?; What is the point of becoming a PRT?; Do I have the experience/qualifications to be a PRT?", and many others.

All are welcome to attend!

**Connecting - Caring - Creating: Transforming a Culture From Within**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Bayside A**

Beate Ebert, Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice  
Carolina Gavira, Ph.D., Private Practice

"How can you transform the effects of violence or violent cultural aspects, using ACT and Prosocial? For the past 15 years, \*Commit and Act\*, a registered NGO with chapters in Germany, Sierra Leone, the United States—and a newly launched initiative in Colombia—has been exploring that question in practice. Our vision is that in the face of all circumstances, people can choose to live according to their values and empower others to do the same. We will share how ACT and Prosocial have been effectively applied to address gender-based violence, respond to health crises such as Ebola, increase access to education, and support families experiencing extreme poverty. With photos, videos, data, and personal field stories, we aim to offer a vivid and practical view of what this work looks like on the ground. May be you're curious about community-level applications of ACT, or considering joining our international team—we look forward to connecting with you. Everyone is welcome! Beate, Carolina & Hannah

**Social Work SIG Luncheon**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Anastasia Sfiroudis-Rodriguez, Private Practice

The ACBS Social Work SIG invites members and prospective members to gather for networking. The SIG is inviting students from local Social Work programs at universities in New Orleans. We will be discussing goals for the future of the Social Work SIG and brainstorming future ideas.

**Chicago Chapter ACBS at World Conference!**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Nottaway**

Kat Johnson, Private Practice  
Tim Lo, Private Practice

Meet-up for the Chicago branch of ACBS.

Thursday Afternoon 1:15 PM

### 15. Mastering 'Creative Hopelessness': Compassionately Undermining Clients' Unworkable Control Strategies in ACT

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Professional development, Behavior analysis, Creative Hopelessness

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Rikke Kjølgaard, M.Sc., [www.rikkekjolgaard.com](http://www.rikkekjolgaard.com)

Many clinicians encounter challenges when implementing the process and practice of creative hopelessness in ACT. They may struggle with their own reactions to clients' responses, worry about its impact on clients, or become entangled in control agendas, leading to discussions that undermine the intervention's effectiveness. Creative hopelessness is designed to help clients recognize the futility of their current control strategies and open up to new, value-driven behaviors. However, if not delivered with clarity and compassion, its function can be lost, shifting the focus to content rather than process.

This highly practical and experiential workshop will guide clinicians through the nuanced application of creative hopelessness, emphasizing compassionate undermining of clients' unworkable control strategies. Through roleplays and demonstrations, participants will learn flexible and fluent methods to incorporate this process into sessions. Additionally, clinicians will be encouraged to reflect on their own processes and how these influence therapeutic outcomes. By engaging in these experiential activities, attendees will enhance their skills in delivering creative hopelessness interventions, ultimately fostering more effective client engagement and progress in therapy.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify unworkable control strategies employed by clients in therapeutic settings.
2. Demonstrate the application of compassionate creative hopelessness techniques through roleplay exercises.
3. Identify personal barriers that hinder the effective delivery of creative hopelessness interventions in clinical practice.

### 17. Acceptance - Training Step by Step

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Professional development, Acceptance

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside A**

Beate Ebert, Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice

Acceptance – Step-by-Step Training

Learning Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) involves mastering processes and skills that are both intuitively understandable and deeply complex.

"Acceptance" is a perfect example: we all know that there are things in life we cannot change—events, our bodies, the state of the world, and more. But how do we truly accept something that feels painful or wrong? How can we support our clients and trainees in this process? Is it possible to find richness and guidance in facing what we have previously avoided?

This workshop will provide you with: 1. Concrete steps to effectively train clients or colleagues in this essential process, which is foundational to all other psychological flexibility processes; 2. A space to personally explore acceptance in relation to your own experiences; 3. Insights into the different dimensions of acceptance and its connection to self-as-context.

You are invited to join with a spirit of curiosity and a willingness to explore an area in your life where you tend to avoid certain experiences.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the process of acceptance as a set of concrete, active steps and apply it effectively.
2. Demonstrate how to guide clients, workshop attendees, or others in cultivating acceptance, seamlessly integrating these principles into conversations.
3. Analyze dimensions of acceptance and explain their relationship to the concept of self-as-context.

## **18. Metaphors, Fire, and Other Dangerous Things: Embodied Experience in the Therapy Room**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Strategic planning*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, RFT / RGB / language, Metaphors, Embodiment

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Eugen Secara, Ph.D. (C), Babeş-Bolyai University  
Matthew D. Skinta, Ph.D., ABPP, Roosevelt University  
Ioana Ivan, M.A., Babeş-Bolyai University  
Cristian-Silviu Oarcea

There are few aspects of language that demonstrate its power in behavior change as elegantly as metaphors. More than just linguistic tools, metaphors structure how we perceive, feel, and act, shaping both our problems and their potential solutions. This workshop explores the use of metaphors in psychotherapy by integrating Relational Frame Theory with the 4E (enactive-embodied-embedded-extended) cognition approach in cognitive science. We will examine how metaphors are not only spoken but lived, offering a direct route to psychological flexibility and experiential change.

Through clinical demonstrations and experiential exercises, participants will explore the embodied nature of the metaphors that emerge in therapy and how embodiment can be skillfully employed to create and shape metaphors that support behavior change.

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to analyze, construct, and apply metaphors from an embodied perspective, using them as dynamic tools for transformation in therapy.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the role of embodiment in metaphor formation and explain how embodied experience influences metaphor use in psychotherapy.
2. Identify relevant present-moment embodied dynamics that can enhance metaphor generation.
3. Apply an embodied perspective when constructing and integrating metaphors in therapy, utilizing bodily experience, movement, and spatial awareness to shape effective metaphors that support psychological flexibility and behavior change.

## **19. Transforming Self and Suffering: Psychological Flexibility in Psychedelic, Interpersonal, and Identity-Focused Interventions**

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data, Case presentation*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Psychedelics, Psychedelic therapy, Impostor Syndrome

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Andreas Larsson, M.Sc., Ph.D., Lic Psychologist, Mid Sweden University  
Henry Whitfield, M.Sc., Maastricht University

This session explores how psychological flexibility processes can help transform suffering and promote well-being across diverse experiential contexts. The first study compares two ACT-informed psychotherapy approaches delivered after psilocybin truffle retreats—one emphasizing self-perspective taking (SPT), and the other focusing on imaginal exposure to aversive memory networks (PMNR). Results show sustained benefits in the PMNR group across multiple domains, suggesting distinct pathways for integration after psychedelic experiences. A second qualitative study builds a grounded theory of interpersonal interactions during ACT-informed psychedelic retreats. Findings reveal how facilitator behaviors, peer witnessing, and embodied presence serve as powerful mechanisms for

deepening emotional processing and supporting participant transformation. Finally, a third study investigates the Impostor Phenomenon (IP) in high-achieving individuals, highlighting how psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion mediate the relationship between IP and distress. Results underscore the potential of ACT to disrupt self-critical patterns and increase adaptive behavior. Together, these studies illuminate the transdiagnostic power of psychological flexibility to guide identity shifts, emotional openness, and healing across psychedelic, interpersonal, and cognitive domains.

- *Post-psilocybin ACT-informed interventions (exposure vs. cognitive defusion) preceded different effects at 12 weeks*

Henry Whitfield, M.Sc., Maastricht University  
 Natasha Mason Ph.D., Maastricht University  
 Jan Schepers, Maastricht University  
 Kim Kuypers, Maastricht University

This observational study contrasts outcomes comparing two adjunct psychotherapy treatments following a psilocybin truffle retreat (n=50). One group (n=23) focused on self-perspective taking, through cognitive defusion (ACT-SPT), and the other (n=27) focused on psychedelic memory network re-experiencing and related aversive memories with imaginal exposure (ACT-PMNR). Both groups received ACT behaviour change coaching. Questionnaires assessed outcomes in Depression, Anxiety, Stress (DASS-21), Valued Living behaviour (VLQ), Psychological Flexibility (compACT), mindfulness FFMQ-15, at baseline, after the retreat, after the intervention and at six months.

Linear Mixed Model analysis detected variations in Time by Intervention interactions for Openness to Experience. During the post-retreat period of intervention, the ACT-SPT group returned to baseline sooner than ACT-PMNR group ( $p = 0.046$ ). Conversely, there was marginal support for the Observe facet of mindfulness increasing ( $p = 0.051$ ), and Cognitive Fusion ( $p = 0.051$ ) mean scores reducing in the ACT-SPT group, diverging from the mean ACT-PMNR scores during the period when these interventions were different.

Long-term follow-up restricted to ACT-PMNR found significant enduring effects in all measures. Preliminary findings suggest post-psilocybin interventions drive targeted outcomes.

- *The Role of Psychological Inflexibility and Cognitive Fusion in the Impostor Phenomenon: A Mediation Analysis*

Andreas Larsson, Ph.D., Mid Sweden University  
 Mustafa Mohammed, M.Sc., Mid Sweden University

The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) affects many high-achieving individuals, leading to persistent self-doubt and heightened psychological distress. This presentation will explore the role of psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion in maintaining IP and provide an analysis of their mediating effects on psychological distress.

Drawing on findings from our recent mediation analysis, we will demonstrate how cognitive fusion and behavioral rigidity contribute to the distressing effects of IP using validated measures such as the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale, the Multidimensional Psychological Flexibility Inventory, and the Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire.

Results indicate significant positive associations between IP and psychological distress ( $p < .001$ ). Psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion both independently mediated this relationship, with a significant serial mediation effect ( $p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of IP experience greater cognitive entanglement and reduced behavioral adaptability, leading to increased distress.

Findings highlight the critical role of cognitive and behavioral rigidity in maintaining the distressing effects of IP. These insights have direct implications for process-based interventions, particularly Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), in individuals experiencing IP.

- *A Qualitative study of Dimensions of participant-facilitator interactions during psychedelic healing ceremonies*

Henry Whitfield, M.Sc., Maastricht University

Interactions between facilitators and participants are fundamental to set and setting during psychedelic healing ceremonies. 44 participants were interviewed after ACT-informed psilocybin retreats that allowed directive and non-directive care during ceremonies. Themes reported were categorised and related through axial coding to build a Grounded Theory of interpersonal interactions that help or hinder psychotherapeutic healing.

Themes included:

-Facilitators embodying stillness in face/posture helped participant stay with pain.



- Facilitators reminding participants of intentions, instructing to lean into difficult emotion, reassuring 'I am safe and capable', contributed to the journey experience.
  - Facilitators unblocking stuck process of participants with cognitive-defusion exercise.
  - Participants: witnessing others receive kindness, touch, ask for help, be present, enabled participants to open to their process, feel avoided emotions, notice self-story.
- A theory of interacting dimensions of 'influencing qualities' from: 1) Facilitators to participants, 2) Participants witnessing facilitators caring for other participants, and 3) direct participant to participant interactions, are discussed.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. List processes that were influenced by particular interventions during the afterglow period of psychedelic integration.
2. Analyze the mediating roles of psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion in the relationship between the Impostor Phenomenon and psychological distress.
3. List multiple dimensions of influencing factors during a group psychedelic therapy process.

## 20. ACT and Digital Mental Health Interventions: Exploring Relevant Populations and Implementation Challenges

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Dissemination or global health strategies, Digital mental health interventions, Suicide risk, Dementia, Adherence in naturalistic settings for young adults

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Keaton J Soileau, M.A., Utah State University

Discussant: Joanna J Arch, Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder

Emily M Bowers, M.S., Utah State University

Kristy Dalrymple, Ph.D., Brown Health Medical Group and Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Francesca M Knudsen, B.A., Utah State University

Historically, psychological research and success of implementing empirical interventions have been developed around those that are put in a position to access novel treatment opportunities, this typically being individuals of European Ancestry that fall within the middle to upper socioeconomic status (SES). Due to the homogeneity of the historical research population and the development of interventions around said population, this has contributed to the lack of diversity, inclusion, and cultivation of major health disparities for individuals seeking psychological intervention. The development of digital mental health interventions (DMHIs) looks to address this gap and has shown to increase access to empirical treatments, acceptability, and is more cost effective compared to traditional treatment (Levin et al., 2014). Moreover, DMHIs have shown to be effective for a variety of mental health concerns (Klimczak et al., 2023). However, when implementing DMHIs within real-world settings, adherence is negatively impacted (Bowers et al., n.d.). Thus, this presentation seeks to disseminate information highlighting relevant populations and implementation challenges when utilizing DMHIs.

- *Exploring the Feasibility and Acceptability of a Single-Session Online ACT Intervention for Adults with a Recent Dementia Diagnosis*

Francesca M. Knudsen, Utah State University

Heather H. Kelley, Ph.D., Utah State University

Ty B. Aller, Ph.D., Utah State University

Carter H. Davis,

Michael E. Levin, Ph.D., Utah State University

Receiving a dementia diagnosis is associated with poor mental health and reduced quality of life (QoL). While mental health interventions exist, they are often lengthy, resource-intensive, and require in-person treatment, which limits accessibility. Brief, online interventions have effectively enhanced mental health and QoL across various populations, but their application to adults with dementia remains understudied. To address this, we developed an online single-session intervention (SSI) using acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). This mixed-methods study examined its feasibility and acceptability among 17 adults with varying recent dementia diagnoses. Recruitment was challenging, highlighting feasibility concerns. However, program adherence was high (94% completion rate), and satisfaction ratings were

positive (system usability score: 80.6/100). Most participants (82%) were satisfied, 94% found it helpful, and 88% felt it was made for them, though 47% suggested further personalization. Qualitative interviews reinforced high acceptability, with participants highlighting useful ACT content and integration into daily life. Findings suggest an SSI may be a promising approach for enhancing QoL in adults with dementia, though future research should address recruitment barriers (e.g., establishing healthcare partnerships).

- *Development of an ACT-Based Digital Intervention to Reduce Suicide Risk in Patients Transitioning from Partial Hospital to Outpatient Care*

Kristy Dalrymple, Ph.D., Brown Health medical Group and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Michael Levin, Ph.D., Utah State University

Michael Antonelli, Rhode Island Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Juyoung (Grace) Yun, Rhode Island Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Catrina Aglubat, Rhode Island Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Hannah Herc, Ph.D., Brown Health Medical Group and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Laura Fischer, Ph.D., Brown Health Medical Group and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Nearly half of partial hospital program (PHP) patients report suicidal thoughts or behaviors upon admission. Despite the short-term efficacy of PHPs, the transition to outpatient care is a period of heightened risk for suicidality, relapse, and rehospitalization. Therefore, additional supports are needed to reduce suicide risk during this transitional period. Although suicide prevention digital interventions exist, many focus on only one or a few best practices (e.g., safety planning only). The current study aimed to develop a comprehensive digital intervention (My Values Program; MVP) to reduce suicide risk for patients transitioning from PHP to outpatient care, based on feedback from PHP patients (n=6) and PHP providers. Qualitative data will be presented from focus groups held with these two stakeholder groups, and the initial prototype of MVP developed based on this feedback will be presented. MVP is currently being tested in an open trial (n=30); the study methods for the open trial will also be presented, along with preliminary results on feasibility and acceptability.

- *Overcoming Adherence Barriers in Digital Mental Health Interventions: Lessons from Naturalistic Implementation*

Emily Bowers, M.S., Utah State University

Korena S. Klimeczak, M.S., Utah State University

Ty B. Aller, Ph.D., Utah State University

Michael E. Levin, Ph.D., Utah State University

Digital Mental Health Interventions (DMHIs) offer accessible and scalable mental health services for college students; however, program adherence is often suboptimal. This presentation explores innovative solutions to improve DMHI adherence in naturalistic settings. The first study investigates the feasibility of implementing a peer coaching program and the effects on DMHI adherence. Students who identified as men and who had worked with a mental health provider were more likely to sign up for peer-coaching. Despite 17.2% of students enrolling in coaching, dropout rates were high, highlighting significant scalability challenges. The second study examines whether adding the choice of a single session DMHI in addition to a multi-session DMHI provides a feasible alternative for users who might otherwise disengage. Among 509 participants, only 24.2% signed up for the single-session program. Users who chose the single session DMHI reported lower motivation and less frequent intentions to address mental health, yet had the highest completion rates compared to multi-session users. Together, these findings emphasize the need for tailored implementation strategies to optimize DMHI adherence in real-world settings.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify and implement innovative solutions to improve digital mental health intervention adherence in naturalistic settings.
2. Assess and compare the implementation of digital mental health interventions using acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for diverse populations.
3. Evaluate the acceptability and feasibility of an online brief intervention for dementia patients with difficulty accessing effective and affordable treatment.

## 21. Contextual perspectives on psychosis and complex mental health

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Complex mental health problems

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Oakley**

Lauren Lawson, Ph.D., La Trobe University

Discussant: Brandon Gaudiano, Ph.D., Brown University and Butler Hospital

Eric Morris, Ph.D., School of Psychology & Public Health, La Trobe University Academic Psychology Unit, Northern Health

Jihoon Choi, B.S., Butler Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Tatiana Khafif, M.Sc., Universidade de São Paulo / CECONTE

This international symposium will highlight the interconnected nature of mental health problems, through research integrating transdiagnostic mechanisms such as cognitive rigidity, psychological inflexibility, identity-related distress, and values engagement to understanding how people struggle with paranoid thinking, suicidal behaviours, and mood instability.

The first paper examines how autistic identity, internalized stigma, and camouflaging interact with paranoia and social communication in autistic adults, revealing subgroup variations and distinct pathways linking social factors to paranoia.

The second paper investigates cognitive fusion's role in insomnia and persecutory thinking within a non-clinical population, demonstrating how cognitive fusion amplifies the impact of negative affect on paranoia.

The third paper explores values-based processes in reducing suicidality and self-harm among individuals with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders post-hospitalization. Findings highlight perceived values progress as a crucial protective factor against self-harm risk.

The final paper presents a randomized controlled trial assessing ACT for depression in bipolar disorder, evaluating its impact on mood, functionality, and psychological flexibility.

Advancements in supporting people with complex mental health may be empowered through process-oriented studies understanding behaviours in context.

- *Autism Identity, Stigma, and Paranoid Thinking*

Lauren Lawson, Ph.D., ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University

Jade Purchase, La Trobe University

Hridant Vakharia, La Trobe University

Elizabeth Cupper, La Trobe University

Venyi Hew, La Trobe University

Ellen Richardson, La Trobe University

Eric M.J. Morris, La Trobe University

Simon Bury, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University

Many autistic individuals face mental health challenges, including increased paranoia. There is emerging evidence that internalised stigma and camouflaging are related to poorer mental health outcomes, though the relationship to paranoia or role positive autistic identity remains unclear. We aimed to explore relationships between internalised stigma, autistic identity, camouflaging, paranoid thinking, loneliness, worry, and belongingness among Australian 19 autistic adults. Participants completed a 3-week experience sampling study with 4 prompts per day. Data were analysed using Group Iterative Multiple Model Estimation (GIMME). At the whole sample level, a contemporaneous relationship was found between paranoid thinking and social communication. Two subgroups were identified: Subgroup 1 had group-level contemporaneous relationship between paranoia and camouflaging, while Subgroup 2 exhibited a more interconnected network, notably connections from social communication to camouflaging, stigma, sensory sensitivity, and paranoia. For both subgroups, identity and belongingness were associated at the group level but did not interconnect with other constructs. Variation was noted in the individual networks, with some participants exhibiting stronger connections than others. Implications of results will be discussed.

- *Sleep, Negative Affect, and Cognitive Fusion in Non-Clinical Paranoia*

Eric M.J. Morris, La Trobe University & Northern Health, Melbourne Australia

Darcy Fahroedin, La Trobe University

Marilyn Cugnetto, Northern Health, Melbourne Australia

John Farhall, La Trobe University

Poor sleep and negative affect are linked to increased paranoid thinking. Research suggests cognitive fusion may play a key role in this relationship. This study explored how these factors interact, proposing a moderated-mediation model of insomnia and persecutory thinking. Anxiety, depression, and repetitive negative thinking were examined as mediators, while cognitive fusion was tested as a moderator of both direct and indirect pathways. A cross-sectional study with 620 Australian adults assessed these relationships through an online survey. Results showed that cognitive fusion moderated the direct link between insomnia and persecutory thinking, as well as the indirect effects through anxiety and repetitive

negative thinking. A rigid response to thoughts appears to significantly shape how insomnia contributes to paranoia, particularly when considering negative affect. Given the cross-sectional design, further research should explore these variables longitudinally and experimentally, across both clinical and non-clinical populations.

- *The Role of Personal Values in Reducing the Risk of Suicidality and Self-Harm Risk in Adults with Schizophrenia-Spectrum Disorders Following a Hospitalization*

Jihoon Choi, Butler Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Ana Rabasco, Butler Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Johnny Lu, Butler Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Brandon A. Gaudiano, Butler Hospital and the Alpert Medical School of Brown University

People with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (SSD) face a heightened risk for suicidality and self-harm (SSH). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has demonstrated efficacy in treating people with psychosis and reducing SSH across various cohorts. This study examined whether core ACT constructs (values progress, values obstruction, psychological flexibility, mindfulness) and their changes predict SSH among adults ( $n = 81$ ) with SSD recruited during psychiatric hospitalization. Participants completed a baseline and 4-month follow-up assessment following hospital discharge. Cross-sectional analyses at baseline showed that values progress was the only ACT construct that emerged as a significant statistical predictor of SSH ( $p < .01$ ). Longitudinal analyses demonstrated that change in values obstruction significantly predicted SSH ( $p < .01$ ); changes in other ACT constructs were not significant predictors of SSH. These findings suggest that one's perceived lack of progress toward personal values is closely linked to SSH and reductions in perceived obstructions to valued living are associated with decreased severity of SSH in patients with psychosis over time. Thus, values may be an important suicide treatment target in this population.

- *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Depression in Bipolar Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Trial*

Tatiana Cohab Khafif, University of São Paulo (Brazil) School of Medicina - Program for Bipolar Disorder (PROMAN)

Sofia Hamoui, University of São Paulo (Brazil) School of Medicina - Program for Bipolar Disorder (PROMAN)

William F. Perez, University of São Paulo (Brazil) School of Medicina - Program for Bipolar Disorder (PROMAN)

Renatha El-Rafihy Ferreira, University of São Paulo (Brazil) School of Medicina - Program for Bipolar Disorder (PROMAN)

Beny Lafer, University of São Paulo (Brazil) School of Medicina - Program for Bipolar Disorder (PROMAN)

Background: Depression in bipolar disorder (BD) includes both full-blown episodes and subsyndromic symptoms, which are common, persistent, and impair quality of life and treatment outcomes. These symptoms increase suicide risk and complicate treatment response. Managing depressive symptoms, including subsyndromic forms, is essential for better BD outcomes. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a psychotherapy that enhances psychological flexibility and value-driven action, has shown efficacy in various psychiatric disorders but remains underexplored in BD.

Aims: This RCT evaluates ACT's efficacy in improving mood symptoms, functionality, quality of life, and sleep in BD.

Methods: Ninety BD patients from the Institute of Psychiatry, University of São Paulo Medical School, are randomized into experimental and control groups. The experimental group receives 12 weekly 2-hour ACT sessions plus treatment as usual (TAU), while the control group receives three 2-hour psychoeducation sessions and TAU. Assessments occur pre- and post-intervention and at six-month follow-up.

Results: Preliminary findings are expected in early 2025.

Conclusion: This trial may establish ACT as an accessible, evidence-based intervention for BD.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how processes of psychological inflexibility contribute to the impact of paranoid thinking.
2. Discuss why addressing values-based processes may be important as a suicide treatment target for people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders.
3. Describe how ACT can be evaluated as an intervention to improve mood symptoms, quality of life and sleep for people with bipolar disorder.

## 22. Prosocial Strategies for High-Performing Teams: Going Beyond the Playbook

Panel • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises

Categories: Sports or performance-enhancing, Organizational / Industrial psychology, Mindfulness, Prosocial, Athletics

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Daniel J Moran, Ph.D., Touro University  
Ross G White, Ph.D., Queen's University Belfast  
David J Udelf, Psy.D., David Udelf & Associates  
Trevor Jones, B.A., Aware Performance Group  
Emily Leeming, Ph.D., KBR

Successful teams—whether in mental health organizations, high-stakes business settings, or sport teams and other organizational settings—thrive on trust, cohesion, and values-driven leadership. This panel explores how Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) and Prosocial principles from Ostrom's Core Design Principles can be applied to create resilient, high-performing teams.

We will examine how psychological flexibility, values-based coaching, and open communication foster team trust, motivation, and sustainable success. Panelists—including sport psychologists, organizational leaders, and consultants—will share real-world applications of ACT-based leadership for navigating conflict, pressure, and balancing individual and collective goals.

In addition to discussion, this session will include an experimental exercise that demonstrates ACT principles in action, providing attendees with an experiential understanding of how these strategies enhance team function. In addition, attendees will leave with access to the Prosocial tool, the Victory Wheel. Whether working in a mental health clinic, a hospital system, a sport team, or another organizational setting, participants will leave with practical tools to cultivate psychological flexibility, improve collaboration, and build more effective teams.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe and analyze how ACT and Prosocial principles enhance team trust, cohesion, and resilience.
2. Identify key psychological flexibility skills that help leaders foster values-driven motivation and performance.
3. Apply ACT-based interventions and Prosocial tools to improve communication, decision-making, and team alignment in high-pressure environments.

### **23. Rapport-building and ACT interventions for the lonely, disgruntled (and possibly angry) male client**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Positive Masculinity, Toxic Masculinity, Values, Radicalization, Anger Management, Interpersonal Processes, ACT, FAP

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Francis Lemay, Ph.D., Université Laval  
Drew Carr, Ph.D., VA Sierra Nevada HCS/UNR

Recent economic, political, and social shifts since the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified challenges faced by men experiencing loneliness, anger, and disenfranchisement. These difficulties often manifest as heightened distress, increased social isolation, and, in some cases, extremist or antagonistic views. Guided by Positive Psychology's Positive Masculinity Paradigm, this workshop aims to promote constructive male identity development through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP). Specifically, we seek to (1) identify the processes leading some men to adopt damaging, misogynistic, or otherwise maladaptive viewpoints; (2) provide empirically grounded strategies for building rapport with these clients despite incongruences between client and therapist values; and (3) foster pro-social beliefs, values, and behaviors that honor men's strengths, relational capacities, and potential for growth. By harnessing ACT's core processes and FAP's principles, mental health professionals can effectively support men in defusing from unhelpful thought patterns, accepting difficult emotions, and cultivating values-driven



actions. Ultimately, this workshop underscores the importance of empowering men toward self-awareness and social contribution, thereby reducing distress and the likelihood of radicalized worldviews.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Apply ACT's six core processes to assess and conceptualize isolation, anger, and related factors in men struggling with loneliness and negative worldviews.
2. Utilize FAP's five guiding principles to establish genuine, supportive connections that facilitate the integration of ACT strategies.
3. Demonstrate effective techniques for defusing from distressing or provocative content in-session, fostering acceptance, and guiding clients toward constructive, value-consistent behaviors despite disagreements in expressed values.

**24. Emotions in Context: What Emotion Science and Intervention Science Can Say to Each Other**

**Panel** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Behavioral or contextual neuroscience, Processes of change, Emotion

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Amie Zarling, Ph.D., Iowa State University

Stefan G. Hofmann, Ph.D., Philipps University Marburg

Lisa Barrett, Ph.D., Northeastern University/Mass General Hospital

Maria Karekla, Ph.D., University of Cyprus

Rick Hanson, Ph.D., UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center

Emotion science and intervention science have historically developed along parallel tracks, yet their integration holds transformative potential for advancing psychological research and clinical practice. This panel explores the interplay between these fields, highlighting how insights from affective science, neuroscience, and contemplative practices can inform psychological interventions—and how clinical findings can refine our understanding of emotional processes.

Discussions will examine the predictive brain model of emotion, the neuroscience of anxiety and depression, and the role of psychological flexibility in emotional regulation. Panelists will also explore how neuroplasticity and contemplative practices enhance resilience, self-compassion, and well-being, providing actionable strategies for integrating these insights into interventions. By bridging basic emotion science with applied clinical methods, the panel will offer new perspectives on optimizing mental health treatments.

Through an interdisciplinary dialogue, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how findings from neuroscience, mindfulness, and contextual behavioral science can refine interventions and inform emotion research, fostering a more comprehensive and effective approach to psychological well-being.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe how contemporary emotion theories, including the constructionist model of emotion, contribute to understanding emotional regulation and psychological flexibility in clinical interventions.
2. Analyze the ways neuroscientific findings, such as neural biomarkers and predictive processing, inform and refine psychological treatments for emotion regulation disorders.
3. Apply process-based intervention strategies to enhance emotional regulation, demonstrating how they can be tailored to diverse clinical populations.

**25. Boosting multicultural Competencies with latins using FAP**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Supervision and training, Social justice / equity / diversity, Training

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Natalia Esparza, Mgs, Private Practice

Amanda Muñoz - Martinez, Ph.D., University of the Andes

Latinx individuals represent one of the largest immigrant populations in the U.S. However, recent political decisions on immigration have disproportionately impacted this community, increasing the need for culturally sensitive interventions. Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP), emphasizes relational contexts—particularly the therapeutic relationship—to promote well-being. FAP offers a unique opportunity to train interpersonal competencies, as therapists function as representatives of their clients' verbal community while adopting a culturally humble stance. In this role, therapists can shape client behaviors while respecting and integrating their cultural practices and identities (Robayo-Pérez et al., 2024). This workshop aims to develop therapists' multicultural competencies—curiosity, awareness, and cultural humility—through a FAP-based approach. Using Behavioral Skills Training (BST), specifically instruction, modeling, and shaping, participants will acquire theoretical and practical tools to enhance multicultural competencies and facilitate deep therapeutic interactions with Latinx Clients.

Participants will review essential FAP principles, train in multicultural competencies, and apply concepts to real cases involving Latinx clients. The workshop will conclude with a discussion on the clinical implications of integrating functional contextualism, behavior modification, and multicultural competence in therapy.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze Latinx cultural experiences (e.g., migration) and practices (e.g., masculinity norms, emotional restraint, family roles) within FAP, and apply this understanding to promote behavioral repertoires driven by cultural curiosity and enhance cultural comfort.
2. Engage therapists in experiential exercises to enhance cultural awareness, increase sensitivity to values, beliefs, and biases related to Latino populations, and address power imbalances in the therapeutic relationship.
3. Train therapists in cultural humility and its integration with FAP's interpersonal reinforcement through role-playing and live exercises, fostering effective interpersonal repertoires and reducing power imbalances shaped by cultural norms.

## 26. Family as Context: Innovative Contextual Behavioral Research with Caregivers and Families

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Families and Caregivers

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute

Discussant: Lisa W Coyne, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School/McLean & New England Center for OCD and Anxiety

Kenneth Po-Lun Fung, M.D., FRCPC, M.Sc., University of Toronto

Ronald D Rogge, Ph.D., University of Rochester

Mary Anne Toledo-Tamula, M.A., Pediatric Oncology Branch, National Cancer Institute

ACT researchers and practitioners know the importance of context. One of the key factors in understanding an individual's context is that of family. ACT provides a framework for coping with caregiving stressors, promoting connections with family and individual values, and strengthening psychological flexibility within the family system. Research has supported the use of ACT among parents and families of youth with medical conditions and autism, but families remain an underexplored population compared with many others. The presentations in this symposium will focus on innovative CBS research being done with caregivers and/or families. With topics ranging from family dynamics during the pandemic, to caregivers of youth with serious medical conditions, to ACT interventions among families from diverse cultures, this symposium encompasses a broad range of contextual-behavioral applications. The expertise among these dynamic presenters is substantial, and the topics are meant to inspire both researchers and clinicians who work with families and caregivers.

- *Caring for Caregivers with ACT: Preliminary Lessons from Black Caregiver Communities in Toronto and Caregiving Communities in South Korea*  
Kenneth Fung, M.D., University of Toronto

Caring for Caregivers with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (CC-ACT) is a group-based intervention designed to support caregivers of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities. Co-facilitated by a trained clinician and a caregiver with lived experience, CC-ACT has been studied across multiple sites in Canada over the past decade, including using an implementation science framework. With the onset of the pandemic, it was successfully adapted for virtual delivery via videoconferencing. This presentation will reflect on the role of sociocultural issues in the development and adaptation of CC-ACT, including the use of the Health Equity Impact Assessment tool to identify and address gaps in service provision for underserved communities. We will share insights from efforts to extend CC-ACT to diverse sociocultural settings, focusing on Black caregiver communities in the Greater Toronto Area and caregivers in South Korea. Key considerations, challenges, and lessons learned in engagement, cultural adaptation, and research implementation will be discussed.

- *The UFM Scale/Model: A Flexible Conceptual Framework to Clarify Mechanistic Pathways Promoting Distress/Wellbeing*  
Ronald D. Rogge, Ph.D., University of Rochester

GOAL: To link psychological flexibility to family dynamics. STUDY 1: Meta-analytic findings from 174 articles (N = 43,952 participants yielding 137 meta-analytic effects) uncovered links from parent psychological flexibility to higher quality romantic relationships, greater adaptive parenting, lower lax, harsh, and negative parenting, lower parenting burden/stress, greater family cohesion, and better child outcomes. STUDY 2: A sample of 742 coparents completed a baseline survey during the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US and weekly diaries for the following 8 weeks. Global parent inflexibility demonstrated robust links to most of the processes in the model, both at the level of stable between-family differences and at the level of within-family weekly shifts. The results further supported a top-down spillover cascade as predicted by Family Systems Theory linking parent inflexibility to greater parent depressive symptoms, to lower relationship satisfaction and higher relationship conflict, to greater coparent discord and family chaos, to greater angry parenting, to greater child distress. CONCLUSIONS: Parent psychological flexibility can shape family dynamics over time, thereby influencing child outcomes.

- *A remote ACT intervention for caregivers of children with a serious medical condition: Preliminary results of a randomized controlled trial*

Mary Anne Toledo-Tamula, M.A., National Cancer Institute  
Millicent S. Curlee, National Cancer Institute  
Jayla Melvin, MLIS, National Cancer Institute  
Darian Weaver, M.A., National Cancer Institute  
Paige Little, B.S., University of Albany, State University of New York  
Nour Al Ghriwati, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute  
Atara Siegel, Ph.D., Kennedy Krieger Institute  
Marielle Yohe, M.D., National Cancer Institute  
Andrea Gross, M.D., National Cancer Institute  
Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute

RASopathies are rare genetic disorders that are associated with physical and cognitive challenges. Thus, parents of children with RASopathies face unique stressors. This randomized controlled trial investigated the effectiveness of a remote ACT intervention aimed at reducing parenting stress in caregivers of children with RASopathies. Participants were randomized to an immediate intervention group (IG) or a wait-list control group (WL). The 8-week intervention included four video coaching sessions, weekly videos with exercises, and a workbook with weekly assignments. Participants completed validated measures of parenting stress, self-compassion, psychological flexibility and inflexibility, and experiential avoidance at pre- and post-intervention. Participants also completed ecological momentary assessments (EMA). Among the first 16 participants (mean age=42.25 years), parenting stress significantly decreased in the IG ( $p=.017$ ). Notable improvements in self-compassion and psychological flexibility ( $ps<.001$ ) and reductions in psychological inflexibility and experiential avoidance ( $ps<.001$ ) were reported. The WL group did not show significant improvements on any of these measures. EMA results are forthcoming. Preliminary findings suggests that the remote ACT intervention reduced parenting stress and enhanced core processes in ACT.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how psychological inflexibility relates to family and parenting outcomes.
2. Name one key consideration relevant to cultural adaption of ACT caregiver interventions.

3. List two examples of ACT techniques that can be applied effectively with parents of youth with medical or neurodevelopmental conditions.

## 27. To ACT or Not to ACT: Indecisiveness From an ACT Perspective

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Behavior analysis, Indecisiveness, awareness, psychological flexibility

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

İbrahim Bilgen, M.D., ACT Turkey

Melisa Ozerman, M.Sc., ACT Turkey

Sinem Bilgen, M.A., ACT Turkey

Indecisiveness comes at a cost—heightened anxiety, lost opportunities, decreased productivity, and stagnation. Avoiding decisions erodes self-trust, fuels regret, and increases existential anxiety, trapping us in avoidance. Yet, decision-making remains a challenge. We may delay choices or actively avoid action, often without recognizing the consequences. Indecisiveness is also multidimensional, influenced by internal experiences such as anxiety, intolerance of uncertainty, or fear of guilt for making a “wrong” decision. From an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) perspective, indecisiveness is not just a symptom of psychopathology—it is a behavior shaped by context, with unique functions for each individual. Choosing not to decide is still a choice; its workability determines how it aligns—or conflicts—with what truly matters. This workshop explores indecisiveness through an ACT and functional contextualist lens, not as a disorder but as a universal human experience. Through interactive exercises, real-play, and experiential practices, we will examine indecision’s function and responses to it. Participants will develop skills to navigate indecisiveness more effectively, bringing awareness to decision-making paralysis and fostering greater psychological flexibility.

Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze the unique function and consequences of indecisiveness in their own lives through a functional contextualist and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) lens.
2. Identify how their experiences during indecision fit into the ACT psychological flexibility/inflexibility hexagons.
3. Assess the workability of indecision and apply values-based decision-making strategies to take committed action.

## 16. One analysis to rule them all: Functional analysis as the guide to metaphor use in psychotherapy

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Strategic planning*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Using client metaphors in contextual therapies

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Borgne**

Niklas Törneke, M.D., NT Psykiatri

Most schools of psychotherapy see metaphor use as a critical tool for intervention. But what should guide the clinician in selecting particular metaphors for use in the therapeutic dialogue? This workshop will show how functional analysis can provide such guidance and give participants direct experience and training in applying it to different types of clinical situations.

The workshop will include some relevant theory but will primarily focus on practical training, particularly on how to use spontaneously evoked metaphors to support client self observation and change.

Educational Objectives:

1. Apply functional analysis on the fly, in making key choices on where to go next in a clinical dialogue using metaphor.

2. Select and apply a relevant metaphor in collaboration with the client to address a specific clinical situation.
3. Identify and utilize relevant metaphors spontaneously used by clients to enhance the therapeutic dialogue.

Thursday Afternoon 3:15 PM

## 28. Social Innovations in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Original data, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Social Support

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Megan M Kelly, Ph.D., UMass Chan Medical School

Maria Karekla, Ph.D., University of Cyprus

The social context has a large impact on the health and well-being of people and groups. Many people with mental health conditions, addictions, and chronic health problems struggle with relationship challenges and have difficulty with managing interpersonal conflict. This workshop will cover specific strategies to target interpersonal challenges across the spectrum of relationships and adaptations for specific mental health conditions and chronic health problems. Content will focus on: 1) acceptance and mindfulness exercises about fears of being rejected by others; 2) willingness exercises focused on avoided social activities; 3) social committed action exercises; 4) self-compassion exercises to target low self-worth as a reason for avoiding others; 5) building healthy relationships and improving communication skills; 6) managing anger in relationships; and 7) trust in relationships. We will present social innovations within the context of in person and telehealth interventions and engage in experiential exercises that could be used in clinical practice. Concepts will be illustrated using live demonstrations, metaphors, and worksheets. We will also discuss technological advances in the areas of social ACT assessment and intervention.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify how social contexts influence health and well-being, particularly in the context of mental health and chronic health conditions, and analyze their impact on treatment outcomes.
2. Describe the foundational principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as they relate to improving interpersonal relationships.
3. Describe ACT skills to improve relationships and social support networks.

## 29. Saying the wrong thing! Approaching difficult conversations with psychological flexibility

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Professional development, Social justice / equity / diversity, ACT, Psychological flexibility, Difficult conversations, Social progress

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Molly Tucker, Ph.D., Private Practice

Danielle Moyer, Ph.D., Oregon Health & Science University

Monica Gerber, Ph.D., Aurora Mental Health and Recovery Asian Pacific Clinic

Nancy Lee, M.A., LPC, NCC, DipCFT, Nancy Lee Counseling PLLC, Adams State University, Naropa University

Stephanie V Caldas, Ph.D., Hassenfeld Children's Hospital at NYU Langone

Have you ever unintentionally said the wrong thing to a client, student, research participant, family member, or even a friend? Have you ever avoided important conversations around difficult topics out of fear of saying the wrong thing? Given current social, environmental, and political events this may feel more salient than ever. As a caring and compassionate human, saying the wrong thing



can feel horrible. Unfortunately, efforts to avoid sensitive topics can have problematic consequences (Scherr, Herbert, & Forman, 2014). Training in ACT improves professional psychological flexibility and interpersonal skills (Luoma & Vilardaga, 2013). This workshop will provide an overview of psychological flexibility and key processes related to approaching difficult conversations. The workshop will be interactive and experiential, with a focus on application. Attendees will be invited and encouraged to explore areas of relevance to their own personal and professional lives and to practice new skills in small groups. If you are ready (or at least willing) to step out of your comfort zone and practice saying the wrong thing, this workshop is for you!

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe how the core processes of psychological flexibility apply to difficult conversations.
2. Identify areas of interpersonal discomfort and apply specific techniques to manage discomfort.
3. List specific value-based actions that can be taken toward engaging in important and meaningful conversations.

### **30. Getting Your ACT Together: Key Strategies for Planning and Leading Transformational Group Sessions**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Professional development, Supervision and training, Group therapy

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Rikke Kjelgaard, M.Sc., [www.rikkekjelgaard.com](http://www.rikkekjelgaard.com)

Facilitating group sessions can be both enjoyable and rewarding, yet it often presents challenges such as managing diverse goals, personalities, and narratives, all while integrating multiple ACT processes and addressing one's own internal dialogue (#helloimpostor!). This workshop introduces key strategies to enhance transformational group journeys. Participants will learn to design a structured yet flexible roadmap that guides the group's progression, ensuring clarity and purpose. They will discover techniques to create an environment that fosters trust and openness, laying the foundation for meaningful engagement. Attendees will explore methods to implement experiential learning, enabling participants to actively engage with ACT principles, thereby deepening their understanding and application. Additionally, the workshop will cover effective reinforcement techniques to encourage desired behaviors and celebrate successes within the group dynamic. This highly interactive session will blend practical tools with humor, creativity, and real-world application, ensuring that learning is both engaging and fun. By focusing on these strategies, participants will leave with renewed confidence and concrete skills to plan and lead impactful group sessions.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Design a Structured Roadmap: Demonstrate how to create a flexible yet structured plan for group sessions, ensuring clear guidance and purposeful progression throughout the therapeutic journey.
2. Foster an Engaging Environment: Demonstrate techniques to establish a trusting and open atmosphere, encouraging active participation and meaningful connections among group members.
3. Implement Experiential Learning and Reinforcement Strategies: Participants will acquire skills to incorporate experiential activities that embody ACT principles and apply effective reinforcement methods promoting desired behaviors and celebrate group achievements.

### **31. Understanding Misophonia: Clinical Characteristics, Treatment Outcomes, and Symptom Heterogeneity**

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Misophonia

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Emily M Bowers, M.S., Utah State University

Discussant: Rebecca L Schneider, Ph.D., Emory University School of Medicine

Samuel D. Spencer, Ph.D., University of North Texas  
 Julie Petersen, Ph.D., Harvard University  
 Mercedes Woolley, M.S., Utah State University

Misophonia, a condition characterized by intense emotional reactions to specific trigger sounds, remains underrecognized despite its profound impact on daily life. This symposium brings together novel empirical findings to deepen our understanding of misophonia and advance clinical interventions. First, we introduce misophonia's core features, including symptom presentation, common triggers, and the role of psychological inflexibility in symptom severity. Next, a case study illustrates how acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) can be tailored for misophonia, highlighting key therapeutic adaptations. We then present findings from a randomized controlled trial comparing ACT to progressive relaxation training in 60 adults with misophonia, demonstrating promising outcomes and high treatment engagement. Expanding on these results, the final presentation explores two distinct misophonia subgroups identified through Gaussian finite mixture modeling, revealing meaningful variability in symptom profiles and treatment responses. These findings underscore the need for personalized, process-based interventions that account for symptom heterogeneity. By integrating empirical data with clinical perspectives, this symposium provides a comprehensive overview of misophonia and its treatment, offering valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners.

- *Advancing the Understanding and Assessment of Misophonia*

Emily M. Bowers, Utah State University  
 Mercedes G. Woolley, Utah State University  
 Julie M. Petersen, Harvard University  
 Leila K. Capel, Utah State University  
 Karen Munoz, Utah State University  
 Michael P. Twohig, Utah State University

Misophonia is a psychological disorder characterized by intense emotional reactions to specific sounds, significantly impacting daily functioning. Despite growing recognition, its clinical characteristics and underlying processes remain underexplored. This presentation explores findings from two empirical studies on misophonia's clinical presentation and the role of psychological inflexibility in symptom severity. Study 1 examines symptom onset, progression, triggers, and psychiatric comorbidities in 60 treatment-seeking adults. Most participants (79%) reported childhood or adolescent misophonia onset, with symptoms worsening over time. Human-produced sounds were the most common triggers, and higher distress across multiple contexts was associated with elevated symptom severity. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and generalized anxiety disorder were the most prevalent comorbidities. Study 2 focuses on the validation of the Misophonia Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (Miso-AAQ) in a sample of 120 participants. The measure demonstrated strong reliability ( $\alpha = .84$ ) and validity, with psychological inflexibility mediating the relationship between symptom severity, anger, and stress. These novel findings highlight the diverse clinical characteristics and importance of psychological flexibility in misophonia, ultimately informing future assessment and intervention strategies.

- *Case study of acceptance and commitment therapy for an emerging adult female with misophonia: Unique adaptations and practical clinical tips*

Samuel D. Spencer, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine & University of North Texas  
 Katie H. Mangen, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine  
 Yasmine Omar, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine  
 Eric A. Storch, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine

Misophonia is characterized by decreased tolerance to idiosyncratic and repetitive human-generated sounds, coupled with affective-based reactions, that results in impairment and distress. While intervention development efforts for misophonia remain ongoing, a consensus has not yet been reached concerning recommended first-line treatments. Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) represents one potentially promising approach for addressing misophonia. The present case study describes the application of an individually delivered, 12-session ACT intervention for an early 20s Black female with misophonia. The specific adaptations of ACT principles for misophonia and explication of practical clinical tips for applying ACT with this condition are described in detail. Descriptive data collected at pre, mid, post-treatment, and two-month follow-up timepoints suggested the utility of ACT for attenuating misophonia symptoms, improving psychological flexibility processes, and reducing secondary depression and anxiety symptoms. Findings are discussed in the context of the possible mechanisms of ACT most likely responsible for misophonia-related clinical improvement, including reductions in experiential avoidance and improvement in values-based living. More rigorous clinical trials are needed to confirm promising findings from existing case studies.

- *Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) plus behavioral intervention versus progressive relaxation training (PRT) plus psychoeducation for misophonia in adults*

Julie M. Petersen, Ph.D., Harvard University & Utah State University  
 Michael P. Twohig, Ph.D., Utah State University  
 Karen Muñoz, Ph.D., Utah State University  
 Mercedes G. Woolley, M.S., Utah State University  
 Emily M. Bowers, M.S., Utah State University  
 Marissa L. Donahue, M.S., Utah State University  
 Doris Velasquez, Utah State University  
 Diana Ortiz, Utah State University  
 Leila K. Capel, M.S., Utah State University  
 Guadalupe G. San Miguel, M.S., Utah State University

There is little empirical evidence supporting audiological and/or psychological treatments for misophonia (Mattson et al., 2023). Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) has a small evidence base of case studies suggesting promising outcomes (e.g., Petersen & Twohig, 2023). The present study is a randomized controlled trial of ACT compared to progressive relaxation training (PRT). A sample of 60 adults with misophonia were enrolled. Participants were primarily White, cisgender women. Data were analyzed using multilevel modeling across pre-, post-treatment, and three- and six-month follow-up timepoints. Participants in the ACT condition reported greater decreases in self-reported misophonia symptoms and severity, with small between-group effect sizes. No other differences between groups were found. All participants reported improvements in clinician-rated misophonia symptoms, psychological inflexibility, and well-being. Both treatments were rated as equally acceptable. These findings suggest preliminary promise for ACT and PRT as treatments for misophonia, with potentially differing processes of change. Limitations of the present study and future directions of ACT for misophonia research will be discussed.

- *Recognizing Individual Variability in Misophonia: Identifying Symptom-Based Subgroups with Model-based Clustering*

Mercedes G. Woolley, Utah State University  
 Amanda M. Ramos, Utah State University  
 Emily M. Bowers, Utah State University  
 Karen Muñoz, Utah State University  
 Julie M. Petersen, Harvard University  
 Michael P. Twohig, Utah State University

We are increasingly recognizing that misophonia may not be a uniform condition, with emerging evidence suggesting variability in symptom presentations (Rosenthal et al., 2023). In this talk, we present findings from a study using Gaussian finite mixture modeling that identified two distinct subgroups—anticipatory and reactive—characterized by differing cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to misophonic triggers. These findings suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may be insufficient and raise important questions about how to tailor interventions to individual symptom presentations. Expanding on the clinical trial discussed in this symposium, this talk will also present the results on how both subgroups responded to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) versus Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PRT). We will discuss the implications of process-based therapy (Hofmann et al., 2022) as a framework for targeting mechanisms of change relevant to each subgroup, as well as the potential role of algorithmic prediction models in optimizing treatment matching. This work highlights the need for more personalized approaches to misophonia treatment that account for symptom heterogeneity.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the clinical characteristics, psychiatric comorbidities, and psychological mechanisms of misophonia, including the role of psychological inflexibility in symptom severity.
2. Discuss the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for misophonia, based on findings from a case study and randomized controlled trial.
3. Identify symptom-based subgroups in misophonia and discuss how treatment approaches can be tailored to individual symptom presentations.

## 32. Basic, Applied, and Conceptual Investigations into Contextual Behavioral Science and Neurodiversity

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Behavior analysis, RFT / RGB / language, Neurodiversity

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Gallier**

Discussant: Thomas G. Szabo, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University  
 Jonathan J. Tarbox, Ph.D., University of Southern California  
 Amanda Chastain, M.S., University of Illinois, Chicago  
 Cassin Gonzales, M.A., University of Southern California

Neurodiversity is a concept created by Autistic scholars that asserts that neurological functioning naturally comprises a vast continuum and that there is no correct or normal neurotype, anymore than there is any correct culture, gender, or race. In many respects, the concept of neurodiversity should find a natural home in contextual behavioral science (CBS) because the goals of CBS include understanding each unique person's behavior-environment interactions, with the goal of helping humans thrive and to decrease suffering. This symposium brings together three papers that address various aspects of the intersection of neurodiversity and CBS. The first presentation sets the stage with a conceptual paper that articulates and discusses the foundational assumptions of neurodiversity and CBS, looking for points of connection and departure. The second presentation consists of a lab study looking at derived stimulus relations involved in social categorization, the likes of which constitute the behavioral foundation for stigma and othering. The third presentation consists of a randomized trial of an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based neurodiversity-affirming support group for parents of newly diagnosed Autistic children.

- *How Neurodiversity Challenges Contextual Behavioral Scientists to be the Best Versions of Ourselves*

Jonathan Tarbox, Ph.D., University of Southern California and FirstSteps for Kids

Neurodiversity is a concept created by Autistic scholars that asserts that neurological functioning naturally comprises a vast continuum and that there is no correct or normal neurotype, anymore than there is any correct culture, gender, or race. Furthermore, the concept of neurodiversity was created in the context of the larger disability rights movement and acknowledges neurodivergent people as a group who have been historically and currently oppressed. This conceptual paper will discuss founding assumptions of neurodiversity and the neurodiversity movement, articulate and discuss criticisms of applied behavior analysis and psychology from the neurodiversity perspective, and discuss points of connection and departure between these issues and the foundational assumptions and goals of contextual behavioral science. We will make the case that the principles of neurodiversity are completely consistent with the foundational philosophical assumptions of behavior analysis and contemporary contextual behavioral science, although not necessarily how these fields have actually been practiced. We will conclude with discussing how the neurodiversity movement is influencing ABA and contextual behavioral science to be better and more consistent versions of themselves.

- *Exploring Social Categorization: Stigma, Equivalence, and Implicit Attitudes*

Amanda N. Chastain, BCBA, University of Illinois, Chicago  
 Mark R. Dixon, University of Illinois, Chicago  
 Grady McDonnell, University of Illinois, Chicago

The equivalence model of social categorization provides a framework for studying social stereotyping (Watt et al., 1991). Research has shown resistance to equivalence class formation between culturally opposing stimuli, with little progress in identifying the mechanisms driving this resistance. Prior learning history is often cited but remains underexplored in maintaining stereotype-consistent relational networks. Across three experiments with adults aged 18 to 65 years, we use the Implicit Association Test (IAT), a measure of implicit attitudes linked to derived relational responding (Cummins et al., 2018), to assess the strength and valence of pre-existing relational networks and their impact on equivalence performance in stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent categorizations of neurotypical and neurodivergent social categories. We also examine how prior learning history influence relational network expansion using a stimulus blocking procedure. Preliminary data suggest that pre-existing biases contribute to both resistance to equivalence class formation and relational network expansion via stimulus blocking. This research enhances understanding of how prior relational histories shape social categorization and may inform behavior analytic strategies for reducing implicit bias.

- *Support and Training on Autism for Newly Diagnosed Families (STAND): Development and Testing of a rapid response, ACT-based parent intervention*

Cassin Gonzales, University of Southern California  
 Alexandra Raport, University of Southern California  
 Jonathan Tarbox, University of Southern California

The months following a child's new autism diagnosis are characterized as a high stress period in which parents struggle to feel assured on how to best support their child and family. The Support and Training on Autism for Newly Diagnosed Families (STAND) ACT-Based, neurodiversity-affirming, virtual parent group was developed to support families with psychological adjustment to the diagnosis, navigation of the autism care system, and understanding and responding to child behavior. The STAND randomized control trial recruited 27 parents of children (age 2.5 – 6 years) who were diagnosed with autism in the previous 12 months. Participants completed qualitative interviews and standardized measures at three timepoints over 22 weeks. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to complete the 8-week STAND program and the other half completed the program following the last data collection. Discussion will include, a) a multi-method informed description of parent experiences in the post diagnostic transition period, b) a description of the community-engaged development of the STAND program, and c) the results of efficacy and acceptability testing of the STAND program.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify points of overlap between defining features of neurodiversity and basic assumptions of contextual behavioral science.
2. Describe how relational frames of coordination are involved in social stereotyping in neurodivergent social groups.
3. Describe components of the STAND ACT-based neurodiversity affirming parent support program.

### 33. Innovative Behavioral and Mindfulness-Based Interventions for ADHD and Neurodiversity: Advancing Science and Practice

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data, Literature review*

Categories: Processes of change, Behavioral or contextual neuroscience, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Dissemination or global health strategies, Health / behavioral medicine, Mindfulness, Cognitive Defusion, Inaction, ADHD, ACT, children, neuroimaging (fNIRS), adults, DBT, Sleep, autism

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Lauren Lawson, Ph.D., La Trobe University  
 Morgan Alexis Palmer, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Betul Kocarslan, M.Sc., Member, Lecturer  
 Gökçen Aydın, Ph.D., TED University  
 Yors Garcia, BCBA-D, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

This session highlights emerging research on behavioral and mindfulness-based interventions to improve functioning in individuals with ADHD and autism. The first study identifies key Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) processes—present-moment awareness and inaction—that significantly predict ADHD symptoms and mediate their impact on quality of life and mood disturbance. The second study builds on this by using functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) to assess the neural impact of an ACT-based program for children with ADHD, evaluating changes in psychological flexibility and brain function across a structured 8-week intervention. Third, a systematic review and meta-analysis evaluates Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) as a promising intervention for emotional dysregulation and impulsivity in individuals with ADHD, showing improvements in executive functioning and emotional regulation, especially in group formats. Finally, a 3-week experience sampling study explores within-person relationships between sleep quality and momentary mental health symptoms in autistic adults, uncovering the dynamic interplay between sleep and daily experiences of worry, loneliness, and paranoia. Together, these studies advance our understanding of neurodiversity and offer pathways for more effective, personalized interventions.

- *Exploring ACT Processes in Relation to ADHD Symptoms in College Students: A Predictive and Mediation Analysis*

Morgan Palmer, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Callum Smith, M.A., Western Michigan University  
 Andrés Beltrán Gabriele, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Megan Campbell, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Gabrielle Mesches, M.A., Western Michigan University



Madison Dirickson, M.S., Western Michigan University  
 Scott Gaynor, Ph.D., Western Michigan University

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is gaining recognition for addressing ADHD symptoms in adults, yet data on its key change processes remain limited. This study examined which ACT processes best predict ADHD symptoms and whether ACT provides a behavioral framework for ADHD. Factor analysis confirmed that mindfulness and ADHD symptoms are distinct constructs, with two components explaining 53.03% of the variance. All six ACT processes correlated with ADHD symptoms. Stepwise regression identified present moment awareness ( $\beta = -0.366$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and inaction ( $\beta = 0.294$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as the strongest predictors, explaining 30.8% of the variance ( $R^2 = .308$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In a serial mediation model, present moment awareness and inaction mediated the relationship between ADHD symptoms and Quality of Life (QOL), though only inaction fully mediated it. Cognitive Fusion partially mediated the relationship between QOL and Mood Disturbance. These findings suggest ACT-based interventions targeting mindfulness, committed action, and cognitive defusion may help manage ADHD symptoms, and processes of ACT offer a novel behavioral interpretation to the CBT models for ADHD.

- *Idiomatic Interactions Across the Day Between Sleep and Mental Health in Autistic Adults*

Lauren Lawson, Ph.D., ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Venyi Hew, MPsych (Clin), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Jade Purchase, MPsych (Clin), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Hridant Vakharia, MPsych (Clin), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Elizabeth Cupper, MPsych (Clin), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Elizabeth Cupper, MPsych (Clin), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Ellen Richardson, BPsychSci(Hons), ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Eric Morris, Ph.D., ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University  
 Simon Bury, Ph.D., ACTUALISE Lab, La Trobe University

Poor sleep affects up to 80% or more of autistic adults and has been associated with worse mental health, perceived stress and anxiety, and quality of life. Despite the growing evidence of these associations, the data have primarily been cross-sectional and relied on group-level averages. We aimed to investigate the individual level relationships between self-reported sleep quality and mental health symptoms across the day in a sample of 30 autistic adults. Participants completed a 3-week experience sampling study with 4 prompts per day. In their first prompt of the day, participants were asked rate the statement "I slept well last night" from a sliding scale of 'not at all' to 'very much'. In all four prompts across the day, participants were also asked to complete questions on momentary feelings of worry, loneliness, and paranoid thinking. Data will be analysed using i-ARIMAX to investigate the extent that (1) within-person changes in sleep quality relate to within-person changes in worry, loneliness, and paranoid thinking concurrently and time-lagged across the day, and (2) the relationships differ between individuals.

- *ACT for ADHD: The use of fNIRS*

Betül Koçarslan, M.Sc., Bahçeşehir University  
 Sinem Burcu Erdoğan, Assoc. Prof., Faculty of Engineering, Department of Medical Engineering, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, İstanbul, Türkiye  
 Herdem Aslan Genç, Assoc. Prof., M.D., Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, School of Medicine, Koç University; Graduate School of Health Sciences, Koç University, İstanbul, Türkiye  
 Gökçen Aydın, Assoc. Prof., Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, TED University, Ankara  
 Aslı Demirtaş Tatlıdede, Prof. of Neurology, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Neurology, Bahcesehir University School of Medicine, Istanbul, Türkiye

The research is designed to investigate the effectiveness of ACT intervention on 50 children with ADHD (9-13 ages) by physiological measurements over the frontal cortex with functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) which is a noninvasive optical neuroimaging method with a low sensitivity to motion artifacts that assesses the changes in oxygenated, deoxygenated, and total hemoglobin levels via a probe placed on the cortex.

This experimental study, which will be conducted between April-May 2025, is based on the measurement of hemodynamic changes in the frontal cortex during an 8-minute resting state and the Emotional Stroop and Conventional Stroop tasks displayed on the screen and the level of psychological flexibility. The experimental group (n=25) will fulfill a measurement of psychological flexibility, take a computer-based attention performance test, and undergo an online 8-week ACT-based intervention (45 minute per week). The results including neuroimaging gathered from experimental group will be compared with control group (n=25) before and after the intervention. Based on findings, discussion and implications will be provided in the light of related literature.

- *Exploring the Efficacy of Dialectical Behavior Therapy in ADHD: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*

Yors Garcia, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana  
 Amanda Muñoz-Martínez, Universidad de los Andes  
 Juliana Reyes, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana  
 Sandra Rocio Rincon, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and emotional dysregulation, which significantly impact daily functioning. While pharmacological treatments remain the primary intervention, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) has gained attention as a potential approach for improving emotional regulation and impulsivity in individuals with ADHD. This systematic review and meta-analysis examine the efficacy of DBT in reducing ADHD symptoms and enhancing related outcomes. Following PRISMA guidelines, we conducted a comprehensive search in PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Medline, identifying randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental studies, and cohort studies assessing DBT delivered digitally or face-to-face. Findings indicate that DBT interventions significantly reduce ADHD symptoms, improve emotional regulation, and enhance executive functioning, particularly in group therapy formats integrating mindfulness and distress tolerance. Digital DBT interventions show promise in increasing accessibility but require further validation. Limitations include high attrition rates, small sample sizes, and short follow-up periods. While DBT demonstrates potential as an adjunctive intervention for ADHD, further rigorous research is needed to confirm its long-term efficacy and optimize treatment delivery.

#### Educational Objectives:

2. Describe how ACT processes, particularly present moment awareness, inaction, and cognitive fusion, relate to ADHD symptoms and Quality of Life.
2. Describe the relationship between sleep and mental health in autistic adults.
3. Analyze the core components of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and evaluate its effectiveness in addressing emotional dysregulation in individuals with ADHD.

### 34. Flexing Forward: Reimagining Psychological Flexibility

**Panel** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Processes of change, Conceptual extensions from psychological flexibility

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Emily Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, UL Lafayette  
 Michael C May, M.A., Mandala House, LLC, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group (Affiliate Researcher)  
 Jennifer Gregg, Ph.D., San Jose State University

Psychological flexibility is an expansive construct intended to capture variability in how humans relate to a range of experiences. The construct originally evolved from clinical and empirical data focused on experiential avoidance. Because the advancement of science necessitates evolution, it requires spaces that support variation and selection of heterogeneous, non-dominant perspectives. To that end, this panel will examine alternative theoretical perspectives for psychological flexibility that emerge from empirical and clinical data to broaden and build potential research and clinical applications.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe limitations of dominant perspectives on psychological flexibility as a process of change.
2. Describe alternative to dominant perspectives on psychological flexibility as a process of change.
3. Describe primary processes at work in their own interventions or research.

### 35. Centering Your Values in Therapy: How Professional Values Can Help Us Navigate Ethical Challenges

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Professional development, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Ethics

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Shawn Costello Whooley, Psy.D., Private Practice / VA Maryland Healthcare System  
 Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute

Many therapists need continuing education credits in Ethics, but most trainings only focus on risk and legalities and leave you stressed about your capacity to keep up with every detail of your ethics code. This workshop is about ACT's core constructs to integrate your personal and professional ethics into your work - every day, moment to moment. It is about approaching ethics in a way that is personally and professionally meaningful. We will use the basic tenets of ACT to explore how ethical dilemmas can be considered from a stance of psychological flexibility. Through specific examples of challenging situations, we will discuss how processes such as experiential avoidance and fusion can contribute to negative outcomes. Approaching these situations from a mindful, accepting stance may increase the likelihood of actions that are consistent with ethical standards. Attendees will participate in experiential exercises meant to encourage connection with values surrounding ethical work and their identities as ethical practitioners. Attendees also will have the opportunity to discuss ethical dilemmas in small groups.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Apply an acceptance-based therapeutic framework for dealing with ethical challenges.
2. Explain how approaching ethical challenges from a mindful, accepting, and psychologically flexible stance can increase the likelihood of actions that are consistent with ethical standards.
3. Identify at least two personal values that pertain to ethical practice in your work as a mental health professional.

### **36. Even a Wounded World Holds Us All: Moving from Climate Inequity to Justice**

**Panel** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Strategic planning*

Categories: Environmental problems, Social justice / equity / diversity, Climate Change

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Maysa Akbar, Ph.D., ABPP, American Psychological Association

Jennifer Shepard Payne, Ph.D., LCSW-C, Johns Hopkins University

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of

California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services

Lisa W Coyne, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School/McLean & New England Center for OCD and Anxiety

As we navigate the challenges of accelerating climate change, communities around the world are finding innovative ways to adapt, recover, and thrive. This panel explores how we can strengthen resilience through community-building, find justice and equality in disaster recovery, and support mental health and resilience, particularly in disaster-prone areas. We will also explore how shifting from an extractive economic model toward one based on reciprocity and collective care—such as the principles found in a gift economy—can foster stronger, more connected communities. The role of Indigenous wisdom, reducing consumption, climate justice, and embracing circular economies will be discussed in an effort to shape a healthier future for all. Join us for a conversation on how we can all play a role in creating a future rooted in sustainability, equity, and shared well-being.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Explain the concepts of climate anxiety and climate justice
2. List ways to engage in local climate action effectively.
3. Describe the differential effects of climate change and inequitable disaster response on marginalized populations.

### **37. climACT: From ecological grief to the capacity to ACT**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Environmental problems, Dissemination or global health strategies, Climate crisis

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Jae Villanueva, Ph.D., SING (Schweizer Institut für nachhaltige Gesundheit)  
Devin Guthrie, Ph.D., Life & Death Coaching

The climate crisis is a mental health crisis, exacerbating many social and environmental risk factors. The grief, rage, panic, and powerlessness people experience when talking about the climate crisis can be overwhelming, both for clients and those working with them. This workshop provides an opportunity to lean into these emotions and open into the other side of the pain: the beauty, inspiration, and vision. Together we'll explore the transformative potential and collective hope inherent in addressing the climate crisis, inviting anyone affected by or concerned about the climate crisis. Using brief didactic presentations, experiential exercises, and intentional conversation, we will explore and process the difficult feelings we naturally avoid when confronted with the climate catastrophe, make meaningful connections to the values we hold regarding the earth and life on it, and craft workable plans to put our values into action. The skills we practice will help our clients get unstuck from helplessness and feel safe to experience the love beneath their grief, freely discuss climate crisis, and develop individual action plans tailored to personal possibilities.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify thoughts and feelings about the climate crisis that keep people stuck in inaction.
2. Identify personal values both we and our clients hold regarding life and the environment and create personal action plans to put those values into action.
3. Facilitate productive conversations about climate crisis, both in and out of the therapy room.

### **38. Sustaining the Heart of Therapy with Self-compassion: A workshop to support therapists in working with tricky cases**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Professional development, Processes of change, OCD, Mindfulness, Self-compassion, Burnout prevention, Therapists, ACT, PTSD, Trauma, Shame, Anxiety, Depression

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Julia Sage, MSW, Sage Heart Psychotherapy  
Marisa Mazza, Psy.D., choicetherapy  
Michelli Cameoka, M.Sc., Fleximind Psicologia

This experiential workshop explores the therapist's experience in challenging therapeutic situations and how self-compassion can serve as a catalyst for change (Germer & Neff, 2013; Bluth et al., 2016; Marshall & Brockman, 2016; Luo et al., 2023). Integrating self-compassion into therapy is believed to enhance ACT processes that target difficult internal experiences, such as shame (Luoma & Platt, 2015), and support clients with more complex trauma histories (Yadavaia et al., 2014).

Participants will learn to apply self-compassion personally, within sessions, and with clients to foster openness, flexibility, and movement through difficult moments. Through experiential exercises, case examples, and practical strategies, the workshop will demonstrate how cultivating self-compassion can mitigate burnout, secondary trauma, and countertransference (Klimecki et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2018). In turn, this enhances therapeutic presence, effectiveness, and psychological well-being (Zessin et al., 2015; Yip et al., 2016; Yela et al., 2020). Drawing on mindfulness and ACT principles, this workshop highlights the interconnectedness of self-care and client care.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the three core components of self-compassion (mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness) and their relevance in clinical practice.
2. Demonstrate the use of guided experiential exercises to cultivate self-compassion and enhance therapeutic presence.
3. Apply self-compassion principles to challenging clinical scenarios, including working with clients presenting with OCD and other complex cases.

### **39. Supervision in the Matrix: Flexible Strategies for Any Clinical Approach**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*

Categories: Supervision and training, Professional development, Supervision and training, ACT Matrix, Professional development

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Robert Mason Burdine, M.Ed., South Carolina Department of Mental Health  
Aja Meyer, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

Several approaches have been developed for supervising therapists within Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS). However, supervisors working within a CBS framework often face the challenge of supervising clinicians whose theoretical orientations differ from their own. Despite these differences, CBS provides powerful tools for the supervision process, offering strategies to enhance psychological flexibility, strengthen professional development, and support values-based clinical practice.

This workshop demonstrates how CBS-informed supervision can be applied across therapeutic methodologies by integrating the ACT Matrix with the Discrimination Model, a widely used framework that helps supervisors determine where to focus and how to respond effectively in the moment. Through interactive exercises and case-based applications, participants will practice using the ACT Matrix to enhance supervisee growth, reinforce values-driven action, and navigate challenges in supervision.

By the end of the workshop, attendees will have practical skills to integrate the ACT Matrix into their supervision practice, improving supervisory relationships, advancing supervisee development, and ultimately enhancing client outcomes.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate how to integrate the Discrimination Model with ACT-informed supervision to determine the most relevant focus of supervision and respond effectively to supervisee needs.
2. Implement ACT-based supervision strategies through experiential exercises and case-based applications.
3. Apply the ACT Matrix within supervision to strengthen psychological flexibility, reinforce values-driven action, and enhance supervisee development.

Thursday Afternoon Plenary 4:45 PM

#### 40. Three Lessons About the Brain

Plenary • 4:45 PM - 5:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Behavioral or contextual neuroscience, Theory and philosophical foundations, Emotion

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Lisa Barrett, Ph.D., Northeastern University/Mass General Hospital



This address will describe three unintuitive insights about brain architecture and the corresponding computational affordances from the science of emotion: (1) Your brain's most important job is efficiently coordinating and regulating the systems of your body (2) predictively (3) to construct signal ensembles that create guide your action and create lived experience. This research approach offers an unintuitive but principled approach that unifies a variety of psychological phenomena into a common explanatory framework with a shared vocabulary for theory building and treatment.

Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the importance of efficient energy regulation as a crucial aspect of basic brain function.
2. Explain how the brain operates through integrated, predictive control, anticipating signals from the world and the body, and making corrections as needed.
3. Describe the brain's role in creating relational meaning.



## Program Detail • Friday • July 18

Friday Morning 7:00 AM

### Morning Yoga Session

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

John Powell, Private Practice

I'm a certified yoga teacher with 20 years of practice and I currently teach on an ongoing basis. This will be an intermediate level practice for people already familiar with the asana practice.

Friday Morning 8:00 AM

### Aging in Context SIG meeting

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bayside A**

Sue McCurry, University of Washington  
Claudia Drossel, Eastern Michigan University

We are looking forward to gathering with all current and potential ACBS members interested in aging issues. We plan to discuss how to keep the SIG moving forward, including brainstorming ways for increasing visibility of the SIG and aging-related topics within ACBS as a whole. Look forward to seeing you there!

### Colombia Chapter Meeting

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Nottaway**

Alexandra Avila, Universidad de los Andes  
Amanda Muñoz, Universidad de los Andes

The Annual Meeting of the Chapter offers an opportunity for all ACBS members to review the progress achieved over the past year in alignment with the chapter's strategic goals. During this session, the Board will present an overview of key activities and initiatives implemented throughout the year. The meeting will also provide a dedicated space for professional networking and the exchange of ideas. Attendees are invited to offer suggestions and feedback to contribute to the continuous improvement and future direction of the chapter.

### NYC-ACBS Chapter Gathering

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Brian Mundy, President, NYC-ACBS  
Abu Nasim, Treasurer, NYC-ACBS

Come meet your NYC peers and colleagues in person! Current NYC-ACBS board members will be present with giveaways and activities.

### Relational Frame Theory (RFT) SIG Meeting

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Patrick Smith, Ph.D., University of Nevada

Please join us for an informal meeting of the Relational Frame Theory SIG. Open to all conference attendees. We'll review ongoing SIG activities, share our plans for the year ahead, and invite member

feedback. Whether you are a SIG member who would like to get more involved or someone curious to learn more about SIG activities, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect. See you there!

### **OCD and Related Disorders SIG Meeting**

**Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting** • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Rebecca Schneider, Emory University School of Medicine  
Kristin Fitch, RISE Center for OCD and Anxiety

This meeting will bring together members of the OCD and Related Disorders SIG for an opportunity to connect, share updates, and collaborate. We will provide space for attendees to discuss clinical and research interests, hear from members about ongoing projects or initiatives, and gather ideas for future SIG activities. The meeting will also include time to plan for the upcoming year, including opportunities for member involvement and leadership. All conference attendees with an interest in OCD and related disorders are welcome to join.

Friday Morning 9:00 AM

### **42. Finding Hope when Hope Feels Lost, Using FAP and ACT to Discover and Sustain Hope**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Professional development, Social justice / equity / diversity, Despair, loss of hope, and social connection, FAP, ACT

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Borgne**

Barbara S. Kohlenberg, Ph.D., University of Nevada Reno School of Medicine  
Mavis Tsai, Ph.D., University of Washington; Awareness, Courage & Love Global Project

The loss of hope stimulated by our changing political climate, war, trauma, losses of every kind, and social disconnection has broad and deep impact today. All of us...clinicians, scientists, teachers, clients, colleagues, students, families and friends, are impacted, no one is untouched. It is the purpose of this workshop to consider the factors that contribute to hope, as articulated by William Miller, Ph.D., in his 2024 book "8 Ways to Hope". We will consider hope from a CBS standpoint, and will use experiential exercises consistent with both FAP and ACT to help the participants contact their own hope as well as grow the skills to ignite and support hope in others.

Educational Objectives:

1. Provide a contextual behavioral account of what it means to hope, and to lose hope.
2. Create or implement exercises focused on perspective shifts moving from pessimism to optimism, and from hopelessness to hope.
3. Describe and demonstrate the social and interpersonal factors that can support hope for both oneself and the individuals being helped.

### **43. Disrupting and Expanding the Behavioral Stream: A Practical Approach to In-Session Inflexibility**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Professional development, Processes of change, Psychological Flexibility

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Jim Lucas, PG Diploma CBT, Openforwards

In-session behavior—both for clients and therapists—is often shaped by aversive control, leading to narrow, inflexible responses that limit therapeutic progress (Villatte, 2015). Clients may deflect, intellectualize, or demand solutions, while therapists may over-validate discomfort, rigidly apply interventions, or avoid confrontation. These patterns undermine psychological flexibility, leading to poorer treatment outcomes (Meier, 2014; Scherr et al., 2014).

Although ACT therapists develop greater contextual awareness over time (Twohig et al., 2019), many struggle to track in-session functions dynamically—defaulting to mechanical or rigid intervention strategies (Brock et al., 2015).

This interactive workshop will provide a structured, experiential approach to disrupting these inflexible in-session patterns. Delegates will:

- Recognize in-session avoidance in client and therapist behavior.
- Link these behaviors to broader, real-world patterns outside the therapy room.
- Examine their impact on life experiences.

Apply a practical four-step method, FLEX (Focus, Link, Examine, Expand), to shift rigid response patterns and facilitate adaptive, values-based action.

Through live demonstrations, small-group exercises, and guided practice, participants will leave with concrete skills for expanding the behavioral stream, ensuring a more dynamic and effective therapeutic process.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify common client and therapist in-session behaviors shaped by aversive control.
2. Identify and track avoidant responses in real-time within a live therapist-client interaction.
3. Apply the FLEX model to disrupt rigidity and create new behavioral possibilities in therapy.

#### 44. The Compassionate ACT of Rewilding Adolescents

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Adolescents

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Chris P Fraser, MSW, Positive Path Counseling, LLC

Lisa Coyne, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School/McLean & New England Center for OCD and Anxiety

This workshop explores an innovative and holistic approach to supporting adolescents struggling with mental health challenges by authentically integrating ACT, CFT, wilderness interventions, and equine therapy. This session offers practical tools to adolescents in transformative experiences that foster resilience, emotional regulation, and meaningful connections.

Participants will learn to:

Apply ACT principles to help teens develop greater psychological flexibility and align their actions with their values.

Incorporate CFT techniques to cultivate self-compassion and reduce shame in adolescents.

Utilize mindfulness based wilderness interventions as a restorative and experiential modality that builds self-efficacy.

Harness the therapeutic power of equine therapy to enhance trust, empathy, and relational skills through the healing nonverbal connection with horses.

Through experiential exercises and interactive discussions, attendees will explore how these modalities can be woven together. The workshop emphasizes creating safe, nonjudgmental spaces where teens can reconnect with themselves, others, animals, and the natural world. By blending these practices with experiential therapies, participants will be equipped to guide adolescents on a journey of rewilding—rediscovering their inner strength and capacity for growth amidst life's challenges.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate the integration of ACT, CFT, wilderness interventions, and equine therapy to create a cohesive framework for addressing adolescent mental health challenges.
2. Apply specific techniques from each modality (ACT, CFT, wilderness, and equine therapy) to foster resilience, self-compassion, and emotional regulation in teens.
3. Design experiential interventions that combine elements from multiple approaches to facilitate transformative growth and reconnection with self, others, and nature for adolescent clients.

#### 45. Hidden Meaning: Examining Values, Valued Living, and Values Interventions through a Colonial Lens

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, Values

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Eva Lieberman, M.S., Western Michigan University

Discussant: Olga Berkout, Ph.D., University of Texas at Tyler

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Positive Development, Inc.

Janani Vaidya, M.S., National Louis University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Thomas B Sease, Ph.D., Institute of Behavioral Research, Texas Christian University

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) involves interventions to promote valued living, i.e., behaving consistently with one's values (Hayes et al., 1999; 2012). Improving valued living has been positively correlated with psychological and physical well-being (Trindade et al., 2016). There are limitations, however, in the conceptualization and operationalization of valued living that hampers continued scientific progress. First, there is a broad assumption that values interventions are universally applicable despite being rooted in a dominant Western perspective (see Bhatia, 2020; Fuchs et al., 2013). Second, time and funding contingencies commonly produce serious mismatches between values theory and research design (see Igiri et al., 2021; Patel & Patel, 2019; Quiroga-Garza et al., 2022). Third, developing meaningful values interventions requires gathering information about culturally and contextually specific factors relevant to promoting valued living. This symposium will critically examine values interventions from a lens of coloniality, discuss the need to match values theory and research design, and demonstrate the development of culturally-specific values interventions via a qualitative investigation of valued living among justice-involved individuals.

- *Colonialism as Context: Applying Decolonizing Principles to Values Interventions*

Janani Vaidya, M.S., BCBA, National Louis University

Ericka Mingo, Ph.D., National Louis University

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

In ACT clinical work, clinicians support clients in identifying their values and building behavioral repertoires consistent with those values to alleviate suffering (Reilly et al., 2019). Values interventions are often focused on using values to empower individuals toward improve their quality of life (Trindade et al., 2016). Though there has been some acknowledgment within the field of the influences of (or outright borrowing from) non-Western practices, largely, there is an assumption that values interventions are universal, and thus - exempt from the lens of coloniality (Mignolo, 2013). Like most, our interventions tend to be rooted in dominant Western thought and require specific adaptations to be culturally responsive (see Fuchs et al., 2013). This paper will introduce the concept of coloniality, the principles of decolonial approaches related to psychological practices, and the application of coloniality and decolonization to our epistemology. Specifically, the assumed universality of values will be examined from this lens. Implications for researchers and practitioners in adopting a decolonial lens will be discussed.

- *Lessons learned in digital health promotion: challenges and solutions to theoretically consistent methodology in valuing research*

Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Wesley Malvini, B.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Michael Bordieri, Ph.D., Murray State University

Valuing, as conceptualized in contextual behavioral science, is well poised as a mechanism that can contribute to effective health behavior change (Heath et al., 2012; Sheeran et al., 2017; Teixeira et al., 2012). Further, personalized approaches linking ideographic functional analyses and processes of change can reveal manipulable variables to utilize in applied and translational settings (Hayes, et al., 2021). However, many of the techniques we employ do not always take into account the nature of valuing itself (Kissi et al., 2017). We will connect the theory underpinning valuing with research strategies, and discuss novel methodologies, results, and roadblocks in recent values-focused studies centering physical health (Jackson et al., 2016; Stapelton et al, 2020), and speak to the implications of theory-design mismatch. Practical solutions for those with limited time and funding will be provided, including experimental design, data collection, and statistical modeling. The clarity resulting from theory-methods congruence can provide deeper insight into both the process of valuing itself and ways to more effectively increase meaningful change.

- *Providing a Place for Positive Change: A Qualitative Investigation of the Values of People on Community Supervision*

Thomas Sease, Ph.D., Institute for Behavioral Research  
 Renee Castillo, B.S., Institute for Behavioral Research  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA,

Values are, “freely chosen verbally constructed consequences of ongoing, dynamic, evolving patterns of activity, which establish predominant reinforcement for that activity that are intrinsic in engagement in the valued behavioral pattern itself” (Wilson & DuFrene, 2009). In this way, valued living refers to the extent to which someone engages in behavior consistent with values (Wilson et al., 2010). Valued living positively correlates with physical and psychological health, making it a desired outcome of many third-wave cognitive behavioral therapies. The current study will qualitatively investigate the values of justice involved individuals. Twenty people on community supervision (i.e., probation, parole) will be asked to participate in interviews focused on personal values and meaning in life. Questions will also ask about barriers that interfere with and facilitators that help promote valued living. Implications include the identification of psychological processes that can be targeted to promote valued living among justice involved individuals.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify ways coloniality is observed in ACT-oriented values interventions and describe culturally responsive ways of conducting such interventions.
2. Describe theoretically congruent methodology in valuing research and ways to implement it with limited resources.
3. Discuss values in a justice-involved sample and barriers to and facilitators for valued living.

#### 46. Co-Design for Culturally and Contextually Sensitive ACT and Behavioral Therapy Adaptation with Diverse Populations

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Social justice / equity / diversity, Co-Design

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Nicole Werner, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
 Discussant: Jonathan B Bricker, Ph.D., Fred Hutch Cancer Center  
 Shelley A Johns, Psy.D., Indiana University School of Medicine  
 Tayler M Gowan, B.S., Department of Psychology, Indiana University Indianapolis  
 Joanna J Arch, Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder

Co-design has great potential to facilitate culturally and contextually sensitive adaptations of ACT and behavioral therapies. This panel will discuss the core concepts of co-design and how those have been applied to create culturally/contextually sensitive adaptations to address what matters most to those for whom the intervention is intended. The first speaker will be conceptual, presenting core co-design concepts and considerations/strategies for co-design in this context. Three additional speakers will describe research in which they co-designed culturally and contextually sensitive adaptations of ACT and behavioral therapies for diverse populations, the resulting interventions, and the impact of co-design on adaptation. The second speaker will describe a co-design process that engaged Black breast cancer survivors with obesity to co-design a weight loss/wellness intervention. The third speaker will present on co-designing an ACT-based stress management smartphone app with breast cancer survivors. The fourth speaker will describe a participatory co-design process to adapt an ACT-infused exposure therapy for diverse socially anxious undergraduates. Overall, this panel will provide conceptual depth and practical considerations for culturally and contextually sensitive intervention co-design.

- *Key principles of co-design for culturally and contextually sensitive adaptations of behavioral interventions*

Nicole E. Werner, PhD, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Co-design is about designing with end users, rather than designing for them. In terms of behavioral interventions, co-design centers the expertise of the people and communities that will ultimately engage with the intervention. Importantly, the expertise of these ‘end users’ is centered throughout the full design process—from identifying the problem, ideating solutions, creating the solution, as well as implementation and evaluation of the solution. By applying a co-design approach to behavioral intervention design, the resulting interventions are more likely to address the challenges that are most meaningful to the



individuals and communities who will be using those interventions and for the most optimal solution to be designed. This presentation will describe the three key tenets of co-design: democratization, generativity, and sustained engagement. This presentation will also discuss how to apply these tenets to co-design culturally and contextually sensitive adaptations of behavioral interventions highlighting key considerations, challenges, and strategies for sharing power, lifting the creativity intrinsic to lived experience, and building lasting partnerships.

- *Co-Design of a Culturally Sensitive Weight Loss/Wellness Program for Black Breast Cancer Survivors with Obesity: Results from a Mixed Methods Pilot Study*

Shelley A. Johns, Indiana University School of Medicine; Regenstrief Institute, Inc.  
Misty A. W. Hawkins, Indiana University School of Public Health Bloomington

Black breast cancer survivors (BCS) have significantly higher rates of obesity and mortality compared to BCS from other racial groups. Given disparities in access to culturally-sensitive care, our team engaged 5 Black BCS with obesity to co-design a weight loss/wellness intervention for this population (Stage 1A). Co-designers identified barriers to achieving a healthy weight and potential solutions to inform development of a weight loss/wellness program that included 8 weekly group sessions facilitated by a Black interventionist. We then conducted a Stage 1B pilot of the co-designed intervention with 12 Black BCS with obesity. High attendance, retention, and satisfaction rates supporting intervention feasibility/acceptability and results on weight and body composition will be presented. Post-intervention qualitative interviews were conducted and thematically analyzed. Participants described the program as transformative, highlighting its provision of practical tools and emotional support, while fostering a sense of community and empowerment. Participants suggested program expansion to 12 sessions and the addition of stretching/physical activity to each session. Findings underscore the impact of co-design in the development of culturally-sensitive interventions for Black BCS.

- *Expanding Access to Care: A Co-Designed ACT mHealth App for Breast Cancer Survivors*

Taylor M. Gowan, Department of Psychology, Indiana University Indianapolis  
Evan J. Jordan, PhD, Indiana University School of Public Health Bloomington; Center for Health Services Research, Regenstrief Institute, Inc.  
Betsey Zenk Nuseibeh, MM, MEd, Indiana University School of Public Health Bloomington; Center for Health Services Research, Regenstrief Institute, Inc.  
Shelley A. Johns, PsyD, HSPP, ABPP, Indiana University School of Medicine; Center for Health Services Research, Regenstrief Institute, Inc.

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer worldwide, affecting over 7.8 million women. Despite a 91% five-year survival rate, breast cancer survivors (BCS) experience elevated stress, anxiety, and depression post-treatment. Limited mental health care access highlights the need for accessible interventions. This study used co-design methods to develop an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) mobile health app to reduce psychological distress in BCS. Phase 1 involved five user-centered design sessions over three months with five BCS, three ACT practitioners, and two user-design experts. Sessions were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed. Thematic analysis revealed key stressors, preferred ACT exercises, and desired app characteristics that will be described. Phase 2 involved three cohorts of 5 BCS who used the app with an integrated heart-rate variability monitor that alerted users to engage with the app when stress was detected over three weeks. Phase 2 app acceptability and usability scores will be presented, along with results from qualitative interviews that have guided iterative app refinements. Phase 3 will pilot-test app effects on key distress outcomes.

- *Participatory Co-Design of a Contextually Sensitive Exposure Intervention for Socially Anxious Undergraduates*

Joanna J. Arch, Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder  
Elizabeth T. Slivjak, University of Colorado Boulder  
Alane S. Burger, University of Colorado Boulder  
Lauren B. Finkelstein, University of Colorado Boulder  
Mateo A. Chavez, University of Colorado Boulder

Contextual behavioral science and participatory co-design approaches both provide compelling frameworks for creating contextually-sensitive interventions. Social anxiety is one of the most common mental health challenges with one of the lowest treatment-seeking rates, and thus stands to benefit from contextually sensitive approaches that reduce barriers to care. Over the past several years, we have collaborated with university student stakeholders to reduce barriers to seeking and receiving help for social anxiety by co-designing a 3-part workshop intervention founded on self-compassion and exposure strategies. The co-design process led to sensitive tailoring of intervention content and delivery format to the lived experience of diverse socially anxious undergraduates. Workshops are led by graduate students and undergraduate students who completed the workshop previously. We will share insights gleaned from

the student co-design process and present acceptability and feasibility findings from the first 6 cohorts of workshop participants.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the key tenets of co-design for culturally and contextually sensitive ACT and behavioral therapy adaptation with diverse populations.
2. Discuss the impact of co-design on culturally and contextually sensitive ACT and behavioral therapy adaptation with diverse populations.
3. Explain how and why to implement a co-design process for adapting ACT and behavioral therapy interventions with diverse populations

### 47. Task-Sharing with Paraprofessionals: Increasing Access to Critical FACT Skills

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, ACT, Task-Shifting

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Olivia Morris

Discussant: Marcia Sasano, M.Sc. Health Sciences, New Zealand Psychologist Board; New Zealand Psychology Society, Aotearoa Integrated Care Association

Kathryn E. Kanzler, Psy.D., Department of Medicine, Section of Health Services Research, Baylor College of Medicine/Center for Innovations In Quality, Effectiveness, and Safety (IQuEst), Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

Patti J Robinson, Ph.D., Mountainview Consulting Group

John Blue Star, Ph.D., Hanscom Air Force Base

Despite the effectiveness of ACT for a myriad of health-related concerns, many patient populations cannot readily access ACT therapists due to a number of factors including limitations accessing specialty mental health care, social and economic factors, and lack of culturally and contextually appropriate interventions (1-2). However, a brief ("focused") version of ACT, known as "FACT" has simplified core components and made ACT interventions easier to understand and deliver. Alternatives to traditional psychotherapy delivery methods can help scale up FACT delivery outside typical specialty care settings. One novel method for increasing access to FACT skills is task-sharing (or "shifting") whereby FACT specialists share their knowledge and skills with non-licensed and uniquely capable health workers (i.e., paraprofessionals) which has been shown to be a promising method of expanding access to quality care (3-4). Thus, our symposium speakers will present four projects in different stages of task-sharing FACT with paraprofessionals.

- *Task-shifting an adapted ACT-based Intervention for Active Duty Military with Chronic Pain*  
John Blue Star, Ph.D., Hanscom Air Force Base

Chronic Pain is the largest single disability source worldwide (1-3), disproportionately affecting certain populations in the United States, including racial/ethnic minorities, rural and economically disadvantaged persons, Veterans (4-6), and active-duty military (7,8). 1 in 3 Veterans experience CP (9) and 30% of servicemembers report being "bothered a lot" by physical pain in the past 30 days (7), posing significant disability risk due to concomitant physical dysfunction and emotional distress. This presentation centers on early stages of a study implementing and evaluating a brief, evidence-based telehealth, ACT-based treatment for CP in active-duty military delivered by non-clinician behavioral health technicians (BHTs), Supporting Acceptance and Action for Living with Unwanted Thoughts and Experiences in Chronic Pain (SALUTE-CP). SALUTE-CP has two phases: 1) patient interviews and BHT focus groups and 2) adapting and piloting the intervention in multiple New England military sites. SALUTE-CP aims to assess programmatic feasibility, acceptability and estimate pain-related outcome improvements (ex. pain-related disability, interference, acceptance). Qualitative data is expected by the ACBS conference, therefore process and preliminary findings are intended to be presented.

- *Examining Data from Task-Shifting Acceptance-Based Coping in Hispanic/Latino Populations*  
Kathryn Kanzler, Psy.D., ABBP, Baylor College of Medicine

The Acceptance-Based Coping (ABaCo) projects is a research program focused on developing and testing Acceptance-Based Coping (ABaCo) Skills for Hispanic/Latino/Latinx ("H/L") patients with unmanaged type 2 diabetes. The first project, in partnership with community health workers, has been completed and data will be presented. Preliminary results from underserved H/L participants who completed data collection to date in our pilot (n=20) are promising: 54% of participants (n=13) demonstrated a reduction of >0.5% in A1c from baseline to 6-month follow-up (e.g., from 7.5% to 7%); Diabetes-related distress decreased at a clinically significant level for 53% (n=12). Additional analyses are underway for other factors (e.g., diabetes acceptance, diabetes self-management, quality of life) and will be shared. Expanding on this work, this presenter will describe early stages and methods of an ABaCo adaptation delivered by a health coach for H/L military beneficiaries, the Supporting Access for Latinx Underserved in Diabetes Management – Military ("SALUD-M") project.

- *Lessons from a 7-year Focused-ACT Intervention in New Zealand*  
Patricia Robinson, Ph.D., Mountainview Consulting

Implementation methods and outcomes are presented for a 7-year New Zealand project aiming to improve primary care services by adding Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs) and Health Coaches (HC). HIPs were trained in Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy before work in primary care clinics. As HIPs and HCs collaborated, Health Coaches learned to support FACT interventions, enhancing patient experience of continuity in care. In a proof of concept study, results included (1) Significantly improved access equity across Māori, Pacific, Asian and European populations with no significant rate differences of conversion of referral to appointments across ethnicities, (2) 74% of Māori clients reported improved wellbeing (compared to 72% European, 74% Asian, 71% overall), 95% satisfaction from 3,000+ client surveys, and (4) Reduced medication prescribing in favor of a 'skills before pills' approach. The Ministry of Health funded country-wide expansion and initiated a 5-year scale-up period in 2020. Now, most New Zealanders can access FACT-informed care from a behavioral health provider in a community primary care clinic and suicide rates have decreased over the past 3 years.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the contexts, methods, and utility of task-shifting and identify ways to implement paraprofessionals in behavioral health settings.
2. Compare practical methods of developing, adapting, implementing, and evaluating Focused Acceptance and Commitment therapy across a range of implementation environments.
3. Analyze methods of implementing task-shifting interventions for chronic diseases in various cultural contexts.

#### 48. I Felt I Was Kind of Connecting with Everyone Else: Pathways to Psychological Flexibility in Diverse Contexts

Panel • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, Pathways to flexibility

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Jennifer Block-Lerner, Ph.D., Kean University

Chair: Hallie Katzman, M.A., Kean University

Marquita Carter, Psy.D., Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital

Donald R. Marks, Psy.D., Kean University

Jonah D McManus, M.S., Kean University

Ashlyne Mullen, Psy.D., Flexible Mind Therapy

Zecharya Setton, M.A., Kean University

Contextual behavioral science (CBS) interventions enhance well-being across diverse clinical and non-clinical populations, with expressive and relational practices offering particularly powerful avenues for cultivating psychological flexibility. Carter et al. (2020), for example, explored music-based practices, including a condition in which participants played percussion instruments together. One participant reflected: "This experience differed from the other two because (in all) I felt I was really trying to connect to the present moment...but with this exercise I felt I was kind of connecting to everyone else." Mullen et al. (2021) invited participants to practice "tree pose," with their arms reaching out to support fellow students. Particularly in diverse communities (e.g., 24% and 26% of participants self-identified as white in Carter et al., 2020 and Mullen et al., 2021, respectively), such

practices may offer powerful pathways to psychological flexibility and a sense of compassionate identification with others.

This proposed panel brings together researchers and practitioners exploring diverse pathways to connectedness, including music-based practices, yoga, engaging with poetry, journaling, and caregiving. In addition to sharing protocols and research findings, discussion will address assessment and scaling for large heterogeneous communities.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Discuss three key findings from research on varied pathways to psychological flexibility.
2. Describe two ways that applications fostering varied pathways to psychological flexibility may be tailored to fit participants' diverse backgrounds.
3. Discuss three considerations relevant to assessing and scaling CBS applications targeting psychological flexibility.

### 49. Selfing with Parts in ACT: An Experiential Method for Self-as-Context

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Self-as-Context

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Lou Lasprugato, M.A., Private Practice

The Self dimension is arguably the most central feature of human psychology, as all suffering and flourishing is influenced by its responses. Self-as-context in ACT can be viewed as a hierarchical Self made up of metaphorical parts (i.e. content) that can be Differentiated, Enacted, Processed, Observed, and Transformed (DEPOT) in their functions and in the functional relations between parts and Self. Such transformations of function via deictic and hierarchical framing have been shown to predict lower stress and depression (Moran & McHugh, 2019). Therapeutic mediums that make use of space and positioning, such as chairwork, can create a context that naturally evokes defusion and flexible perspective-taking.

This brief experiential workshop will introduce a method of working with the Self dimension that is present-and-person-centered, unconditionally accepting, and transformative in its aim. Participants will have opportunities to witness and experiment with this method while integrating techniques from other therapeutic modalities that are sensitive to function and context.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain how to listen for and differentiate parts of Self through language and physical positioning.
2. Describe the steps and functions of the ACT DEPOT method in working with the Self dimension.
3. Demonstrate how to derive relations that evoke transformations of function and more flexible responding to parts of Self.

### 50. Idionomics and process based empirical practice: Where are we now?

**Panel** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Processes of change, Process-Based Practice

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Steven C Hayes, Ph.D., Institute for Better Health  
 Stefan Hofmann, Ph.D., Philipps University Marburg  
 Baljinder K Sahdra, Ph.D., Australian Catholic University  
 Cristóbal Hernández, Ph.D., Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez  
 Diana M Hill, Ph.D., Private Practice  
 Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville

The shift from a protocol-driven model of psychotherapy to a process-based approach has fundamentally altered how clinicians conceptualize treatment and intervention. This panel explores the evolving landscape of idionomics—the personalized, idiographic study of psychological processes—and its implications for process-based therapy (PBT). Panelists will discuss the latest advancements in identifying, measuring, and tailoring intervention strategies to individual-level processes, leveraging network theory, computational modeling, and machine learning.

Key topics will include the integration of idiographic assessment with nomothetic science, the practical application of extended evolutionary metamodels (EEMM) for treatment planning, and how PBT aligns diverse therapeutic approaches under a unified framework. Additionally, the panel will examine the role of artificial intelligence in analyzing and optimizing therapeutic processes to enhance treatment outcomes.

Attendees will gain insight into cutting-edge methodologies that move beyond syndrome-based diagnostics, fostering more precise, dynamic, and effective interventions. This discussion will provide clinicians and researchers with a roadmap for implementing idionomic principles in real-world settings, ultimately bridging the gap between theory, technology, and clinical application.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how idionomic assessment methods can improve precision in therapy by tailoring interventions to individual psychological processes.
2. Analyze the role of process-based therapy (PBT) in unifying therapeutic approaches through the extended evolutionary metamodel (EEMM).
3. Apply emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and network theory, to enhance the measurement and application of idiographic interventions.

### **51. An RFT-based analysis of interactions in session. Strategies for developing brief effective ACT interventions**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, RFT / RGB / language, Clinical RFT

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Miguel Rodríguez-Valverde, Ph.D., University of Jaén

This workshop will focus on the analysis of verbal interactions that take place in ACT-based therapeutic interventions (including conversation, presentation of metaphors and therapeutic exercises) from the point of view of RFT. The goal is that participants will be able to abstract the relational cues and the functions that the different elements have and that allow to account for the usefulness of these interactions. In this way, they will be able to learn how to adjust interventions and develop new tools to work more effectively from this perspective. The first part of the workshop will consist of a brief didactic exposition of the basic principles of RFT with special attention to its clinical implications. In the second part, different verbal interactions will be analyzed (through videos, practical exercises and role-playing) from the RFT perspective, with the aim of enhancing the effects of the interventions by focusing on what is fundamental.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the basic principles of RFT and their clinical implications.
2. Analyze the problems the client raises and the tools the therapist uses in session in terms of Crel and Cfunc.
3. Analyze the implications of this perspective for the development of brief and effective ACT interventions.

### **52. Your Voice, Your Impact: Working Together to Make a Difference with ACBS**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services  
Rhonda Merwin, Ph.D., Duke University School of Medicine



Emily K Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, UL Lafayette  
 Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., C. Psychol. Ps.S.I., University College Dublin  
 Manuela O'Connell, Lic., Private Practice

The Association for Contextual Behavioral Science (ACBS) thrives on the engagement and contributions of its members. This interactive workshop will identify and discuss key ACBS-related concerns that members have previously raised, along with ideas and actions the ACBS board has taken to address them. In an open forum, participants will have the opportunity to highlight additional issues they believe deserve attention, taking steps towards representing the diverse perspectives and experiences of the membership are included.

Following this discussion, attendees will break into small groups, each focused on a specific issue, to collaboratively brainstorm potential solutions. These working groups will engage in problem-solving discussions aimed at developing actionable strategies to improve ACBS policies, practices, and member experiences. The session will conclude with a call for volunteers to continue working on these solutions beyond the conference, fostering ongoing collaboration and meaningful change within the ACBS community.

By participating in this workshop, attendees will play an active role in shaping the future of ACBS, strengthening inclusivity, and advancing the organization's commitment to responsiveness and growth.

### 53. Showing up Authentically in the Therapy Room & in Your Life

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Professional development

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Jessica Borushok, Ph.D., The ACT Therapist PLLC  
 Andreas Larsson, M.Sc., Ph.D., Lic Psychologist, Mid Sweden University

This workshop is an invitation to grow, to challenge ourselves, and to embrace the vulnerability that comes with genuine therapeutic engagement. We invite practitioners at the beginner to intermediate level to join us in a reflective and grounded exploration of authenticity in therapy.

Participants will engage in honest discussions and hands-on exercises to discover what it truly means to show up authentically, both for their clients and themselves. Drawing from recent studies, we'll consider the delicate balance between professional knowledge and personal presence that defines our work and helps to create a meaningful life.

Being authentic is not just about applying techniques; it's about fostering genuine connections and living your values. And it can be scary! Even for therapists. Through role-plays, group discussions, and functional analysis, we'll journey together toward a deeper understanding of this vital aspect of our practice. This workshop is born from our own clinical experiences and the shared wisdom of our community, aiming to weave together empirical insights with the lived reality of therapeutic practice. *This session is not eligible for CEs for social workers or counselors.*

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe which ACT core processes address the barriers to being authentic as a therapist.
2. Conduct a functional analysis to understand the patterns of experiential avoidance that get in the way of living authentically to one's values.
3. Demonstrate how to engage in the therapeutic process with clients from a more authentic stance as a therapist.

### 41. Self-as-context Made Simple

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Flexible Perspective Taking

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Russ Harris, MBBS, Psychological Flexibility P/L

Self-as-context – the transcendent experience of the ‘noticing self’ or ‘observer self’ – is, for many, one of the most confusing elements of ACT. This workshop aims to make the concept simple and understandable, and introduce brief, practical techniques for working with it in therapy. We start off with a quick explanation (using simplified RFT) to explain how self-as-context originates in typically developing children. We’ll then cover, in non-technical language, many different ways to talk about self-as-context with our clients. And we’ll practice and experience a number of simple but effective self-as-context exercises, ideal for brief interventions with clients. By the end of this workshop, attendees will have repeatedly experienced the psychological space of self-as-context, and will have a variety of tools to facilitate this process in therapy.

Educational Objectives:

1. Discuss and describe self-as-context in a non-technical and jargon-free manner, simple for non-professionals to understand.
2. Describe how the ‘observer self’ develops in typically-developing children.
3. Apply a variety of techniques for facilitating the ‘observer self’ experience in therapy.

Friday Morning 10:30 AM

#### 54. Integrating ACT and Health at Every Size (HAES) to Transcend Body and Weight Concerns

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, ACT, Body image, Weight stigma, Health at every size, Intervention

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Borgne**

Sarah Pegrum, Ph.D., Pegrum Therapy & Training  
 Racheli Miller, Ph.D., The Compassion Practice

We live in a societal context whereby body size is commonly fused with personal worth, driving the chase for a physical ideal that can overshadow other life pursuits. This societal context of diet culture shapes the individual's experience of their body; often, the body becomes labelled as ‘the problem’ to be fixed and changed. What can entail is an entanglement with weight and body concerns and an increasing vulnerability to cycles of yo-yo dieting, eating disorders and various other physical and psychological issues.

The Health at Every Size (HAES) movement challenges these norms and encourages individual transcendence of cultural paradigms around body and weight. When combined with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), HAES principles can foster body acceptance and values-driven living, even in the face of weight discrimination. In this interactive and experiential workshop, HAES and ACT principles will be integrated, offering techniques for cultivating body acceptance and enhancing value clarification to empower clients to accept their bodies and live in accordance with their values, even in the context of weight discrimination.

Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the core principles of the Health at Every Size (HAES) movement and demonstrate how to integrate them with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
2. Apply ACT and HAES based strategies to help individuals reshape their relationship with thoughts and emotions related to body image and weight.
3. Implement practical techniques to support clients in disentangling from contextual body-related messages and reconnecting with values-driven actions.

#### 55. Beyond Normativity: Rethinking Behavioral Approaches for Minority Groups

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *None of these*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, DEI, Gender, Sexuality, Neurodiversity

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Chair: Steven C Hayes, Ph.D., Institute for Better Health  
 Matthew D. Skinta, Ph.D., ABPP, Roosevelt University  
 Sonia Singh, Ph.D., University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
 Janani Vaidya, M.S., National Louis University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Behavioral science has a controversial history when working with marginalized groups. This panel will explore how the application of nomothetic behavioral principles can inadvertently yet so frequently become a tool that enforces normative standards in ways that harm the members of minority groups, specifically focusing on how behavior therapy has been leveraged in harmful ways in attempts to treat or change experiences of sexual orientation, gender identity, and autism. These efforts disconnect individuals from their own authenticity, and lead to a cascade of adverse outcomes.

Drawing upon lived experiences, research evidence, and clinical expertise, panelists will explore how behavior therapists can critically examine their own biases, develop more inclusive, empathetic, and culturally humble approaches that enhance the well-being and self-determination of all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodivergence, or disability status. The panel will close with a discussion of the potential role ACBS could play in challenging systemic inequities and promoting an affirming, human rights-based approach to behavioral interventions.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Identify and critically analyze how traditional behavioral therapy approaches, rooted in nomothetic principles, can inadvertently perpetuate systemic inequalities and marginalize individuals from minority groups.
2. Identify and address the potential for harm within behavioral interventions, such as the perpetuation of internalized stigma, the suppression of authentic self-expression, and the potential for worsened mental health outcomes.
3. Adapt behavioral interventions to prioritize client autonomy, self-determination, and cultural sensitivity, while acknowledging and addressing the impact of systemic inequalities on the mental health and well-being of marginalized individuals.

**56. I know I should exercise but...: ACT strategies to empower you and your clients to move more everyday**

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Original data, Role play*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Physical Activity

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Diana M Hill, Ph.D., Private Practice  
 Jason Lillis, Ph.D., Brown Medical School; California Northstate University

We all have our reasons for not exercising; and these same excuses contribute to you feeling bad or guilty when you fail to move as much as you know you “should.” In addition, multi-level challenges (e.g. societal stigma towards body shape, urban design limitations, chronic health conditions, availability of safe spaces for physical activity) create additional headwinds for initiating and sustaining regular physical activity (PA). In this workshop, we’ll tackle some of the stickiest barriers to PA. You’ll learn how to address these challenges through a process-based lens—moving beyond lectures about why you should exercise and instead exploring ways to get moving in the life you have. Blending clinical and research perspectives, we’ll introduce the latest creative and flexible approaches to integrating “nutritious movement” into therapy and daily life. This interactive session will include conceptual formulation, practical strategy demonstrations, experiential exercises, and real play. We want to hear all the reasons why you and your clients just can’t get moving—and we will help you move right through them!

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Explain the scientific and conceptual support for using ACT strategies to promote PA.
2. Describe 3 processes targeted by ACT for PA intervention strategies.

3. List at least 3 practical strategies for promoting increased PA with clients.

## 57. From Leaning In to Letting Go: Empirical Investigations into State of Surrender

Symposium • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Processes of change, Surrender, Acceptance

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Caleb M Jean, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Discussant: David "Rick" Perkins, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Matt D Andersland, M.S., The University of Memphis

Lauren E Venable, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Hunter K. Sudduth, M.S., University of Alabama

A psychological state of surrender is characterized by a willingness to accept what is to come without resistance, and is associated with psychological well being and engagement with SUD treatment (Sease et al., 2024a, 2024b). Increases in state of surrender have been observed following mindfulness practice, supporting its manipulability and identifying it as a potential outcome of therapeutic relevance (Sease et al., 2024a). To further explore the utility of the surrender construct as a psychotherapeutic target, exploration of lay perspectives on the surrender construct, and investigation of cross sectional and longitudinal associations with variables related to psychological distress and treatment outcome are warranted. The first paper will present a longitudinal examination of relations between surrender and valued living. The second paper explores the relation between surrender and existential isolation, a construct from existential psychotherapy associated with attenuated treatment effects (Constantino et al., 2023), in an at-risk population. The third paper will present a qualitative analysis of subjective perspectives on the meaning of psychological surrender. Consideration for the role of surrender in psychotherapy will be discussed.

- *Surrendering to a Life of Meaning: Exploring the Moderating Role of Profiles of Flexibility and Stress in the Relation Between State of Surrender and Valued Living*

Matthew D. Andersland, M.S., University of Memphis; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Tennessee Institute for Gambling Education and Research

Thomas B. Sease, Ph.D., Texas Christian University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

David "Rick" Perkins, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

States of psychological surrender - characterized by a sense of willingness to accept what is to come without resistance, have been positively associated with psychological health, meaning in life, and engagement in substance use treatment (Sease et al., 2024; Sease et al., 2024b). Contextual behavioral treatments for psychological suffering highlight the role of valuing - the verbal establishment of consequential reinforcing functions - in the construction of meaningful, contextually sensitive, and resilient patterns of responding. The present study explores longitudinal associations between State of Surrender (SoS) and progression toward value-aligned patterns of action and meaning in life. Latent profile analysis is used to derive profiles reflecting various aspects of repertoire and context at baseline, including psychological flexibility, stress, mindfulness, and disruptions to valued living. The relationship between individual level SoS and progression toward values and meaning in life, and the potential enhancing or attenuating roles of latent profile membership, is explored using hierarchical linear modeling. The present study advances our understanding of processes facilitative of building meaningful lives.

- *Surrendering to Existential Concerns: Exploring the Relationship Between State of Surrender and Existential Isolation*

Lauren E. Venable, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Thomas B. Sease, Ph.D., Texas Christian University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

David "Rick" Perkins, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Existential Isolation (EI) is the subjective sense that a person is alone in their experience and that others are unable to understand their perspective (Pinel et al., 2017). EI is associated with various

negative outcomes including clinically significant psychological distress, negative help-seeking attitudes, and reduced therapeutic outcomes (Constantino et al., 2019). State of Surrender (SoS) – the willingness to accept what is to come without resistance – is a novel correlate of psychological wellbeing that is positively associated with treatment outcomes in at-risk populations (Sease et al., 2024). Theoretically, a state of psychological surrender may aid in adaptive coping with existential concerns (Yalom, 1980); however there has been no empirical inquiry into this theory. This study explores the empirical relationship between SoS and EI in an at-risk population – individuals in residential substance use treatment – and discusses potential clinical applications.

- *Perceptions of State of Surrender: Utilizing Thematic Content Analysis to Capture Individual Conceptualizations and Impacts of States of Surrender*

Hunter K. Sudduth, M.S., University of Alabama; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Alabama Research Institute on Aging (ARIA);  
 Thomas B. Sease, Ph.D., Texas Christian University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
 David "Rick" Perkins, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

State of Surrender (SoS; Russ et al., 2019) refers to the willingness to accept, without resistance, what is to come (Sease, et al., 2024). The original concept can be attributed to William James. However, only recently have efforts been made to empirically study SoS and delineate it from conceptually similar concepts. To date, SoS appears functionally and quantitatively distinct from psychological flexibility and mindfulness (Sease, et al., 2024b). Lay perceptions of SoS within the broader population, however, remain unknown. This study examined perceptions of SoS in a large college sample using qualitative methodology. Participants were provided with a definition of SoS and then asked to describe a SoS experience from their lives. Thematic analysis will be conducted to identify common emotions that participants associated with SoS. These results are expected to further distinguish SoS from related constructs and inform the development of clinical interventions targeting SoS.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Define State of Surrender and compare definitions to participant experiences.
2. Describe individual level relationships between valued living, meaning in life, and state of surrender.
3. Discuss potential clinical applications of scaffolding SoS in at-risk populations.

### 58. Rethinking Reinforcement: Interbehavioral Insights and Implications for Practice

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Theory and philosophical foundations, Behavior analysis, Interbehavioral Psychology

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Abbey M Warren, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Discussant: Claudia Drossel, Ph.D., Eastern Michigan University

Linda J Parrott Hayes, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno

Emily K Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, UL Lafayette

Mitch Fryling, Ph.D., California State University, Los Angeles

Contextual Behavioral Science understands organisms and behavior in terms of their interactions with the context (i.e., act-in-context; Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Wilson, 2012). Reinforcement, a primary component of three and four-term contingencies within operant learning theory, offers a mechanistic understanding of how behavior evolves in context (Catania, 2012). Interbehaviorism offers a holistic perspective on the complex interaction of factors in context as convolving (co-evolving) with behavior (Smith, 2006). What might this mean for the foundational construct of reinforcement? How might the phenomenon that reinforcement is intended to describe be approached from an interbehavioral perspective? The authors will explore interbehavioral perspectives on processes commonly described in operant language in terms of contingencies of reinforcement. The first paper provides a reinterpretation of the operant concept of reinforcement as a participating factor in an integrated field. The second paper provides an interbehavioral conceptualization of processes in functional analytic psychotherapy. The third paper explores appetitive functional relations as a dimension of K, the unique organization of interrelated participants in the field.



- *Reinforcement as a Setting Factor*

Linda J. Parrott Hayes, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno

In behavior science, reinforcement is held to be a causal process – one that is new in the sense that it follows rather than precedes the behavior it causes and is thereby applicable only to classes of behavior. It is held to be a causal process of “selection”. Support for a causal interpretation of the consequences of behavior is drawn from a similar construction in biology. In this presentation it is argued that selection, be it natural or selection by consequences, is not a causal process but rather a reference to a continuously changing configuration of conditions in which it is, itself, a participant. From this perspective, reinforcement may be conceptualized as a setting factor. The setting, as construed in interbehavioral psychology, includes factors of both organismic and environing types. It is also from whence an individual’s history continues to operate. Implications of a reinterpretation of reinforcement in this way are discussed.

- *An Interbehavioral Analysis of Processes in Functional Analytic Psychotherapy*

Mitch Fryling, Ph.D., California State University, Los Angeles

Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) is a behavior analytic therapy approach that focuses on the therapeutic relationship as the context for assessing, shaping, and promoting the generalization of clinically relevant behavior. Operant constructs, such as reinforcement, discriminative stimuli, and evoking, have been proposed as the mechanisms of change in FAP. This presentation considers FAP research and scholarly work which has explored this hypothesis and proposes an alternative approach. Two issues are considered specifically: 1) the extent to which operant terminology corresponds to the processes used in FAP, and 2) the relational nature of interpersonal stimulus and response functions. It is argued that conceptualizations of reinforcement, as part of a linear contingency, may distract from other factors pertinent to developing social connection and intimacy. The presentation concludes by advocating for the inclusion of interbehavioral psychology in conceptual work related to FAP.

- *With Breadth and Flexibility: Unpacking Positive Reinforcement through the Lens of Appetitive Functional Relations*

Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Matthew Andersland, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; University of Memphis  
Karen Kate Kellum, Ph.D., University of Mississippi

Positive reinforcement has been a useful construct, supporting applications of behavior analysis to increase target behaviors across a variety of settings (e.g., Bowman-Perrott et al., 2016; Walker & Buckley, 1968; Wei & Yazdanifard, 2014). Positive reinforcement is often introduced in contrast to negative reinforcement, where a preceding behavior becomes more likely due to removal of a stimulus. This distinction is problematic, in that it depends on the observer’s discrimination of what is being added or removed, and is often arbitrary (i.e., removal of cold vs. access to warmth). The distinction has persisted, however, perhaps in part due to its orienting observers (analysts and interventionists) to contingencies that broaden the repertoire and improve receptivity to learning. This state of interaction with the environment may be referred to as psychological flexibility in mid-level terms. Another way of characterizing this distinction between “toward” and “away” behaviors may be in terms of functional relations (Kantor, 1958) – appetitive and aversive. Implications of characterizing positive reinforcement in terms of appetitive (and aversive) functional relations will be discussed.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify the strengths and limitations of operant conceptualizations within FAP.
2. Describe positive reinforcement in terms of appetitive (and aversive) functional relations.
3. Describe the ways in which reinforcement may be conceptualized as a setting factor.

## 59. Innovative methods to improve psychometric precision in the measurement of psychological flexibility processes

Symposium • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Processes of change, Psychometrics/measurement

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Samuel D. Spencer, Ph.D., University of North Texas

Discussant: Robert D. Zettle, Ph.D., Wichita State University

Eric Lee, Ph.D., Southern Illinois University  
 Nicholas C Borgogna, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham  
 Ti Hsu, M.S., University of Iowa  
 Natalie Tadros, B.A., Mississippi State University  
 Ronald D Rogge, Ph.D., University of Rochester

Measurement of psychological flexibility processes continues to be an important CBS priority (Hayes, Merwin et al., 2021). While critical examination of existing measures of psychological flexibility processes remains ongoing (Arch et al., 2023), research that seeks to refine measurement practices in this area continues to grow. This symposium highlights recent conceptual and empirical innovations that seek to improve precision in measurement of psychological flexibility-related constructs. The first paper presents data from a large-scale content analysis across a range of psychological flexibility measures. The second paper investigated the measurement invariance of the Experiential Avoidance Rating Scale (EARS) across various demographic variables. The third paper examined an alternative item response format to improve psychometric performance of the CompACT-15. The fourth paper investigated the psychometric properties of the MPFI using a longitudinal EMA approach. The fifth paper showcases a series of innovative studies that empirically validate the unified flexibility and mindfulness model. By centering innovative CBS-based psychometric work, this symposium seeks to answer the call for continuing to improve precision in measurement of psychological flexibility-related constructs.

- *We Can Define it, But How Do We Actually Measure it? A Content Analysis of Psychological Flexibility Scales*

Eric B. Lee, Ph.D., Southern Illinois University- Carbondale  
 Alexa M. Skolnik, University of Toledo  
 Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) emphasizes the importance of psychological flexibility and inflexibility, making these constructs central to evaluating ACT theory. However, measuring the complexity of psychological flexibility presents significant challenges. One key issue is the potential content overlap between scales designed to measure the same or similar constructs. This study analyzed content overlap across nine commonly used psychological flexibility and inflexibility scales. Forty distinct item categories were identified, but none were shared by all nine scales. The Jaccard Index across these scales was 0.13, indicating minimal category overlap. Items were fairly evenly distributed between measuring psychological flexibility (42.9%) and inflexibility (57.1%). A significant proportion (78.5%) focused on internal experiences or relationships with internal experiences, including emotions (41.1%), thoughts (28.2%), worries (3.1%), memories (2.5%), physical sensations (2.5%), and undefined "experiences" (1.2%). These findings highlight the need to clarify the definitions of psychological flexibility and inflexibility in relation to self-report items and to improve transparency in reporting study measures, including the constructs of interest, scale selection, and psychometric data.

- *Incremental Structural Invariance of the Experiential Avoidance Rating Scale*

Nicholas C. Borgogna Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham  
 Samuel D. Spencer Ph.D., University of North Texas  
 David A.L. Johnson B.S., University of Alabama at Birmingham  
 Kyle M. Brasil M.S., University of South Alabama  
 Ryon C. McDermott Ph.D., University of South Alabama  
 Shane W. Kraus Ph.D., University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
 Jeffrey A. Buchanan Ph.D., Minnesota State University, Mankato

Experiential avoidance is a foundational component of the psychological inflexibility model. Several critics have identified flaws in popular experiential avoidance measures (particularly the AAQ series). The Experiential Avoidance Rating Scale (EARS; Borgogna et al., 2023) was developed to correct many of the previous limitations. In the current paper we extend psychometric validation data for the EARS. Using a large, combined sample of community members and college students (n=3,000) we tested the structural invariance of the incremental validity of mental illness EARS correlates. Specifically, invariance models were tested for gender, race, and sexual orientation. We then examined how the incremental validity of the EARS performed above-and-beyond the AAQ, brief experiential avoidance questionnaire, and a measure of neuroticism in the prediction depression, anxiety, and trauma (this is done in one wholistic multivariate model for each demographic invariance test). All models demonstrated significant findings, with various demographic moderators indicating differential effects. We will discuss these findings in the context of the larger experiential avoidance measurement literature. Our findings ultimately demonstrate the strength and utility of the EARS.

- *Confirmatory measurement modeling and measurement invariance of the Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes-15 across Likert and Expanded response formats.*

Ti Hsu, M.S., University of Iowa  
 Lesa Hoffman, Ph.D., University of Iowa  
 Emily B.K. Thomas, Ph.D., University of Iowa

Many psychological flexibility questionnaires include a mix of positively and negatively worded Likert items. This practice, however, compromises scale dimensionality, validity, and reliability (Chyung et al., 2018). The Expanded response format addresses these issues, producing instruments with more theoretically congruent factor structures, higher reliability, and better construct validity (Zhang & Savalei, 2016). Using confirmatory factor analysis and item factor analysis, this study compared the effects of the Expanded and Likert formats on the psychometric properties of the Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Process-15 (CompACT-15; Hsu et al., 2023). 1,319 adults were randomly assigned to complete the Likert or Expanded CompACT-15. Findings showed that the Expanded format CompACT-15 was more reliable than the Likert CompACT-15 across multiple indices. While item factor loadings and residual variances were largely equivalent, item location parameters functioned differently for multiple items across formats. Most factor correlations were stronger in the Expanded format. Findings highlight wording issues in psychological flexibility measures, and provide a methodological template for similar research aimed at improving measures of psychological flexibility and other transdiagnostic processes.

- *A Preliminary Psychometric Investigation of the Multidimensional Psychological Flexibility Inventory Short Form for Use in Ecological Momentary Assessment*

Natalie Tadros, B.A., Mississippi State University  
 Jennifer Krafft, Ph.D., Mississippi State University  
 Ashley C. Middleton, Mississippi State University

The Multidimensional Psychological Flexibility Inventory short form (MPFI-24; Gregoire et al., 2020) assesses all facets of psychological flexibility and inflexibility and has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. However, its validity for ecological momentary assessment (EMA), a method crucial for assessing within-person variability, has not been investigated. This study developed the MPFI-EMA and conducted a preliminary investigation of its psychometric properties in a U.S. college sample (n = 126). Results indicated excellent between-person reliability for all the MPFI-EMA scales ( $w = .95-.1.00$ ) and adequate within-person reliability ( $w = .64$  to  $.80$ ), except for the Acceptance subscale (low;  $w = .54$ ). Evidence for the convergent and divergent validity of the MPFI-EMA was supported, except for specific subscales (e.g., Inaction). Lagged analyses demonstrated the predictive validity of the MPFI-EMA in relation to mood. The MPFI-EMA Psychological Inflexibility and specific subscales demonstrated reactivity over time, potentially related to social desirability. Limitations include using arbitrary cutoffs, as EMA psychometric validation criteria are not well-established. Recommendations will be discussed, including replication in diverse samples.

- *The UFM Scale/Model: A Flexible Conceptual Framework to Clarify Mechanistic Pathways Promoting Distress/Wellbeing*

Ronald D. Rogge, University of Rochester  
 Yi-Ying Lin, University of Rochester  
 Shin-Young Kim, University of Rochester

This talk presents the Unified Flexibility & Mindfulness (UFM) model, a conceptual framework that incorporates self-compassion, mindfulness, and emotion regulation as ACT-relevant processes. STUDY1: EFA, CFA, and IRT analyses in a sample of 2742 online respondents expanded the MPFI to create the 70-item UFM scale. SEM path analyses supported the UFM model, organizing the 14 distinct flexibility processes into a series of broader stages (mindful lenses promoting greater decentering, promoting greater value-drive behavior, promoting wellbeing). STUDY2: SEM and network analyses in 668 white Americans, 319 Asian Americans, 332 Chinese, 400 Japanese, and 362 Taiwanese demonstrated cross-cultural support for the UFM. STUDY3: Network analyses on 1-month change scores from 1242 respondents continued to support the UFM model in 2-wave longitudinal data. STUDY4: Network analyses in 1911 respondents clarified the role of self-compassion in facilitating decentering (acceptance, self-as-context, & defusion) and the role of difficulties in emotion regulation in promoting defensively reacting (experiential avoidance, self-as-content, fusion) and aimless haphazard behavior (loss of contact with values & inaction). CONCLUSIONS: The UFM offers insights into the mechanisms underlying wellbeing.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe and discuss the importance of accurately, reliably, and validly measuring psychological flexibility-related constructs.
2. Explain the nuanced differences among diverse measures of psychological flexibility, and apply theoretical tenets of construct validity to the selection of measures for use in clinical practice.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of limitations of cross-cultural generalizability of measures of psychological flexibility-related processes, and the importance of utilizing psychometric research to guide clinical use of these measures with diverse populations.

## 60. ACT Within The Therapeutic Relationship: Interpersonal Processes of Change

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Therapeutic Alliance

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Lou Lasprugato, M.A., Private Practice

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services

Jim Lucas, PG Diploma CBT, Openforwards

Manuela O'Connell, Lic., Private Practice

Michael C May, M.A., Mandala House, LLC, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group (Affiliate Researcher)

Research into the therapeutic relationship consistently finds moderate, yet robust, relationships between alliance assessment and client outcome measures (Flückiger et al., 2018). Still, dissent persists over which factors are most salient (Finsrud et al., 2022), even though it is generally considered, by therapists and researchers alike, to be the primary mechanism of change in psychotherapy.

A very modest body of research evaluating acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) suggests that the transference of psychological flexibility skills may account for any significance of the alliance within the therapeutic relationship (Walser et al., 2013; Gifford et al., 2011). That is, as clinicians shape psychological flexibility processes, the benefits of the working alliance may be realized. The relationship is the vehicle of change, and work done to conceptualize and quantify the alliance should not consider process and outcome as separate entities. This panel will call upon ACT experts to share their perspectives on this crucial phenomenon, including the role of functional analysis in determining what processes to target. Panelists will also demonstrate process-based shaping within the therapeutic relationship.

Educational Objectives:

1. Compare and contrast qualities of the therapeutic alliance from different perspectives.
2. Explain how psychological flexibility processes naturally support the therapeutic/working alliance.
3. Explain the role that functional analysis plays in determining what processes to target within the therapeutic relationship.

## 61. Machine Psychology: A contextual behavioral approach to Artificial General Intelligence

**Invited** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *None of these*

Categories: Mobile or digital technology, Artificial Intelligence

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Robert Johansson, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Stockholm University, Sweden



Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) aims to create flexible, adaptive intelligence, yet much of AGI research remains constrained by mechanistic assumptions of fixed representations, static learning, and rule-bound environments. In contrast, Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) offers a framework for understanding intelligence as an adaptive, behaviorally shaped process, dynamically molded by environmental interaction.

In this talk, I introduce Machine Psychology, a CBS-driven approach to AGI that reframes intelligence as an evolving behavioral repertoire rather than a rigid computational model. Drawing from operant conditioning and Relational Frame Theory (RFT), I will explore how AGI can be shaped through operant learning paradigms, mirroring human cognitive development. I will discuss experimental work demonstrating how an AI architecture based on Non-Axiomatic Reasoning (NARS) successfully acquires generalizable, context-sensitive behaviors.

By integrating CBS principles with AGI, Machine Psychology offers a more interpretable, adaptable, and ethically grounded approach to artificial intelligence while providing CBS with novel testbeds for advancing theories of learning, cognition, and behavior change.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how mechanistic assumptions in AGI research limit adaptability and contrast them with CBS principles that support context-sensitive, evolving intelligence.
2. Explain how operant conditioning and RFT apply to AGI development and identify at least one experimental case demonstrating these principles in AI training.
3. Evaluate the reciprocal contributions between CBS and AGI and propose at least one way CBS can inform AGI development or vice versa.

## 62. What's new in CBS and Psychedelics: Recent Developments in Theory, Research, and Clinical Practice

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Literature review*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Theory and philosophical foundations, Psychedelic-assisted therapy

*Target Audience: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Brian Pilecki, Ph.D., Portland Institute for Psychedelic Science, Portland Psychotherapy  
 Jason Luoma, Ph.D., Portland Psychotherapy Clinic, Research, & Training Center  
 Kati Lear, Ph.D., Portland Institute for Psychedelic Science  
 Florencia Cicchitti, Dra., CEPPA  
 Henry Whitfield, M.Sc., Maastricht University

Recent developments in psychedelic science and clinical applications have highlighted the importance of understanding processes of change and optimizing therapeutic frameworks. This panel brings together diverse experts at the intersection of Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) and psychedelic-assisted therapy to explore emerging developments in theory, research, and clinical practice. Panelists represent multiple domains including systematic reviews of the evidence-base for the role of psychological flexibility in psychedelics, clinical trials incorporating CBS principles, ACT-based protocols in clinical settings, providing therapeutic support in outpatient settings to clients using psychedelics on their own, and CBS-informed psychedelic retreats. Discussion will focus on how CBS and ACT are informing various approaches to psychedelic work across different contexts and populations. Key discussion topics will address processes of therapeutic change, cultural adaptations of CBS-informed protocols, and optimizing treatment outcomes across different contexts of psychedelic use. The panel will examine challenges, opportunities, and future directions for CBS approaches in psychedelic therapy, with emphasis on practical implications for clinicians and researchers working in this rapidly evolving field.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Evaluate how principles of Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) are being applied across different contexts of psychedelic-assisted therapy and psychedelic use.



2. Describe the current evidence base in how psychedelics and ACT-based processes of change are interconnected in positive therapeutic outcomes.
3. Identify key considerations for adapting CBS-informed therapeutic protocols across different cultural contexts and treatment settings.

### 63. Integrating ACT & DBT for Clients at Risk for Suicide

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Suicide Intervention

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Amy House, Ph.D., Augusta University

Christopher F Drescher, Ph.D., Augusta University - Medical College of Georgia

This training will focus on strategies for integrating Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for individuals at risk of suicide. Suicidality is a serious and persistent problem, with a disproportionate impact on certain populations (e.g., gender and sexual minoritized populations, people with disabilities). Decades of research have demonstrated the limitations of traditional suicide assessment and intervention methods. We will highlight the advantages of combining strategies from DBT's structured, behavior-focused approach with ACT's emphasis on psychological flexibility. Key topics covered within this integrated Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) approach to suicidality include functional assessment, chain analysis, and acceptance and defusion of suicide-relevant thoughts and emotions. We will include suicide-specific interventions, including CBS-enhanced safety planning, lethal means restriction, and DBT crisis survival strategies. We illustrate these concepts using multiple case examples and small group roleplays. By integrating ACT and DBT, clinicians can offer a comprehensive, individualized approach that promotes long-term resilience for suicidal clients.

Educational Objectives:

1. Explain a contextual behavioral framework for understanding suicidality and integrating ACT and DBT.
2. Apply a functional perspective, including chain analysis, to the assessment of suicidal behaviors.
3. Describe suicide-specific interventions including CBS-enhanced safety planning.

### 64. The Third Wave of CBT and Beyond: Process-oriented therapy based on belonging and responsibility

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Theory and philosophical foundations, Process-based psychotherapy that is suitable for education, prevention - building resilience and therapy

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Daniel Hamiel, Ph.D., Richman University Israel

The workshop will teach a protocol that focuses on processes beyond diagnoses and is not only therapy but also a basis for prevention, education, and the development of a meaning-oriented way of life. The approach is based on ACT and combines Frankl's logotherapy, elements from Stoic philosophy, and mind-body work. The intervention promotes attention and regulation tools to counter the brain's tendency to retreat to the comfort zone, where unpleasant feelings are avoided, and focus shifts to narcissistic self-affirmation. It encourages going beyond the self while validating oneself through "belonging" and "responsibility" to others. The intervention redirects the brain's automatic default, fostering freedom and meaning in reactions to reality. This is done in the spirit of developing virtues and taking responsibility. A central element is the use of mind-body work to connect with and contain emotions. The intervention is suitable for every person and problem but does not claim to solve any issue completely. It is intended as short-term therapy, helping individuals continue independently.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate the ability to shift from reactive responses to intentional, virtue-based actions, apply value-driven exercises, and develop strategies to sustain this practice independently.
2. Compare self-affirmation and connection, apply purpose-driven exercises from logotherapy and Stoicism, and analyze how transcending self fosters freedom and meaning.
3. Recognize the brain's tendency to avoid discomfort, practice body-based techniques, and apply tools to tolerate and integrate difficult emotions.

### 65. Get Out of Your Head and Into the Game: Optimizing Focus of Performers Utilizing Context Relatable ACT Exercises

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Sports or performance-enhancing, Methods/approaches for individual variation, ACT for athletes and other performers

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

David J Udelf, Psy.D., David Udelf & Associates

Command of attention is critical for the successful execution of skills for athletes and other performers (Haberl, 2024; Moran, 2024). Due to the stressful nature of performance, including athletics, participants often struggle with intrusive thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations that can undermine full presence and disrupt optimal achievement. Psychological flexibility (PF) training, therefore, is crucial for the command of attention and committed actions. This workshop demonstrates how to train psychological flexibility to performers with exercises relatable for them and their specific performance context., utilizing the ACT Matrix (Polk, Schoendorff, Webster, and Olaz, 2016).

Attendees will engage in activities that train performers to effectively respond to internal experience to achieve and maintain optimal presence and attention. Exercises presented enable athletes and performers to effectively connect to their specific context, empowering the ability to pivot from distracting internal experience to a laser focus on the skills required of their performance. Participants will also learn to actively engage with performers in the creation of personalized strategies to attain attention and to restore correct focus when it gets lost.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Teach athletes and other performers the concept of psychological flexibility with simple, intuitive, and relatable language using the ACT Matrix to improve their understanding of how the mind works.
2. Train athletes, and other performers, strategies relatable to them and their context to establish and/or restore focus on the skills and other actions required of their performance.
3. Collaborate with performers to create exercises and strategies that enhance the personalization, relatability, and effectiveness of methods used to establish and maintain focus.

Friday Afternoon 12:15 PM

### Gender, Sex, and Relationship Diversities SIG

**Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting** • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Borgne**

Matthew Skinta, Ph.D., ABPP, Roosevelt University  
Sarah Levinson, JD, LMSW

A new expansion of the Gender and Sexualities SIG, inclusive of the ways that working with diverse sexualities and gender identities and expressions also overlap with those who work with sex therapy, differences in romantic attraction (i.e., ace/aro), kinks, or diverse relationship and sexual practices. Please join to connect, build community, or to plan for a strong presence in Lyon!

All are welcome.

### ACBS Membership Committee Meeting

**Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting** • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Bayside A**

Ashlyne Mullen, Psy.D., Flexible Mind Therapy  
 Jeridith Lord, Ph.D., LCPC, BCBA

This meeting is open to all ACBS members interested in enhancing the experience of ABCS membership. Current committee members will meet to discuss values-based goals and action items for the coming year. Those interested in joining the committee are invited to come, ask questions, and learn more about the work of the Membership Committee. All are invited to join with questions, feedback, and suggestions.

**Psychedelic and Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness SIG**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Temple Morris, LCSW-C, True North Therapy  
 Brian Pilecki, Portland Psychotherapy & Training

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of the Psychedelic and Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness SIG! Connect with colleagues who share your interest in advancing our understanding of non-ordinary states of consciousness from a functional contextual perspective. This informal gathering provides a welcoming space to meet fellow SIG members, share experiences from the past year, and explore collaborative opportunities for the future. Whether you're a current member or curious about joining our community, come participate in open discussions about our ongoing work to bridge behavioral science with consciousness studies. We'll celebrate our collective achievements and brainstorm ways to further our mission of evidence-based investigation and dialogue in this emerging field.

**Pain SIG Annual Meeting**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Nottaway**

Skye Ochsner Margolies, Ph.D., University of North Carolina School of Medicine

ALL are welcome and encouraged to join the Pain SIG meeting. Members, as well as those interested in joining, will gather to discuss the Pain SIG's current initiatives and activities, goals for the upcoming year, and pain-related topics of interest. We hope to see you there.

Friday Afternoon 1:15 PM

**67. Why Process Based Therapy (PBT) is so awesome**

Workshop • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Behavior analysis, Building the bridge between ACT and Process Based Therapy (PBT)

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Borgne**

Gijs Jansen, Ph.D., PsychFlex

In this workshop you will experience first hand what Process Based Therapy (PBT) is, how it connects to ACT and behavior analysis, and what the practical implications are of the Extended Evolutionary Meta Model (EEMM). You will understand why it's so important to open up our clinical model for other therapeutic techniques, and how that will make us stronger as a field. You will discover just how awesome PBT really is and how it can benefit your work as a professional, by connecting the model to high tech personalised elearning and contextual interventions that will blow your mind.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the overlap and difference between ACT and Process Based Therapy (PBT).
2. Analyze the connection between PBT and classical behavioral analysis.

3. Apply the Extended Evolutionary Meta Model (EEMM) to your everyday therapeutic work.

### **68. Building resilient teams: How to use the Matrix to Manage Conflict and Create Psychological Safety**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Organizational / Industrial psychology, Professional development, Prosocial ACT Matrix, Leadership, Workplace Mental Health, Team Building, Conflict management, Psychological Safety

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Dayna Lee-Baggley, Ph.D., Saint Mary's University  
Ron Pizzo, LLB, Dr. Lee-Baggley and Associates

This experiential workshop introduces attendees to the use of the ACT Matrix to manage conflict, enhance communication and build psychological safety within teams. Whether you are a practitioner working directly with teams or lead a team yourself in a research lab, clinic, or workplace, this workshop will equip participants with concrete skills to reduce misunderstandings, promote open communication, and strengthen team cohesion. Using the Matrix framework, participants will explore ways to address difficult topics and navigate sensitive issues constructively. The Matrix encourages open dialogue without framing conversations as right or wrong, making it easier to handle cultural differences, personal preferences, and complex team dynamics. Attendees will engage in practical exercises that help identify and manage internal barriers, foster empathy, and approach mistakes with compassion. By focusing on real-world scenarios, attendees will gain actionable tools to create a supportive, psychologically safe environment that empowers teams to resolve conflicts and collaborate effectively. This unique workshop presented by both a clinical psychologist and employment lawyer, both certified in the Matrix, provides a unique opportunity to learn essential skills.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate the use of the ACT Matrix to manage conflict and enhance communication within teams.
2. Apply the ACT Matrix to navigate sensitive issues constructively, promoting open dialogue and mutual understanding within teams.
3. Describe strategies to foster psychological safety and approach team conflicts with empathy and compassion through real-world scenarios.

### **69. Focused ACT on Fire: Training Clinicians to Use the Fairy Dust of FACT Awareness**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Patti J Robinson, Ph.D., Mountainview Consulting Group

Clinicians often struggle with identifying indicators of psychological flexibility in-the-moment while conducting an interview. The Pillars Assessment Tool (PAT) is used in Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to direct clinician attention to behavioral indicators of Open, Aware, and Engaged qualities during a clinical interaction.

Participants will use this tool while viewing short video clips of a FACT Contextual Interview with a new client. After viewing, participants will share their observations of indicators of "openness, awareness, and engagement" in client behaviors and the impact on their own psychological flexibility.

In a second learning activity, participants will experiment with different responses to client statements that trigger stress in most clinicians. Small groups will experiment with different ways of replying to scripted statements. In debriefing they will explore the impact of present moment

responding on directions taken in a clinical conversation following a stressful moment. This workshop is designed to strengthen clinician ability to use the “fairy dust” of FACT to promote radical change.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Provide examples of higher and lower levels of psychological flexibility, using the FACT Pillars Tool (Open, Aware, Engaged).
2. Formulate and describe options for intervening to assist with greater psychological flexibility by targeting a pillar of demonstrated need (Open, Aware, Engaged).
3. Identify one or more strategies for optimizing use of “Aware” skills (as clinicians), while engaging in challenging moments in interactions with patients.

## 70. ACT with youth across settings: What does the data say?

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Dissemination or global health strategies, Children and adolescents

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Olivia F Petersen, B.A., Harvard University

Discussant: Maria Karekla, Ph.D., University of Cyprus

Julie Petersen, Ph.D., Harvard University

Rebecca L Schneider, Ph.D., Emory University School of Medicine

Sean M O'Dell, Ph.D., Beyond The Horizon, PLLC

Despite the benefits of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for adult mental health concerns (e.g., Gloster et al., 2020), little research exists on ACT for youth (Petersen et al., 2024). Given the ongoing global youth mental health crisis (McGorry et al., 2025), there is pressing need to evaluate and disseminate evidence-based psychotherapies for youth. The present symposium brings together recent outcome research focused on increasing the efficacy and effectiveness of ACT for young people around the world. Researchers will present transdiagnostic outcomes and processes of change from studies testing ACT in youth within a diverse range of settings: community mental health, integrated primary care, a telehealth intensive outpatient program, and an online self-help program. Findings will be integrated and discussed while highlighting study limitations and promising future directions. An emphasis will be placed on clinical implications and developmental adaptations important for increasing the efficacy and effectiveness of ACT with young people across settings.

- *Assessing the initial acceptability, outcomes, and processes of change for an acceptance and commitment therapy group intervention for anxiety in adolescents from the Bronx*

Julie M. Petersen, Ph.D., Harvard University

Olivia F. Petersen, B.A., Harvard University

Sandra S. Pimentel, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Anxiety in adolescents is pervasive and debilitating, necessitating novel treatment approaches and adaptations, such as DNA-v, a developmental adaptation of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). This study is a preliminary test of group DNA-v in a racially diverse sample of youths with anxiety. Participants were (N=37) adolescents (M age = 16.28 years) already receiving individual mental health services for anxiety and/or related problems. Treatment comprised eight 90-minute weekly group sessions. Participants completed measures of psychological flexibility weekly and at six-week follow-up, as well as anxiety and psychological inflexibility at pre-, post-treatment, and follow-up. Data were analyzed at individual and aggregate level using means, percent change, and reliable change indices. Psychological flexibility remained relatively stable and psychological inflexibility and anxiety scores decreased slightly. Participants reported variable change in weekly measurement of the six ACT processes. Participants rated the treatment as acceptable and positive. Overall, this study demonstrates initial promise for DNA-v as an intervention for racially diverse adolescents with anxiety, and points to the need for more research on DNA-v and measures for youth psychological flexibility.

- *Retrospective cohort study of a novel acceptance and commitment therapy group intervention for adolescents implemented in integrated primary care*

Sean M. O'Dell, Ph.D., Geisinger

Shelley J. Hosterman, Ph.D., Geisinger



Cody A. Hostutler, Ph.D., Geisinger, Nationwide Children's Hospital  
 Cara Nordberg, Geisinger  
 Tracey Klinger, Geisinger  
 Rachel A. Petts, Ph.D., Geisinger, Wichita State University  
 Monica R. Whitehead, Ph.D., Geisinger, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center  
 Samuel A. Faulkner, Ph.D., Geisinger  
 Allen Garcia, Ph.D., Geisinger  
 Carrie A. Massura, Ph.D., Geisinger

To address limited access to behavioral health services in primary care, we conducted a preliminary effectiveness study of a novel acceptance and commitment therapy group treatment implemented within pediatric integrated primary care (ACT-IPC) using a retrospective cohort study design. Participants included 110 youth referred after psychological evaluation between 2015 and 2019. ACT-IPC was implemented in nine sessions; participants had a variety of primary psychiatric diagnoses and were predominantly White (93%) and female (81%) with an average age of 15.1 (SD = 1.5). Anxiety ( $d = -0.71$ ) and depression ( $d = -0.54$ ) symptoms improved significantly, as did psychological inflexibility ( $d = -0.52$ ). Additionally, up to three individualized treatment goals were established and tracked weekly. These outcomes also improved significantly ( $d = -.69$  to  $d = -1.42$ ), and the first two goals evidenced the majority of improvement within approximately the first half of treatment. Reliable and clinically significant change was promising on all outcomes, and few iatrogenic effects were observed. Of note, concurrent individual therapy and psychotropic medication were prevalent within the sample and were not associated with improved outcomes. Overall, findings provide preliminary transdiagnostic effectiveness and feasibility of ACT-IPC and represent a positive example of a reticulated contextual behavioral science approach to treatment development.

- *Preliminary outcomes from a telehealth-based intensive outpatient program incorporating ACT and the DNA-V model for pediatric OCD*

Rebecca L. Schneider, Ph.D., Emory University School of Medicine

Background: While ACT and the DNA-V model (Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015) shows promise for youth OCD and anxiety (Petersen et al., 2022), its application in higher levels of care is limited. The current study evaluated the preliminary feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of delivering an intensive, group-based telehealth treatment combining DNA-V and acceptance-based skills with ERP for pediatric OCD. Methods: Twenty-five adolescents (12-18 years) with OCD participated in a 4-12-week program involving 10 hours weekly of group, individual, and family therapy. Daily groups included DNA-V skills and ERP. OCD symptoms were assessed monthly using the clinician-administered Child Yale Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (CYBOCS-II) and self-report measures. Results: Both adolescents and parents reported large decreases in OCD symptoms. Qualitative feedback indicated high satisfaction overall, with parental and peer involvement, exposures, and acceptance-based skills noted as particularly beneficial. Discussion: This pilot study provides preliminary evidence supporting the feasibility and effectiveness of an intensive, telehealth-delivered ACT-based intervention for pediatric OCD. Findings suggest that combining DNA-V and ACT with ERP within an intensive model may be a promising treatment approach.

- *Promoting Youth Life Satisfaction Through a Brief Online Intervention: Individual Differences in Initial Well-Being and Intervention Response*

Anna-Lotta Lappalainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Katariina Keinonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Päivi Lappalainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Raimo Lappalainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Kirsikka Kaipainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Anne Puolakanaho, University of Jyväskylä, Finland  
 Noona Kiuru, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

There is considerable variance in the need for psychological support and in the response to ACT interventions among young people. We sought to examine factors that may contribute to benefitting from a brief online Acceptance and Commitment Therapy intervention to promote youth life satisfaction, the Youth Compass. Individual differences in adolescents' ( $N = 154$ ) initial well-being and intervention response were examined using cluster analysis. Three distinct subgroups of adolescents were identified based on initial life satisfaction, depressive symptoms and psychological flexibility: 1) Low well-being (16%), 2) Medium well-being (49%), and 3) High well-being (35%). Life satisfaction improved most among youth with low initial wellbeing. Intervention gains were significantly larger in the Low well-being group when compared to Medium ( $d = 0.85$ ) and High ( $d = 0.91$ ) well-being groups. The current results will be discussed in the context of previously reported effectiveness data from the larger Youth Compass research with special attention to implications to implementation of online ACT interventions among young people.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the latest intervention research outcomes in ACT for youth.
2. Discuss the adaptation and implementation of ACT for youth in a variety of online and in-person settings.
3. Identify important areas of future research on ACT with younger populations.

**71. Diverse Applications of ACT for Adults with Cancer**

Symposium • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Original data*Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, ACT in cancer populationsTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Gallier**

Chair: Joanna J Arch, Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder  
 Catherine E Mosher, Ph.D., Indiana University Indianapolis  
 Shelley A Johns, Psy.D., Indiana University School of Medicine  
 Ben Giber, M.A., University of Colorado

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) facilitates acceptance, psychological flexibility, and orienting toward what matters, making it well-suited for people facing serious health conditions. This symposium presents findings from recently completed large trials of ACT for cancer populations. These randomized trials target diverse outcomes, including fatigue, advance care planning, and mental health. First, Catherine Mosher will discuss results from a trial addressing fatigue and its daily interference among 236 women with metastatic breast cancer. Next, Joanna Arch will present on recent findings from a trial for 249 adults with metastatic cancer that targeted advance care planning behavior and mental health outcomes, with ACT delivered by social workers in community clinics. Ben Giber will present this trial's moderator analyses that evaluate baseline patient characteristics that predict who did best in ACT (relative to usual care). Finally, Shelley Johns will present findings from her 3-arm trial that compared ACT, CBT, and Cancer Survivorship Coaching among 390 cancer survivors. These studies expand the evidence base for ACT in cancer populations, highlighting its strengths, limitations, and diverse applications.

- *Randomized Controlled Trial of Telephone-Based ACT for Fatigue Interference with Functioning in Metastatic Breast Cancer*

Catherine E. Mosher, Ph.D., Indiana University Indianapolis  
 Stella Snyder, M.S., Indiana University Indianapolis  
 Shieun Lee, Ph.D., Indiana University Indianapolis  
 Shelley A. Johns, Psy.D., ABPP, Indiana University School of Medicine

Fatigue is the top concern of patients with metastatic breast cancer and is associated with impaired daily activities and quality of life. Evidence-based pharmacologic and behavioral interventions for fatigue in advanced cancer are lacking. This phase II randomized controlled trial tested the impact of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) on fatigue interference with functioning in women with stage IV breast cancer. All patients had moderate to severe fatigue interference at the time of enrollment. Following a baseline assessment, patients were randomized to six weekly telephone-delivered sessions of ACT or education/support. Outcomes were assessed at 2 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months post-intervention. Results of linear mixed model analyses showed that ACT patients had significantly reduced fatigue interference and better functional quality of life at 2 weeks and 6 months post-intervention compared to education/support patients. Other aspects of quality of life, engagement in daily activities, and sleep interference did not significantly differ between study groups. Overall, results suggest that ACT can significantly improve fatigue management and daily functioning in metastatic breast cancer.

- *Randomized Controlled Trial of a Multi-Modal ACT Intervention for Anxious and Depressed Adults with Advanced Cancer in Community Clinics*

Joanna J. Arch, PhD, University of Colorado Boulder and University of Colorado Cancer Center  
 Jill L. Mitchell, PhD, MSW, Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers  
 Sarah Schmiede, PhD, University of Colorado, School of Public Health  
 Madeline Nealis, MPH, University of Colorado Boulder  
 Sarah Genung, University of Colorado Boulder  
 Michael Levin, PhD, Utah State University  
 Regina Fink, PhD, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Jean S Kutner, MD, MPH/MSPH, University of Colorado School of Medicine

Up to half of adults with metastatic cancer report clinically elevated anxiety or depression symptoms. To take control of their health care, they also must engage in advance care planning (ACP) – planning for the types of future care they want and choosing who will advocate on their behalf if they become incapacitated. We recently completed collecting data on a randomized trial of 249 adults with metastatic cancer, comparing a multi-modal online group ACT intervention to usual care. The ACT intervention was delivered by oncology social workers in community cancer care clinics. Between weekly online groups, ACT participants completed self-paced online modules and check-ins at home. We will present main findings from this large study for the primary outcome of ACP engagement as well as secondary outcomes including anxiety, depression, fear of dying, and process variables. By embedding this trial in community clinics, this work embodies the NIH Stage Model of intervention development and testing, producing findings that are relevant to community healthcare settings.

- *Outcome Moderators in a Multi-Modal ACT Intervention in Metastatic Cancer*

Ben Giber, University of Colorado Boulder  
Schmiege, S., University of Colorado School of Public Health  
Mitchell, J.L., Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers  
Kutner, J., University of Colorado School of Medicine  
Fink, R., University of Colorado School of Medicine  
Genung, S., University of Colorado Boulder  
Nealis, M., Arch, J.J.

ACT is well-suited to address psychosocial, emotional, and behavioral barriers to advance care planning in cancer populations, and yet there remains a need to clarify which patients may benefit most from an ACT intervention in this context. To address this gap, we randomized 249 adults with metastatic cancer to a multi-modal Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (M-ACT) supportive care intervention or usual care. In this study, we will explore moderators of differential intervention outcomes at post-intervention and 2-month follow-up. We will investigate several baseline patient characteristics to evaluate whether they predict treatment response on the trial's primary outcome of advanced care planning (ACP): age, sex/gender, baseline anxiety and depression symptom severity, baseline levels of acceptance, and baseline engagement with ACP. These results may inform future efforts to personalize interventions to increase ACP engagement by identifying which patients are most likely to benefit from ACT-based supportive care.

- *Facilitating Adaptive Coping with Fear of Recurrence Among Breast Cancer Survivors: Results from a Three-Arm Randomized Controlled Trial*

Shelley A. Johns, Indiana University School of Medicine; Regenstrief Institute, Inc.  
Matthew E. Hays, Department of Biostatistics & Health Data Science, Indiana University School of Medicine  
Yang Li, Department of Biostatistics & Health Data Science, Indiana University School of Medicine  
Jonathan B. Bricker, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center  
Catherine E. Mosher, Indiana University Indianapolis

Fear of cancer recurrence (FCR) is a prevalent and disruptive problem for breast cancer survivors (BCS). This study compared the effects of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and enhanced usual care (EUC) on FCR. Early-stage breast cancer survivors (N=3f384) with clinical FCR were randomized to one of the three group-based interventions delivered via videoconference. ACT and CBT consisted of six weekly 1.5-hour sessions, while EUC was a single 1.5-hour survivorship coaching session. Repeated measure linear mixed models assessed FCR changes over 12 months, adjusting for baseline group differences in FCR. Participants (mean age=56.3, 80.9% white, 71.4% college-educated) reported significant FCR reductions from baseline to 12 months across all interventions ( $P<0.0001$ ). CBT produced significantly greater decreases in FCR compared to EUC from baseline to all other time points, including 12 months ( $P=0.0103$ ), while ACT showed superior reductions over EUC at select time points ( $P=0.0052, 0.0055$ ). No significant differences were found between ACT and CBT. Findings suggest breast cancer survivors can choose from effective interventions based on personal preference and treatment accessibility.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the effects of ACT on functional outcomes in metastatic breast cancer.
2. Describe a myriad of ways and delivery formats that ACT has been adapted to support both behavioral and mental health outcomes in cancer populations.
3. Define fear of cancer recurrence and describe its disruptive effects on quality of life during cancer survivorship.

## 72. TRANScending Adversity: Lifting Up LGBTQ+ Communities and Tackling Systemic Barriers to Well-Being

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, LGBTQ+, Adversity, Psychological flexibility, Psychological distress, Well-being, Advocacy

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Abbey M Warren, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
 Eva Lieberman, M.S., Western Michigan University  
 Jordan Schroeder, B.S., Western Michigan University  
 Allie Mann, Ph.D., University of Virginia School of Medicine  
 Lauren Griffin, M.S., Suffolk University

As attacks on the LGBTQ+ community continue to rise, and current rhetoric encourages further hate, work focusing on this population is critical. This symposium will explore adversities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals and specifically examine the impact of systemic adversity on well-being. The authors will address unique challenges, including discrimination, internalized homophobia, shame, coming-out experiences, and limited access to medical and mental health care. The first paper will analyze the relationship between victimization, internalized homophobia, and psychological distress, exploring how psychological flexibility moderates these factors. The second paper will focus on coming-out experiences, shame, and psychological distress, emphasizing their connections with psychological flexibility. The third paper will investigate the impact of discrimination on well-being, moderated by psychological flexibility. The fourth paper will present a case study on gender-affirming care in primary care settings. Overall, this symposium will highlight the systemic barriers faced by the LGBTQ+ community and discuss ways in which we, as a scientific community, can work to dismantle these systems, fostering allyship and advocacy in both research and practice.

- *Victimization of LGBTQ+ Individuals: The Role of Psychological Flexibility in Moderating Negative Psychological Outcomes*

Eva Lieberman, M.S., Western Michigan University  
 Jordan Schroeder, Western Michigan University  
 Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Western Michigan University

The current study aimed to investigate the role of psychological flexibility in LGBTQ+ individuals who have been victims of crimes, and the impact psychological flexibility may have on psychological functioning associated with a minority identity. Based on the minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), individuals who are members of this community face stressors due to their marginalized identities and experience an increased likelihood of victimization compared to heterosexual and cisgender individuals (Choudhary et al., 2012; Herek et al., 1999; Kilpatrick et al., 2003). This study examined components of the minority stress model, including psychological distress, internalized homophobia, and shame, and how those concepts are associated with psychological flexibility and victimization. Results show a relationship between victimization due to LGBTQ+ identity and psychological distress, shame, internalized homophobia, and psychological flexibility, with psychological flexibility moderating these relationships. The talk will include discussion of these results as they inform intervention options. Additionally, we will discuss the unique distress of being victimized for being LGBTQ+ and how providers and researchers can work against systemic discrimination and toward activism and allyship.

- *Beyond the Closet: The Role of Resilience and Psychological Flexibility in the LGBTQ+ Coming Out Process*

Jordan Schroeder, Western Michigan University  
 Eva Lieberman, M.S., Western Michigan University  
 Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Western Michigan University

For LGBTQ+ individuals, the coming out process involves ongoing decisions about how, when, and to whom to share their identity (Ali & Barden, 2015). Concealment and disclosure are both highly dynamic and context dependent (Jackson & Mohr, 2016). Psychological flexibility, resilience and social support are crucial for higher disclosure and mitigating negative outcomes (Chan & Yip, 2021; Flynn & Bhambhani, 2021). The present study examined these relationships and found that level of outness was associated with shame, rather than psychological distress. Psychological flexibility was correlated to level of outness when respondents provided an average rating of their outness. Additionally, outness acceptance was

found to be associated with shame, psychological distress, and psychological flexibility. These findings highlight the impact that outness measures have on outcomes. Furthermore, extent of disclosure, open discussions, and perceived outness and acceptance are related to negative outcomes, like shame, as moderated by psychological flexibility or resilience. Discussion will include intervention targets which may be influenced by aspects of psychological flexibility and how application of interventions may need to be tailored for LGBTQ+ populations.

- *The Missing Piece: How Privilege & Discrimination Impact Psychological Flexibility & Well-Being among Gender and Sexual Minoritized Individuals*

LaGriff Griffin, M.S., Suffolk University  
Anna Larson, M.S., Suffolk University

Gender and Sexual Minoritized Individuals (GSMIs) experience greater levels of psychological distress (Balsam et al., 2005; King et al., 2003, 2008; Kirsch et al., 2015; McAleavey et al., 2011), largely due to systemic adversity such as GSMI-related stigma, discrimination and oppression (Harrison, 2009; Livingston et al., 2019; Mink et al., 2014; Valentine & Shipherd, 2018). Psychological flexibility plays an essential role in adapting to adversity and thriving (Doorley et al., 2020). However, GSMIs may struggle to be psychologically flexible and exhibit higher levels of psychological inflexibility due to much of their resources being diverted toward survival in these oppressive systems. The current study used path analysis to investigate whether discrimination impedes GSMIs's ability to achieve psychological flexibility and how this, in turn, may impact psychological distress (depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms). Results suggest that the influence of anticipatory discrimination (InDiA) on depression, anxiety, and stress occurs through InDiA's impact on psychological inflexibility (PI), meaning InDiA worsens psychological distress by first negatively impacting PI. Implications and future directions are discussed.

- *Gender Affirming Integrated Primary Care: A Case Study*  
Allie Mann, Ph.D., University of Virginia

This presentation will explore the case of a trans patient who accessed care at an integrated primary care center that offers both gender-affirming medical care and integrated behavioral health services. Through this case study, we will highlight the benefits of providing LGBTQ+ individuals with comprehensive, affirming care within a single, supportive setting. The patient's journey demonstrates how access to coordinated healthcare—including primary care, gender-affirming treatments, and mental health services—can improve both physical and mental health outcomes. Through this case we can explore models of care that resist systems that maintain LGBTQ+ marginalization.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify and describe adversities faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community.
2. Explain how institutions and organizations uphold systems that contribute to exacerbating adversities faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community.
3. Describe ways in which we, as members of a scientific community, can work toward dismantling these systems and improving allyship and advocacy in research and practice.

### 73. Addressing Racial Bias with Contextual Behavioral Science: From Theory to Practice

**Panel** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: *Social justice / equity / diversity, RFT, ACT*

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Lexy Halpen, M.S., BCBA, The Chicago School  
Jewel Parham, Ph.D., M.S., BCBA, The Chicago School  
Danielle S. Jeudy, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA, Navigate Behavioral Health  
Meredith Andrews, Ph.D., The Chicago School

Racial bias is deeply embedded in our language, interactions, and societal structures. This panel discussion will explore how Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS)—particularly Relational Frame Theory (RFT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)—can help us understand and challenge these biases. RFT provides a theoretical framework for understanding the development of racial bias and informs various interventions, such as perspective-taking and mindfulness, including ACT. The discussion will highlight how these approaches can effectively combat racial bias and promote equity



and psychological flexibility. A Q&A session will allow participants to engage with the panelists and explore strategies to implement in their efforts against racial bias.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe how RFT can be used to explain the formation and reinforcement of racial bias through language and cognition.
2. Analyze how mindfulness and perspective-taking can challenge racial bias and apply these practices to promote psychological flexibility.
3. Identify practical ways to integrate ACT into their personal and professional efforts to reduce racial bias and foster inclusive interactions.

**74. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: A Patient Centered Approach for Insomnia and Behavioral Sleep Medicine**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play, Strategic planning*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Insomnia and other Sleep Disorders

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Colleen Ehrnstrom, Ph.D., University of Colorado at Boulder  
 Skye Ochsner Margolies, Ph.D., DBSM, UNC School of Medicine

Although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is a highly effective treatment, many patients struggle to fully comply with the instructions. ACT offers multiple strategies to help people increase their willingness to be uncomfortable when implementing a behavioral sleep program, additional strategies for managing these sleep-interfering thoughts, including cognitive defusion and mindfulness training, and provides a framework for optimizing sleep programs by addressing and reframing a person's attention, intention, and effort around sleep.

This workshop will help attendees blend ACT strategies with traditional CBT-I to enhance patient outcomes. In particular, attendees will learn how to help their patients: decrease physiological arousal by decreasing struggle, be more willing to fully comply with behavioral treatments, and decrease cognitive hyper-arousal using cognitive defusion and mindfulness.

This workshop will include lecture reviewing relevant research, role play, case examples, and attendee practice. Sample treatment handouts will be provided.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Identify when to use acceptance-based strategies in the context of CBT-I and help patients decrease physiological arousal by "leaning into" their experience, rather than struggling against "the insomnia monster."
2. Explain what cognitive defusion is, and blend it with traditional cognitive restructuring using 2-3 defusion exercises.
3. Explain the role of mindfulness in the treatment of insomnia and describe three practical mindfulness techniques patients can use.

**75. Catalyzing Prosocial Evolution with the help of ACBS**

**Panel** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Evolutionary behavioral science, Dissemination or global health strategies, Cooperation

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

David Sloan S Wilson, Ph.D., ProSocial World  
 Anna Castonguay, M.A., Awakening Lands  
 Steven C Hayes, Ph.D., Institute for Better Health  
 Rachel Gooen, LCSW, Prosocial World

A recent bibliometric analysis of the book: "Prosocial: Using Evolutionary Science to Build Productive, Equitable, and Collaborative Groups" shows how fast the ideas are spreading around the world and across topic domains, thanks very largely to members of ACBS. This panel session will feature both the authors of the book and also a range of ProSocial trainers working with a wide variety of groups. We will describe how CBS and evolutionary ideas are shaping the narrative and helping increase prosocial behaviour in a wide variety of contexts and discuss how prosocial evolution can be further catalyzed with the help of ACBS through the formation of regional communities of practice. Our hope is to generate a conversation regarding how CBS can best influence prosocial cultural evolution.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the global diffusion of ProSocial principles across diverse contexts, as evidenced by bibliometric analysis of the ProSocial book and practitioner case studies.
2. Identify opportunities to participate in and strengthen regional ProSocial communities of practice within the ACBS framework.
3. Analyze how Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) and evolutionary principles can be integrated to enhance prosocial behavior change initiatives in their own professional contexts.

### 76. Zooming In: Making Training and Supervision More Clinically Relevant Using Video Case Vignettes

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Supervision and training, Academics or education, Complex cases, ACT processes, Interpersonal processes, FAP processes

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Francis Lemay, Ph.D., Université Laval

Trainees and supervisees usually appreciate video case-based material to develop their understanding and skills alongside more theoretical and conceptual guidance. Rather than relying on videos developed by others, the presence of easy-to-utilize, high quality recording equipment on most computers allows trainers and supervisors to easily create relevant and impactful material. This helps students and trainees reflect on and prepare to intervene in complex, and sometimes harder to predict, clinical situations. Neither expensive video production companies nor professional actors are needed for this. Situations covered could include a suicidal crisis, a client expressing anger towards their therapist, discussions about clients' values that would be opposed to their therapists', expressions of clear contempt in-session, or a client openly flirting with their care provider. This workshop will demonstrate how series of short pre-recorded role-played clinical vignettes can easily be created and used, both in a classroom (in-person or virtual) or in the context of supervision (virtual, physical, group, or individual format), to help hone ACT or FAP skills with beginner, as well as seasoned, clinicians.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how trainer-created video case vignettes can allow training and supervision to be more precisely targeted and effective.
2. Assess how efficiently students or supervisees have integrated previously studied clinical processes through the use of video-based vignettes.
3. Compile a list of clinical situations relevant to your training/supervision goals, and an action plan to create video vignettes based on them.

### 77. Ignite 1

**Ignite** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

- Psychological Flexibility for Physician Wellbeing

Categories: Professional development, Health / behavioral medicine, Physician Coaching

Maria Benzo, M.D., MSPP, Mayo Clinic

Roberto Benzo, M.D., M.S., Mayo Clinic

Physicians face high rates of burnout, stress, and emotional exhaustion, negatively impacting their well-being and professional effectiveness. Psychological flexibility, a core construct in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is associated with improved resilience and reduced distress. This study evaluated a 12-session ACT-based coaching program designed to enhance psychological flexibility, reduce burnout, and improve well-being among 22 physicians and advanced practitioners at Mayo Clinic Rochester. The intervention targeted the six ACT processes: fostering mindful presence (contact with the present moment), encouraging acceptance of difficult emotions, using defusion techniques to reduce unhelpful thoughts, promoting self-as-context for a stable perspective, clarifying values for meaning, and guiding committed action toward valued behaviors. Pre- and post-intervention assessments using the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, Physician-Expanded Well-Being Index, and AAQ-2 showed significant improvements: WHO-5 scores increased from 53.64 to 70.73 ( $p = 0.0002$ ), distress scores decreased from 3.45 to 0.23 ( $p < 0.0001$ ), and AAQ-2 scores improved, indicating greater psychological flexibility. These findings suggest ACT-based coaching enhances well-being and reduces distress in healthcare professionals. Future research should explore long-term sustainability and broader applicability.

- Imaginal Dosed Exposure and Acceptance (IDEA): A brief protocol for the treatment of panic disorder

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Panic Disorder

Trey D Gehring, LPC

The treatment of panic disorder is within the proverbial DNA of ACT. Stephen C. Hayes has shared how the development of ACT was in part informed by his own history of experiencing panic attacks. In my clinical work, I have found success in treatment of panic disorder using integrative ACT-based imaginal exposure that incorporates constructivist conceptualizations of internal experiences derived from Lisa Feldman Barrett's theory of constructed emotions (TCE). This brief talk introduces the key components of the brief integrative protocol, called IDEA (Imaginal Dosed Exposure and Acceptance), which extensively utilizes dosed imaginal exposure to interoceptive signals and emphasizes ACT core processes of acceptance and cognitive defusion. Designed to be completed in eight sessions or fewer, individual cases in the clinical setting have demonstrated reduction of dysfunctional responses to interoceptive panic stimuli to a subclinical level in as few as five sessions. The intent of this presentation is to initiate conversations on the potential applications of imaginal dosed exposure within an ACT framework and encourage discourse on the applications of TCE within the clinical setting.

- Storytelling as a Tool to Improve Anxiety and Psychological Flexibility

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Academics or education, Academic Anxiety, Psychological Flexibility, RFT

Jacob M Hardin, B.A.A.S, East Texas Contextual Behavioral Science Lab - University of Texas at Tyler  
Olga Berkout, Ph.D., The University of Texas at Tyler

The study to be discussed aims to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and initial impact of a storytelling-based intervention that integrates Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles with creative writing to address academic anxiety among undergraduate students. Academic anxiety, prevalent in higher education, can negatively impact academic performance and psychological well-being. ACT, known for enhancing psychological flexibility (PF), has shown promise in improving mental health outcomes in academic contexts. Storytelling, as a tool for cognitive and emotional flexibility, may further enhance ACT's effectiveness by helping students reframe their academic challenges. In this study, students will engage in a single-session intervention, where they creatively relate their academic experiences to the journey of a fictional character facing similar struggles. Participants will complete pre- and post-intervention measures assessing academic anxiety, PF, and intervention acceptability. It is hypothesized that the intervention will lead to reduced academic anxiety and increased PF. The findings will provide insight into the potential of combining ACT with storytelling to support students' mental health and academic success in higher education settings.

- Eficacia De La Defusión Cognitiva Y La Reestructuración Cognitiva En Una Unidad De Salud Mental

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Defusión Cognitiva en Ansiedad, Depresión

Juan C Algecira, Mg. Universitario en Terapias de Tercera Generación, Membro ACBS Colombia  
Natalia Zambrano, MG, PSICOLOGIA CLINICA, PSICOLOGO CLINICO

El objetivo del presente estudio fue evaluar la eficacia de dos protocolos terapéuticos breves en la modulación de la sintomatología asociada a los trastornos de ansiedad y depresión. El primer protocolo, basado en la técnica de defusión cognitiva y el segundo protocolo, centrado en la reestructuración cognitiva. La muestra estuvo compuesta por 40 pacientes de la Clínica Nuestra Señora de la Paz, quienes presentaron diagnóstico de ansiedad y depresión sin sintomatología psicótica. Los participantes se asignaron aleatoriamente a dos grupos experimentales: uno defusión cognitiva y el otro reestructuración cognitiva. Los resultados obtenidos mediante el análisis de datos evidencian que ambos protocolos lograron una reducción significativa en los niveles de malestar emocional reportados. Sin embargo, se observaron diferencias en el tamaño del efecto entre los dos tratamientos. El protocolo de defusión cognitiva mostró una mayor efectividad en la mejora del constructo de fusión cognitiva. En conclusión, los protocolos demostraron ser intervenciones efectivas en el tratamiento de los trastornos de ansiedad y depresión dentro de un contexto hospitalario. Se sugiere estudios que controlen variables de tratamiento farmacológico

- **Psychological Flexibility: A Gift to Yourself and the World Around You**  
Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Psychological Flexibility, Love, Interpersonal Relations, Relational Growth, Self-As-Context, Relaxations of Beliefs, Predictive Coding  
Johannes Freymann, M.Sc., SIA Berlin

It is widely recognized in the ACT literature that fostering psychological flexibility in our patients begins with cultivating it in ourselves as therapists. This IGNITE Talk explores the mechanisms through which psychological flexibility serves as a foundation for growth-oriented relationships - whether within the therapy room or beyond. Drawing from personal experiences, the speaker connects these insights to core change mechanisms in psychotherapy and the brain's predictive nature. This underscores the critical role of psychological flexibility as a fundamental interpersonal process, promoting mutual growth and heartfelt connection.

- **ACT for Eco-Anxiety**  
Categories: Environmental problems, Dissemination or global health strategies, Eco-Anxiety  
Devin Guthrie, Ph.D., Life & Death Coaching

Civilization is ending. Or so it seems to people hooked by eco-anxiety, the chronic fear of ecological doom. And with the deluge of headlines about stronger storms and accelerating feedback loops, who among us can say with certainty doom does not impend? The rational foundation of eco-anxiety makes it particularly tricky for traditional cognitive-behavioral therapies to treat, all the more so because terror management theory research indicates eco-anxiety is founded upon death anxiety about both individuals and the human race. So, in this IGNITE, I invite ACT practitioners and researchers to take up what may be the greatest challenge our modality has yet faced: To help people accept the inevitability of death and the possibility of extinction and act on values that matter even in the face of them. ACT is uniquely suited to build the psychological flexibility people require to be resilient to climate crisis. I will present a roadmap to how we can show the world not even the end of the world can prevent people from living a fulfilled and meaningful life.

- **Stepping into Professionalism: Embracing Your Role Beyond Caregiver/Tutor/Respite with ACT**  
Categories: Supervision and training, Professional development, ACT for Employees (Behavioral Therapists)  
Man Yan (Ida) I Chung, Ph.D., BCBA-D

As a clinical director, I've seen burnout persist despite employee benefits, breaks, and training. Many therapists struggle to see themselves as professionals, especially in Ontario, where no formal licensing exists below the BCBA level. Employees from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and education systems often find it difficult to embrace their professional identity. This Ignite presentation showcases an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-based workshop designed to bridge this gap by fostering professional identity and resilience. The workshop empowers therapists to manage self-doubt, burnout, and workplace challenges through psychological flexibility, values-driven action, and cognitive defusion. Through guided discussions, mindfulness exercises, and role-playing scenarios, participants learned to move beyond the mindset of being "just a tutor" and embrace the deeper meaning of their role. The session also emphasized self-care, career growth, and opportunities for professional development. This presentation will highlight key insights, therapist reflections, and actionable strategies to help clinicians step into

their professional identity with confidence, ultimately improving client outcomes and workplace satisfaction.

- Emotional Awareness and Expression Therapy in Chronic Overlapping Pain Conditions: A mixed-methods pilot

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Veteran health, Clinical Science, EAET, Chronic pain

Jenna L Adamowicz, Ph.D., Pain, Research, Informatics, Multi-morbidities, and Education (PRIME) Center, VA Connecticut Healthcare System: West Haven, Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine  
 Brandon Yarns, M.D., Department of Mental Health/Psychiatry and Center for the Study of Healthcare Innovation, Implementation & Policy (CSHIP), VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, University of C  
 Elizabeth Galliford, MPH, Pain, Research, Informatics, Multi-morbidities, and Education (PRIME) Center, VA Connecticut Healthcare System: West Haven  
 Alicia Heapy, Ph.D., Pain, Research, Informatics, Multi-morbidities, and Education (PRIME) Center, VA Connecticut Healthcare System: West Haven, Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine  
 Mary Driscoll, Ph.D., Pain, Research, Informatics, Multi-morbidities, and Education (PRIME) Center, VA Connecticut Healthcare System: West Haven, Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine

Emotional Awareness and Expression Therapy (EAET), a psychological chronic pain intervention, was developed to target dysregulated emotional processes (e.g., experiential avoidance) and psychosocial adversity. These targets are especially important for those with unresolved trauma and for whom centrally mediated pain pathways are implicated. This presentation will cover preliminary results of a mixed-methods, single-arm study to examine the feasibility and acceptability of 9-session group-based EAET in women Veterans with chronic overlapping pain conditions (COPCs) and responder analysis. Participants (N = 7) completed surveys at baseline, midpoint, and post-intervention, and a post-intervention qualitative interview. All participants identified as female, White, and non-Hispanic/Latine. Average baseline scores on pain measures (range, 0-10) indicated moderate pain severity (M = 5.9, SD = 1.6) and severe pain interference (M = 8.4, SD = 1.8). At follow-up, 5/7 (71%) participants experienced clinically-meaningful ( $\geq 20\%$ ) reductions in pain severity while 3/7 (43%) experienced clinically-meaningful ( $\geq 20\%$ ) reductions in pain interference. Preliminary qualitative analyses revealed participants would recommend EAET to peers. Overall, findings support feasibility and acceptability of EAET in women Veterans with COPCs.

- Bridging Gaps with Bots: Scaling Contextual Behavioral Science through an AI-Driven ACT Ecosystem

Categories: Mobile or digital technology, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Parents, Children, Artificial Intelligence

Yuen Yu Chong, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
 Pui Tik Yau, MPsyMed, Project Manager  
 Man Ho Li, Ph.D., The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
 Andrew. T. Gloster, Ph.D., University of Lucerne  
 Alan Hiu Fung Lam, JP, Ph.D., SMIEEE, MHKIE, The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
 Wai Tong Chien, Ph.D., The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This Ignite talk presents the development and implementation of Pai.ACT™, a US and China patented AI-driven Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) ecosystem that aims to expand access to evidence-based mental health services for underserved populations in Hong Kong. Targeting parents of children with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD)—over 35% of whom exhibit clinically significant anxiety or depression—Pai.ACT™ integrates contextual behavioral science (CBS) principles with a patented ACT-specific Large Language Model (ACT-LLM). Trained on more than 19,000 Chinese-language therapeutic dialogues, the ACT-LLM accurately classifies psychological inflexibility processes (F1: 0.72–0.89), enabling AI-personalized interventions, automated triage, and enhanced therapist decision-support. Through partnerships with over 10 NGOs and the Government, the system has served more than 1,100 parents in Hong Kong and earned three technology awards. Preliminary data indicate a 95.8% completion rate and statistically significant reductions in parenting stress ( $d = 0.66$ ,  $p = .013$ ). This talk will discuss how AI can augment—rather than supplant—human-driven CBS, thereby bridging mental health care gaps through scalable, equitable innovation, and will also outline future strategies for extending this AI-driven ACT ecosystem worldwide.

- Getting Their Behinds In The Chair: Reflections On Therapy With Oppressed Populations



Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, Culturally tailored intervention

Jennifer Shepard Payne, Ph.D., LCSW-C, Johns Hopkins University

This IGNITE session will focus on data gathered from implementing POOF (Pulling Out Of Fire), a culturally tailored ACT model. POOF aims to address the racial and systemic trauma, as well as adversity stress, experienced by African Americans. Therapists facilitate the POOF model in a group format, either in-person or online, during 90-minute sessions conducted over 10 weeks per group.

In 2023 and 2024, POOF groups were conducted at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, MD, USA. These groups targeted Black caregivers with neurodiverse children who self-identified as experiencing stress from structural racism or environmental hardships. Although these groups were not official research studies, data was collected on program feasibility.

In running these groups, I learned how chaotic the lives of these caregivers are, especially as they navigate the challenge of obtaining resources for their neurodiverse children. This systemic chaos also impacted their ability to be fully present and engaged during POOF sessions. Based on these findings, I reflect on the irony of trying to bring oppressed populations into therapy spaces.

- Mindset Matters: How Self-Compassion Can Support Collegiate Athletes' Well-being and Performance

Categories: Sports or performance-enhancing, , Self-Compassion

Lindsay L Craig, Ph.D., Institute for Life Renovation

This presentation aims to highlight how self-compassion may serve as a powerful psychological resource for collegiate athletes. In a sample of 243 NCAA collegiate athletes, self-compassion was linked to adaptive coping strategies and inversely related to maladaptive coping mechanisms. Additionally, it was negatively associated with psychological distress underscoring its utility in helping collegiate athletes manage stress, anxiety, and depression more effectively. Furthermore, self-compassion was positively associated with key psychological skills essential for athletic performance, such as coping with adversity, peaking under pressure, goal setting/mental preparation, concentration, freedom from worry, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability. Findings of this study add to the growing body of research which suggests that self-compassion may be a valuable tool for collegiate athletes in managing their emotional responses. By promoting emotional balance and resilience, self-compassion may help athletes navigate setbacks without becoming overwhelmed by their emotions or engaging in harsh self-criticism. Ultimately, developing self-compassion may not only enhance mental well-being but also contribute to sustained athletic performance.

- The Smithsfield Grid: A CBS-Enhanced Coventry Grid for Differentiating Autism, ADHD, and C-PTSD in Adults

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Autism, ADHD, C-PTSD

Amanda McGovern, Smithsfield Clinic  
Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic  
Sarah Cassidy, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic  
Helen San, LPC, Smithsfield Clinic

Differentiating between autism, ADHD, and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) remains a significant challenge in clinical assessment, particularly for autistic and ADHD adults with trauma histories. The Coventry Grid has been instrumental in distinguishing autism from trauma in children; however, its application to adults and its ability to account for ADHD remains underdeveloped. This IGNITE seeks to enhance the Coventry Grid using a Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) framework, integrating principles of functional contextualism, psychological flexibility, and relational learning to refine differential assessment. By applying CBS concepts, the revised grid, The Smithsfield Grid, will emphasize behavioral function over form, distinguishing intrinsic neurocognitive differences in autism and ADHD from trauma-based adaptations. This approach will clarify overlaps in emotional regulation, executive functioning, sensory processing, and attentional patterns across all three conditions. Expanding the grid's use to clinicians working with autistic and ADHD adults navigating trauma recovery will improve diagnostic accuracy and intervention planning. This project will contribute to neuroaffirming, trauma-informed care, bridging research gaps and advancing CBS-driven interventions for identity development and trauma recovery.

- Rethinking Neurodivergence: A CBS Perspective on ADHD as a Profile of Autism

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Autism, ADHD

Amanda McGovern, Smithsfield Clinic  
 Sarah Cassidy, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic  
 Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic  
 Helen San, LPC, Smithsfield Clinic

Autism and ADHD have long been classified as distinct neurodevelopmental profiles, yet increasing research highlights substantial neurological, cognitive, and behavioral overlap between the two. Current diagnostic frameworks separate ADHD and autism based on criteria that prioritize outward presentation rather than underlying function, leading to frequent co-diagnosis, diagnostic overshadowing, or misidentification. From a Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) lens, this proposal explores the possibility of ADHD functioning as a profile or subtype within the autistic spectrum, rather than a wholly separate condition.

By applying principles of functional contextualism, psychological flexibility, and relational learning, this research examines how executive functioning differences, attentional regulation, and sensory processing challenges in ADHD align with monotropic attention, cognitive inflexibility, and social differences in autism. A CBS-driven analysis will emphasize behavioral function over form, investigating whether ADHD traits emerge as expressions of autistic cognitive variability rather than a distinct neurotype. Findings could contribute to a paradigm shift in neurodevelopmental classification, fostering more accurate, affirming assessment models and intervention strategies.

## 78. Harmonizing Healing: Using Music and ACT to Support Trauma Recovery

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Trauma, PTSD

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Joann Wright, Ph.D., ACT One  
 Daniel J Moran, Ph.D., Touro University

Music is a powerful and accessible experiential tool in therapeutic settings, particularly for individuals who have experienced trauma and may avoid situations and sensory experiences that trigger painful memories. This workshop explores how music can facilitate emotional processing within the framework of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). By engaging in music listening, individuals can access emotions, verbalize responses, and work through the six core processes of the ACT hexaflex model.

Originally developed for Wounded Warrior Project events, this intervention helps individuals recognize and explore the emotional significance of song-related memories. Participants will learn to listen mindfully, observe the emotions and thoughts that arise, and reflect on how these memories connect to their core values. Through experiential exercises and discussion, attendees will gain practical skills for integrating music into ACT-based therapy, fostering psychological flexibility, and reinforcing a stable sense of self despite life's challenges.

Educational Objectives:

1. Apply music listening as an experiential exercise in therapy.
2. Facilitate client articulation of clear values statements based on song-evoked memories.
3. Utilize music as a tool for "contacting the present moment" and engaging other core ACT processes in therapy.

## 66. Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP): Creating Intense and Curative Therapeutic Relationships

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Original data, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Therapeutic Alliance

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Mavis Tsai, Ph.D., University of Washington; Awareness, Courage & Love Global Project  
 Daniel W. M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri - Kansas City  
 Holly E Yates, M.S., NCBLCMHC

Katia Manduchi, DCLinPsy, Iescum, Ascco, Humanitas  
Elle Winterwood, MSW, Independent Practice

Increase the emotional intensity, interpersonal focus and impact of your treatment. Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) uses functional analysis to create deep, meaningful and healing therapeutic relationships. By focusing on the subtle ways clients' daily life problems occur in the context of therapy and by augmenting the therapist repertoires identified as awareness, courage and love (behaviorally defined) in responding contingently

to emotional and interpersonal target behaviors, clients are helped to resolve presenting symptoms and to delve into their purpose and passion for living. FAP calls for therapeutic stances and techniques that no single orientation would predict, and provides a conceptual and practical framework that concretely builds skills to help practitioners reach their highest aspirations. A model also will be presented for how to disseminate FAP more broadly by going beyond the therapy office and creating a community and sense of belonging for individuals who want to connect more open-heartedly and support one another in rising to live more true to themselves.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Apply the rules of FAP in a variety of experiential exercises in order to increase intensity, connection and impact in your clinical work.
2. Identify your own therapist avoidance repertoires, and gain a more functionally precise understanding of the contexts in which commonly used interventions may be inadvertently counter-therapeutic.
3. Implement the FAP principles of Awareness, Courage and Love beyond the therapy room to impact greater change in your community.

Friday Afternoon 3:15 PM

### **79. Functional analytic and ACT skills to address myths and misunderstandings of aging and dementia**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Behavior analysis, Aging, Dementia care

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Borgne**

Susan M McCurry, Ph.D., University of Washington/Private Practice  
Claudia Drossel, Ph.D., Eastern Michigan University

Significant declines in thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, planning, or remembering are common, and sooner or later, affect all of us, directly or indirectly through friends or family members. Such losses can be due to neurocognitive disorders (e.g., dementia), environmental stressors, or other common medical/psychiatric conditions. This workshop, which focuses on progressive neurodegenerative diseases, will provide a reconceptualization of cognitive loss from a functional perspective. We will view and discuss videotapes of clients experiencing a variety of challenges, including behavioral changes associated with unidentified medical conditions or unexplored contextual life circumstances, visual misperceptions, caregiver unrealistic expectations about client cognitive capacity, and dyadic conflicts. Videoclips of clients will challenge longstanding beliefs about work with adults 60 and older, particularly when they have dementia, and will demonstrate individually tailored, collaborative, and innovative treatment strategies that highlight the communicative function of behaviors and the importance of psychological flexibility in responding. The workshop will give participants new skills in functional contextual assessment and 7 practical steps for becoming better advocates for clients with neurodegenerative diseases and their families.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe neurocognitive disorders and assess associated emotional and behavioral changes using functional analysis.
2. Explain the importance of supporting the quality of care receiver-care partner relationships when cognitive loss occurs.
3. Implement a functional approach for responding to everyday verbal/behavioral interactions with individuals with cognitive loss.

## 80. ACTIVE Play: Using Improvisational Games to Reinforce ACT Concepts and Skills with Groups

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Supervision and training, Group exercises

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside A**

Emily EA Fleming, M.A., The Faison Center

Shannon D Stott, B.A., Improv | On and Off the Stage

Psychological flexibility and improvisational theater have a long and lovely history together. Role play, especially utilizing unscripted and honest responses to scenarios, has been a component of ACT work for decades. Humor and play are also near and dear to our practitioner hearts, as evidenced by ACBS' own Follies.

In this workshop, we will explore the utility of play and games that are explicitly improvisational in nature, and we will do so through a contextual behavioral lens. We will play games designed to strengthen psychological flexibility. We will experience a space where those skills receive dense and powerful positive social reinforcement. In the end, we will walk away with "pre-built" games in our toolbox and learn to build our own to fit our practice.

This workshop is best for practitioners who work with groups of clients, students, or supervisees. It is also best for attendees who want to move, play, and try something a little out of the ordinary in a conference setting. Comfortable shoes strongly recommended.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the utility games and play can have in a group setting.
2. Demonstrate at least three games that can be played with groups of clients and/or supervisees to practice skills related to psychological and behavioral flexibility.
3. Create simple games of their own to play with groups of clients and/or supervisees.

## 81. Using Interoceptive Exposure to Strengthen Psychological Flexibility

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Exposure, Anxiety, Panic, OCD, Health anxiety

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Brian Thompson, Ph.D., Portland Psychotherapy Clinic, Research, & Training Center

Brian Pilecki, Ph.D., Portland Institute for Psychedelic Science, Portland Psychotherapy

Exposure in ACT involves creating contexts in which clients struggle to help them expand behavioral repertoires, making ACT-informed exposure an effective, process-based method for strengthening psychological flexibility in clients with anxiety (Thompson, Twohig, & Luoma, 2021; Thompson, Pilecki, & Chan, 2023). Interoceptive exposure is a subset of exposure therapy focused on bodily sensations and is helpful when clients struggle with somatic manifestations of anxiety. In interoceptive exposure, clients practice discreet exercises such as hyperventilation or spinning to evoke specific bodily sensations in order to strengthen psychological flexibility while remaining present with uncomfortable sensations. ACT-informed interoceptive exposure is useful in clients for whom bodily sensations trigger a behavior narrowing response, such as panic disorder, OCD, and illness anxiety disorder (Meuret et al., 2012; Twohig et al., 2018).

In this hands-on workshop, attendees will engage in interoceptive exposure exercises through an ACT lens and connect with their own willingness. Through role-play, the presenters will demonstrate how to adjust interoceptive exposure exercises to balance evoking contextual cues that narrow psychological flexibility (e.g., bodily sensations, thoughts) with client willingness.

Educational Objectives:

1. Assess when the use of interoceptive exposure is indicated.

2. Apply interoceptive exposure methods to strengthen core ACT processes.
3. Utilize ACT willingness ratings to guide exposure exercises and treatment.

## 82. Regulation, Resilience, and Recovery: Unpacking Psychological Flexibility's Role in Mental and Physical Health

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Processes of change, Psychological flexibility

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Jessica Criddle, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Positive Development, Inc.

Discussant: Jason Lillis, Ph.D., Brown Medical School; California Northstate University

Abbey M Warren, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Brendan W Skinner, B.S., Western Michigan University

Kishan Desai, B.A., The University of Memphis

Natalie Tadros, B.A., Mississippi State University

Psychological flexibility is a key adaptive process that can buffer risks associated with mental and physical health outcomes (Gloster, Meyer, & Lieb, 2017), yet, more research is needed to understand how its benefits arise and under what contexts. This symposium will discuss the role of psychological flexibility and related constructs in various health outcomes. The first presentation explores daily fluctuations in psychological inflexibility and sleep, using ecological momentary assessment to clarify their bidirectional relationship. The second study investigates the acute impact of self-compassion on heart rate variability responses to stress. The third presentation identifies profiles of diabetes-related supports and challenges in adolescents with Type 1 diabetes through latent variable mixture modeling. The fourth study evaluates the effects of a value clarification intervention on exercise motivation through ecological momentary assessment to explore within-person variability based on context. The final presentation identifies the unique adversities among student athletes and the potential risk and resilience processes. Findings and their implications will highlight the diverse ways psychological flexibility influences health and inform interventions to enhance well-being.

- *State of Self-Compassion and Stress Resilience: Examining the Influence on Heart Rate Variability Responses to Acute Stressors*

Melanie R. Schanke, B.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Sleep Heart and Health Lab; Villanova University

Elizabeth J. Pantescio, Ph.D., Sleep Heart and Health Lab; Villanova University

Self-compassion, an adaptive response to suffering, may have psychophysiological mechanisms that underlie its health-protective effects. Previous research is mixed, with some studies showing an association among trait self-compassion and greater heart rate variability (HRV) whereas other studies do not (Arch et al., 2016; Bluth et al., 2016; Luo, Qiao, & Che, 2018; Walter, 2019). However, given the within-person variability in stress responses (Sliwinski et al., 2009), trait measurements of self-compassion may miss the impact of recent stressors experienced in the days or weeks leading up to the assessment. The study's aim is to assess the effect of recent experiences of self-compassion specific to an active, salient stressor on HRV responses to stress. Participants undergo physiological monitoring prior to, during, and following the completion of a modified Stroop and anger recall tasks intended to induce a state of stress. Participants self-report demographic information and their current state of self-compassion 48-72 hours before undergoing mildly stressful laboratory tasks. The study's findings and implications for the study will be discussed, potentially highlighting the acute nature of self-compassion and HRV.

- *Day In and Day Out: Investigating the Reciprocal Relationship Between Sleep and Psychological Inflexibility in Daily Life*

Abbey Warren, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University

Jennifer Krafft, Ph.D., Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University

Natalie Tadros, B.A., Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University

Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) research suggests potential bidirectional relationships between mindfulness and sleep (Hülshager et al., 2018; Yap et al., 2021). However, EMA research on how sleep may relate to other components of psychological flexibility/inflexibility is lacking. Determining the direction and nuances of this relationship may suggest ways to improve Acceptance and Commitment



Therapy (ACT) and/or sleep interventions. This talk will present findings from an EMA study exploring the interrelationships between psychological inflexibility processes and sleep in daily life in young adults ( $n = 120$ ). In preliminary analyses of intensive longitudinal data, previous night sleep quality was associated with reduced avoidance ( $B = -0.08$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), lack of present moment awareness ( $B = -0.10$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and inaction ( $B = -0.09$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the morning. The implications of identifying the impact of specific components of psychological flexibility for clarifying novel or particularly beneficial targets in the treatment of sleep will be discussed, and ideas for future research in this area will be explored.

- *Deriving Profiles of Diabetes-Related Supports and Challenges and Predicting Longitudinal Trajectories of HbA1c to Promote Flourishing in Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D)*

Kishan R. Desai, B.A., Child Health and Illness (CHILL) Lab at The University of Memphis; The University of Tennessee Health Science Center; Le Bonheur Children's Hospital  
Kristoffer Berlin, Ph.D., Child Health and Illness (CHILL) Lab at The University of Memphis; The University of Tennessee Health Science Center; Le Bonheur Children's Hospital

Managing T1D is emotionally demanding, especially for adolescents facing competing priorities. Routinely screening for supports and challenges related to managing T1D may help meet youths' needs. For youth, greater diabetes-specific psychological flexibility was found to be associated with higher health-related quality of life (HRQOL) and lower HbA1c (Berlin et al., 2020; Keenan et al., 2022). However, these relationships have not been explored using person-centered statistical methods. 180 adolescents with T1D age 11-18 ( $M=14.65$ ,  $SD=1.71$  years) were recruited from a Mid-South pediatric diabetes clinic and completed a screening battery assessing "supports" (diabetes-specific psychological flexibility, HRQOL, diabetes self-management) and "challenges" (diabetes-related stress, diabetes-specific family conflict, general internalizing symptoms). Latent variable mixture modeling will derive latent profiles of diabetes-related challenges and supports and explore relationships between sociodemographic/clinical characteristics, profile membership, and distal outcomes (diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) hospitalizations and trajectories of HbA1c). These findings will encourage healthcare professionals to identify and strengthen patients' "supports" to improve glycemic health.

- *WriteMove: A Mobile App Intervention Investigating the Impact of Values Clarification vs. Self-Reflection on Physical Activity.*

Natalie Tadoros, B.A., Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University  
Jennifer Krafft, Ph.D., Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University  
Abbey Warren, M.S., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes Lab; Mississippi State University

Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of disease, however, fluctuating motivation leads to inconsistent exercise (Conroy et al., 2011). Research shows that motivation based on autonomously chosen goals and values predicts long-term maintenance of weight loss (Silva et al., 2011). Hence, values clarification may lead to consistent exercise, as it is a motivational process that theoretically provides a stable source of positive reinforcement (Villatte et al., 2016). This randomized controlled trial evaluated the impact of values clarification, implemented over 4 weeks through daily writing exercises in a mobile app, relative to a control condition focused on self-reflection. Preliminary analyses of 69 U.S. based adults indicated that there was not a significant difference between the conditions over time on total physical activity ( $B = -496.9$ ,  $SE = 984.8$ ,  $p > .05$ ), overall mental health ( $B = -0.99$ ,  $SE = 0.74$ ,  $p > .05$ ), or overall physical health ( $B = -0.98$ ,  $SE = 0.66$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Ecological momentary assessment data on the momentary impact of values clarification on motivation and potential moderators will be discussed.

- *We are the Champions: Predicting the Health and Well-Being of NCAA Student-Athletes*

Brendan Skinner, B.S., Study of Emotion and Adversity Lab; Western Michigan University  
Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Study of Emotion and Adversity Lab; Western Michigan University

The collegiate student-athlete experience presents unique challenges, including injury, coach-athlete conflict, ineligibility, redshirting, limited playing time, and scholarship loss (Armstrong et al., 2015). Despite the prevalence of these adversities, little research has examined their impact on student-athlete health and well-being. Additionally, while psychological flexibility, social support, and athletic identity are implicated in sports psychology research (Chang et al., 2018; Defreese & Smith, 2013; Mooney et al., 2024; Simons & Bird, 2023), they are rarely explored as risk/resilience factors in the context of adversity. This study investigates how injury, coach-athlete conflict, ineligibility, redshirting, limited playing time, and scholarship loss affect psychological distress, substance use, academic success, and quality of life among NCAA Division 1, 2, and 3 student-athletes. It also examines whether psychological flexibility, social support, and athletic identity moderate these relationships. Findings will clarify the impact of select adversities on student-athlete well-being and the role of psychological flexibility and other processes to inform student-athlete interventions (e.g., Acceptance and Commitment Therapy). Implications will be presented for athletic departments and health professionals to better support student-athlete well-being.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Explain how psychological flexibility and related constructs contribute to mental and physical health across diverse populations and contexts.
2. Evaluate how momentary and contextual influences shape the dynamic relationships between psychological flexibility, health behaviors, and stress responses.
3. Discuss implications of research findings for designing interventions that enhance resilience, well-being, and adaptive health behaviors.

**83. Innovations in Applying ACT for Trauma in Diverse Clinical Contexts**

Symposium • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Literature review, Original data*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Other, TraumaTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate***Location: Gallier**

Chair: Laurie Gallo, Ph.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine/ Montefiore Medical Center  
 Discussant: Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services;  
 University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical  
 Services

Kira Banks, Ph.D., Saint Louis University

Sharon Stovezky, M.A., Wright Institute

Meaghan Rowe-Johnson, Ph.D., Drake University

Lauren Borges, Ph.D., VA Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention; University of Colorado  
 Anschutz Medical Campus

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is well suited to alleviate trauma related suffering given its roots in functional contextualism and focus on decreasing experiential avoidance and increasing values-based living (Walser & Hayes, 2006). There is growing research support that ACT is an effective intervention for trauma-related distress in war veterans diagnosed with PTSD (Wharton et al., 2019), unaccompanied refugee minors (Morrone, 2024), and veterans with comorbid PTSD and Alcohol Use Disorder (Meyer et al, 2018). There is a need for innovation to enhance the effectiveness of ACT for trauma (Lang et al, 2017) as well as broaden its application to various contexts. This research symposium brings together several data-based papers advancing the application of ACT for trauma: a recent meta-analysis on ACT for trauma-related distress (Rowe-Johnson, Browning & Scott, 2024), a randomized controlled trial of ACT for Moral Injury in warzone veterans (Borges et al.), an ACT intervention designed to interrupt racial oppression (Banks), and a pilot study examining the effectiveness of enhancing ACT with two forms of exposure therapy (WET, EMDR) (Stovezky, Walser, & McKay).

- *Effects of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Trauma-related Symptoms: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*

Meaghan K. Rowe-Johnson, Ph.D., Drake University  
 Bridgette Browning,

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in reducing trauma-related symptoms in adults exposed to traumatic events. Although ACT has shown promise as a third-wave cognitive behavioral therapy for transdiagnostic issues (Gloster et al., 2020), no prior meta-analyses have specifically evaluated its impact on trauma-related distress in adults. Hence, a systematic review of the literature and a between-groups random-effects meta-analysis of eleven studies were conducted to examine trauma symptom reduction at initial posttest. Results revealed a moderate, statistically significant effect of ACT (Hedges'  $g = -0.423$ , 95% CI =  $[-0.605, -0.240]$ ;  $I^2 = 25.75\%$ ), with subgroup analyses exploring differences by study design, trauma type, and comparator groups. These findings provide additional evidence supporting the effectiveness of ACT interventions for adults experiencing trauma-related concerns.

- *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Moral Injury (ACT-MI): Results from a Rigorous Randomized Controlled Pilot Trial of warzone deployed Veterans*

Lauren M. Borges, Ph.D., VA Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention; University of Colorado  
 Anschutz Medical Campus

Jacob K. Farnsworth, Ph.D., VA Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention; University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinic

Kent D. Drescher, Ph.D.,

Sean M. Barnes, Ph.D., VA Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention; University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Moral Injury (ACT-MI) is an innovative 15-session hybrid group and individual psychotherapy targeting psychosocial functional impairment following moral violations. We will describe the development and iterative refinement of ACT-MI in the context of a rigorous randomized controlled pilot trial (N=74 warzone Veterans). We will then present results demonstrating the acceptability of ACT-MI to participants (e.g., Client Satisfaction Questionnaire: [M = 29.53; SD=3.73; 95% CI:28.10, 30.94]) and the feasibility of delivery. Outcome data suggest ACT-MI participants experienced clinically significant change in psychosocial functioning on the Outcome Questionnaire-45 (M=-17.45; SD=19.33; 95% CI:-24.80, -10.10) whereas participants in the comparison condition (Present Centered Therapy for Moral Injury) did not (M=-5.89, SD=15.29, 95% CI:-11.94, .16). Qualitative data support the acceptability and impact of ACT-MI; many participants reported ACT-MI helped them transform their lives as one stated, "I can live life again...I can go outside...I can spend time with my kids...I can be a better mom. I thank God every day that I got to be part of this." Plans for future trials will be discussed.

- *ACT Interventions for Interrupting Appropriated Racism*

Kira H. Banks, Ph.D., Saint Louis University

Anjum Umrani, M.S., Saint Louis University

Kaevyn Maple, M.S., Saint Louis University

Olivia Cruz Oyola, B.A., Saint Louis University

Michaela Jones, B.A., Saint Louis University

The current intervention builds on previous research on ACT as effective in helping individuals navigate stigma (Brewster et al., 2013; Lucksted & Drapalski, 2015; Luoma et al., 2011). A group (six 90-min sessions) and individual (three 60-minute sessions) intervention aimed at decreasing internalized/appropriated racial oppression will be presented. The group intervention (n= 21 Black women) resulted in significant pre/post decreases in depression, anxiety and stress symptoms (t = 5.97(18) p = .00,) internalized oppression (t = 2.93(19) p = .02), internalized shame (t = 1.69 (19) p = .01), and strong Black woman attitudes (t = -2.14(16) p = .05). The individual intervention included women (6), men (3), and non-binary (1) participants who identified as African American (6), Asian Pacific Islander (2), South Asian (1), and Middle Eastern (1). Pre and post results found significant decreases in emotional reactivity to appropriated racial oppression (t = 2.43, p = .05) psychological inflexibility (t = 2.60, p = .04), internalized shame (t = 3.31, p = .01), and isolation (t = 3.57, p = .02).

- *Enhancing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with Written Exposure Therapy (WET) or Eye Movement Desensitization And Reprocessing (EMDR) for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*

Sharon Stovezky, M.A., Wright Institute

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinic

Matthew McKay, Ph.D., Wright Institute

This pilot investigation explores the efficacy of a hybrid 12-week PTSD treatment protocol combining ACT with written exposure or EMDR. The project addresses the need to improve evidence-based PTSD treatments given that even the most empirically supported treatments for PTSD, exposure-based interventions, have a non-response rate of up to 40%. ACT is an alternative treatment for trauma that uses values-based living rather than symptom reduction as the ultimate success criterion. Research shows that ACT is a promising treatment for PTSD but may not directly target traumatic memories enough to resolve symptoms fully. This exploratory study developed a hybrid protocol targeting PTSD symptoms and functional impairment by enhancing ACT with trauma-processing therapies like WET and EMDR. Fifteen participants were randomized into ACT alone, ACT+WET, and ACT+EMDR groups; 13 completed treatment. Results demonstrated that adding WET/EMDR to an ACT protocol is associated with greater decreases in PTSD symptoms between baseline and follow-up (Hedges' g: 1.39), and that adding trauma-focused phases to ACT can be done while also supporting gains in values-based living.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe current research findings regarding the effectiveness of ACT for trauma related symptoms in adults.

2. Explain innovative research designs and findings of empirical studies evaluating ACT interventions for moral injury and racism related stress.
3. Discuss how incorporating exposure-based interventions (WET, EMDR) enhanced ACT for trauma treatment outcomes.

#### **84. Is It Time To ACT?: Pre-requisite Skills for Acceptance and Commitment Training in Autism**

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Behavior analysis, RFT / RGB / language, Autism

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Emmie Hebert, Ph.D., BCBA-D, JumpStart Autism Collective

Discussant: Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., C. Psychol. Ps.S.I., University College Dublin

Elle Kirsten, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, Compassionate Behavior Analysis, PLLC; RaiseyourIQ

Sophie O Steele, M.A., Compassionate Behavior Analysis, LLC.

This symposium explores systematic approaches to teaching and measuring language skills essential for Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT). The first presentation examines an RFT-based curriculum designed to teach arbitrarily derived relational responding (ADRR) in autistic children using relational evaluation procedures and multiple exemplar training, demonstrating the impact of transformation of stimulus function (ToF) on generative language. The second presentation highlights how instructional design and Precision Teaching (PT) accelerate figurative language (e.g., analogy, simile, metaphor) in neurodiverse children, using PT metrics to measure progress. The final presentation addresses prerequisite language and behavioral skills needed for an effective ACT intervention, offering a draft of a structured model to help learners transition to lower-intensity services (e.g., psychotherapy). Together, these talks identify key discussion points on how to systematically teach and measure relational language relevant to ACT. Audience participation will be highly encouraged to explore practical applications, refine intervention strategies, and discuss challenges in implementation. This session will provide clinicians with evidence-based methods to enhance language development and improve ACT accessibility for diverse learners.

- *Sentences without a cfunc are meaningless: Recent discoveries in training functional and meaningful language in autistic children*

Elle Kirsten, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, Compassionate Behavior Analysis, PLLC; Raiseyouriq

Relational Frame Theory (RFT) has shown that arbitrarily derived relational responding (ADRR) is operant behavior and that teaching ADRR produces flexible, functional, and meaningful language development in children with language delays. Furthermore, RFT sees operant acquisition of various patterns of relational framing as crucial to cognitive and linguistic development, and it has explored the emergence of a range of psychological phenomena (e.g., analogy, perspective-taking) in these terms. This talk examines a novel, RFT-based curriculum using the relational evaluation procedure and multiple exemplar training to teach increasingly complex derived relational responding, including the transformation of stimulus function (ToF), across various frames (coordination and distinction, comparison, and deictic framing). Findings suggest explicit ToF training facilitates functional and meaningful arbitrary relational framing and generative language. Participants included 8- to 16-year-old autistic children who did not demonstrate arbitrary relational responding at intake. All participants successfully generated derived relational responses across frames and levels of complexity including ToF. Protocol training sequences will be described, and data showing the efficacy of the RFT-based language intervention will be shared.

- *The New Frontier: The Dynamism of Relational Frame Theory, Instructional Design and Precision Teaching*

Sophie Steele, M.A., BCBA, Compassionate Behavior Analysis, LLC

The integration of relational language intervention, instructional design processes and precision teaching (PT) offer an efficient and effective technology to accelerate figurative language, a repertoire necessary for individuals to access Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Relational Frame Theory (RFT) suggests that arbitrarily derived relational responding (ADRR) is the generalized and contextually controlled operant key to the development of figurative language. PT is a robust system of accurate and precise measurement suitable for the analysis of relational operants, and instructional design processes

enable practitioners to systematically accelerate figurative language within and across instructional sequences. Furthermore, many applied practitioners remain curious about the conceptualization and implementation of RFT-protocols in practice. This talk will explore the impact of a novel RFT-based curriculum on the acceleration of the relational repertoires necessary for figurative language (e.g. analogy, simile and metaphor). Participants included 10- to 14-year-old neurodiverse children who demonstrated nonarbitrary language at intake. Instructional design processes will be described and outcome data shared using the PT metrics of celeration and agility to indicate clinically and statistically significant growth in figurative language.

- *Building the Bridge, Breaking the Barriers: How to Identify and Prepare a Learner for Acceptance and Commitment Training in ABA*

Emmie Hebert, Ph.D., BCBA-D, JumpStart Autism Collective  
 Brian Lopez, Ph.D., BCBA, JumpStart Autism Collective  
 Allison Lopez, M.Ed., BCBA,

Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) has been documented as an effective intervention strategy for autistic learners as a means of building behavioral flexibility (Tarbox et al. 2020). While these aims are desirable, they sometimes prove challenging for the applied practitioner to utilize for learners without specific pre-requisite skills (i.e., tacting internal and external experiences). Additionally, pre-requisite instruction modalities have not yet been identified to facilitate the most effective implementation for these learners. This paper proposes an analysis and an example treatment program that utilizes the conceptual framework of ACTraining, in a manner that is accessible to practitioners working with a variety of learners on the Autism Spectrum through the use of compound behaviors and element skills. Additionally, the proposed model can be utilized to support the transition of a learner from comprehensive services to a lesser intensity of care (community-based services, or otherwise, once clinically appropriate), through the use of effective teaching methodologies informed by ACTraining.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Define and describe the effects of training the transformation of stimulus function in arbitrary relational frame training.
2. Define the critical features of precision teaching and instructional design processes to make data-based decisions about the acquisition of relational operants.
3. Identify prerequisite language and behavioral skills necessary for effective implementation of Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) in autistic learners.

### 85. Program Development and Outcomes of ACT for Chronic Pain in Interdisciplinary Outpatient Pain Programs

Panel • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Chronic Pain

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Heather Poupore-King, Ph.D., Stanford School of Medicine  
 Corinne E Cooley, DPT, Stanford HealthCare  
 Dokyoung Sophia You, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma  
 Allie Van Nuys, OTR/L, OTD, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

Chronic Pain impacts millions of people, with annual prevalence 20.5% among adults in the United States (Yong, 2022). Practice guidelines acknowledge the role of psychology and mental health providers as necessary components of the pain interdisciplinary treatment team for chronic low back pain (Salathe, 2018). However, in the United States the most utilized physical therapy, with 9.4 million respondents (18.6%) having tried this therapy, and notably an underutilization of psychological, support groups or behavioral treatments (.9-2.6%). Patients referred for chronic pain treatment may be confused how pain control strategies, fused thoughts and psychological inflexibility can impact pain and participation in life. Recent reviews on ACT for chronic pain demonstrate a small to large effect on pain interference, disability, depression, improve quality of life and pain-related functioning. (McCracken, 2022, Martinez-Calderon 2024). Our panel we will discuss (a) the development of ACT as an interdisciplinary pain program and (b) integration of clinical outcome measures and patient satisfaction data across all disciplines (OT, PT, and Pain Psychology) to enhance the effectiveness of chronic pain care.



Educational Objectives:

1. Review ACT based approaches for chronic pain.
2. Discuss how ACT can be integrated into an interdisciplinary pain program.
3. Identify relevant clinical outcome measures to utilize with chronic pain population.

## 86. Psychology's Roadmap to Organizational Cultural Transformation

**Invited** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, EDI, Human Rights

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Nottoway**

Maysa Akbar, Ph.D., ABPP, American Psychological Association



This presentation will outline APA's approach for fostering organizational cultural transformation, focusing on inclusivity, belongingness, and psychological safety. Participants will gain insight into APA's strategic approach to creating equitable, accessible environments and supporting workplace transformation through the science of psychology. The keynote will explore how practitioners and behavioral scientists can leverage psychological principles to drive meaningful change, promoting inclusivity and human rights within both psychology and broader society.

Participants will engage in discussions on global challenges, including how to apply psychological principles to integrate these values into various practices and work settings in the current socio-political landscape. Additionally, strategies for building consensus and fostering support for these transformative efforts will be explored.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe APA's approach to fostering inclusivity, belongingness, and psychological safety.
2. Apply psychological principles to promote inclusivity and human rights within psychology and broader society.
3. Discuss strategies for integrating EDI values and building support for cultural organizational transformation.

## 87. Interbehaving about Interbehaviorism: A Question and Answer Panel

**Panel** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Theory and philosophical foundations, Interbehaviorism

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Matt D Andersland, M.S., The University of Memphis

Emily K Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, UL Lafayette

Mitch Fryling, Ph.D., California State University, Los Angeles

Kate Kellum, Ph.D., University of Mississippi

Linda J Parrott Hayes, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno

A renewal and expansion of interest in interbehaviorism and interbehavioral psychology has been observed within recent years. Interbehavioral philosophy and psychology are pertinent to the evolution of Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) across investigative, interpretive, and applied domains (Finn & Barnes-Holmes, 2021; Hayes & Fryling, 2021; Sandoz, 2021). Pertinence does not, however, guarantee accessibility or actionability. CBS researchers and clinicians may find themselves interested in interbehavioral ideas, but limited by questions about how to apply these ideas to their work. Question asking and answering is a process which can evolve how particular instances of language function, both as aspects of context and currents of behavior, bridging interpretive systems and promoting the emergence of understanding. In other words, asking questions and hearing answers can expand our behavioral repertoires. We've solicited questions about interbehavioral psychology from our communities to promote this continued evolution. And - maybe you have

questions and curiosities of your own! In this panel, the speakers will discuss and respond to questions about interbehaviorism and interbehavioral psychology, and their relationship to CBS.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify one application of an aspect of interbehaviorism to their CBS work.
2. Identify one application of an aspect of interbehavioral psychology to their CBS work.
3. Describe one misconception about interbehaviorism or interbehavioral psychology and correct it.

### **88. Invitation to Change: Using science & kindness to help clients struggling with a loved one's addictive behaviors**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Substance Use Disorder

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Cordelia Kraus, LPC, CADC-I, Certified CRAFT clinician, Vital Space, LLC  
Jeff Foote, Ph.D., Center For Motivation and Change

In 2023, 17% of people in the US met criteria for a substance use disorder (including alcohol). The effects of addictive behaviors impact, not only those directly struggling, but the family around them. The wide variety of impacts experienced by families include increased anxiety, depression, and family conflict.

Invitation to Change (ITC) is a novel approach that helps family members 1) shift their perspective on the nature and function of substance use; 2) utilize reinforcement and communication strategies; and 3) implement an intentional practice of self-awareness, self-compassion, and values-driven actions; in order to stay compassionately connected to themselves and their loved one while creating a context that supports the process of change.

ITC provides an evidence-supported framework for providers to help those impacted to expand their behavioral repertoire beyond the common "detachment" or "rock bottom" strategies offered by conventional and widely-disseminated confrontational approaches.

This workshop will be enhanced through demonstration, and experiential exercises. Attendees will learn some ITC tools they can use immediately and will receive access to additional resources for themselves and their clients.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the 3 major components of Invitation to Change and how they work to increase intra- and interpersonal flexibility.
2. Explain the function of two of the 8 subcomponents within Invitation to Change and give an example of how that component is seen within the context of their own work.
3. Contrast elements of the ITC with pervasive cultural messages around addictive behaviors that block helping efforts.

### **89. Being Brave: Developing an ACT-informed community workshop**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Dissemination or global health strategies, Community-based support

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Kathryn L Wood, LCPC, P-RDT, True North Therapy & Training  
Laura Natta, MDiv, Ph.D., APA  
Daniel Lyons, NP, PMHNP, Adaptive Minds LLC

This experiential workshop will guide participants through the process of creating a community-based, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-informed workshop aimed at exploring social constructs, such as bravery, in turbulent socio-political times. Drawing on ACT core processes, the session will explore how to foster values-based action in the face of societal challenges. Participants

will learn how to design experiential exercises aiding individuals connect to their core values, navigate fear and uncertainty, and take committed action toward social change. Through integrating mindfulness, acceptance, and cognitive diffusion strategies, this workshop will also emphasize the importance of creating a compassionate, safe space where individuals can explore their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in relation to bravery, activism, and social justice. By the end of the session, attendees will be equipped with a toolkit to design and facilitate their own community-based ACT-informed workshops, empowering individuals to act with courage, authenticity, and resilience during times of collective struggle and societal turbulence.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify opportunities for creating community-based groups in their own localities.
2. Identify and engage with their own values in creating community-based interventions.
3. Identify ways to connect and collaborate with individuals and organizations in their chosen community to realize and support community-based interventions.

### 90. Non-Zero Sum Game: Promoting Fairness and Interdependence using ACT and the Prosocial Model

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play, Strategic planning*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Dissemination or global health strategies, Prosocial model, DEI, Global mental health, Cultural values, Cultural competence, Conflict resolution, Empathy, Interdependence, Mindfulness

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Kenneth Po-Lun Fung, M.D., FRCPC, M.Sc., University of Toronto  
Yukie Kurumiya, Ph.D., BCBA-D, IBA, The Chicago School

Sociocultural issues significantly influence individual and organizational behaviors through implicit cultural scripts, affecting policies and social structures, reinforcing hierarchical power dynamics, and perpetuating inequities. These issues may not immediately adversely affect organizational effectiveness, obfuscating the need for change. Further, empathy for those affected may be perceived as taking sides, and movements advocating social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) can provoke backlash, and even become targeted in politics or policies. Globally, sociocultural conflicts may even escalate into war. This gamified workshop aims to explore how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and the Prosocial model can be utilized as mechanisms for transformation. Participants will engage in experiential exercises to understand how internalized cultural values and organizational scripts influence their actions within various settings and how groups function, including political, professional, and research environments. ACT and the Prosocial model will be used collectively to address identified challenges locally and globally. The workshop supports participants to critically engage with sociocultural issues, leveraging these models to promote personal and organizational social change in personal, professional, community, and international contexts.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify implicit sociocultural scripts in personal functioning and within organizations; reflect on underlying DEI and other cultural values; and describe our relationship and participation with sociocultural issues.
2. Apply Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and the Prosocial model as tools for addressing and transforming sociocultural challenges at both the individual and organizational levels.
3. Develop strategies to leverage ACT and the Prosocial model for addressing sociocultural issues, aiming to promote personal and collective social change in personal, professional, community, and global contexts.

Friday Afternoon Plenary 4:45 PM

### 91. Origins of Human Cooperation

**Plenary** • 4:45 PM - 5:45 PM

Categories: Other, Academics or education, Cooperation

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Michael Tomasello, Ph.D., Duke University



Human beings are biologically adapted for culture in ways that other primates are not. Uniquely human forms of social understanding and cultural learning emerge in human ontogeny at around one year of age as infants begin to engage with other persons in various kinds of joint attentional activities, including linguistic communication. Comparisons to the social cognition of apes helps to specify in more detail the nature of uniquely human social cognition.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the key principles of human cooperation.
2. Describe the key principles of children's cooperation.
3. Explain the evolution of cooperation.

DRAFT

## Program Detail • Saturday • July 19

Saturday Morning 7:00 AM

**Morning Yoga Session**

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

John Powell, Private Practice

I'm a certified yoga teacher with 20 years of practice and I currently teach on an ongoing basis. This will be an intermediate level practice for people already familiar with the asana practice.

Saturday Morning 8:00 AM

**Climate Justice and Action SIG - Meet the SIG!**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bayside A**

Jae Villanueva, Ph.D., Swiss Institute of Sustainable Health  
Devin Guthrie, Ph.D., Life & Death Coaching

Join us at the meeting of the Climate Justice and Action SIG! We will provide a comprehensive overview of current activities, achievements, and strategic directions as detailed in the SIG's annual report. We explicitly welcome both current members and potential new participants and will talk about ongoing projects and initiatives within the SIG and we'll also brainstorm further actions for the SIG in small groups. This will be embedded in a dynamic and inclusive atmosphere, encouraging personal connections and networking opportunities. The session will conclude with a discussion segment, inviting feedback and ideas on increasing engagement and broadening the scope of action of the SIG within the ACBS community.

**Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) SIG Annual Meeting**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Daniel Maitland, University of Missouri - Kansas City

This interactive session will provide an opportunity to reflect on our collective progress and shape the future of the FAP SIG. We will hold elections for leadership positions, discuss goals and initiatives for the upcoming year, and explore opportunities for collaboration and growth. Our efforts this year will be focused on how we can create structure and enhance the FAP SIGs support of research, training, and presence at the ACBS World Conference. Attendees are encouraged to share insights, propose events, and identify ways to meet the evolving needs of our community. Whether you are a long-time member or new to FAP, your participation is essential in fostering a vibrant and supportive network.

**Michigan Chapter - Mitten Meeting**

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Brendan Skinner, Western Michigan University

The newly formed Michigan Chapter of the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science (ACBS) invites all interested attendees to a chapter meeting at ACBS World Conference 2025. We will introduce our recently elected board members, discuss the future direction of the chapter, and provide opportunities for networking. We especially encourage attendees who have traveled from Michigan or who are connected to and passionate about the state to join us. Topics of discussion will include current research initiatives, chapter activities and event planning, and subcommittee formation. We



aim to foster connection and collaboration around our shared experiences at the ACBS World Conference 2025.

### ANZ Chapter Connect

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Dr. Lauren Lawson, ANZ ACBS Chapter President & La Trobe University

Join us for this informal gathering of Australia and New Zealand ACBS members to connect with colleagues across the region, share ideas, and shape the future direction of our chapter. This session provides an opportunity to hear about current and upcoming ANZ Chapter activities, contribute your voice to future planning, and explore ways we can strengthen community, collaboration, and support across research, practice, and training. Whether you're a long-standing member or new to the ACBS community, we welcome your insights and involvement. Let's work together to grow a vibrant, inclusive chapter that reflects and supports the diversity of contextual behavioural science in our region.

### Sport, Health, and Human Performance SIG Meeting

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

David J. Udelf, Psy.D., David Udelf & Associates  
Manabu Yoshimoto B.A., DEEP SLOW MOVE RIVER

These days, there is a growing interest in applying contextual behavioral approaches to sports and other performance-related endeavors within ACBS communities. However, the Sport, Health, and Human Performance SIG remains a minority group. Therefore, we seek your collaboration to help realize our potential. We aim to create an excellent opportunity for interaction, sharing opinions on our SIG activities, and more during this meeting. Additionally, we are currently recruiting new board members to enhance our SIG initiatives. If you have some time, please join us—everyone is truly welcome!

Saturday Morning Plenary 9:00 AM

## 92. Realizing the Potential of CBS to Alleviate Human Suffering

Plenary • 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, CBS research methods, eating and weight control

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Rhonda Merwin, Ph.D., Duke University School of Medicine



CBS is distinct from other scientific approaches. The face of modern contextualism, behaviors are understood as acts in historical and situational context, and the explicit aim of analysis is the betterment of the human condition via prediction and influence of behavior using principles and processes with precision, scope and depth. High quality CBS research can be difficult to conduct. However, technological advances provide new tools (or capabilities) for conducting research that is multilevel, multidimensional, pragmatic and process-based - in traditional (e.g., labs) and nontraditional research settings (e.g., clinics, home environments).

This address will draw a line through a program of basic and applied research that leverages modern technology within a CBS framework. Studies will center on two clinical problems with extremely high mortality rates: anorexia nervosa and T1DE (disordered eating in type 1 diabetes). While the research content focuses on suffering that arises from having an adversarial relationship with the body (or the body's signals), the broader goal will be to outline a progressive CBS research strategy to alleviate human suffering whatever form it takes.

## Educational Objectives:

1. List the 5 qualities of CBS research according to ACBS Research Task Force Report and how they apply to an area that you care about (as a human, practitioner, researcher...).
2. Identify 2-3 innovative uses of modern technology that increase our capacity to conduct progressive CBS research in traditional and nontraditional research settings.
3. Describe how clinical trials can be maximized to advance CBS.

Saturday Morning 10:30 AM

**93. ACT for Grief & Loss****Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PMComponents: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Complicated GriefTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Russ Harris, MBBS, Psychological Flexibility P/L

This workshop on ACT for grief and loss is loosely based on my ACT-based self-help book, *When Life Hits Hard*. We will explore how we can simply and effectively apply the ACT model to any form of grief or loss, to effectively handle intense emotional pain, foster a healthy grieving process. We'll also look at 'complicated grief' and how to work with it using core ACT processes. The workshop is both didactic and experiential, and will include videos of therapy sessions. Experiential components will focus on self-compassion, acceptance, anchoring oneself in the present and living by one's values in the face of loss.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Describe an ACT-congruent process of healthy grieving.
2. Apply core ACT techniques to work with common grief and loss issues.
3. Conceptualize complicated grief using the ACT model and design appropriate interventions based on this framework.

**94. RNT We Still All Impostors?! Practical Psychological Flexibility for Impostor****Phenomenon****Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PMComponents: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Organizational / Industrial psychology, Impostor Syndrome, ACT-RNT, Clinical RFTTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Borgne**

Andreas Larsson, M.Sc., Ph.D., Lic Psychologist, Mid Sweden University

Caroline S. Leão, Ph.D., Private Practice

Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a common challenge experienced by individuals, irrespective of their accomplishments. It involves persistent self-doubt and the fear of being exposed as a fraud, despite evidence of competence. This workshop offers practical tools for addressing IP, guided by the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Repetitive Negative Thinking (ACT RNT) model and its comprehension around negative selfing and worrying/ruminating.

This session combines academic knowledge with shared personal and clinical experiences. Both presenters and attendees will share insights, highlighting that even accomplished individuals have grappled with IP. Participants will explore the ACT RNT model, which synthesizes ACT and RFT principles, providing guidance for embracing defusion, self-acceptance, and personal growth.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze the role of cognitive fusion and avoidance in sustaining the Impostor Phenomenon.
2. Apply ACT and RFT-based strategies to enhance psychological flexibility in individuals experiencing Impostor Phenomenon.

3. Implement experiential exercises and case-based interventions to address Impostor Phenomenon in clinical and professional settings.

### 95. Integrating positive psychology practices to expand flexible attention to the beautiful and awe-inspiring

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Theory and philosophical foundations, Positive Psychology

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Jennifer Gregg, Ph.D., San Jose State University

Matthew Boone, MSW, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Positive thoughts and feelings such as joy, gratitude, and awe are often de-emphasized in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) due to their potential to function as avoidance strategies for distressing thoughts and feelings. However, if the overarching aim of ACT is to cultivate psychological flexibility and intentional living, there is value in fostering awareness and openness to these experiences as well. This workshop will explore the theoretical foundations for incorporating positive psychological constructs within ACT while preserving the principles of contextual behavioral science. Participants will learn exercises designed to integrate positive emotions in a way that enhances flexible responding without undermining foundational principles.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe positive psychology interventions.
2. Evaluate positive psychology interventions in relation to cognitive behavioral science
3. Integrate positive psychology interventions into Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

### 96. Rethinking Punishment in the Therapeutic Context: Enhancing Sensitivity to Behavioral Functions

**Workshop** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Supervision and training, Behavioral psychological flexibility

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Manuela O'Connell, Lic., Private Practice

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services

In Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), the concept of punishment is often misunderstood, despite its pivotal role in shaping human behavior and relational dynamics. Punishment, when viewed through a functional contextual lens, is not inherently harmful but rather a natural process that influences behavioral repertoires in both clients and therapists. However, insensitivity to the nuanced role of punishment can inadvertently reinforce patterns of avoidance, fusion, and therapeutic disengagement. This workshop will explore the importance of understanding punishment in ACT, emphasizing how therapists can effectively identify and respond by punishing within the therapeutic relationship. Through the use of didactic teaching and experiential role-playing exercises, participants will develop advanced skills to Identify and address instances of punitive interactions in therapy, use punishment awareness to promote behavioral change while maintaining a secure therapeutic alliance, and reframe challenges potentially caused by punishment into opportunities for relational growth. This interactive workshop is designed for clinicians looking to deepen their practice by integrating a nuanced understanding of punishment into their ACT work to enhance flexibility and connection in the therapeutic process.

Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze the concept of punishment through a functional contextual lens, exploring its impact on behavioral repertoires, psychological flexibility, and therapeutic relationships.
2. Demonstrate the skillful use of punishment through experiential exercises, applying awareness to shape flexible and adaptive client behaviors while maintaining a supportive therapeutic context.
3. Explore strategies to recognize and respond effectively to unintentional punitive interactions, transforming challenging exchanges into opportunities for relational growth within the therapeutic alliance.

## 97. Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Innovations in Contextual Behavioral Science

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Original data, Literature review, Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises*

Categories: RFT / RGB / language, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Behavior analysis, Social justice / equity / diversity, Dissemination or global health strategies, Professional development, Academics or education, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Psychological Flexibility, Metalinguistic Awareness, Bilingual Advantage Theory, Psychological well-being, ACT Cultural Adaptation, Career, Mental Health, Iterative Design Thinking, Architectural Pedagogy, Inclusive Critique Models, Cognitive Flexibility, Process-Oriented Learning, Equity in Architectural Education, Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS), Behavioral Adaptability, Appetitive Learning, Mindfulness, Latines, Liberation Psychology

*Target Audience: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Miriam N Mukasa, M.S., Utah State University  
 Andrés J Beltrán, B.S., Western Michigan University  
 Morgan Alexis Palmer, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Eman AlBedah, M.Sc., University of Bath  
 Manuel Gutierrez Chavez, M.S., University of Utah  
 Ela Ari, Ph.D., Faculty in Istanbul Medipol University, Psychology Department  
 Serra Kadayıfci, M.A., Mindfulness Institute, Resilience Academy

This session highlights six studies grounded in Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) and psychological flexibility, showcasing culturally and contextually responsive adaptations of ACT and mindfulness-based interventions across global populations. One study found that while bilingualism did not affect flexibility directly, metalinguistic awareness was associated with core ACT processes and positive emotional outcomes. A systematic review of ACT in sub-Saharan Africa identified feasibility and effectiveness across youth and adult populations, with cultural adaptations enhancing accessibility. Another study demonstrated how a 14-week ACT course for university students increased mindfulness, valued living, and emotional resilience. CBS principles were also explored in architectural pedagogy, offering a framework for enhancing cognitive flexibility and design thinking. Two studies emphasized culturally sensitive delivery: a qualitative exploration of Muslims' experiences in MBSR/MBCT highlighted ways to align mindfulness with Islamic values, and a study with Latino families illustrated how mindfulness-based health interventions can integrate social justice and liberation psychology. Collectively, these studies advance flexible, inclusive, and culturally grounded practices to promote mental health and well-being in diverse communities.

- *Psychological Flexibility and Bilingualism: Exploring their relationship*

Andrés J. Beltrán, Western Michigan University  
 Morgan Palmer, Western Michigan University  
 Megan Campbell, Western Michigan University  
 Scott Gaynor, Ph.D., Western Michigan University

This study examines the relationship between bilingualism, psychological flexibility, and metalinguistic awareness. A sample of university students (N = 225) was examined using a descriptive, comparative design, with bilingualism as the independent variable and psychological flexibility and metalinguistic awareness as dependent variables. Results indicated no significant differences in psychological flexibility between bilingual and monolingual participants. However, bilinguals demonstrated significantly higher metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals,  $t(174) = 2.38, p = .018$ . Further analyses revealed that metalinguistic awareness was positively associated with psychological flexibility ( $r = .243, p = .001$ ) and its components, including Defusion ( $r = .207, p = .005$ ), Acceptance ( $r = .225, p = .002$ ), Self-as-Context ( $r = .227, p = .002$ ), and Values ( $r = .188, p = .011$ ). Psychological flexibility, in turn, was negatively

correlated with depressive symptoms ( $r = -.218$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and anxiety symptoms ( $r = -.223$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and positively associated with Positive Affect ( $r = .335$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This research aims to deepen our understanding of the relationship between bilingualism and psychological flexibility.

- *Barriers and Facilitators to Mindfulness Based Interventions for Muslim Populations*

Eman AlBedah, University of Bath  
Vuokko Wallace, University of Bath  
Paul Chadwick, University of Bath

Muslims are one of the fastest growing populations in the world. Centuries of colonization stripped most Muslim countries from their natural resources and left them behind the progressive world. Mental health in Muslims' countries is impacted by the modest socioeconomic development. The scarce and modest mental health services available are underutilized due to stigma, misconceptions, lack of mental health awareness and negative attitude towards seeking professional help. Mindfulness-Based Interventions, MBI are feasible, cost effective, transdiagnostic and potentially suited for communal delivery as prevention and wellbeing interventions. This is an exploratory qualitative study to explore the experience of navigating the 8-week MBSR/MBCT programs from the dual perspectives of Muslim participants and the teachers (Muslims or not) who deliver such programs to Muslim populations. It is an attempt to explore how Islam and mindfulness interact during an MBSR program from the perspectives of Muslim participants and their teachers. The constructed themes may assist in improving accessibility and acceptability of MBI to wider groups of faith.

- *Questioning the Status Quo: Latino Community Members as Researchers in the Study of Health Equity*

Manuel Gutierrez Chavez, M.S., Department of Psychology, University of Utah  
Katherine J. W. Baucom, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Utah  
Ana Sanchez-Birkhead, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, APRN, College of Nursing, University of Utah, Community Faces of Utah, Hispanic Health Care Task Force, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Jeannette Villalta, Community Faces of Utah, Salt Lake City; Hispanic Health Care Task Force, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Sara Carbajal-Salisbury, Community Faces of Utah, Salt Lake City; Hispanic Health Care Task Force, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Nidia Zavala Gonzalez, Department of Psychology, University of Utah  
Leila Tatarevic, Department of Psychology, University of Utah  
Anu Asnaani, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Utah

Latinos face growing inequities in obesity and type 2 diabetes rates, with current interventions often being inadequate due to their individual-focused nature and lack of cultural responsiveness across emotional, physical, political, and social health domains (Gutierrez Chavez et al., 2022; Ritchie et al., 2020). This paper argues for a paradigm shift in psychotherapy research towards multilevel, multidimensional strategies incorporating social justice perspectives (i.e., prosocial research purpose), psychotherapy science, and behavioral medicine to effectively address these health inequities (Asnaani, 2023; Collins et al., 2018). By detailing Latino families' dietary habits and emotional coping strategies via community focus groups and describing the development of a culturally responsive, mindfulness-based health intervention, this study illustrates the importance of integrating liberation psychology (Martín-Baro, 1996) to understand structural influences on health. The results of this study are currently being analyzed and will be presented along with the intervention development process. This study challenges conventional psychotherapy studies to broaden their definitions of success to include community engagement and liberatory practices, thereby developing further efforts addressing health inequities through applied research.

- *A Systematic Review of ACT in Sub Saharan Africa: Understanding the Cultural Adaptations*

Miriam N. Mukasa, Utah State University  
Marissa Donahue, Utah State University  
Michael E. Levin, Utah State University

Background: ACT has been implemented across international contexts (Lim et al., 2024) and may be a resource to address the overwhelming unmet mental health need in sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2022). To understand the promise of ACT in this context, we evaluated the evidence on the application, effectiveness, and cultural adaptation of ACT in SSA.

Methods: Four databases, PsycINFO, PubMed, ProQuest and Scopus were examined in accordance with the PRISMA systematic reviewing guidelines.

Results: We identified 18 studies that met the inclusion criteria. Studies on improving athletic performance were the most common. ACT interventions significantly reduced symptoms and improved psychological flexibility. Cultural adaptations included language, delivery methods adaptations, and context specific adaptations. ACT was applied with equal frequency in youth and adult populations with



most sessions occurring in group settings. The most used ACT process was acceptance. Cultural adaptations improved ACT's feasibility and acceptability. Western normed assessment measures were utilized in all studies.

Conclusion: Findings suggest that ACT could be delivered in community settings (e.g., schools) rather than in clinical environments, improving accessibility and engagement.

- *"I May Not Have It All Figured Out, But I Know What Truly Matters": An Experiential ACT Intervention for Students*

Ela Ari, Ph.D., Istanbul Medipol University  
Serra Kadayifci, Istanbul Medipol University

This study examines the effects of an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-based intervention on university students' psychological flexibility and well-being. The intervention was part of a 14-week Introduction to ACT course, experientially designed to teach all six core processes of the ACT hexaflex model through role-plays and mindfulness exercises.

Sixty students participated, with 30 receiving ACT-based training and 30 in a social psychology control group. While career anxiety and career decision self-efficacy showed no significant changes, key improvements emerged in the intervention group. Participants demonstrated increased valued living, assessed by the Valuing Questionnaire (VQ), which measures how individuals act in alignment with their values (Roohi et al., 2019). Additionally, mindfulness levels were significantly higher in the ACT group ( $p < .05$ ), aligning with ACT's emphasis on present-moment awareness.

Distress tolerance self-efficacy was significantly higher after the course ( $p < .05$ ), suggesting that ACT improved individuals' ability to accept emotional discomfort in service of meaningful actions. This study strengthens evidence that ACT interventions enhance psychological flexibility and value-based engagement in young adults.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify the relationship between bilingualism, metalinguistic awareness, and psychological flexibility based on empirical findings.
2. Describe the role of structural factors (e.g., socioeconomic status) on the health of Latinos in Utah.
3. Analyze and compare key cultural adaptations of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) used in sub-Saharan Africa, identifying common modifications in treatment processes and delivery methods.

## **98. A Constructional Approach to Mental Health**

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Behavior analysis, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Mental Health, Autism, OCD, Anxiety, Emotions

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Angela Fuhrmann-Knowles, M.A., Endicott College

Discussant: T. V. Joe Layng, Ph.D., Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, Endicott College

Katherine L Gibson, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Anna Linnehan, Ph.D., Endicott College

Awab Abdel-Jalil, M.S., Upstate Caring Partners; Endicott College

Danielle Cohen, M.S., The Abrite Organization/ Comprehensive Autism Center

This series of presentations explores the constructional approach and nonlinear contingency analysis (Goldiamond, 1975; Layng et al., 2022), and their implications for mental health treatment, including severe problem behavior, treatment resistance, emotional behavior, and exposure-based interventions. Rather than focusing on eliminating problems, this approach emphasizes identifying and shaping precisely identified skills to help individuals build meaningful lives. The first talk provides an overview of the constructional approach, its integration into mental health treatment, and case studies on its application with patients facing significant mental health challenges. Next, a discussion on emotions as contingency descriptors challenges traditional views, presenting emotions as learned, functional responses to environmental contingencies. Building on this, a review of exposure therapy literature introduces Constructional Exposure Therapy (CET)—an alternative to traditional exposure techniques that avoids extinction-based procedures. Last, case studies will be presented that illustrate

CET's application in clinical settings, highlighting its effectiveness for individuals with autism, trauma histories, and healthcare-related fears. This symposium will demonstrate how a constructional framework enhances mental health interventions, emotional understanding, and fear reduction strategies.

- *What is the Constructional Approach and What does it have to do with Mental Health?*  
Katherine Gibson, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

The constructional approach and nonlinear contingency analysis, first presented by Dr. Israel Goldiamond (Goldiamond, 1975), can have many implications for mental health and improve treatment by precisely identifying what skills need to be built to help a person build the life they want to live. As people build the lives they want to live and learn the necessary skills in a targeted way, the identified problems that brought them into treatment fade out without ever being the focus of their treatment (Layng et al., 2022). A constructional approach and nonlinear analysis can help identify the skills needed so that other teaching technologies and treatment modalities can be selected and designed to treat these complex disorders. A constructional and nonlinear analysis does not offer a brand-new way of treatment; rather, it enhances treatments we know to work by adding a comprehensive analysis of behaviors of concern, how they interact with their environment, and shifting the focus of treatment to building specific targeted skills, the absence of which is the problem. This presentation takes a broad overview of the breadth of this work, providing a background on what the constructional approach and nonlinear contingency analysis is, how it can be incorporated into treatment for patients with mental health disorders, and clinical outcomes with associated data of the constructional approach and nonlinear contingency analysis applied with children and teens diagnosed with mental health disorders.

- *An Introduction to Emotions as Contingency Descriptors*  
Anna Linnehan, Ph.D., Endicott

Over the course of centuries, numerous efforts have been made to understand human emotion, many of which rely on mediation through internal processes and universal emotion expression. However, converging approaches from neuroscience (Barrett, 2017) and the consequential contingency analysis of behavior (Skinner, 1957, 1963, 1965, 1971; Goldiamond, 1979, 2022; Layng, 2006, 2017) provide a different account of emotions and emotional behavior to answer the questions: What are emotions and emotional behavior? How do we use our emotions and emotional behavior to affect the world around us? The purpose of this presentation is to provide a parsimonious analysis of emotions as described by Lisa Feldman Barrett, B. F. Skinner and updated by the Goldiamond-Layng theory which states that emotions are not internal states or universally expressed, but rather descriptions of changes in contingencies as we navigate the world around us. A formal definition of contingency, the distinction between emotions and emotional behavior, and how we learn the words for emotions will be discussed.

- *Building Towards a Constructional Exposure Therapy*  
Awab Abdel-Jalil, M.S., BCBA, Endicott

Abstract: A focused review of the history and literature on exposure therapies for phobias and highly reactive patterns will be presented (Abdel-Jalil et al., 2024). The review will set the stage for the introduction of a new approach for addressing phobias and highly reactive patterns: Constructional Exposure Therapy (Layng & Abdel-Jalil, 2022). This approach emphasizes the operant/consequential contingencies associated with reactive patterns, and aims to shape the needed repertoires utilizing the already present negative reinforcement contingency without the use of extinction or other extraneous consequences. That is, the removal of the aversive stimulus follows approximations to a targeted repertoire. It will be shown how Constructional Exposure Therapy empowers participants, rather than them playing a passive role in most exposure therapies. This approach is consistent with a radical behavioral interpretation of emotions and serves to illustrate one practical application.

- *A Constructional Approach to Fear*  
Danielle Cohen, M.S., BCBA,

Fear and fearful responses develop through interactions with the environment (Barrett & Lida, 2024). These interactions can limit someone's ability to navigate their surroundings and reduce their quality of life. Identifying and implementing strategies that consider all behavior in context is important for supporting those experiencing fear. Constructional exposure therapy (CET) is an approach to alleviate fearful responding and distress while constructing new positive responses that allow people to live a more free and unrestricted life (Layng & Abdel-Jalil, 2022). This presentation will feature case example videos of CET, showing how it helped a 9-year-old autistic boy with his fear of health care and hygiene-related tasks. The results highlight a shift from fearful emotions and responses to confidence and positive engagement in these situations. Attendees will see examples of CET implemented in clinical practice, be

able to identify the general components of CET procedures, and learn about a constructional approach for minimizing distress.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe the principles of the constructional approach and nonlinear contingency analysis, including how they apply to mental health treatment.
2. Compare and contrast traditional models of emotions with the contingency-based framework, explaining how emotions function as learned responses to environmental contingencies.
3. Demonstrate how Constructional Exposure Therapy (CET) applies operant contingencies to reduce fearful responding and promote adaptive behaviors through case study analysis.

**99. Avoidance to connection: Psychological flexibility in loneliness, psychological health, and social connection**

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Processes of change, Loneliness

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Jacob M Hardin, B.A.A.S, East Texas Contextual Behavioral Science Lab - University of Texas at Tyler

Discussant: Michael Bordieri, Ph.D., Murray State University

Olga Berkout, Ph.D., University of Texas at Tyler

Maureen Flynn, Ph.D., Metropolitan State University Of Denver

Daniel W.M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri - Kansas City

Loneliness and low social connection are associated with poorer health and wellbeing. Challenges in this domain impact a significant proportion of the population. Developing a better understanding of how these relate to key mechanisms relevant to dysfunction and therapeutic change can help identify ways in which associated negative outcomes can be ameliorated. Papers within this symposium examine relationships between psychological flexibility processes and interpersonal wellbeing. Psychological flexibility has been positively associated with adaptive social function and inversely related to loneliness; however, the literature has been limited by a reliance on cross-sectional studies and self-report methodology. Papers within this symposium expand upon extant research by integrating longitudinal data, ecological momentary assessment, and exploring a task-based metric relevant to social function. These studies contribute to understanding how psychological flexibility processes relate to loneliness, wellbeing, alcohol use, and engagement in social responding supportive of relationships. Findings may inform future efforts to ameliorate the negative impact of interpersonal difficulties and broaden the methodology utilized to strengthen the field.

- *Loneliness and psychological health: A longitudinal exploration of ACT mechanisms*

Maureen K. Flynn, Ph.D., Metropolitan State University of Denver

Michael J. Bordieri Ph.D., Murray State University

Approximately 50% of adults in the United States report experiencing loneliness (Cigna Corporation, 2021), which significantly impacts psychological health (Mann et al., 2022). According to the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) model, loneliness may lead individuals to engage in cognitive fusion, which can increase experiential avoidance and reduce committed action, ultimately contributing to psychological distress (Castro et al., 2021). In their cross-sectional study, Castro et al. (2021) found that cognitive fusion is associated with loneliness and poorer psychological health due to heightened experiential avoidance and lower committed action. The present study builds on Castro et al.'s work by utilizing longitudinal data to explore how core ACT processes influence loneliness and well-being over time. Participants (n = 391) were Prolific users who completed questionnaires on ACT processes, loneliness, and psychological health at three time points. Serial mediation analysis will be conducted to assess these relationships. Understanding factors that contribute to loneliness and well-being is essential for developing interventions to mitigate the negative psychological effects of loneliness.

- *Putting yourself out there: Exploring gratitude expression in relation to psychological flexibility and social function*

Olga V. Berkout, Ph.D., University of Texas at Tyler

Relationship-focused values domains are commonly represented within psychological flexibility-informed tools (Lundgren et al., 2012; Polk, 2014; Wilson et al., 2010). Although interpersonal connection is an important component of well-being, challenges in this domain are common and related to distress and morbidity and mortality (Surgeon General, 2023). Prosocial actions, such as expression of gratitude, support connection, but concerns about potential awkwardness for recipients and imperfect wording in expression hinder this behavior (Chang et al., 2022; Kumar, 2022). Expression of gratitude can be conceptualized as values-consistent behavior in the face of difficult thoughts and feelings. Assessment of responses promoting social connection has relied on self-report methodology, which may be limited by challenges in accurate perception and recall and bias. Novel metrics assessing psychologically flexible behavior in a social context are needed. The current study examines gratitude expression task responses in relation to measures of psychological flexibility and social function among 400 participants. Demonstrating expected relationships between theoretically consistent responding and established metrics may contribute to availability of non-self-report alternatives for assessing key interpersonal constructs.

- *Experiential avoidance as a predictor of loneliness and engagement in the interpersonal model of intimacy in daily life: Findings from a binge drinking sample*

Daniel W. M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri – Kansas City

Previous research suggests that loneliness increases mortality risk at a level comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes per day (Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2012). In recent years, our understanding of how loneliness influences health behaviors—such as alcohol consumption—and, in turn, impacts physical and mental health has grown significantly (Park et al., 2020). These findings prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to issue an advisory on the adverse effects of loneliness. Despite these widespread efforts to raise awareness, the mechanisms underlying the development of loneliness remain poorly understood. Broadly, loneliness arises when there is a discrepancy between an individual's actual and desired levels of social connection. Cross-sectional research suggests that experiential avoidance may play a key role in this process. The current study builds on these findings using a 14-day ecological momentary assessment period. Data will be reported for individuals aged 18-35 who reported binge drinking during the past month. Results will be discussed in terms of how experiential avoidance shapes social interactions, contributing to loneliness and problematic alcohol use.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Discuss how loneliness, psychological flexibility processes, and wellbeing interact over time.
2. Describe intersections between gratitude expression and psychological flexibility in a social context.
3. Describe how experiential avoidance can lead to the development of loneliness and how loneliness in turn increases motivations for drinking and drinking behavior.

### **100. Centering science: Professional development and mentorship in ACBS throughout the academic career trajectory**

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *None of these*

Categories: Professional development, Academics or education, Early Career Mentorship Program, ACBS Centering Science Pillar

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Samuel D. Spencer, Ph.D., University of North Texas

Discussant: Akihiko Masuda, Ph.D., University of Hawaii at Manoa

Brandon Gaudiano, Ph.D., Brown University and Butler Hospital

Emily Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, UL Lafayette

Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville

Robert D. Zettle, Ph.D., Wichita State University

In this panel discussion, leading scientists within ACBS will reflect on topics related to mentorship, training, and professional development. Informed by perspectives within the ACBS Centering Science Strategic Pillar and the Early Career Mentorship Program, panelists with a range of diversity across career stages and academic settings will explore the following questions: (a) what aspects of the mentorship process are most underrated and warrant amplification? (b) when growing a research lab, how does one strike a balance between CBS-focused research and other “non-CBS” topics, especially to the extent to which the latter may align with extramural funding priorities? (c) how do mentorship and professional development differ in later career stages? (d) how can we navigate the dialectical

between clinical science and scientist-practitioner training models in doctoral clinical psychology, especially as it relates to the strong focus in CBS on practitioner-focused training? (e) what are some of the most valuable (and perhaps unexpectedly so) professional development opportunities? This discussion will further ACBS mentorship initiatives by assisting scholars across the career trajectory in maximizing professional development opportunities.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. List important aspects of the mentorship process critical for ongoing professional development.
2. Describe how mentorship and professional development differ across the academic career trajectory and identify appropriate professional development activities aligned with one's particular career stage.
3. Identify and articulate potentially lucrative (and perhaps unexpectedly so) professional development opportunities.

**101. Targeting Racial and Systemic Oppression: On Tailoring ACT for Black Trauma**

**Invited** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Racial and Systemic Trauma

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Nottoway**

Jennifer Shepard Payne, Ph.D., LCSW-C, Johns Hopkins University



Evidence-based programs (EBPs) have been scientifically proven to enhance mental health functioning. However, individual counseling can only be somewhat effective for marginalized groups, as they face not only personal emotional distress but also systemic issues that affect their well-being. Some EBPs inadvertently "blame the victim" when a client belongs to an oppressed community because 1) they primarily focus on individual growth, and 2) they often disregard the systemic oppression impacting the client.

This plenary will explore ways to address systemic issues through ACT, highlighting the experiences of Black Americans. While ACT serves as an effective intervention, certain elements can be adjusted to build trust in the therapeutic process and motivate treatment among Black individuals facing systemic oppression. We will examine the POOF (Pulling Out Of Fire) culturally tailored ACT model, which considers both individual and collective values when engaging with Black communities. Cultural humility and social determinants of health have been integrated into POOF to create an ACT model that encourages and empowers Black Americans who have encountered social injustice.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe the axiology of evidence-based practices and how they were not specifically designed for marginalized populations.
2. Apply the social determinants of health to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.
3. Compare classic ACT with culturally tailored ACT (POOF).

**102. Cooperation, culture, and human cognition: How are they linked and why does it matter?**

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Evolutionary behavioral science, Theory and philosophical foundations, Cooperation, Cognitive development

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Steven C Hayes, Ph.D., Institute for Better Health

Michael Tomasello, Ph.D., Duke University

Louise McHugh, Ph.D., UCD

David Sloan S Wilson, Ph.D., ProSocial World



Human cognition, culture, and cooperation are deeply intertwined, shaping the evolutionary trajectory of our species. This panel explores how these processes interact to influence behavior, social organization, and psychological well-being. Drawing on insights from Relational Frame Theory (RFT), cultural evolution, and developmental psychology, panelists will examine the mechanisms that drive human cooperation and the implications for mental health, education, and societal change.

Key topics will include the role of symbolic thought and language in fostering cooperation, how cultural transmission and evolutionary processes shape group dynamics, and why understanding cooperation at multiple levels—from individuals to global societies—is critical for addressing modern challenges. The discussion will highlight practical applications, including process-based interventions for enhancing prosocial behavior and resilience.

By integrating perspectives from evolutionary psychology, behavioral science, and cognitive development, this panel will provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the forces that bind human societies together. Attendees will leave with actionable insights into how fostering cooperation and cultural adaptability can enhance psychological flexibility, social cohesion, and collective well-being.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how cultural evolution and relational frame theory contribute to human cooperation and cognitive development.
2. Analyze the role of symbolic thought and social learning in shaping cooperation and prosocial behavior across different contexts.
3. Apply insights from process-based and evolutionary perspectives to enhance cooperation in clinical, educational, and organizational settings.

### 103. Clinic to Classroom to Lab: Emerging Human Operant Research

**Symposium** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Behavior analysis, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Rule-governed behavior, Matching-to-Sample Task, Learned Helplessness, Delay Discounting, Childhood Unpredictability, Social Behavior, Ego Depletion, Psychological Flexibility

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Chair: Matthew Andersland, M.S., The University of Memphis

Discussant: Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., C. Psychol. Ps.S.I., University College Dublin

Brad M Parfait, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Caleb M Jean, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Contextual behavioral science is, in part, distinguished from other areas of psychology by the aspiration to nurture the connection between basic research and applied intervention. Ideally this nurturance involves direct discussions about basic research and its implications for applied intervention. This symposium offers such an opportunity, highlighting emerging human operant research with implications to clinical and other applied settings. The first presentation will detail a study utilizing a matching to sample task to investigate differences in rule-governed insensitivity when participants are prompted with appetitive and aversive contingencies. The second study will describe results of a mediation analysis of an MTURK sample, investigating the association between outcomes on measures of Childhood Unpredictability, Learned Helplessness, and a Delay Discounting Task. The final study seeks to understand the impact of experimentally induced ego depletion on participant's tendencies towards either altruistic or aggressive behaviors, and whether or not these results were moderated by levels of psychological flexibility.

- *Of Carrots and Sticks: Using a Matching to Sample Task to investigate differences in appetitive and aversive contingencies of verbal rules*

Brad Parfait, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Caleb Jean, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Emily Sandoz, Ph.D., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Rule-governed behavior, a well-documented phenomenon in behavior analysis (e.g., Vaughan, 1989), has received considerable attention for its potential contributions to the development of psychopathology (e.g., Hayes & Ju, 1998; Poppen, 1989; Torneke et al., 2008). Much research on rule-governed behavior and the insensitivity effect has focused on differences between pliance and tracking. However, one area that has gone relatively unexplored has been the interaction between appetitive and aversive contingencies and rule type. Conceptual accounts have suggested that behavior under the control of aversive contingencies is insensitive to contingencies other than escape and consequently these relations limit the overall behavioral repertoire (Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, 2023). On the other hand, behavior that is under the control of appetitive contingencies results in increased sensitivity to shifts in context and promotes seeking and engaging behavior (Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, 2023). As such, the current study sought to investigate differences in the insensitivity effect between appetitive track, appetitive ply, aversive track, or aversive ply conditions. Results, as well as implications for future research, will be discussed.

- *Anticipating Disorder: An Investigation of the Association between Childhood Unpredictability, Learned Helplessness, and Delay Discounting*

Caleb Jean, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Brad Parfait, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

A lack of impulse control characterizes numerous pathological behaviors across the psychological spectrum and has often been a primary focus of interventions by the applied psychologist (Hollander & Rosen, 2000). Research has often focused on identifying predictors of impulsive control, such as childhood experiences, but investigations of the mechanisms that link these predictors to later impulsive behavior are lacking (Martinez et al., 2022). Thus, this paper sought to investigate the role of Learned Helplessness (LH) as a mediator of the relationship between scores of Childhood Unpredictability (CU) and subsequent outcomes on a Delay Discounting (DD) task used to measure impulsive decision-making patterns. Results indicated a reduced direct effect of CU on DD and a positive indirect effect of CU on DD through LH, indicating a partial mediation. In exploring these associations, this talk aims to shed light on the dynamics underlying impulsive decision-making in adults who experienced CU. Limitations and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

- *Out of Spoons: The Relationships Between Ego Depletion and Social Behaviors Across Different Degrees of Psychological Flexibility*

Jacob Norris, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Brad Parfait, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Caleb Jean, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
 Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Altruism and aggression are classified as social behaviors. Social behavior includes behaviors that are influenced, directly or indirectly, by realistic, anticipated, imagined, or implied presences of others (American Psychological Association, 2018a). Ego depletion can be defined as the temporary reduction in an individual's capacity or willingness to engage in volitional acts caused by previous acts of volition (Baumeister et al., 1998; Graham et al., 2017). During states of ego depletion, an individual's expression of altruistic and aggressive behaviors can be altered due to a lack of available self-control resources (Achtziger et al., 2015; Ainsworth et al., 2014; Barlett et al., 2016; Ruci et al., 2018). Psychological Flexibility is the ability to be in contact with the present moment and the feelings that it contains without needless defense, while also having adaptable behaviors in the pursuit of goals or values (Bond et al., 2011). The current study seeks to examine how inducing states of ego depletion affects altruism and aggression, and if level of psychological flexibility might moderate this relationship.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate knowledge rule-governed behavior and its latest use in research from the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of delay discounting and childhood unpredictability and their latest use in research from the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of ego depletion and psychological flexibility and their latest use in research from the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group.

#### 104. ¿Cómo yo funciono como pareja? De la comprensión y aceptación a la autorresponsabilidad en una relación amorosa / How Do I Function as a Couple? From Understanding and Acceptance to Self-Responsibility in a Romantic Relationship

Workshop • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Componentes: *Análisis conceptual, Presentación didáctica, Ejercicios experienciales, Revisión de la literatura, Datos originales, Juego de roles*

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Original data, Role play*

Categorías: Métodos/enfoques para la variación individual, Análisis de la conducta, Relación amorosa

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Behavior analysis, Romantic Relationships

Público objetivo: *Principiante, Intermedio*

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Mara Lins, Ph.D., FACEFI

La IBCT está diseñada principalmente para parejas, pero sus principios pueden adaptarse a la terapia individual para abordar problemas de relación con un enfoque en la aceptación emocional y en cambio de comportamiento. Estrategias de aceptación como unión empática, separación unificada y tolerancia pueden ayudar a las personas a comprender y aceptar sus propias respuestas emocionales. El enfoque fomenta el cambio de comportamiento a través de la identificación y modificación de patrones desadaptativos, lo cual es aplicable en la terapia individual para promover el crecimiento y desarrollo personal. Una transformación fundamental ocurre cuando el cliente se centra en los cambios que puede realizar, en lugar de en los cambios que su pareja debería realizar. Es un reconocimiento de que sólo la persona misma tiene control y responsabilidad sobre su propia conducta. Puede cambiar sin esperar que la otra persona cambie. Este taller propone una comprensión individual de la autorresponsabilidad en la relación, de la propia participación en la relación a través de una evaluación DEEP y proponiendo vivencias de las estrategias de aceptación.

IBCT is primarily designed for couples, but its principles can be adapted for individual therapy to address relationship problems with a focus on emotional acceptance and behavior change. Acceptance strategies such as empathic joining, unified detachment, and tolerance can help individuals understand and accept their own emotional responses. The approach fosters behavioral change through the identification and modification of maladaptive patterns, which can be applied in individual therapy to promote personal growth and development. A fundamental transformation occurs when the client focuses on the changes they can make, rather than on the changes their partner should make. This is a recognition that only the individual has control and responsibility for their own behavior. They can change without expecting the other person to change. This workshop proposes an individual understanding of self-responsibility in the relationship, of one's own participation in the relationship, through a DEEP assessment and by proposing lived experiences of acceptance strategies.

Objetivos educativos:

1. Describir la autorresponsabilidad del individuo en la dinámica de una relación amorosa.
2. Promover la apertura a los procesos internos a través de la aceptación intrapersonal.
3. Conocer sus propias vulnerabilidades emocionales y evaluar su propia participación en el patrón de interacción.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the individual's self-responsibility in the dynamics of a romantic relationship.
2. Demonstrate strategies to promote openness to internal processes through intrapersonal acceptance.
3. Assess personal emotional vulnerabilities and analyze individual contributions to recurring interaction patterns.

### **105. The impact of the economic burden of disease on emotional well-being**

**Panel** • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Social justice / equity / diversity, Emotional wellbeing

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Chair: Maria Pisu, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham

Minal Patel, Ph.D., MPH, University of Michigan School of Public Health

Stella Snyder, M.S., Indiana University Indianapolis

Nora B. Henrikson, Ph.D., MPH, Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute

High treatment costs and other economic consequences of having a disease lead to financial hardship, which negatively impacts physical and mental quality of life. This panel will discuss the broader impact of financial hardship, including coping strategies. Speakers are members of the NIH-funded Emotional Well-being and Economic Burden (EMOT-ECON) Research Network designed to advance research on the impact of economic burden of disease on emotional well-being. The first speaker will discuss broader implications of financial hardship on aspects of emotional well-being like life meaning and purpose. The second speaker will examine the extent to which cancer patients seek navigation services for financial concerns and financial stress affecting their well-being. The third speaker will expound on strategies for coping with cancer treatment costs and their association with symptoms. The fourth speaker will examine the emotional response to the administrative burden associated with accessing benefits (e.g., health insurance, paid leave) that could mitigate financial hardship. Overall, this panel will provide an in-depth understanding of mechanisms by which financial hardship impacts patients' well-being.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Explain the economic burden of disease and financial toxicity, including their impact on patients and healthcare systems.
2. Describe how economic burden of disease may impact overall and emotional well being.
3. List examples of how patients cope with the economic burden of disease and the ways in which coping strategies affect wellbeing.

Saturday Afternoon 12:15 PM

#### Applying ACT to Addictions SIG Gathering

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Borgne**

Cordelia Kraus, LPC, CADC1, Private Practice

Come meet with others who are interested in applying contextual behavioral approaches to addictive behaviors! This field can feel lonely and the stigma is strong... let's connect, learn from each other, and cheer each other on! Not a SIG member yet? No worries... your interest in the field and desire for connection is your ticket! We'll spend a little time talking about the SIG, what it's been up to, and how to get more involved... and spend most of the time connecting and meeting with others in a structured yet flexible conversational format. We would love to see you there!!

#### Women in ACBS SIG

Chapter/SIG/Committee Meeting • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM

**Location: Bayside B& C**

Sarah Pegrum, Women in ACBS Co-President

The ACBS Women's SIG promotes diversity by offering a safe space for individuals to share women's perspectives and address women's issues within and beyond ACBS. This group advocates for all women, with a focus on women of color, those in oppressive cultures, and young women clinicians and behavioral scientists. In our meeting, we will review recent SIG activities, reconnect, and brainstorm future initiatives. All current and potential new members are encouraged to attend.

Saturday Afternoon 1:15 PM

#### 106. Laying a Foundation for Working with Shame and Self-Criticism using ACT

Workshop • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Shame, Self-criticism, Self-compassion

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Jason Luoma, Ph.D., Portland Psychotherapy Clinic, Research, & Training Center

Kati Lear, Ph.D., Portland Institute for Psychedelic Science

This workshop teaches attendees how to create a strong therapeutic foundation for working with shame and self-criticism using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Participants will learn a structured process for building a shared understanding of client's experiences with shame and self-criticism, setting the stage for effective ACT and compassion-focused interventions later in therapy. Through experiential exercises and hands-on skill-building, attendees will explore three key components of this preparatory work: (1) using self-report measures as experiential tools to help identify patterns of shame and self-criticism, (2) contextualizing self-criticism and shame as learned relational processes rooted in their early learning history, and (3) identifying experiences of warmth, support, and compassion in clients' histories to serve as psychological resources in later perspective-taking work. By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to guide clients in developing greater awareness of shame and self-criticism while laying the groundwork for interventions that promote psychological flexibility and self-compassion.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Utilize experiential debriefing of self-report measures to help clients identify patterns of shame and self-criticism and develop greater awareness of these processes.
2. Analyze shame and self-criticism as learned relational processes by exploring clients' early experiences and social histories to foster a de-blaming, compassionate framework.
3. Identify and integrate clients' histories of warmth, support, and compassion as psychological resources to be used in future ACT and compassion-based interventions.

**107. ACT Like Nobody's Watching: Women Practicing Psychological Flexibility from the Inside Out**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Improv, Women, Psychological Flexibility

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Borgne**

Miranda Morris, Ph.D., True North Therapy and Training

Shawn Costello Whooley, Psy.D., Private Practice / VA Maryland Healthcare System

Lisa W Coyne, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School/McLean & New England Center for OCD and Anxiety

Holly E Yates, M.S., NCBLCMHC

Temple Morris, LCSW-C, True North Therapy & Training

Knowing what we "should" do to be more psychologically flexible is one thing, but actually doing it? That's a different matter. As women therapists, we have an extra layer to navigate: all those internalized rules about how we're "supposed" to be (you know the ones we're talking about!).

This workshop is your invitation to throw away the rule book and discover ACT from the inside out through the magic of play and Improv. No more just talking about psychological flexibility – we're going to live it, breathe it, and laugh our way through it!

In this experiential playground, we'll use games and exercises to:

- Transform "I should" into "I choose" through actual practice (because our brains need more than just good intentions)

- Practice \*being\* different - with ourselves and others - through the experimental context of play and spontaneity.

- Build our psychological flexibility muscles

This workshop is about getting out of our heads and into our bodies, trying new things, and discovering what psychological flexibility actually feels like.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Engage in experiential activities to clarify personal values as female therapists and apply these insights to guide clients effectively through values clarification work.
2. Apply self-compassion and acceptance techniques to manage difficult thoughts and emotions in therapeutic work, and demonstrate how to model these processes for clients.
3. Engage in committed action aligned with therapeutic values while identifying personal barriers, and demonstrate how to support clients through similar challenges based on this experiential understanding.



### 108. Functional Contextualism for the treatment of complex trauma and dissociative disorders

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, PTSD, Dissociative Disorders, Complex trauma

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside A**

Abby Hurley, Psy.D., Midwestern University  
Michal Kocum, M.A., Heritage Professional Associates

Despite Functional Contextualism's upholding as a transdiagnostic approach to treatment, relatively little speaks to its use with complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (cPTSD). Given cPTSD's official recognition in the ICD-11 along with its prevalence, persistence, and impact this is a specific area of needed engagement. This presentation will illustrate the clinical utility of functional contextualism with cPTSD, with central emphasis on building awareness to the present along with a dialectic of holding the historic contextually grounded function of avoidance with its present ineffectiveness. Utilizing this, we will cover considerations for conceptualization of cPTSD. Considering treatment, we will cover the three pillars of this approach. First, we will centralize the pillar of awareness to both time and self. Further, we will discuss the pillar of openness to acknowledge and hold painful experiences. Third, we will discuss the engage pillar for moving meaningfully forward in life. Through didactic and experiential practice the emphasis will be on practical skills in each of these three pillars to build a new network of attachment behavioral repertoire with the cPTSD population.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe three principles of a functional contextualist conceptualization for cPTSD.
2. Apply one "aware" skill for building present moment awareness of self and time.
3. Apply one "open" skill for making compassionate connection to painful emotions.

### 110. Advancing process-based approaches for underserved populations: Insights from Irish farming communities

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data, Strategic planning*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Processes of Change, Farmers, Underserved population, Ecological momentary assessment

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Louise McHugh, Ph.D., UCD  
Discussant: Alison Stapleton, Ph.D., C. Psychol. Ps.S.I., University College Dublin

The ACBS Task Force report called for CBS research to identify intervention "kernels", reach underserved populations, and employ more idiographic, longitudinal high temporal density measurement techniques. The present symposium comprises four papers addressing these recommendations in farming communities. Paper 1 examines therapeutic processes of change, finding that psychological flexibility and self-as-context were significant independent predictors of suicidality. Paper 2 reports the outcomes of a randomized, multiple baseline, single-case experimental design testing a six-session process-based intervention ( $n = 6$  farmers) with 84 days of ecological momentary assessment data, finding significant increases in psychological flexibility. Paper 3 details clinical observations from the psychotherapist who delivered Paper 2's six-session intervention; insights include considerations around how processes are framed (e.g., "acceptance" may be misunderstood as "accepting mistreatment"). Finally, Paper 4 explores framing in mental health messaging, examining the effects of message framing on perceived speaker credibility and mental health stigma. Together, all four papers signpost ways we can broaden pathways to support for underserved populations and advance the Task Force report.

- *Exploring therapeutic processes of change among farmers*

Mark Creagan, University College Dublin  
 Tomás Russell, University College Dublin  
 Paul Nangle, University College Dublin  
 Anne Markey, University College Dublin  
 Louise McHugh, University College Dublin  
 Alison Stapleton, University College Dublin

Globally, several studies have revealed higher rates of suicide among farmers than the general population. In Ireland, research on suicide rates by occupation is limited. However, recent research highlights that male farmers and agricultural workers accounted for 8% of all male probable suicides in Ireland from 2015 to 2018. Despite this, little research has been conducted in Ireland exploring farmers' mental health, risk of suicide, and contributing factors. The present study explored factors impacting farmers' mental health and suicide on the island of Ireland. A total of 457 adults currently working on a farm participated in a national-level survey assessing distress, wellbeing, suicidality, farming-related stressors, farm attachment, work family conflict, psychological flexibility, and self-as-context. Descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and a hierarchical regression model were used to examine the relationship between the variables. Overall, 22.8% of the sample were considered at risk for suicide. Hierarchical regression analysis explained 22% of the variance in suicidality, with farm-specific stressors ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ), psychological flexibility ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and self-as-context ( $\beta = -.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ) identified as independent predictors. Findings are discussed with reference to the need for high temporal density idiographic measurement and a conceptualization of farm attachment as "self-as-land".

- *Effectiveness of a process-based approach to farmer wellbeing: A randomized multiple baseline single-case experimental design*

Gregory Stynes, University College Dublin  
 Alison Stapleton, University College Dublin  
 Barbara Moore, University College Dublin  
 Martin O'Connor, University College Dublin  
 Paul Nangle, University College Dublin  
 Tomás Russell, University College Dublin  
 Francisco J. Ruiz, Fundación Universitaria Konrad Lorenz  
 Louise McHugh, University College Dublin

Farmers experience elevated levels of depression, anxiety, stress and suicidal behaviors. Financial concerns, workload, time pressures, loneliness, climate change, regulatory policies, physical health, and relationships all appear to play a role. Perceptions of the self as being self-reliant, along with distance from and cost of healthcare, may further compound distress by impeding help-seeking behaviors. Transdiagnostic, process-based therapies, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, may provide a useful resource in efforts to support farmer mental health. This study outlines the evaluation of a six-session online ACT intervention, with six farmers in Ireland (39 to 69 years; self-described as five males and one female) using a randomized, multiple baseline, single case experimental design. Tau-U results from responses over 84 days suggested a significant increase in psychological flexibility (all  $p < .001$ ) for three farmers and a significant reduction in stress for one farmer ( $p < .001$ ). There was a significant between case, standardized mean difference effect size observed for psychological flexibility (0.964). Implications from the research and recommendations for future interventions are discussed.

- *Clinical observations of the acceptability and effectiveness of a process-based approach to farmers' psychological flexibility*

Barbara Moore, South East Technological University  
 Alison Stapleton, University College Dublin  
 Gregory Stynes, University College Dublin  
 Martin O'Connor, University College Dublin  
 Louise McHugh, University College Dublin

In Ireland, farmers have been identified as an underserved occupational group that displays elevated levels of physical and mental health challenges. This is in part related to the nature of their work (e.g., long working hours and isolation) and compounding structural issues (e.g., financial precarity and farm compliance pressures). In line with the Task Force report, single-case experimental designs offer one way to examine the effects of process-based approaches, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). However, given that CBS concepts are functional and contextually embedded, diverse assessment and analytic methods are needed to examine an approach's clinical utility. Aligning with this, the present paper details a practitioner's clinical observations of six farmers as they progressed through a six-session online ACT intervention. Insights include the importance of centering individual clients' perspectives, attending to message framing (e.g., acceptance is not passive resignation), and leveraging valued action to drive

meaningful clinical change. Findings are discussed with reference to the importance of resourcing underserved groups to advocate for themselves and others.

• *Speaker credibility and mental health messaging: We \*think\* we've found what works*

Ella Joyce, University College Dublin  
Paul Nangle, University College Dublin  
Tomás Russell, University College Dublin  
Louise McHugh, University College Dublin  
Alison Stapleton, University College Dublin

Skinner (1989, p.88) argued that, long-term, "we believe or trust those who most often qualify what they say with appropriate autoclitics". This is partly attributed to the fact that those who speak tentatively are less likely to mislead us than those who speak definitively. Indeed, recent relational frame theory research suggests that people tend to follow coherent speakers' rules and avoid following incoherent speakers' rules. Employing a between-group experimental design, the present study examined the effects of mental health message framing on perceived speaker credibility and mental health stigma. Participants (n = 220) were randomly assigned to read one of three messages, two of which lacked appropriate autoclitics: (i) overemphasizing mental health concerns, (ii) downplaying mental health concerns, and (iii) adopting a middle-ground approach to discussing mental health concerns. Findings revealed no differences in rated mental health stigma across conditions. Speakers that overemphasized or adopted a middle-ground approach were rated as significantly more credible than speakers that downplayed mental health concerns. Results are discussed with reference to the relational frame theory account of "coherence".

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify and conceptualize intervention "kernels" for farmers in Ireland.
2. Discuss adaptations to process-based approaches that may increase acceptability among underserved populations.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of using high temporal density measurement in their context.

**111. Supporting Caregivers Through Compassion and Flexibility: Evidence-Based Approaches to Mental Health and Implementation**

**Symposium** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Experiential exercises, Original data, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Mobile or digital technology, Behavioral or contextual neuroscience, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Academics or education, Processes of change, Evidence-Based Practice, Children, Parents, ACT, special needs, neurodevelopmental disorder, technology, special health care needs, acceptance and commitment therapy, autism, cognitive defusion, stress

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Yuen Yu Chong, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Si Ni Li, M.Sc., The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Xiaohuan Jin, Ph.D., Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine

Lisa Saldana, Ph.D., Chestnut Health Systems, Lighthouse Institute

Claudia I. Iacob, Ph.D., University of Bucharest

This collection of studies highlights the impact of contextual behavioral science—particularly Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)—on caregiver mental health and the implementation of compassionate, evidence-based interventions. The first presentation showcases the Stages of Implementation Completion (SIC) as a robust framework for guiding and tracking fidelity in implementing new practices across diverse settings. The remaining four studies focus on caregivers of children facing significant health or developmental challenges, including cancer, neurodevelopmental disorders, and autism. Two randomized controlled trials demonstrate that brief or scalable ACT-based interventions significantly reduce caregiver stress, depression, and anxiety while improving parenting competence and children's behavioral outcomes. Another study explores the feasibility of an EEG-informed cognitive defusion training, aiming to enhance psychological flexibility and reduce distress in caregivers. Collectively, these findings underscore the efficacy and adaptability of ACT-based interventions in promoting resilience, reducing emotional burden, and improving family outcomes—

offering scalable, compassionate solutions for caregivers navigating complex and emotionally demanding roles.

- *Effects of an ACT-based parenting programme for parents of children with autism: a randomised controlled trial*

Si Ni Li, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Wai Tong Chien, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Stanley Kam Ki Lam, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Parents of children with autism often face significant caregiving stress and burden, requiring parenting guidance and support. This study aimed to evaluate the effects of an acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)-based parenting program for parents of children with autism on parenting stress and other parents' and children's health outcomes. The term "autism" (孤独症) is currently used in alignment with the preferences of many individuals with autism across mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, reflecting the broader adoption of neurodiversity-affirming practices among professionals in these regions. A two-arm, single-blinded randomized controlled trial was conducted from February to July 2024, involving 154 adult parents of children (aged 3-9) with autism at seven rehabilitation institutions in Shenzhen, China. Participants were randomly assigned to either an intervention (eight-session ACT-based parenting program plus usual care) or a usual care control group (77 per group). The Generalized Estimating Equations results showed that compared to the control group, participants in the ACT-based parenting program experienced significant improvements in parental stress, psychological flexibility, parenting competence, and their children's emotional and behavioral problems immediately and six months post-intervention with medium-to-large effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ : 0.55-0.90), as well as parents' depression ( $d=0.46$ ) and anxiety ( $d=0.49$ ) symptoms immediately post-intervention. Future research with longer-term follow-ups and diverse groups of children with autism is recommended.

- *ACT for Promoting Mental Health and Quality of Life in Parents of Children with Cancer: An RCT*

Xiaohuan Jin, Ph.D., Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine

Huiyuan Li, Ph.D., The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Wenyang Yao, M.D., Children's Hospital of Soochow University

Cho Lee Wong, Ph.D., The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Objective:** This trial aimed to examine the effects of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on mental health and quality of life in parents of children with cancer.

**Methods:** 142 parents were randomised into the intervention group, which received four consecutive weekly sessions of individual-based ACT, or the control group, which received usual care. Outcomes were assessed at baseline, postintervention (T1) and 3 months postintervention (T2).

**Methods:** Generalised estimating equation analyses showed significant group-by-time interaction effects in reducing symptoms of anxiety ( $\beta = -2.97$ , 95% CI:  $-5.37$  to  $-0.56$ ,  $P = .02$ ), depression ( $\beta = -4.20$ , 95% CI:  $-6.78$  to  $-1.62$ ,  $P = .001$ ) and stress ( $\beta = -4.66$ , 95% CI:  $-7.41$  to  $-1.92$ ,  $P < .001$ ) and improving quality of life ( $\beta = 8.52$ , 95% CI:  $2.79$ ,  $14.26$ ,  $P = .004$ ) at 3-month follow-up.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate brief ACT is efficacious for promoting parental mental health and quality of life, presenting a positive prospect for the application of ACT in the context of paediatric oncology.

- *Facilitating Implementation Fidelity to Foster Successful Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice*

Lisa Saldana, PhD, Chestnut Health Systems, Lighthouse Institute

Mark Campbell, MS, Chestnut Health Systems, Lighthouse Institute

Wambui Young, PhD, Chestnut Health Systems, Lighthouse Institute

Jason Chapman, PhD, Chestnut Health Systems, Lighthouse Institute

Implementation of evidence-based practice involves a delicate balance of rigor and flexibility to ensure delivery of care as intended. A repository of data collected using the 8-staged Stages of Implementation Completion® (SIC)— an observational tool of implementation process and progression from Engagement (Stage 1) to development of Competency (Stage 8) — provides a unique and rich source of real-world activities conducted by sites attempting to implement an evidence-based practice (EBP), and an assessment of their inner and outer context variables. The SIC maps onto three phases of implementation (Pre-implementation, Implementation, and Sustainment) and was developed to assess sites' implementation process behavior and obtainment of milestones. It has been adapted or customized for over 85 EBPs or emerging programs. Common SIC items have been identified that show consistent ability to predict program start-up and achievement of program competency for sustainment suggesting the

potential for the SIC to serve as a facilitator for implementation fidelity. This presentation will describe recent advances with the SIC as a tool to facilitate implementation fidelity and achievement of sustainment.

- *Facilitator-Guided ACT Bibliotherapy for Parents of Children with Special Needs: Preliminary RCT Results*

Yuen Yu Chong, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Pui Tik Yau, MPsyMed, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Kin Fung Chan, MRes, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Koa Whittingham, Ph.D., Child Health Research Centre Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences, The University of Queensland

Wai Tong Chien, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs), such as ADHD and autism, impose high caregiving burdens on parents, exacerbating stress, anxiety, and depression, yet scalable parent-child interventions remain limited. We conducted a multicenter RCT (N=3154) evaluating Facilitator-Guided Acceptance and Commitment Bibliotherapy (FAB) against general parenting advice for parents of children with NDDs. The 12-week FAB intervention combined ACT-based web modules (culturally tailored narratives, self-practice exercises) with four facilitator-guided group sessions. Outcomes were assessed at baseline, post-intervention, and 6-month follow-up. Adjusted models showed FAB reduced parenting stress (ES=0.56, 95% CI [0.34–0.67],  $p=.033$ ), anxiety (ES=0.48, CI [0.31–0.79],  $p=.004$ ), and depression (ES=0.51, CI [0.34–0.79],  $p<.001$ ), with sustained effects. FAB improved psychological flexibility (ES=0.33–0.68,  $p<.001-.032$ ), parenting behaviors, and reduced children's emotional and behavioral symptoms (ES=0.28–0.43,  $p<.001-.044$ ). Though changes in child healthcare utilization were non-significant, qualitative feedback highlighted high satisfaction, better coping, and improved parenting confidence. No adverse effects were reported. These findings suggest FAB is a feasible, scalable, ACT-based intervention for reducing parental psychological distress and enhancing parent-child dynamics in families managing neurodevelopmental disorders.

- *Digital ACT for Parents of Children with Special Needs: Two RCTs on Mobile and Videoconferencing Interventions*

Yuen Yu Chong, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Kin Fung Chan, MRes, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Pui Tik Yau, MPsyMed, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Wai Tong Chien, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Parents of children with special health care needs (CSHCN) face heightened psychological distress during public health crises, exacerbated by caregiving burdens and disrupted services. Two randomized controlled trials evaluated technology-assisted Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) interventions. Study 1 (n=196) tested a 12-week mobile-based Prosocial-oriented ACT (PACT) program with parenting advice versus advice alone. PACT significantly improved parental mental well-being, psychological flexibility, prosociality, and family functioning over 12 months, with path analyses identifying therapeutic mechanisms. Study 2 (n=254) assessed videoconferencing Focused ACT (FACT) plus standard parenting advice versus advice alone. FACT+SP reduced parenting stress immediately ( $\beta=-2.33$ ,  $P=.010$ ,  $d=0.47$ ) and at six months ( $\beta=-6.26$ ,  $P<.001$ ,  $d=0.61$ ), alongside improvements in anxiety, depression, and flexibility. Both interventions leveraged digital delivery—mobile apps for scalable, longitudinal support and videoconferencing for accessible, structured therapy—to address caregivers' needs. Results highlight technology's efficacy in delivering ACT-based interventions, offering adaptable solutions to mitigate mental health disparities during health emergencies and informing preparedness strategies for future crises.

- *Behavioral and EEG correlates of cognitive defusion tasks in caregivers of children: A pilot study*

Claudia I. Iacob, Ph.D., University of Bucharest

Miralena Tomescu, Ph.D., University of Suceava, I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (International Center for Research and Education in Innovative and Creative Technologies)

Alexandra Sofonea, I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (International Center for Research and Education in Innovative and Creative Technologies)



Background: Caregivers of children with disabilities often experience heightened stress and anxiety. This pilot study will examine whether a brief cognitive defusion training is associated with EEG changes and improved psychological flexibility. Methods: A group of 15-20 caregivers will complete a three-phase protocol: 1) An online questionnaire assessing distress levels, psychological flexibility, and repetitive negative thoughts; 2) Selected participants will be randomly assigned to an online cognitive defusion training or a waiting-list control group. The training will include psychoeducation, thought observation, metaphor-based defusion, and guided acceptance techniques; 3) In the lab, EEG will record brain activity while participants will be exposed to three categories of self-referential thoughts: emotionally activating; fusion-intensifying, and cognitive defusion-based thoughts. Believability and emotional discomfort associated with each thought type will be assessed. Expected results: Cognitive defusion exercises are anticipated to produce measurable EEG changes, reducing emotional reactivity to distressing thoughts. Improved psychological flexibility scores are also expected.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Define implementation process fidelity and why it is important to consider when adopting evidence-based practice.
2. Describe the measurable impact of Facilitator-Guided Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Bibliotherapy on reducing parenting stress, anxiety, and depression, and improving psychological flexibility and parenting behaviors.
3. Apply cognitive defusion strategies, such as thought observation and metaphor-based defusion, to enhance psychological flexibility in caregivers of children with disabilities.

### 112. Integrating Values and Flexibility in Health Behavior Change: Scalable Interventions Across Chronic and Preventive Care

Symposium • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Dissemination or global health strategies, Health / behavioral medicine, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, HIV Prevention, Young adults, Single-Session Interventions, Primary Care, ACT, Breast cancer, Sleep disturbance, Cancer, Adults, Group Intervention, Digital Intervention, Meaning in life, Diabetes

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Chun Tao, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic Arizona

Brooke Short, B.S., Bowling Green State University

Anne I Roche, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic

Wenqian Zhao, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Kenneth Ngure, Ph.D., School of Public Health, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

This session presents six studies examining the effectiveness and feasibility of values-based and acceptance-oriented interventions across diverse populations and healthcare contexts. A cluster randomized trial in Kenya demonstrates that allowing private pharmacies to initiate and manage PrEP increases uptake, reaching individuals at risk for HIV. Two diabetes-focused studies highlight the promise of psychological flexibility: a single-session DNA-V intervention improved glycemic control and valued living among young adults with chronic hyperglycemia, while a large international sample revealed strong links between psychological flexibility, gratitude, and improved diabetes self-management. In oncology care, two ACT-based programs enhanced psychological flexibility and well-being among cancer patients. One targeted post-mastectomy breast cancer patients with brief, in-person sessions; the other used a virtual group model to reach adults with diverse diagnoses. Finally, an ACT- and solution-focused single-session intervention in primary care for depression and anxiety showed high feasibility and satisfaction. Together, these findings underscore the broad applicability of acceptance- and values-based approaches in preventive and chronic care, supporting both behavioral change and emotional well-being.

- *Psychological flexibility and gratitude in the context of type 1 diabetes*  
L. Brooke Short, Bowling Green State University  
William H. O'Brien, Bowling Green State University

Diabetes requires self-management behavior to maintain glycemic control. Individuals may also experience fear or worry about their diabetes. Self-management behavior, glycemic control, and diabetes distress have been associated with psychological flexibility. Gratitude, experiencing appreciation for life experiences, can reduce the odds of A1C being in the diabetic range (OR = .87). In this study, an international sample of 325 adults (M age = 31.33, SD = 10.94) with type 1 diabetes were recruited from online diabetes communities. After controlling for age, sex, and race, psychological flexibility was significantly related to less diabetes distress and better self-management behavior (respectively:  $B = -.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $B = .22$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Conversely, psychological inflexibility was significantly related to more diabetes distress and lower self-management behavior (respectively:  $B = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $B = -.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ). After partitioning out variance explained by age, sex, race, and psychological flexibility/inflexibility, gratitude was significantly related to less diabetes distress ( $B = -.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Explanations and implications for these results and nonsignificant results will be offered.

- *Piloting an ACT-Based Single Session Intervention in Primary Care Integrated Behavioral Health*

Anne I. Roche, Mayo Clinic, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Division of Integrated Behavioral Health, Rochester, MN

Kyle Schofield, Mayo Clinic, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Division of Integrated Behavioral Health, Rochester, MN

Brian L. Straub, Mayo Clinic, Department of Nursing, Division of Social Work, Rochester, MN

Robert M. Jacobson, Mayo Clinic, Department of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Division of Community Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Division of Pediatric Infectious

Alanna M. Chamberlain, Mayo Clinic, Department of Quantitative Health Sciences, Division of Epidemiology, Rochester, MN

Kristin Vickers, Mayo Clinic, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Division of Integrated Behavioral Health, Rochester, MN

Emily B.K. Thomas, University of Iowa, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Iowa City, IA

Hana-May Eadeh, University of Minnesota, Department of Pediatrics, Minneapolis, MN and Hennepin Healthcare, Department of Psychiatry, Minneapolis, MN

Rhonda M. Merwin, Duke University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Durham, NC

Craig N. Sawchuk, Mayo Clinic, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Division of Integrated Behavioral Health, Rochester, MN

**Background:** Research examining single-session interventions (SSIs) in primary care is limited. This project explores the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness of an SSI based on principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) as well as solution-focused brief therapy delivered in primary care.

**Methods:** We contacted adult patients waiting for a psychotherapy visit. Interested individuals consented and completed screening (PHQ-9, GAD-7). Eligible patients (mild-moderate depression and/or anxiety,  $\leq 1$  on PHQ-9, #9) were scheduled for an SSI. Pre-post and 2-week follow-up measures assessed demographics, satisfaction, and change in symptom- and ACT process- variables.

**Results:** To date, 26 individuals (mean age = 49.34; 58% women; 96% White) have completed the SSI (16 in-person, 10 video). Baseline mean PHQ-9 was 8.50 and mean GAD-7 was 7.73. Data indicate encouraging levels of post-intervention satisfaction (mean CSQ-8 = 28.62). We expect to meet recruitment goals (N=34 per power analyses) by the conference. Full results will include intervention content and study outcomes (completion, acceptability, symptom and process variable change).

**Conclusion:** Results will inform research and guide implementation of SSIs into primary care.

- *Effectiveness of ACT-Based Programme for Breast Cancer Patients on Sleep Disturbance*

Wenqian Zhao, Ph.D., The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China

Lulu Li, M.Sc., Nasopharyngeal Cancer Center, The Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, China

Xiaomei Li, Ph.D., School of Nursing, Health Science Center, Xi'an Jiaotong University, No.76 Yanta West Road, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

**Background:** Breast cancer patients suffer various disease and treatment-induced symptoms, such as depression induced sleep disturbance. ACT-based interventions could be the optimal strategies to improve the patients' psychological flexibility and thus empower them adaptive competency on symptom management.

**Methods:** A double-blinded, two-arm RCT involving 106 post-mastectomy breast cancer patients was conducted to assess the effectiveness of ACT programme (three 30-40 mins sessions, in-person individual meeting) in their sleep quality, psychological distress, depressive symptoms, experimental avoidance, cognitive fusion, and mindfulness awareness at four, seven, ten and thirteen weeks post-mastectomy.

**Results and discussions:** The ANCOVA test results revealed significant interaction treatment effects in sleep quality, depressive symptoms, experimental avoidance and mindfulness awareness across time

( $F=3.37\sim 28.90$ ,  $ps < 0.05$ ), except psychological distress and cognitive fusion ( $ps \geq 0.05$ ). Longer investigation such as more than six months follow-up may be needed for further evaluating the long-term effectiveness on psychological distress.

Conclusion: This study demonstrated the promising effectiveness of an ACT-based programme on sleep disturbance among breast cancer patients. Future research should explore its effectiveness in diverse cancer populations and intervention delivery modes.

- *Uptake of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis at private pharmacies in Kenya: Early findings from the Pharm PrEP study*

Kenneth Ngunjiri, Ph.D., School of Public Health, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology  
 Stephanie Roche, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Seattle, WA, USA  
 Victor Omollo, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kisumu, Kenya  
 Tabitha Kareithi, BPharm  
 Patricia Ong'wen, Jhpiego, Nairobi, Kenya  
 Lawrence Juma, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kisumu, Kenya  
 Catherine Kiptinness, Partners in Health and Research Development, Thika, Kenya

We are seeking to understand the potential value-add of allowing private pharmacies to initiate and manage clients on PrEP (the intervention) compared to the current standard of care (screening and referral to clinic-based PrEP services, the control). We report early findings from a randomized controlled trial (cRCT) on PrEP uptake at 45 private intervention pharmacies in Central and Western Kenya offering PrEP initiation and refill services. From July 2023 to June 2024, 715 clients were enrolled and initiated PrEP, 75% in Western Kenya. About half (57% of enrollees were female, median age was 27 (IQR 23-33), and 49% were unmarried. Similar to prior pilot studies, most (97%) did not self-identify as belonging to a key population. The most commonly reported HIV risk behaviors were inconsistent condom use (81%), multiple sex partners (60%), and having 1+ sex partner(s) of unknown HIV status (61%). Data from this cRCT provides further evidence that private pharmacies in Kenya, reach individuals who could benefit from PrEP and that pharmacy clients are willing to initiate PrEP at these locations.

- *"Live Fully with Cancer": Preliminary Evaluation of An Acceptance Commitment Therapy Group for Adults with Cancer*

Chun Tao, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Lisa A. Howell, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Katie A. Lespron, MSW, L.C.S.W., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Anne I. Roche, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic Rochester  
 Diane S. Wheeler, Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Devin Lincenberg, Psy.D., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Kelly D. Gemmill, M.S.W., L.M.S.W., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Melody A. Griffith, M.S.W., L.M.S.W., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Nandita Khera, M.D., M.P.H., Mayo Clinic Arizona  
 Cynthia M. Stonnington, M.D., Mayo Clinic Arizona

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has demonstrated benefits on adults' psychological flexibility and quality of life following a cancer diagnosis. However, existing ACT-based groups are often tailored to a unique population or specific cancer stage (e.g., women with metastatic breast cancer), which limits the accessibility and scalability of resources for individuals with rare cancer diagnoses.

This study evaluates the effects of "Live Fully with Cancer" - a manualized 6-week ACT-based therapy group with compassion-focused and meaning-centered experiential exercises for adults with diverse cancer diagnoses across stages. Licensed oncology psychologists delivered the group virtually to 5-8 participants in each cohort. Thirty-eight consented group participants completed pre- and post-group assessments on psychological flexibility (COMPACT-15; Hsu et al., 2003) and meaning in life (MIL Questionnaire; Steger et al., 2006).

Preliminary analysis revealed that compared to pre-group responses, upon group completion, participants reported greater openness to experience, behavioral awareness, engagement in valued action, and meaning in life, which continued one month later.

Clinical implications and limitations of these findings for future implementation of ACT in psycho-oncology will be discussed.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how values can be incorporated into health behaviour action planning.
2. Describe the utility of implementing single-session interventions in the context of primary care integrated behavioral health.
3. Describe the role and significance of psychological flexibility in breast cancer patients' symptom management.

**113. Implementing CBS Training Standards Worldwide****Panel** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PMComponents: *Strategic planning*Categories: Dissemination or global health strategies, Supervision and training, Training Standards*Target Audience: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Southdown**

Chair: Jim Lucas, PG Diploma CBT, Openforwards

Sarah Pegrum, Ph.D., Pegrum Therapy &amp; Training

Sean Wright, M.A., M.S., LMHC, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Sarah Cassidy, Ph.D., Smithsfield Clinic

Now that CBS therapeutic approaches have established their scientific validity (Aravind et al., 2024), we face the challenge of training professionals effectively (Walser et al., 2023). The ACBS community has significantly contributed to competency development (Luoma et al., 2017; Maitland et al., 2016; O'Neill et al., 2019). However, the absence of international training standards significantly limits the effective dissemination of CBS and unintentionally undermines the intention to prepare highly effective practitioners. By contrast, rigid certification procedures risk restricting innovation through hierarchical structures that erode openness and collegial working cultures. Many perceive that we sit at a significant juncture. Take a backseat, and others unconnected to our community may exploit ACT's growth, leading to diluted dissemination. Frustrated with the absence of a professional face, national institutions may move towards other approaches. By contrast, taking the lead allows us to shape the agenda. This panel will explore the dissemination of CBS training standards. We will consider the experiences of different countries and the various roles those within our community can play in achieving our goals.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the context for developing training standards in CBS therapeutic approaches.
2. Describe the needs of different countries for training standards.
3. Describe and analyze the possible roles of different stakeholders in a given context.

**114. Practical Clinical Interventions Grounded in Contextual Behavioral Science****Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PMComponents: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, RFT / RGB / language, Process-Based Change Mechanisms*Target Audience: Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Nottoway**

Lanaya Ethington, Ph.D., Private Practice

This workshop will provide an overview of practical clinical interventions, with an accompanying analysis of each intervention from specific contextual behavioral science (CBS) processes. Sometimes workshops focus on the theoretical underpinnings of CBS without explanations of how to utilize those theories in clinical contexts, and sometimes workshops focus on the topography of clinical interventions without a focus on the science that underlies them. This workshop aims to provide both! The presenter has delivered thousands of hours of individual and group therapy with hundreds of clients over 15 years of clinical practice, and most of her experience has utilized process-based approaches, including ACT and RFT. This workshop utilizes a variety of CBS approaches, with an emphasis on RFT, to increase clinicians' ability to use the three selfing repertoires (self-as-content, self-as-process, and self-as-context) with intentionality in their clinical practice. The workshop also addresses how values-based behavior is impacted by both flexible and inflexible selfing, how transformation of stimulus function leads to behavior change, and how the differences between pliance, tracking, and augmenting will impact rule-governed behavior.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify specific contextual behavioral science principles that are utilized in at least five clinical interventions.
2. Utilize three selfing repertoires in case analysis and clinical practice.

3. Demonstrate awareness of how to increase values-based behavior change with CBS principles.

### 115. How ACT/RFT/FAP Make a Difference for Psychiatrists During Brief, Medication Focused Interactions

**Panel** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, None of these*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Other, Serious mental illness, Psychiatry

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Discussant: Niklas Törneke, M.D., NT Psykiatri

Nicole Pavlatos-Delavoye, M.D., Inspire Sierra

Steven Sha, DO, Providence Portland Medical Center

Erika Ryst, M.D., Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, College of Education and Human Development, University of Nevada-Reno

Barbara S. Kohlenberg, Ph.D., University of Nevada Reno School of Medicine

Joshua B Fitzgerald, M.D., University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

ACT/RFT and FAP are part of the didactic and supervision experiences of many psychiatry residents, who ultimately work in settings that are primarily medication based.

This panel will consider the following questions:

How do you navigate managing symptoms with medications and the ill effects of emotional avoidance? How do you balance this with valued living?

When is symptom reduction a valued outcome in and of itself?

How do you navigate the patient's agenda to feel less pain with issues of living well in life?

How has learning about ACT/RFT/FAP changed how you personally manage discomfort in session and perhaps help you be more courageous in session and with clinical consultation or supervision?

How has ACT/FAP impacted you, personally, and has that impacted your practice?

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe interventions by practicing psychiatrists, in the context of medical management, that reflect ACT and or FAP principles.
2. Describe how to use values, relationship, and acceptance in clinical encounters that are defined by requests for symptom management.
3. Describe the challenges psychiatrists face in balancing symptom management with addressing experiential avoidance and promoting valued living.

### 116. Using Predictive Coding Theory to Develop Powerful ACT Interventions

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Original data, Role play*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Behavior analysis, Persistent Physical Symptoms, Acute Crisis, Predictive Coding Theory

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Philipp Klein, M.D., Ph.D., Lübeck University

Patti J Robinson, Ph.D., Mountainview Consulting Group

Individuals seek therapy with unpleasant experiences, including intense emotional or physical pain. In Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), these experiences are seen as valuable "signals" rather than symptoms to eliminate. Predictive coding theory (PCT) offers a new perspective on how these signals arise, how their suppression creates suffering and how they can be used adaptively.

PCT suggests that our experiences of emotional and physical pain are signaling a gap ("error") between internal models ("predictions") and sensory input. If someone predicts "somatic symptoms are dangerous", they are more likely to experience them as pain. Similarly, memories of traumatic events are particularly painful if individuals predict they shouldn't be confronted with them.

Suppressing these signals and overreliance on internal models can intensify suffering.



This workshop provides an experiential introduction to PCT and demonstrates two clinical applications: persistent somatic symptoms and acute life crises. Participants will learn powerful interventions integrating PCT into ACT, using mindfulness of the body to reduce the harmful impact of predictions and building agency by using sensory experiences as signals for one's values.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe predictive coding theory (PCT) of mental disorders.
2. Utilize PCT to conceptualize cases more effectively.
3. Deliver powerful ACT interventions informed by PCT.

**117. Ignite 2**

**Ignite** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

- Adopting Pro-Wrestling's Kayfabe Mindset to help move towards your values  
Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Values work, Acceptance, Defusion  
Jared M Broussard, M.A., Thumos.Life Mindfulness & Psychotherapy

Long before I was a therapist, I was a young adolescent boy with an undying love for pro-wrestling. We all know that it's fake (Don't tell the kids!), but we all have to embrace Kayfabe, which is the suspension of disbelief while watching pro-wrestling. I firmly believe that all people (professional/personal) can benefit from adopting a kayfabe mindset, identifying how they want to show up in life that is most in accordance with their values. It also allows them to embrace the grind, struggle, and heartache that comes with the uncomfortable experiences that often accompany the values we strive for in life.

- ACTing on my own life: When the therapist becomes the client.  
Categories: Professional development, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Valued living

Gita Sankaran, BCBA, Psy.D., WeCAN India

As a female psychologist and behavior analyst living and working in India, I've guided clients through the transformative power of ACT, helping them find clarity, live by their values, and embrace life's challenges. But what happens when the therapist becomes the client? This is the story of how ACT not only helped me support others but ultimately SAVED MY OWN LIFE.

Applying ACT to myself gave me the strength to recognize that everything wasn't peachy keen, to leaving a toxic marriage, walking out of a traumatic home after 37 years, and rebuilding a life I could truly thrive in.

At the core of my journey was the question: Who am I when I strip away the narratives shaped by trauma and fear and social conditioning? Through ACT's key processes, I confronted my pain, embraced discomfort, and stepped toward a life grounded in freedom and purpose.

This talk is a reminder that transformation begins within—and that the most powerful work we can do as helpers is often the work we do for ourselves first.

- Radical Responsibility (or Opening Doors): a concept to revitalise our orientation to context  
Categories: Theory and philosophical foundations, Behavior analysis, Radical Responsibility  
Jacob T H Waite, DCLinPsy, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group & Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

This talk will introduce the concept of 'radical responsibility' via a story about a new friendship between the speaker and a receptionist who, every day, presses the button that opens the door to his place of work. For 5 years the receptionist existed for the speaker as a singular function - the opener of the door. He barely noticed her face.

'Radical responsibility' is a concept originated by Emmanuel Levinas, the French Jewish philosopher. Levinas describes how, when we encounter the face of another human being, the face imposes an inescapable demand on us to respond. Before this encounter, this seeing and being seen, 'we' do not exist. The talk will suggest that we could easily translate this concept into contextual behavioural terms by substituting 'context' for 'face' but that we might revitalise our orientation to context by doing the opposite and considering all context as 'face'. When we open ourselves without reserve to the other's face, we recognise our absolute interdependence, and so our radical responsibility for the world.

- Raising Children with Autism: Relational & Educational Roles of Parents & Behavior Analysts

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Behavior analysis, Meaningful collaboration of parents and behavior analysts, Life-wide learning, Executive functioning  
Marianne Clancy, M.A. in ABA, Autism, Live Fulfilled

Raising and educating a child with autism requires intentional skill-building, and focusing on directly teaching and generalizing skills across all environments of life. Both professional providers and parents play key roles, using principles of learning and behavior throughout the child's lifespan, and optimizing collaborative efforts.

This IGNITE presentation will inspire:

- A collaborative approach between parents and behavior analysts/educators.
- A strategy for parents to integrate ABA principles into everyday family life daily events, fostering meaningful outcomes, with a positive, motivational approach and person-centric strategies of support.
- Collaboration with behavior analysts to target skills relevant to both clinical and home settings, respecting the child's abilities.
- Shaping the child's interactions across living and learning environments.
- Progressing skills and goals relevant within home and clinical settings.
- Intentionally shifting from adult- and instructor-led to learner-managed experiences / self-monitored experiences.
- Incorporating contextual flexibility and problem solving strategies.
- Supporting lifelong development through experiences at home, school, in the community, and within vocational and social settings. Planfully developing quality of life.

- How to Speak ADHD

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, ADHD

LeAnn Levering, LCSW, Levering Mind PLLC

Whether you're working with a client who has an ADHD brain, living with a person with ADHD, or have to communicate with an ADHDer for some other reason (we are everywhere!!), it's useful to know why ADHDers communicate the ways we do. This short talk will aim to be a humorous and affirming guide for those who want to communicate with ADHDers. It will focus on five common ADHD communication issues and explain why they occur. The talk will acknowledge the weaknesses that can irritate neurotypicals, while shedding light on the beneficial flip-sides of these traits. Topics will include lateral thinking, self-referential comparisons, pacing, interrupting, and pragmatic communication differences.

- Why ACT for ADHD?

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, ADHD

LeAnn Levering, LCSW, Levering Mind PLLC

This conference will be full of people who like ACT as a modality, but they might not know why ACT is so friendly to those with ADHD. This short talk will illustrate very briefly five reasons that ADHD brains adapt so well to ACT. The talk will start with a quick look at the executive functions that can cause ADHDers trouble. Once this background is provided, the talk will shift to showing how supportive ACT is to executive function improvement, including increasing psychological flexibility, gaining a greater awareness of inhibitory control issues, providing affirmation for complicated emotions, acceptance of any thought or emotion (no matter how off-beat), learning to recognize and drop the struggle, and the harnessing of lateral thinking through metaphor.

- Embracing the Yips: An ACT based approach to Athlete Self-Compassion through Novel Metaphors

Categories: Sports or performance-enhancing, Processes of change, PTSD

Jorge Aguilar, Ph.D., Montefiore Einstein University  
Trevor Jones, B.A., Mental Performance Coach

The phenomenon of the 'Yips', characterised by a sudden loss of motor skills in pressurised situations, has historically resisted traditional sport psychology interventions. This presentation explores a novel approach to 'fixing' the Yips, utilising a ACT-consistent metaphors that the co-authors of this work, Trevor Jones and Jorge Aguilar, have now tested successfully with dozens of athletes suffering the issue in both amateur and professional sport.

These metaphors evoke both a compassionate dialogue with their past experiences and a crucial understanding of the attentional skills required for progress to be made. Athletes who

suffer from this issue often find themselves in contexts marked by unrealistic performance pressure and a history of aversive control. In essence, our method creates a platform of coherence around the issue, and a clear sense of direction in order to integrate said experience and begin building a more stable and competent sense of self. Sportspeople begin to see their experience less as a reflection of their worth and more as a reflection of their 'humaness'.

- **Clinging to Confidence: A Live Demo of the ACT and RFT Implications of Pursuing Feelings as Goals in Sport**

Categories: Sports or performance-enhancing, RFT / RGB / language, Sport Psychology

Billy Ryan, M.S., Aware Performance Group  
Gijs Jansen, Ph.D., Vice President

Feeling confident and positive thinking interventions for athletes to play their best has been a hallmark in traditional sport psychology. However, making feelings and thoughts as goals creates a splitting effect of attention, often leaving athletes with more of a game in their head than their head in their game. Acceptance and Commitment Training in sport, however, offers a much more flexible approach, helping athletes develop the psychological flexibility to openly feel a wide array of emotions while pursuing their goals.

The speaker listener dynamic that is so present before meaningful performances will be demonstrated live, with RFT, and ACT processes being highlighted along the way through the slides. The presenters will show the language commonly present when wanting to feel more confident, as well as what is showing up "beneath the words".

This presentation aims to highlight how clinging to any emotion, can be detrimental to performance, as well as the simple shifts that can be made for athletes to get back to their authentic self.

- **Leveraging ACT to Overcome Behavioral Avoidance in DBT: A Pre-commitment Phase Approach**

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, DBT, Behavioral Avoidance, Avoidant Personality Disorder

Lori Eickleberry, Ph.D., ABPP, Institute for Life Renovation/Nova Southeastern University

This Ignite session will explore how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) during the pre-commitment phase of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) can enhance retention and outcomes. Individuals with behavioral avoidance, a core feature of emotion dysregulation, often struggle to engage in therapy, yet structured participation is crucial for overcoming avoidance patterns. Effective DBT programs address this through balancing validation with skill-building, but nonetheless, missing four sessions results in dismissal from treatment. This paradox can hinder those with high behavioral avoidance, making them more susceptible to removal due to the "4-miss rule." ACT, in an abbreviated format during DBT's pre-commitment phase, can improve attendance and outcomes. While DBT's effectiveness is well-documented, it primarily includes those who stay engaged. Since DBT addresses therapy-interfering behavior through shaping, individuals removed from the program lack the opportunity to build the skills needed to remain in therapy. This session will discuss using ACT in the DBT commitment phase and present resulting data.

- **Mama said there'll be days like this: A Hierarchy of Therapeutic Skills**

Categories: Professional development, Supporting Clinical skills

Cordelia Kraus, LPC, CADC-I, Certified CRAFT clinician, Vital Space, LLC

Some days are better than others. As clinicians, we are behaving beings along with the rest of humanity; the context that we are in changes the therapeutic skills we have accessible at any given moment. And not every day is stellar. I'll invite you to consider what this means for you and your practice and how to intentionally choose your therapeutic skills based on what is happening in front of you... and within you... even if it's one of those days.

- **PsychFlex in Action: Remote Personalized Process-Based Intervention for Pain and Depression**

Categories: Mobile or digital technology, Pain, Depression, Mobile Intervention

Harry Voulgarakis, Ph.D., St Josephs University, New York

This presentation will present data using PsychFlex, a remote, process-based intervention app designed to supplement therapeutic work grounded in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). The current study explores PsychFlex as a supplementary intervention for individuals experiencing chronic pain and depression.

The app was tested in a pilot study with three participants (N=3) diagnosed with chronic inflammatory conditions, including long COVID, and ongoing depression. A multiple baseline design was used to assess the app's effectiveness in providing individualized interventions over several weeks. Participants responded daily to process-based questionnaires related to their psychological flexibility processes, which informed the selection of tailored interventions. A daily pain inventory was also included.

Preliminary findings suggest that PsychFlex's personalized, data-driven approach holds promise for providing meaningful support to individuals managing these conditions. This talk will present early results, highlight challenges encountered in the study, and discuss future directions for refining the app for broader use. Through this work, we aim to contribute to the growing field of mobile interventions for pain and mental health management.

### **118. Masculinities in Context: Imagining Post-Toxic Models of Masculinity.**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Theory and philosophical foundations, Gender Identity, Identity, Sexuality, Men's Mental Health, Self as Context Process, Diectic Perspective taking & RFT, Clinical intervention & conceptualization

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Mark Sisti, Ph.D., NYC Cognitive Behavioral Psychology, PLLC

Julian L Manetti-Cusa, Psy.D., Private Practice

Brian Pilecki, Ph.D., Portland institute for Psychedelic Science, Portland Psychotherapy

The workshop is aimed at raising awareness of masculinity narratives within the increasingly polarized-politicized culture wars. Experiential exercises will encourage participants to reflect on their own journeys of masculinity. Participants will be asked to functionally consider a range of emerging "post-toxic" masculinity theories 1) "positive or aspirational masculinity", 2) "de-gendered masculinity", masculinity has outlived its usefulness and is replaced with flexible universal humanistic qualities, or 3) "neo-masculine", the more traditional if not regressive return to more traditional roles. These conversations might be uncomfortable and evocative, though we believe it is important to bring mindful attention to emerging data on men's deteriorating health, alongside a functional perspective on any "masculinity crisis" for the sake of all sexes and identities. Defused non-zero sum narratives will be prioritized in order to imagine a progressive, post "toxic" masculinity. While this workshop will focus on the experiences of male-identified people, we hope to engage in these conversations without reinforcing a regressive agenda, and simultaneously allying ourselves with ongoing struggles of women, trans and non-binary people.

Educational Objectives:

1. Demonstrate how to incorporate emerging data on the deteriorating emotional and educational state of men into more effective prosocial work, in and out of session.
2. Analyze masculinity-related challenges, such as declining graduation rates, increased suicide rates, and the friendship/isolation crisis, and apply this awareness to improve the quality of life for all sexes.
3. Create case conceptualizations, evoking the best of what masculinity is and extinguishing the worst. Defuse narratives of a zero sum gender game, toward one in which we all rise together.

### **109. Together Toward Freedom: Building Psychological Flexibility Through Group ACT**

**Workshop** • 1:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Original data, Role play*

Categories: Other, Other, Group Therapy

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Darrah Westrup, Ph.D., Private Practice

Eric Morris, Ph.D., School of Psychology & Public Health, La Trobe University Academic Psychology Unit, Northern Health

Psychological flexibility can be cultivated and deepened through the process of people joining and participating in groups. Along with the

common humanity and connection in meeting with others in a group, there are opportunities to learn from others' experience - witnessing moments of being open, aware and active in the group, contributing to a micro-culture/community of kindness, compassion and curiosity. Group therapy is a cost-effective solution in resource-limited settings and naturally aligns with cultural practices that emphasize community and shared experiences. ACT groups uniquely integrate experiential exercises, public commitments, and facilitator self-disclosure, making them both powerful and nuanced.

This workshop will use an open-aware-active approach to develop an understanding of the fundamentals of ACT group facilitation. We will introduce several evidence-based examples of ACT groups, providing a framework for developing ACT groups in a variety of settings and clinical contexts. Participants will learn how to introduce and engage group members in the therapy, how to create and recognize in-session opportunities to practice core ACT skills, and how to harness group dynamics to foster psychological flexibility.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe how psychological flexibility can be promoted in single-session, brief groups, and open-ended formats.
2. Identify how group experiential exercises and mindful enquiry can support a micro-culture of psychological flexibility.
3. Conduct central metaphors that support group cohesion and learning.

Saturday Afternoon 3:15 PM

### 119. I Met God- Now What? Using ACT to Transform Psychedelic Experiences into Lasting Change

Workshop • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Other, Psychedelics

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Brian Pilecki, Ph.D., Portland Institute for Psychedelic Science, Portland Psychotherapy  
Temple Morris, LCSW-C, True North Therapy & Training  
Jason Luoma, Ph.D., Portland Psychotherapy Clinic, Research, & Training Center

Emerging research suggests that psychedelic-assisted therapy is effective in treating mental health conditions via four key processes of change: enhanced embodiment, perspective-taking, meaning-making, and connection. This workshop will examine the relationship between these underlying processes and psychological flexibility, and explore how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be strategically employed to amplify these processes and optimize therapeutic outcomes in clients who are using psychedelics. Presenters will emphasize the critical integration phase following psychedelic experiences and give special attention to working with mystical experiences and transcendent emotions such as awe and wonder, and describe how such experiences can be leveraged to deepen psychological flexibility and values-aligned living. For example, perspective-taking interventions to revisit psychedelic experiences and committed action strategies to enact behavior change will be taught to participants. This workshop will include didactic and experiential components, is open to individuals of all experience levels, and will help clinicians have better informed conversations with clients using psychedelics in a variety of contexts.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the four key processes of change in psychedelic-assisted therapy (embodiment, perspective-taking, meaning-making, and connection) and their relationship to psychological flexibility.
2. Analyze psychedelic integration through an ACT framework, identifying opportunities to enhance psychological flexibility during the integration phase.
3. Demonstrate a specific perspective-taking intervention that can help clients revisit and derive meaning from their psychedelic experiences.



**120. Using Functional Analysis to Guide Affirming Therapy with Neurodivergent Clients****Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PMComponents: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, Neurodivergence, Neurodiversity, Functional analysisTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Borgne**

Jennifer Kemp, MPsych(Clinical), Adelaide Behaviour Therapy

This workshop will explore how to apply functional analysis to support effective and affirming therapy with neurodivergent clients. Autistic and ADHDe individuals experience significantly higher rates of interpersonal trauma, marginalization and minority stress, and a higher burden of mental and physical ill-health. When therapists do not accommodate their unique needs, they can feel invalidated, misunderstood, and reluctant to seek further support. Ongoing functional analysis can help practitioners discriminate between behaviors that are valid targets for therapy and those that are a vital expression of neurodivergent needs. This interactive workshop will open with an exploration of the inter- and intrapersonal contextual factors that drive helpful and harmful behaviors in neurodivergent people, including avoidance, self-harm, compulsions, and body-focused repetitive behavior. Through case examples and discussion, participants will consider how challenging normative assumptions can allow for novel, creative solutions and identify practical ways to deliver a more nuanced, individualized, and affirming approach to therapy. The workshop will close with a comprehensive framework for contextually sensitive therapy that can guide neurodivergent clients toward self-compassion and self-acceptance, and psychological well-being.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the contextual factors that drive behavior in Autistic and ADHDe adolescents and adults, including neurobiological differences and experiences of trauma, rejection, and minority stress.
2. Identify the functions of repetitive behaviors that could be the target of therapy such as skin-picking, hair-pulling, and self-harm.
3. Apply ongoing functional analysis within clinical behavior analysis, ACT or compassion-focused therapeutic approaches to deliver affirming and effective therapy for Autistic and ADHDe clients.

**121. Bridging ACT and Behavioral Analysis: Enhancing Functional Sensitivity in Clinical Practice****Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PMComponents: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play, Strategic planning*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Behavior analysis, ACT, Functional Analysis, Contingency Analysis, Therapeutic OutcomesTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate***Location: Bayside A**

Roberta Kovac, Ph.D., Instituto Par

William Perez, Ph.D., Instituto Par

Tatiana C Khafif, M.Sc., Universidade de São Paulo / CECONTE

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a powerful tool for fostering psychological flexibility, but its effectiveness hinges on integrating functional analysis into practice. There is a growing concern that ACT can sometimes be applied in ways that overlook contingencies, leading to less effective interventions. This workshop addresses the importance of grounding ACT in behavioral principles, emphasizing the use of functional analysis to enhance sensitivity to individual contingencies and improve therapeutic outcomes. This workshop aims to equip clinicians with practical skills to integrate functional analysis into ACT interventions. Participants will learn how to identify key contingencies in their clients' contexts and adjust ACT processes to align with behavioral principles. By doing so, therapists can ensure that their interventions remain client-centered and contextually sensitive. The workshop combines didactic teaching, experiential exercises, and role-playing scenarios.

Participants will learn to conduct functional analyses in real-time and apply this understanding to refine ACT interventions. Through hands-on practice, attendees will develop the skills needed to balance ACT's philosophical principles with its behavioral roots, creating interventions that are both compassionate and effective.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Explain the role of functional analysis in grounding ACT within behavioral principles and its relevance to clinical effectiveness.
2. Conduct basic functional analyses to identify contingencies shaping client behavior in therapy.
3. Adapt ACT interventions to align with functional analytic insights, enhancing their sensitivity to the client's unique context and needs.

**122. Innovating Mental Health Care: Usable, Scalable, and Digital Interventions for Psychological Flexibility Across Contexts**

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Original data, Strategic planning, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Mobile or digital technology, Health / behavioral medicine, Usability, Digital intervention, Psychological Flexibility, Emotional Schemas, Stress, Person-Based Approach, Dementia caregivers, Depressive symptoms, Co-design, Instant message, cancer patients

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Sean A Munson, Ph.D., University of Washington

Rita Sebastião, M.Sc., ISPA-Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI – Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

Fen Ye, M.N., University of Hong Kong

Giuseppe Deledda, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore - Don Calabria Hospital - Negrar di Valpolicella (VR)

Digital and technology-enabled interventions hold promise for expanding access to mental health care—but to succeed, they must be usable, flexible, and grounded in evidence. This session brings together four studies advancing digital approaches to psychological flexibility and mental health promotion. The first study tested usability evaluation methods across 22 clinical and implementation intervention teams, identifying practical adaptations to support non-expert teams designing digital and collaborative interventions. The second study applied a person- and evidence-based approach to develop a personalized, modular self-help app for stress management, targeting emotional schemas and flexibility. The third study piloted a culturally adapted Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) intervention delivered via instant messaging for informal dementia caregivers, demonstrating high feasibility and clinically meaningful reductions in depression and anxiety. The fourth study combined ACT processes with virtual reality exposure for cancer patients, helping reduce the credibility and distress associated with intrusive disease-related thoughts. Together, these studies demonstrate the potential of digital platforms to deliver scalable, tailored, and psychologically informed care for diverse populations and mental health needs.

- *From conceptual integration into practice: Developing a person-based digital intervention for stress*

Rita Sebastião, Ispa – Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI - Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

Pedro Rodrigues Ribeiro, Ispa – Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI - Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

Eduardo Sardinha, Ispa – Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI - Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

Cátia Castro, Ispa – Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI - Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

David Dias Neto, Ispa – Instituto Universitário; APPsyCI - Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion

Stress impacts mental health. This study aimed to develop a personalized digital intervention to address stressful events by targeting emotional schemas and psychological flexibility to enhance mental

health. The development followed a theory-, evidence-, and person-based approach across two phases. Phase I gathered evidence through: cross-sectional and longitudinal studies examining emotional schemas, psychological flexibility, and mental health in the context of stress; a scoping review of digital interventions for stress; and a qualitative study exploring coping experiences. Phase II applied these findings to develop the guiding principles, a logic model, and the initial draft of the intervention. This resulted in a guided self-help app composed of eight mandatory and five optional modules, personalized to users' needs and preferences, completed sequentially weekly. Modules include psychoeducation and exercises on topics such as stress, emotions, cognitive flexibility, mindfulness, acceptance, values, activities, problem-solving, time management, physical exercise and lifestyle, social support and assertiveness, and relaxation. The methods and results framing the intervention's development highlight the potential of iterative integration of conceptual reflection and practice.

- *Co-designed Instant Message-delivered ACT for Depressive Symptoms among Informal Dementia Caregivers : A Pilot RCT*

Fen Ye, M.D., RN, School of Nursing, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, China  
Doris Sau-fung Yu, Ph.D., School of Nursing, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, China

Jung Jae Lee, Ph.D., School of Nursing, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, China

#### Background

While over 84% of dementia care is provided by informal caregivers, up to 80% of caregivers experience depressive symptoms. Despite the need, scalable psychological interventions for these caregivers are lacking. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) shows promise but remains underutilized in this population.

#### Methods

This pilot randomized controlled trial recruited 40 depressed informal dementia caregivers (PHQ-9 score ranging: 5-19) from 3 hospitals in China. Participants were randomly allocated to the intervention or control group. The intervention group received an 8-week culturally adapted, co-designed ACT delivered via instant message (n=20), while the control received disease education messages (n=20). Outcomes included feasibility, acceptability, and psychological outcomes (e.g., depressive and anxiety symptoms). Intention-to-treat analysis using generalized estimating equations adjusted for covariates was conducted.

#### Results

The intervention demonstrated high feasibility (100% enrollment; 90% retention) and acceptability (85% usefulness). The most helpful messages for the participants were caregiving tips (34.8%) and mental health strategies (28.3%). The intervention group showed significant reductions in depressive symptoms ( $\beta = -3.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and anxiety symptoms ( $\beta = -2.30$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ) over time.

#### Conclusions

Findings support advancing to a full-scale trial to assess the effectiveness of ACT among dementia caregivers.

- *Addressing usability to improve contextual fit of complex psychosocial innovations*

Sean A Munson, PhD, University of Washington  
Aaron Lyon, University of Washington  
Tricia Aung, University of Washington  
Alex Dopp, RAND Corporation  
Katie Osterhage, University of Washington  
Kat Bruzios, University of Washington  
Brittany E Blanchard, University of Washington

Clinical interventions (CIs) and implementation strategies ISs must fit their destination context and intended users. Usability problems are a major contributor to these mismatches, which in turn contribute to non-adoption and to drift that reduces interventions fidelity and effectiveness.

We worked with 22 teams applying usability methods to CIs or ISs. We piloted guidance for usability testing and evaluation and iteratively revised it to support independent use by redesign teams that did not have prior usability expertise.

Teams were able to use usability methods, but adaptations were required. Adaptations included adjusting methods to include the multiple perspectives involved in collaborative CIs and ISs, greater use of observation or retrospective methods to avoid interrupting collaborative activities, use of heuristics tailored to CIs and ISs, and use of vignette-based methods for innovations that could unfold over several sessions. Teams were able to describe usability issues, but they encountered initial challenges, including framing issues in ways that blame the user and focusing on outcomes of the problem without a detailed understanding of the underlying cause.

- *ACT applied with Virtual Reality (VR) for cancer patients with fears related to the disease context*

Giuseppe Deledda, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Sara Poli, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Isabella Gravina, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Giovanna Fantoni, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Eleonora Geccherle, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology Unit, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Daniele Lombardo, Behaviour Labs srl, Catania, Italy  
 Marco Lombardo, Behaviour Labs srl, Catania, Italy  
 Filippo Alongi, Advanced Radiation Oncology Department, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Stefania Gori, Medical Oncology, IRCCS Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Negrar di Valpolicella, Verona, Italy  
 Giovambattista Presti, Ph.D., University of Enna "Kore", Italy

**Introduction:**

This study aims to explore the feasibility of ACT process exercises with virtual reality (VR) for cancer patients with fears related to the disease context.

**Methods:**

A experimental Multiple Baseline Design across subjects, was adopted to measuring the behavior of each participant in treatment and control conditions. Pre- and post-intervention self-report questionnaires will include the MPFI, VAS, Target Thought Negative Scale, and DASS-21.

**Preliminary Results:**

9 patients (mean age = 52.2 years), were recruited for the study. From the VAS administered before and after the training, a decrease in the credibility of the worrying thought was observed, and, in some cases, a reduction in the associated discomfort was reported. Participants described the study as sustainable and noted that Virtual Reality was a valuable aid in the process of objectifying intrusive thoughts, which in turn helped them manage these thoughts more effectively.

**Conclusion:**

This study introduces an innovative methodology that will be incorporated into the broader ACT protocol to improve the quality of care and interventions offered to patients.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Analyze the use of a theory-, evidence-, and person-based approach to inform the development of integrative digital interventions for stress management and mental health enhancement.
2. Evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of instant message-delivered psychotherapy interventions by analyzing metrics such as retention rates, technical challenges, and engagement patterns in dementia caregiver populations.
3. Describe the role of defusion and avoidance in the development and maintenance of suffering in the cancer patients.

**123. Integrating Mindfulness Concepts and Practices within Applied Behavior Analysis**

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Behavior analysis, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Mindfulness

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: MaKensy Sanders, M.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Discussant: Robyn M Catagnus, Ed.D., LBS, BCBA - D,, National University

Kate Kellum, Ph.D., University of Mississippi

Victoria Hutchinson, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, University of Mississippi

Cassidy Rock, University of Mississippi

Worner Leland, M.S., Collab Lab; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Sex Ed Continuing Ed

Mindfulness-based strategies have been used across clinical settings to improve adaptive responding to help individuals thrive within varying contexts. Research and practice of mindfulness specifically within applied behavior analysis (ABA) has been growing, and further exploration of the application and processes is warranted. The current symposium aims to present research and a conceptual overview of the principles of mindfulness, as well as wells to incorporate it into clinical

practice. The first presentation provides an analysis for mindfulness as an intervention and behavior to shape. The second presentation will provide an examination of data among BCBAs selecting different strategies for addressing private events in practice. The third presentation will review a study incorporating the principles of improv into mindfulness practice for direct care staff. The final presentation will provide an overview of incorporating ACTr strategies into ABA practice. Discussions for implications for the field, as well as further research and application will be provided.

- *Mindfulness as Behavior and Intervention: A Conceptual Analysis*

Karen Kate Kellum, Ph.D., BCBA-D, University of Mississippi  
Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, University of Louisiana-Lafayette  
Johnathon Tarbox, Ph.D., BCBA-D, University of Nevada Reno

Mindfulness is widely regarded as a psychological strength (e.g., Keng et al., 2011), yet its conceptualization within behavior analysis presents ongoing challenges (e.g., see Catagnus et al., 2023). Across the literature, mindfulness is examined both as a dependent variable (a behavior) and an independent variable (an intervention), presenting challenges in measurement, definition, and application (Catagnus et al., 2023). This presentation will offer a behavior analytic conceptualization of mindfulness both as behavior and as an intervention, exploring criteria that help clarify its role. Additionally, we will consider its potential as a behavioral cusp, facilitating broader learning and adaptation. By distinguishing between these functions and emphasizing context over form, this discussion aims to refine the behavior analytic study of mindfulness and highlight its relevance across interventions.

Keng, S. L., Smoski, M. J., & Robins, C. J. (2011). Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. *Clinical psychology review*, 31(6), 1041-1056.

Catagnus, R. M., Garcia, Y. A., & Zhang, D. X. (2023). Single-subject design studies of mindfulness interventions for behavior change: A scoping review and behavioral conceptualization. *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 7(2), 133-164.

- *Practitioner responses to addressing private events using ACT versus other strategies*

Victoria Hutchinson, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, University of Mississippi, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and other mindfulness-based strategies have been growing in popularity among practitioners in ABA (BCBAs). However, research on the use of ACT in common ABA settings is limited, despite the underlying processes and functional control demonstrated within mindfulness as an intervention (Catagnus, Garcia, & Zhang, 2023). The purpose of the current study was to examine self-reported variables among BCBAs treating individuals with ASD. Participants included BCBAs sorted into two groups based on whether they selected using ACT as a strategy for addressing behaviors related to private events. Participants completed surveys which included measurements of social validity, competency, psychological flexibility, and levels of burnout. Statistical analyses were used to determine differences between the groups and the dependent variables. Results showed there was a difference between the groups, which showed that participants in the ACT group reported higher levels of social validity and competency, and lower levels of psychological inflexibility and levels of burnout related to emotional exhaustion. Implications for practitioners in the field will be discussed.

- *Imbedding mindfulness and the principles of improv in ABA settings*

Cassidy Rock, University of Mississippi  
Victoria Hutchinson, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, University of Mississippi  
Addison Phelps, University of Mississippi

One of the facets of working directly with individuals in a treatment setting is the ability to adapt to changing conditions fluently, while remaining fully engaged in the program. The principles and processes of mindfulness encompass this skill. Including mindfulness-based strategies within training for direct care staff and volunteers could enhance engagement and flexible responding in treatment and intervention settings. Previous research has shown that using mindfulness-based techniques in staff training can enhance adherence to implementation of interventions (Pingo, Dixon, & Paliliunas, 2020). Additionally, the principles of improv comedy align closely with the processes of mindfulness to enhance flexible responding within the context of performing (Amezquita, 2021). The current study aims to assess the effects of adding improv exercises incorporating mindfulness to training procedures for individuals working in a human service organization or program. The study will include a single-subject design to assess the effects of the mindful improv program on interactions with clients and engagement within treatment sessions. Further discussion on the generality, social validity, and feasibility of the program will be discussed.

- *Red Dead Defusion: ACTr Instructional Design Using Highly Preferred Stimuli*



Worner Leland, M.S., BCBA, LBA, Collab Lab, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, Sex Ed Continuing Ed

When considering Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTr) therapies, interventions, and strategies, especially as they grow in popularity with behavior analysts, it is valuable to consider functional adaptation for clients who may struggle to connect with traditional exercise modalities. This presentation will examine behavior analytic strategies for ACT and ACTr adaptations, especially when considering the use of highly preferred stimuli to increase accessibility (m1nd PnK, 2023; Tincani, Brodhead, & Dowdy, 2024; Wine & Wilder, 2013). Critical and variable features of some common ACTr exercises will be examined and instructional design considerations will be reviewed.

Tincani, M., Brodhead, M.T. & Dowdy, A. ABA Promotes Autonomy and Choice of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *J Dev Phys Disabil* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-024-09949-5>

Wine, B., & Wilder, D. A. (2009). The effects of varied versus constant high-, medium-, and low-preference stimuli on performance. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 42(2), 321–326. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2009.42-321>

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the role of mindfulness processes within applied behavior analysis.
2. Analyze the relationship between practitioner selection of ACT/mindfulness strategies and measurements of social validity, competence, psychological flexibility, and levels of burnout.
3. Discuss the various strategies for implementing mindfulness into ABA practice across different contexts.

### 124. Enhancing Social Connection Through Experiential and Contextual Interventions: Applications in Clinical and Educational Settings

**Symposium** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Original data*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Supervision and training, Processes of change, Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social isolation, social determinants of health, clinical trial, Awareness, Courage, and Love in FAP, Functional Analytic Psychotherapy

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Ela Ari, Ph.D., Faculty in Istanbul Medipol University, Psychology Department

Johanne Eliacin, Ph.D., Indiana University School of Medicine

Daniel W.M. Maitland, Ph.D., University of Missouri - Kansas City

Amanda Muñoz - Martinez, Ph.D., University of the Andes

Social connection is vital to health and well-being, yet isolation and disconnection are increasingly prevalent. This session brings together four studies examining innovative, experiential strategies to foster connection and interpersonal well-being across diverse contexts. First, we present CONNECTED, a Veteran-centered intervention addressing social isolation within the Veterans Health Administration. Pilot and ongoing hybrid trials demonstrate promising effects on isolation, depression, and anxiety. Second, we explore an experiential university course using Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) with the Awareness, Courage, and Love framework. Students showed gains in emotional regulation, resilience, and self-compassion. Third, we report on an analog study evaluating the impact of FAP experiential training on therapist behaviors linked to intimacy and contingent responding. Finally, we present findings from a pilot study of the FAP-inspired FFP protocol, which increased perceived intimacy and shifted attention toward social connection. Collectively, these studies underscore the power of experiential, behaviorally informed methods to enhance connection and psychological flexibility, with implications for training, practice, and public health.

- *Brave Hearts in the Lecture Hall: Exploring Awareness, Courage, and Love in FAP*  
Ela Ari, Ph.D., Istanbul Medipol University

This study examines the impact of an experiential version of the university course "Mental Health with Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP)," enriched with the Awareness, Courage, and Love (ACL) framework, on students' emotional regulation, self-compassion, and resilience. A total of 60 undergraduate psychology students participated, with 40 receiving FAP-ACL training, while 20 in the

control group received psychoeducation on relationships, resilience, and compassion. Participants completed pre- and post-training assessments, including the Awareness, Courage, and Responsiveness (ACR) scale, Self-Compassion Scale (SCS-SF), and Emotional Regulation Skills Questionnaire (ERSQ).

Findings indicate significant improvements in emotional regulation, particularly in awareness ( $p = .03$ ), sensations ( $p = .01$ ), clarity ( $p = .01$ ), understanding ( $p = .03$ ), tolerance ( $p = .05$ ), confrontation ( $p = .04$ ), self-support ( $p = .03$ ), and modification ( $p = .02$ ). Participants also showed greater resilience ( $p = .01$ ) and reduced over-identification ( $p = .04$ ), reflecting enhanced self-compassion. The mindfulness dimension of self-compassion improved ( $p < .01$ ), suggesting increased present-moment awareness. The courage dimension of ACR improved ( $p < .01$ ), indicating greater interpersonal risk-taking.

- *Addressing social isolation as a negative social determinant of health: CONNECTED program development & evaluation*

Johanne Eliacin, Ph.D., HSPP, Indiana University School of Medicine

Marianne S. Matthias, Ph.D., Indiana University School of Medicine

Scott M. Patterson, Richard L. Roudsbush VA Medical Center

Diana M. Mendez, Ph.D., VA National Center for PTSD, Executive Division

Leslie RM Hausmann, Ph.D., Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion, VA Pittsburg Healthcare System

Diana J. Burgess, Ph.D., Center for Care Delivery and Outcomes Research, Minneapolis VA Healthcare System, MN

Social isolation is a negative social determinant of health and a global public health threat. It affects 1 in 5 adults in the U.S., is prevalent among socially disadvantaged groups, and has more adverse health effects than tobacco use and obesity. Yet, few effective social isolation interventions exist. Our team developed the CONNECTED program to reduce social isolation among Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration (VA). Pilot testing showed that the intervention is feasible and acceptable. In two successive cohorts of Veterans ( $N = 319$ ), our average recruitment was 88%, enrollment rate was 86%, and retention rates were 80% and 50% respectively. Satisfaction rate was 100%. Preliminary effectiveness results showed significant reduction in social isolation ( $+5.91$ ,  $SD = 4.99$ ;  $p = .0028$ ), and improvements in social support ( $+0.74$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ;  $p = .03$ ), depression ( $-3.83$ ,  $SD = 3.13$ ;  $p = .001$ ), and anxiety scores ( $-3.92$ ,  $SD = 3.73$ ;  $p = .003$ ). We are now conducting a Hybrid-Type 1 effectiveness implementation randomized controlled trial to evaluate the intervention. For this presentation, we will (1) provide an overview of the study, (2) describe our approach to engaging Veterans, and (3) discuss potential implementation factors.

- *The impact of experiential Functional Analytic Psychotherapy training on building social connection*

Daniel W. M. Maitland, University of Missouri Kansas City

An increasing amount of research has been conducted on the role of interpersonal intimacy in Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP, Maitland et al., 2017). FAP prototypically targets the development of interpersonal intimacy. Previous findings indicate that by engaging in naturalistic contingent responding, interpersonal intimacy develops between the therapist and client as a part of conducting FAP (Maitland & Gaynor, 2016; Maitland et al., 2016). A significant aspect of the experiential training utilized to train clinicians in FAP includes learning how to be emotionally open and leverage genuine reactions to others to shape behavior in the moment, a process consistent with the contextual behavioral understanding of the interpersonal process model of intimacy (Kanter et al., 2020). No study has evaluated whether these training procedures translate to enhanced relationships, and conceptually more effective contingent responding, during therapy. The current study seeks to address this gap in the literature by evaluating the effects of experiential training in a FAP analog study. After data are presented, discussion will focus on the implications for best practice in experiential training in FAP.

- *Acceptability and Pilot of the Fast Friends Procedure (FFP) on Social Connection: An Analog of FAP*

Amanda Muñoz-Martínez, Ph.D., University of the Andes

Victor Delgado, M.S., University of the Andes

Jessica Giraldo, M.S., University of the Andes

Angela Silva, University of the Andes

Carlos Gantiva, University of the Andes

FAP is a contextual-behavioral intervention that promotes interpersonal competencies (e.g., intimacy; connection). Research in FAP has identified contingent reinforcement from the therapist as a key mechanism driving therapeutic change. While most studies analyze turn-by-turn therapeutic interactions, analog situations to explore whether audience responsiveness (e.g., therapist behavior) is crucial for fostering interpersonal changes can be conducted to evaluate this mechanism. This pilot experiment

evaluated the feasibility of the FFP and potential effects on social connection correlates. Twelve young adults (male = 5; female = 7) participated across three conditions: Control Group (CG), Supportive Listening Group (SLG), and Contingent Response Group (CRG). Participants in SLG and CRG rated the protocol as highly acceptable, whereas CG participants were less favorable. Intimacy increased more in SLG and CRG, and all groups showed reductions in loneliness. Eye-tracking results revealed greater fixation duration on interpersonal-connection images in CRG, whereas CG and SLG exhibited reductions. These findings support FFP's feasibility and highlight the role of audience responsiveness in fostering intimacy and shifting attentional focus, informing future research on social connection.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze and describe the impact of an ACL-enriched Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) training program on emotional regulation, self-compassion, and resilience by interpreting pre- and post-training assessment data.
2. List strategies to support individuals who are socially isolated.
3. Describe the acceptability of the FFP as an analog method for studying interpersonal processes in FAP across different audience responsiveness conditions (Control, Supportive Listening, Contingent Response).

### 125. Ethical Considerations in Chronic Pain Management: The Benefits of an ACT-Based Approach

**Panel** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Ethics, Chronic Pain, ACT

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Southdown**

Skye Ochsner Margolies, Ph.D., UNC School of Medicine  
 Tracy Protti, Ph.D., Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System  
 Heather Poupore-King, Ph.D., Stanford School of Medicine  
 Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute  
 Lauren Hollrah, Psy.D., VA

Chronic pain, defined as pain persisting more than three months, impacts approximately 20% of the population and is considered a major public health concern. Current research demonstrates the effectiveness and importance of integrating acceptance-based interventions for chronic pain treatment. Interventions such as ACT focus on helping clients flexibly respond to their symptoms while engaging in a life with meaning and purpose even in the context of persistent pain. Despite these advances, the predominating biomedical model of controlling and removing pain persists thus raising systemic and ethical challenges for pain clinicians in these settings. This panel will explore the ethical issues and challenges inherent in multidisciplinary pain management and using an ACT based approach. Using case reports and examples from our various practices as pain psychologists, we will explore the barriers to providing evidence-based care anchored in ethical principles of respect, beneficence, nonmaleficence, integrity, and competence. Participants will be encouraged to consider and discuss the importance of an ACT-based approach to pain management and the ethical considerations inherent in this work.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify ethical considerations working in pain management.
2. Review ACT based approaches to pain management that support ethical principles.
3. Explain how the ACT model can be integrated in multidisciplinary systems.

### 126. Promoting the uptake of contextual behavioural interventions: Observations from a knowledge translation scientist

**Invited** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Other, Processes of change, Getting evidence into practice

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Nottoway**

Alison L Kitson, Ph.D., Flinders University



The gap between new evidence being generated and it being routinely used in practice can be as much as 17 years. What is not clear is why it takes so long to change what people do. Knowledge translation approaches which reinforce the importance of stakeholder engagement, co-design, and adaptation to contexts may offer insights into the effective uptake and spread of evidence based contextual behavioural interventions.

This presentation offers insights and perspectives from the lens of a knowledge translation scientist, new to the field of contextual behavioural interventions. Appreciating the impact of individual, group and contextual factors influencing the adoption of new knowledge, the presentation will outline key steps along a path to more effective uptake of evidence that may shed light on doing the same for contextual behavioural interventions.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe how knowledge translation approaches can explain why effective behavioural interventions are not always used in everyday practice.
2. Explain what methods could be used to engage key stakeholders in more successful uptake.
3. Design strategies to plan, implement, and evaluate small-scale implementation projects aimed at building capacity.

### 127. Innovations in Trauma-Focused ACT

**Panel** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Trauma

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Sonja V. Batten, Ph.D., Stop Soldier Suicide  
 Russ Harris, MBBS, Psychological Flexibility P/L  
 Jennifer Shepard Payne, Ph.D., LCSW-C, Johns Hopkins University  
 Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services

Trauma-focused interventions continue to evolve, integrating mindfulness, exposure, and process-based approaches to enhance psychological flexibility. This panel brings together leading experts in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to explore cutting-edge approaches to trauma treatment. Discussions will focus on key challenges, including the role of trauma-related exposure in ACT, trauma-sensitive mindfulness practices, and the integration of somatic/body-based interventions for complex trauma. Additionally, the panel will examine brief interventions and culturally responsive ACT approaches for diverse populations experiencing racial and systemic trauma.

Panelists will discuss how mindfulness and acceptance-based strategies can create safety while promoting emotional processing, and when and how exposure techniques can be integrated within an ACT framework. Practical applications for clinicians, including innovative adaptations for short-term interventions, will be explored.

Through this discussion, attendees will gain insight into evidence-based strategies for treating trauma with ACT, including balancing acceptance with change, fostering resilience, and tailoring interventions to meet individual and cultural needs.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe how trauma-sensitive mindfulness and acceptance-based strategies can be applied to promote emotional safety and processing in trauma interventions.
2. Analyze the role of exposure within ACT-based trauma treatments, identifying when and how it can be effectively integrated to support psychological flexibility.
3. Apply culturally responsive and process-based interventions to diverse trauma populations, demonstrating adaptations that address systemic and racial trauma.

### 128. Center Stage: Drama Therapy Meets ACT - An Experiential Workshop

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Drama therapy, Interventions, Experiential exercises

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Kathryn L Wood, LCPC, P-RDT, True North Therapy & Training  
Miranda Morris, Ph.D., True North Therapy and Training

Drama Therapy, a therapeutic modality rooted in theatre, storytelling, and performance techniques, offers uniquely adaptable interventions that can significantly enhance the delivery of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). This workshop explores the natural synergy between these approaches, particularly through Drama Therapy's use of embodied metaphor and interpersonal experiential techniques. Participants will learn how to integrate key Drama Therapy skills within an ACT framework, focusing specifically on role-based interventions that amplify psychological flexibility and values-based action.

The workshop provides hands-on experience with drama therapy warm-ups before introducing a powerful technique: guiding clients to embody supportive figures from their lives (including friends, family members, or even pets). Through practical demonstration and experiential learning, participants will master conducting strength-based interviews with these enacted supportive figures, creating a unique perspective-taking opportunity that enhances psychological flexibility and deepens personal insight. This innovative integration offers therapists new tools for helping clients access their resources and values through embodied experience.

Educational Objectives:

1. Explain how focusing on how embodied metaphor and experiential techniques increases psychological flexibility.
2. Demonstrate the facilitation of at least one Drama Therapy exercise to enhance therapeutic work within an ACT framework.
3. Describe at least one way on which the "interviewing a supportive other" exercise is related to enhancing self compassion through more flexible perspective taking.

### **129. The Use and Misuse of ACT for OCD**

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Professional development, OCD

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Max Maisel, Ph.D., Beachfront Anxiety Specialists

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is increasingly integrated into Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). While ACT's underlying theory and processes—such as defusion, acceptance, and values—can enhance ERP, improper application may inadvertently reinforce compulsions and lead to ineffective treatment.

This workshop explores both the benefits and pitfalls of ACT in OCD treatment, addressing common misuses such as over-relying on defusion without engaging uncertainty, using values-based interventions in ways that inadvertently delay exposure, and failing to differentiate between obsessive thoughts and compulsive rumination.

Attendees will learn concrete strategies to integrate ACT with ERP effectively, ensuring that ACT-based interventions enhance exposure therapy. The session will include case conceptualizations and experiential exercises, which will help the attendees differentiate between mental compulsions and intrusive thoughts and to learn to use attentional control techniques to allow thoughts while stopping mental compulsions.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to apply ACT techniques appropriately within ERP, identify common ACT-related pitfalls in OCD treatment, and modify interventions to improve client outcomes.

Educational Objectives:



1. Describe at least three ways Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can enhance Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) in the treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).
2. Identify two common misapplications of ACT in OCD treatment that may reinforce compulsions or interfere with inhibitory learning.
3. Demonstrate at least one ACT-based intervention that effectively supports ERP without inadvertently increasing cognitive rituals or avoidance.

### 130. ACT Against Stuckness: ACT for Procrastination

**Workshop** • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Academics or education, Organizational psychology, Teens, Young adults, Adults, Fear of failure

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Patricia E. Zurita Ona, Psy.D., East Bay Behavior Therapy Center

Procrastination is a transdiagnostic process in therapy, and a common psychological struggle in coaching, academic, and work environments, with far-reaching consequences for clients' overall well-being (Rozental & Carlbring, 2014; Glick & Orsillo, 2015).

We'll explore a contextual-functional perspective and unpack the psychological processes behind procrastinating behaviors. We'll go beyond the cliché messages of "just get things done, get better at time management, or use post-its as reminders." Instead, we'll focus on acceptance and change-based skills to help clients get things done, build new patterns of workable behaviors, and compassionately accept themselves as they are, not as they wish to be (Gilbert, P., & Procter, S. (2006).

Specific skills will be presented to guide clients in nourishing compassionate accountability, unhooking from problematic reasons and rules (Scent & Boes, 2014), managing self-criticism, dealing with overwhelming emotions, starting simple and complex tasks, staying focused, and approaching deadlines.

Through experiential exercises participants will learn contextual-functional interventions to tackle all types of procrastinating behaviors.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify the 6 core psychological processes that led people to chronically procrastinate through the lenses of contextual-behavioral science.
2. Teach clients skills to develop compassionate accountability and apply strategies to unhook from reasons, rules, self-criticism, and overwhelming emotions that contribute to procrastination.
3. Teach actionable skills to develop a flexible relationship with time, goals, and productivity systems beyond the usual strategies, e.g. Pomodoro method, blocking calendar, post-its).

Saturday Afternoon Plenary 4:45 PM

### 131. Agency, Individuality, and Positive Neuroplasticity to Develop Durable Psychological Resources

**Plenary** • 4:45 PM - 5:45 PM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Original data*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Client meta-learning in clinical settings

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Napoleon Ballroom**

Rick Hanson, Ph.D., UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center



Mental health professions often use a Growth 1.0 model in which people are treated like passive vessels into which information and experiences are poured – with little respect for individual differences – in the hopes that something will stick.

For some it does – yet many report mild or fleeting gains at most. And over the past several decades, there has been little or no improvement in average response to treatment. With new theories, methods, and research, we may have gotten better at helping people to have particular experiences, but as a profession we don't seem to have gotten better at helping our clients to learn

from them in lasting ways.

In this fast-paced, sometimes experiential, and very practical presentation, we'll explore evidence-based methods in a Growth 2.0 model in which people are active agents in the durable neuroplastic "internalization" of their experiences of inner strengths. Then in both daily life and structured interventions, they have a wonderful power to grow the good that lasts inside themselves – including to benefit other beings.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the evolutionary basis of the brain's negativity bias.
2. Describe the necessary two stages of social, somatic, and emotional learning.
3. Teach clients three evidence-based methods for increasing the learning from beneficial experiences.

DRAFT

## Program Detail • Sunday • July 20

Sunday Morning 9:00 AM

**132. Bringing Functional Analytic Psychotherapy to the Public: Change via the Awareness, Courage & Love Global Project****Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AMComponents: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Original data*Categories: Dissemination or global health strategies, Processes of change, Community BuildingTarget Audience: *Beginner***Location: Borgne**

Mavis Tsai, Ph.D., University of Washington; Awareness, Courage &amp; Love Global Project

Eugen Secara, Ph.D. (C), Babeş-Bolyai University

Ioana Ivan, M.A., Babeş-Bolyai University

Ben K Spaloss, B.S., Institute for Better Health

Paulo G Sousa-Filho, Ph.D., Universidade do Rio Grande

How do we disseminate an intervention sensitively and equitably to people in different cultures in a way that understands and calls for societal change? The Awareness, Courage and Love (ACL) Global Project addresses the worldwide loneliness epidemic by bringing the key concepts of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) to the general public through group meetings that foster connection with self and others. FAP emphasizes scientific principles that focus on the healing power of present-moment authentic interactions. ACL meetings create a safe and accepting space to thrive, to be one's true self, and to create a sense of belonging through the practice of vulnerable self-disclosure and responsive listening and personalized appreciation. In this workshop, co-led by global ACL leaders, you will learn about and experience an innovative approach to disseminate FAP principles by using powerful protocols that require minimal training and that enhance the potential of individuals. You will be invited to join our worldwide ACL movement that currently has chapter leaders in 35+ countries and 6 continents.

Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze the sensitivity required to translate a concept or exercise while preserving its intent and function, and apply an understanding of cultural context to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.
2. Engage in true self and authentic connection exercises adapted for different cultures, and analyze their impact on cross-cultural therapeutic practice.
3. Implement a model of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy that moves beyond the therapy room and can be disseminated widely and equitably to the general public.

**133. Using the Psychological Flexibility Model to Enhance Positive Valence Systems Interventions for Depression****Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AMComponents: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, DepressionTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate***Location: Bayside A**

Duncan G Jordan, Ph.D., The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Advances in psychotherapy research have highlighted the role of positive valence systems (PVS) interventions and their importance in depression treatment (Craske et al., 2023; Dunn et al., 2023). PVS interventions include techniques designed to enhance attentional awareness for positive information (e.g., "finding silver linings" and gratitude reflections), promote mindful engagement with positive activities (e.g., savoring), and enhance prosociality (e.g., practicing loving-kindness). Although these interventions show promise in enhancing positive affect, additional research suggests certain depressed persons may be positivity or happiness "averse." That is, a robust line of research proposes that some depressed persons may actively devalue reward, coming to view positive

emotions as threatening (Gallagher et al., 2023). To this end, a psychological flexibility model may enhance delivery of PVS interventions in depressed/anhedonic patients by viewing the use of these techniques as means to facilitate cognitive, attentional, emotional, and behavioral flexibility. As such, this workshop aims to promote awareness of evidence-based PVS interventions for depression and how these techniques can be delivered in an ACT-consistent manner to personalize their use and augment their effectiveness.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Discuss the effectiveness and utility of positive valence systems-based interventions for depression.
2. Describe the processes by which some depressed persons come to fear or avoid positive emotions.
3. Implement and adapt positive valence systems-based interventions within the psychological flexibility model.

### **134. Getting Creative with Creative Hopelessness**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Behavior analysis, Creative Hopelessness

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Staci Martin, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute

Miranda Morris, Ph.D., True North Therapy and Training

What is it about the term “creative hopelessness” that strikes fear in the hearts of many ACT practitioners? Creative hopelessness interventions are core to the practice of ACT and set the stage for everything that comes afterwards, yet practitioners often feel uncertain about how to use them effectively - they worry that clients might become discouraged or leave therapy altogether. But creative hopelessness is not about foreclosing on options. It is about illuminating the functions of clients’ behaviors so they can build values-fulfilling lives. It is an organic way of determining what does not work and steering them towards what does. In this highly experiential workshop, we will go beyond the usual exercises to explore how creative hopelessness can increase awareness of what is and isn’t working in clients’ lives. Demonstration role-plays and small group practice will provide attendees with solid strategies to reveal the futility of clients’ ‘control agenda’ and the workability of the ‘acceptance agenda.’ You might even leave feeling hopeful about creative hopelessness!

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Explain how the functions of behaviors are related to assessing the “workability” of behavior.
2. Describe how creative hopelessness involves a functional assessment of behavior.
3. Demonstrate at least one creative hopelessness intervention that can move your clients toward their values.

### **135. PBT: Is it as actually as easy as 1-2-3? Challenges and opportunities within clinical practice and research domains**

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Original data*

Categories: Methods/approaches for individual variation, PBT

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Samuel D. Spencer, Ph.D., University of North Texas

Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville

Mercedes Woolley, M.S., Utah State University

Nicholas C Borgogna, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham

Robyn D. Walser, Ph.D., Trauma and Life Consultation and Psychological Services; University of California, Berkeley; National Center for PTSD; Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinical Services

Brandon Gaudiano, Ph.D., Brown University and Butler Hospital

Advances within process-based therapy (PBT) call for a shift in how we conceptualize and target both human struggle and resilience. This manifests in greater prioritization of individual variability, along with the use of innovative methodological practices appropriate for individual-level analyses. Such a paradigm shift, while promising, seems likely to upend longstanding practices within the protocols-for-syndromes era and nomothetic inferential statistics, respectively. This symposium brings together leading researchers and clinicians within CBS to discuss opportunities and challenges for moving the PBT enterprise forward in terms of both clinical and research domains. The first paper provides a concise yet comprehensive summary of a PBT approach. The second paper showcases a data-driven clinical application of PBT. The third paper presents a conceptual overview of areas for growth and opportunities within PBT from a research perspective. Finally, two senior CBS leaders with expertise in research and clinical domains, respectively, will lead a discussion regarding PBT. Through this symposium, we seek to improve mental health practices by highlighting challenges and opportunities within the novel area of PBT.

- *Introductory Overview of Process-Based Therapy (PBT)*

Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., University of Louisville  
Eric Lee, Ph.D., Southern Illinois University

This presentation will provide an overview of the conceptual foundations of PBT, describing it using five guiding principles: (a) thinking in terms of process (relationships/function of problems and strengths), (b) considering the individual in their unique context, (c) tailoring assessment and treatment to the individual, (d) attending to workability relative to the client's goals, and (e) being empirically minded. It will also cover assumptions underlying PBT, what PBT is not, the rationale behind this approach, and key features of PBT. The objective is to provide a broad overview of PBT ideas, rather than an in-depth theoretical analysis of this approach.

- *Network-Informed Process-Based Therapy for Trichotillomania: Lessons from a Case Series*

Mercedes G. Woolley, Utah State University  
Michael P. Twohig, Utah State University  
Michael E. Levin, Utah State University

The feasibility and clinical utility of idiographic, process-based therapy (PBT) remain underexplored, raising questions about the practical demands of intensive data collection and the adaptability of network-informed interventions in clinical practice. This case series examines the feasibility and clinical utility of a PBT approach for trichotillomania, guided by data-derived network case formulations for two clients. Ecological momentary assessment (EMA) data were analyzed using individual-level structural equation models within a vector autoregressive framework (Lane et al., 2019), identifying personalized psychological networks capturing dynamic relationships between hair-pulling urges, cognitions, affective states, and behavioral responses. These networks informed case conceptualization and treatment planning, enabling targeted interventions tailored to each client's dominant processes. Therapy trajectories were continuously adjusted based on real-time EMA data and client feedback, ensuring alignment with evolving symptom patterns and treatment preferences. Comparative pre- and post-treatment network models illustrate symptom changes and shifts in network connectivity following PBT. This presentation will showcase the application of PBT with idiographic networks, highlighting successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing this approach in real-world clinical practice.

- *No Shortage of Opinions: Growth Areas for Process-Based Therapy*

Nicholas C. Borgogna Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham

Process-based therapy (PBT) represents a fundamental shift in clinical psychological science. The broad aims and innovations of PBT will be presented by other authors in this symposium. The current presentation will outline growth areas for the PBT research program that are critical but offered in the spirit of equipoise. The following criticisms will be presented with potential solutions: (1) PBT researchers must find a way to demonstrate incremental superiority to extant approaches. Why learn PBT if my Adlerian approach works? (2) PBT researchers must come to a consensus on whether ecological momentary assessment (EMA) is an essential element of the intervention and/or research design. Do the ideographic networks discussed in PBT texts exclusively require EMA? (3) It has been eight years since Hayes and Hofmann's (2017) initial World Psychiatry paper, yet PBT has not measurably expanded beyond ACBS. Is it catching on? It is hoped that through a discussion of these concerns (and potential solutions) that the PBT research program can move forward in a manner that alleviates suffering for a greater number of people.

Educational Objectives:



1. Articulate key tenets of a PBT approach and list ways in which this approach differs from traditional practices.
2. Apply conceptual principles of PBT to applied clinical practice domains.
3. Describe challenges and opportunities for expanding PBT in both clinical and research domains.

### 136. Resilience, Compassion, and Mental Health: Contextual Behavioral Interventions Across Life Challenges

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Original data*

Categories: Behavioral or contextual neuroscience, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Health / behavioral medicine, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Mobile or digital technology, Cognitive Defusion, Thought Believability, Psychological Flexibility Model, Compassion, Depression, Process-based therapy, Internet addiction, Experiential avoidance, Idionomics, Bereavement, Autism, Parenting stress, Mindfulness, Resilience, Mediation analysis

*Target Audience: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Gallier**

Chair: Anne Finucane, Ph.D., University of Edinburgh  
 Morgan Alexis Palmer, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Marcela Matos, Ph.D., University of Coimbra, Portugal  
 Cristóbal E Hernández, Ph.D., Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez  
 Yongshen Feng, M.Sc., The University of Hong Kong

This collection of five studies explores the interplay of resilience, compassion, and mental health through the lens of contextual behavioral science. Each study highlights how psychological flexibility, mindfulness, and compassion-based processes support individuals navigating life stressors and emotional adversity. One study identifies grit, need for cognition, and psychological flexibility as key predictors of emotional outcomes following a learned helplessness task. Another investigates the biological and psychological benefits of Compassionate Mind Training for teachers, including effects on heart rate variability and gene expression. A third study uses individualized time-series analyses to reveal how avoidance-driven internet use can perpetuate depressive symptoms, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness and flexible responding. The fourth study presents My Grief My Way, an ACT-informed online bereavement tool shown to enhance coping and normalize grief. Lastly, a study with parents of autistic children demonstrates how mindfulness-based resilience and psychological flexibility reduce parenting stress. Together, these studies underscore the promise of compassion- and flexibility-based interventions in fostering resilience and improving mental health across diverse life contexts.

- *Predicting Affect and Altering Thought Believability In the Context of a Learned Helplessness Paradigm*

Morgan Palmer, B.A., Western Michigan University  
 Marcus Cunha, B.S., Western Michigan University  
 Aqdas Khan, B.S., Western Michigan University  
 Scott Gaynor, Ph.D., Western Michigan University

This study examined whether psychological flexibility variables predicted affect following a computerized Learned Helplessness (LH) task. Ninety-five participants completed the LH task. The overall multiple regression models were significant, with the best predictors identifying Grit ( $t(93) = 2.284, p = .025$ ), Need for Cognition ( $t(93) = 2.931, p = .004$ ), and Psychological Flexibility ( $t(93) = -1.916, p = .059$ ) as the strongest predictors of affect. The study also investigated the impact of participants receiving computerized training in vocalizing cognitive defusion strategies. Prior to the LH task, half of the participants ( $n = 43$ ) received training using self-generated negative thoughts. The believability ratings (before versus after the training) significantly decreased for Labeling ( $t(40) = 6.91, p < .001$ ), Musical Thoughts ( $t(42) = 7.84, p < .001$ ), Funny Voices ( $t(42) = 6.63, p < .001$ ), and Word Repetition ( $t(42) = 7.41, p < .001$ ). However, these reductions did not predict affect or fusion following the LH task, likely due to the task failing to induce significant negative affect.

- *Compassion in Action: Exploring the Psychophysiological and Genetic Impact of Compassionate Mind Training*

Marcela Matos, Ph.D., University of Coimbra, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioural Interventi  
 Paulo Rodrigues-Santos, M.Sc., Laboratory of Immunology and Oncology, Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC), University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal; Center for Innovation  
 Luana Sousa, M.Sc., Laboratory of Immunology and Oncology, Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC), University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal; Center for Innovation  
 Margarida Pedroso, Lima Ph.D., University of Coimbra, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioural Interventi  
 Steve Cole, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences, Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology-Oncology, Norman Cousins Center, Jonsson Comprehensive  
 Robert Kumsta, Ph.D., Laboratory for Stress, Pain, and Gene-Environment Interplay, Department of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Université du Luxembourg  
 Lara Palmeira, Ph.D., University of Coimbra, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioural Interventi  
 Ana Galhardo, Ph.D., Marina Cunha, Ph.D., University of Coimbra, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioural Interventi  
 COMP-S Project Team, University of Coimbra, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioural Interventi  
 Paul Gilbert, University of Derby, College of Health, Psychology & Social Care, Derby, United Kingdom

Promoting mental and physical health, alongside efforts to enhance overall well-being, is a critical global objective. Contextual behavioral approaches, namely compassion-focused interventions, have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering psychosocial and physiological well-being. This study examines preliminary findings on the effects of an eight-week Compassionate Mind Training (CMT-T) intervention on psychophysiological well-being, immune response markers, gene expression and epigenetic correlates linked to stress, inflammation, and prosociality (Conserved Transcriptional Response to Adversity, CTRA; Oxytocin Receptor Gene, OXTR). A pilot non-controlled study was conducted with public-school teachers ( $n = 36$ ) assessed at four time points: 8 weeks before CMT-T, pre-intervention, post-intervention, and 3-month follow-up. Assessments included self-report measures of compassion and well-being, heart rate variability (HRV), and biological markers analyzed through blood and saliva samples. Preliminary findings on the impact of CMT-T on psychological processes and wellbeing indicators, parasympathetic regulation (HRV), immune response, CTRA gene expression (type I interferon response, antibody synthesis, pro-inflammatory genes), and OXTR methylation will be presented, with implications to contextual behavioral science discussed.

- *Finding "loops": A process-based account of the relationship between depression, escape and internet addiction*

Cristóbal Hernández, Ph.D., Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez  
 Joseph Ciarrochi, Ph.D., Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University  
 Steven C. Hayes, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Nevada, Reno  
 Clarissa Ong, Ph.D., Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, University of Louisville  
 Alex Behn, Ph.D., Escuela de Psicología, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile  
 José Antonio Garcés, M.A., Escuela de Psicología, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez  
 Baljinder K. Sahdra, Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University

Research has shown positive and negative effects of the internet on mental health; however, media overuse, often termed internet addiction, has been reliably associated with symptoms of depression, in particular when individuals use the internet to avoid getting in touch with negative experiences and in turn create them, creating a vicious cycle or loop. From a process-based perspective, this study aimed to evaluate the extent to which such vicious cycles apply at the level of the individual. We measured 181 adolescents and young adults with an ecological momentary assessment methodology for 12 days. We conducted time series analyses one individual at a time and developed a novel algorithm to identify this loop, finding that the 16% of participants who displayed it had a 3.5 times greater likelihood of being classified as internet addicts. Our results highlight the importance of individual functional dynamics in differentiating when internet usage might be helpful or harmful for mental health and human growth. Practical applications are discussed, as individualized methods can be also applied in clinical settings.

- *My Grief My Way: Development of an online ACT resource to improve coping and quality of life after bereavement*

Anne Finucane, Ph.D., University of Edinburgh  
 David Gillanders, DCLinPsy, University of Edinburgh  
 Anne Canny, Ph.D., University of Edinburgh  
 Emily Harrop, Ph.D., Cardiff University  
 Brooke Swash, Ph.D., University of Chester  
 Juliet Spiller, Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh

Lucy Selman, Ph.D., University of Bristol  
 Aileen Nielson, University of Edinburgh  
 Nicholas Hulbert-Williams, Ph.D., Edge Hill University  
 My Grief My Way Advisory Group, University of Edinburgh

My Grief My Way is an online bereavement support intervention underpinned by Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): <https://mygriefmyway.co.uk/>. The My Grief My Way prototype was launched in January 2024 and tested over nine months. In this presentation we describe the development of My Grief My Way and present data on its feasibility and acceptability. Phase 1 involved synthesizing theory, research evidence and stakeholder perspectives to develop an intervention logic model. The logic model underpinned the production of the My Grief My Way online resource. 20 bereavement support volunteers were trained in using My Grief My Way alongside their usual bereavement support; and 27 bereaved individuals were recruited to test the resource. Qualitative and quantitative data, collected via interview and questionnaires, indicated overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the resource, with perceived benefits including normalization of grief and better coping. My Grief My Way can help more people access evidence-based bereavement support in a timely manner. It is openly available and continues to be refined in line with user feedback.

- *Resilience and Psychological Flexibility Mediate Mindfulness and Parenting Stress in Parents of Autistic Children*

Yongshen Feng, M.Sc., School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Dali Lu, Ph.D., Department of Child Mental Health, Shenzhen Longhua Maternity and Child Healthcare Hospital, Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, China.

Tsz Ying Christine NG, B.Sc., M.Sc., School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Pui Hing Chau, BSocSc, Ph.D., School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Lily Man Lee Chan, BN, School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Jojo Yan Yan KWOK, MPH, Ph.D., School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China / Centre on Behavioral Health, Department

High parenting stress is associated with diminished quality of life in parents and more problematic behaviors in autistic children. Mindfulness interventions effectively mitigate parenting stress, with psychological flexibility and resilience acting as protective factors. This cross-sectional study examined the mediating roles of psychological flexibility and resilience in the relationship between mindfulness and parenting stress. We recruited a convenience sample of 181 Chinese parents of autistic children from Shenzhen Longhua Maternity and Child Healthcare Hospital in Shenzhen, China. This study assessed characteristics, parents' mindfulness, psychological flexibility, resilience, and parenting stress. Results indicated that parents experienced considerable parenting stress. Correlation analysis found that higher mindfulness, psychological flexibility, and resilience were associated with lower parenting stress. After controlling for children's age, gender, core symptom severity, parents' age, gender, marital status, and education levels, psychological flexibility and resilience completely mediated the relationship between mindfulness and parenting stress. These findings suggest that multicomponent psychological interventions may enhance the mental health of parents of children with autism, warranting further investigation. Note: The current use of "Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD, 孤独症谱系障碍)" aligns with the preferences of many individuals with ASD in mainland China and other regions, including Hong Kong (Lao et al., 2024). Additionally, as the majority of autistic respondents in the United Kingdom reported a preference for identity-first language (e.g., "autistic" rather than "person with autism") (Taboas et al., 2023), this study adopts identity-first terminology, such as "autistic children," in accordance with regional best practice. Both terms were acceptable and preferred by our study participants from hospitals in mainland China.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the role of cognitive defusion in reducing the believability of self-relevant negative thoughts.
2. Identify the impact of the Compassionate Mind Training intervention on psychological outcomes (compassion, self-criticism, fears of compassion, positive affect, wellbeing, burnout, stress) and the stability of the improvements over time.
3. Describe the process by which media overuse can contribute to a vicious cycle of avoidance and depressive symptoms, from an individualized and process-based perspective.

### 137. Toward Precision Psychosocial Care: Psychological Flexibility and Biopsychosocial Processes Across Chronic Illness

**Symposium** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Original data, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Academics or education, Health / behavioral medicine, Methods/approaches for individual variation, Dissemination or global health strategies, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Processes of change, Health / behavioral medicine, ACT, advanced lung cancer, fatigue interference, caregiver burden, RCT, Chronic pain, PBAT, Migraine, Pain, Process-based therapy, Gastro-intestinal disease

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oakley**

Chair: Felicia T.A. Sundström, M.Sc., Department of Psychology, Uppsala University

Huiyuan Li, Ph.D., Fudan University; The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Vasilis Vasilou, Ph.D., University of Oxford, NDORMS

Andreas Larsson, M.Sc., Ph.D., Lic Psychologist, Mid Sweden University

Chronic illnesses such as cancer, pain conditions, endometriosis, migraine, and IBD often involve significant psychological distress and variability in symptom expression, underscoring the need for flexible, person-centered interventions. This session brings together six studies that explore how psychological flexibility and process-based approaches enhance understanding and treatment of these conditions. An ACT intervention for lung cancer patients and caregivers shows promise for reducing fatigue interference and caregiver burden. In endometriosis, idiographic and single-case designs offer a novel lens on ACT's mechanisms. A dyadic pain study reveals that psychological flexibility in one partner benefits the other's well-being, while a migraine study highlights cognitive fusion and pain catastrophizing as key mediators of disability. Longitudinal data in fibromyalgia and endometriosis challenge static views of comorbid depression, revealing dynamic symptom fluctuations. Lastly, a 10-year follow-up of individuals with IBD uncovers subtype-specific links between physical symptoms and mental health. Together, these studies support tailored, process-based psychosocial care that adapts to individual patterns of distress and functioning across diverse chronic health populations.

- *Effects of ACT on fatigue interference in patients with advanced lung cancer and caregiving burden: A pilot RCT*

Huiyuan Li, Ph.D., Fudan University; The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cho Lee Wong, Ph.D., The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cancer-related fatigue is common in patients with advanced lung cancer, only interfering with patients' health-related quality of life but also increasing the caregivers' caregiving burden. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) may effectively improve fatigue interference and caregiver burden. This study aimed to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effects of ACT on fatigue interference and caregiver burden. An assessor-blinded pilot randomised controlled trial was conducted. 40 advanced lung cancer patient-caregiver dyads were randomly allocated into either an online six-session ACT plus health education group (n=20) or health education control group (n=20). The primary outcomes were feasibility, fatigue interference and caregiver burden. Outcomes were measured at baselines (T0), one-week post-intervention (T1). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the feasibility and acceptability of the intervention in a subsample of 10 participants from the intervention group. This pilot trial supports the feasibility and acceptability of ACT for patients with advanced lung cancer patient-caregiver dyads. Future studies with full-scale samples are recommended to evaluate the long-term effects of ACT in this population.

- *EndoACT: Effects and Experiences of ACT for Endometriosis-Related Chronic Pain*

Felicia T.A. Sundström, M.Sc., Uppsala University

Amani Lavefjord, M.Sc., Uppsala University

Sanna Östergård, M.Sc., Kungshälsan - Region Jönköping

Monica Buhrman, Ph.D., Uppsala University

Lance McCracken, Ph.D., Uppsala University

Chronic pain from endometriosis severely impacts quality of life, highlighting the need to integrate psychological treatments with medical care (Zondervan et al., 2020). Acceptance- and mindfulness-based treatments show promise (e.g. Hansen et al., 2023), and idiographic methods have been recognized as crucial for understanding endometriosis-related pain (Sundström et al., 2025). However, no study has comprehensively applied idiographic approaches to explore treatment mechanisms and individual responses.

To address this gap, we are evaluating a manualized, internet-delivered Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) intervention using a single-case experimental design (SCED) with multiple baselines over 7–8 weeks ( $N = 5-10$ ). Primary outcomes include daily functioning, psychological flexibility, quality of life, and depressive symptoms. Data collection integrates daily self-reports (both standard and idiographic items), standardized measures, and semi-structured interviews for deeper insight into short- and long-term treatment effects.

Findings will contribute to the development of individualized, accessible psychological treatments for women with endometriosis-related pain, ultimately improving quality of life and reducing psychological distress.

- *A dyadic examination of Psychological Flexibility as a coping behavior hub in chronic pain adaptation: Greece & Cyprus Chapter Sponsored*

Vasilis S. Vasiliou, Ph.D., University of Oxford, NDORMS

George Mavroeidis, Ph.D., University of Crete, Greece

Evangelos Karademas, University of Crete, Greece

Maria Karekla, Ph.D., University of Cyprus

Partners of chronic pain patients (CP) play an active role in pain management by shaping dyadic regulatory systems, influencing both individuals' adaptation and well-being (Goubert & Bernardes, 2025). Recent models emphasize the need to study dyadic regulation within a framework that includes central network hubs (Karademas, 2021). This cross-sectional study examined psychological flexibility (PF) as a key regulatory coping behaviour hub in CP adaptation among  $n=55$  couples. Employing the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIC), we analyzed the moderating effects of both partners' PF (AAQ-II) on well-being (SF-36), and distress (HADS). Results indicated that individuals with CPs' Psychological inflexibility were negatively associated with their partners' general health ( $b = -.27, p < .05$ ) and emotional well-being ( $b = -.27, p < .05$ ). Moreover, spouses' Psychological flexibility was positively associated with patients' general health ( $b = .33, p < .05$ ), but no reciprocal effects were observed ( $p > .05$ ). Enhancing psychological flexibility in CP patients may benefit their partners' well-being. Future longitudinal and experience sampling research should explore how PF functions as a central hub within a CP adaptation hub.

- *Psychological Predictors of Pain and Disability in Migraine: A Process-Based Approach*

Andreas Larsson, Ph.D., Mid Sweden University

Joakim Rytter, Mid Sweden University

Vidar Ahlqvist, Mid Sweden University

Migraine is a debilitating condition influenced by psychological processes such as cognitive fusion, psychological inflexibility, and pain catastrophizing. This study employs a process-based approach to examine how these factors predict pain-related disability and life outcomes.

A quantitative cross-sectional design was used to assess migraine symptoms, psychological flexibility, and pain acceptance. Key measures included HIT-6, MPFI, PCS, CPAQ-8, and SWLS. Boruta feature selection was applied to identify the most relevant PBAT predictors of life satisfaction and pain acceptance. Mediation analyses were conducted to explore whether psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion mediate the relationship between selected PBAT factors and outcomes.

Findings provide insight into core psychological mechanisms underlying migraine-related distress and guide the development of process-based interventions. This study contributes to refining targeted treatments by isolating key psychological variables influencing migraine disability and well-being.

- *Beyond comorbid diagnoses: Treating people instead of conditions*

Felicia T.A. Sundström, M.Sc., Uppsala University

Amani Lavefjord, M.Sc., Uppsala University

Monica Buhrman, Ph.D., Uppsala University

Lance McCracken, Ph.D., Uppsala University

Depression is frequently conceptualized as a stable comorbid disorder in chronic pain (Surah et al., 2014). However, traditional diagnostic and research frameworks often rely on single time-point assessments (Tenti et al., 2022), potentially overlooking substantial intraindividual variability in depressive symptoms. To examine the stability of depressive symptoms over time in participants with chronic pain data were collected from a cohort of women with fibromyalgia, endometriosis, and vulvodynia. Depressive symptoms were assessed once using the PHQ-9, and twice daily using the PHQ-2 for up to 42 days. Intraindividual and interindividual variability in depressive symptomatology was analyzed, with a particular focus on within-person fluctuations challenging the notion of depression as a homogenous comorbid disorder and demonstrate the value of within- (as opposed to between-) person analyses.



Educational Objectives:

1. Assess the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effects of ACT on advanced lung cancer patient-caregiver dyads.
2. Identify psychological flexibility as a core coping behaviour network hub in chronic pain adaptation.
3. Analyze the role of psychological inflexibility and cognitive fusion in mediating the impact of migraine-related distress on pain acceptance and life satisfaction.

### 138. Lean in with Love: Transdisciplinary Team Collaboration in Schools

**Panel** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Academics or education, Behavior analysis, CBS in Schools/Education

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Holly K Blais, M.Ed., BCBA, IBA, LABA, Projectlife Services

Discussant: Thomas G. Szabo, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

Robin L Martinez, M.A., BCBA, RadEd Collective

John Powell, M.S., Mind, Body, Spirit, LLC

Katie Palmer, EdD, BCBA, VigeoBx

Love can be understood as a deliberate and values-driven commitment to act in ways that promote the well-being, dignity, and humanity of others. This panel will address the preconditions required for a school to move forward with love. Subsequently, panelists will examine the roles that CBS and ACT play in educational settings to cultivate collaborative environments - promoting well-being by embracing diversity and addressing social justice issues among students and staff. Drawing inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr.'s notion of the strength to love, we will investigate strategies for meeting resistance with compassion and tension with understanding. By addressing the distinct challenges experienced by transdisciplinary teams in educational settings, the panel aims to equip stakeholders with practical tools for cultivating inclusive, supportive, and psychologically flexible learning environments that benefit all members of the school community.

Educational Objectives:

1. Articulate strategies for encouraging educators to take committed action amidst uncertainty.
2. Describe methods for data collection on ACT-based intervention for teachers and students.
3. Identify at least two of their own behaviors that they could change to improve their effectiveness in schools.

### 139. Shaping Acceptance in Session: Let's go beyond talking about it

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes,

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Nottoway**

Ashley M Moskovich, Ph.D., Duke University School of Medicine

Acceptance, defined as the active willingness to experience private events (e.g., thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories, etc.) without unnecessary attempts to escape, avoid or otherwise control these experiences, is a key component of psychological flexibility. Despite its centrality to the model, it can be challenging to go beyond talking about acceptance to shaping new ways of interacting with difficult private events in real-time. This 1.5 hour workshop will first provide a brief technical overview of acceptance, then will offer a practical approach to implementing acceptance interventions, and will lastly provide concrete strategies for shaping acceptance in session. The goal is for clinicians to leave this workshop with a deeper understanding of acceptance work and practical strategies they can incorporate into their current practice. Teaching methods may include didactic presentation, discussion, demonstration, role-play and experiential exercises.

Educational Objectives:



1. Define acceptance and explain its role in psychological flexibility and therapeutic practice.
2. Describe a practical approach to implementing acceptance interventions.
3. Conduct an acceptance intervention with a client in session.

#### **140. Heartfelt Practice: Alleviating Suffering with Innovative Applications of Compassion-Focused ACT**

**Panel** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Theory and philosophical foundations, Compassion, Mindfulness, Emerging Adults, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Exposure, Fear of Cancer Recurrence

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Nicholas L Dynan, M.A., Kean University

Chair: Keryn Kleiman, Psy.D., Cognitive Behavioral Associates

Dennis Tirch, Ph.D., The Center for CFT

Leslie Regan, M.A., Kean University

Sarah L Kuper, M.A., Kean University

Lauren Todd, Ph.D., Center for Compassion Focused Therapy

Laura Silberstein-Tirch, Psy.D., The Center for CFT

Compassion has been shown to play a significant role in psychological and physiological well-being (Gilbert, 2009; Gilbert & Choden, 2013). A generation of emerging cognitive-behavioral therapies emerging from the CBS tradition have now begun to center the need for cultivation of compassion for self and others (Tirch et al., 2014). Building on the tradition of research-informed practice that has characterized behavioral and cognitive treatment, clinical researchers developing these interventions integrate scientific understanding of human behavior and evidence-based psychological processes.

This panel includes researchers and practitioners exploring and evaluating compassion-focused interventions for psychological distress across a range of contexts and populations including adolescents, college students, and patients in medical settings. Interventions include both transdiagnostic approaches to human distress as well as problem-specific treatments for concerns such as OCD, fear of cancer recurrence, eating disorders, as well as anxiety and depression. Panelists will share the theoretical underpinnings for understanding and employing compassion-related processes, discuss the relevance of compassion, and describe specific practices, skills, and techniques that clinicians can consider applying in their current practice settings.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe methods for integrating compassion-based approaches with empirically supported therapies, such as ACT.
2. Analyze how compassion-focused interventions can be adapted to meet the unique needs of specific populations and settings.
3. Identify common clinical challenges in introducing compassion as a focus of treatment and demonstrate strategies to address them effectively.

#### **141. The Art and Science of Trust in Clinical Practice**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Behavior analysis, Trust, Therapeutic Relationship, Intervention, Assent

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Tommy Parry III, BCBA, LMHC, Parry Behavioral Consulting, LLC

Jonathan Amey, M.Ed., A.I.M.S.

Trust is a cornerstone of effective clinical practice and human relationships, shaping interactions across personal, professional, and societal contexts. This workshop offers a comprehensive concept analysis of trust by exploring its essential defining characteristics such as reliability, integrity,

competence, benevolence, vulnerability, and predictability—along with additional features including emotional connection, mutuality, and institutional support. Integrating perspectives from behavior analysis and contextual behavioral science, participants will examine how trust is built, maintained, and sometimes neglected in clinical settings. Drawing on recent publications by Linnehan et al. (2023) and Abdel-Jalil et al. (2023), interactive discussions, case studies, and applied exercises will provide practical strategies to enhance client engagement, staff communication, and ethical practice. Attendees will gain valuable tools to create bi-directional, trust-based interactions, ultimately advancing compassionate and responsive clinical care.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Identify and explain the essential characteristics and contextual features of trust.
2. Critically analyze how trust is established, maintained, and sometimes neglected within clinical environments.
3. Design and implement practical strategies to foster bi-directional, trust-based interactions.

#### **142. When Your Client's Beliefs Scare You: Values-Driven Therapy in a Polarized World**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Professional development, Political Polarization, Perspective-Taking

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Jessica Goodnight, Ph.D., Anxiety and Trauma Clinic of Atlanta

In an era of deep political division, therapists may find themselves working with clients whose beliefs feel unsettling, threatening, or personally painful. Rather than directly challenging beliefs, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) fosters psychological flexibility, perspective-taking, and values-based growth, an approach aligned with research showing that interventions based on perspective-taking, rather than confrontation, are effective in reducing political polarization (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2025). This experiential workshop will help clinicians navigate their own emotional responses to politically challenging clients while staying grounded in their professional values.

Participants will engage in structured exercises to explore their personal reactions to clients with political differences, including perspective-taking, identifying underlying values, and aligning therapeutic responses with those values. By the end of this workshop, participants will have concrete tools to maintain therapeutic presence, set values-aligned boundaries, and cultivate a stance that allows them to work effectively—or decide when it's best to refer out.

**Educational Objectives:**

1. Identify emotional and cognitive barriers that arise when working with clients who hold politically challenging beliefs.
2. Practice perspective-taking to reduce fusion with values-misaligned beliefs.
3. Apply values-aligned strategies for maintaining professional boundaries and deciding when to continue working with politically challenging clients.

#### **143. Motivational Interviewing and ACT: Theoretical and Practical Considerations for Integration**

**Workshop** • 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Components: *Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Other, Motivation

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Michelle Drapkin, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, CBT Center  
Onna R Brewer, Ph.D., Brewer & Bristow Training  
Marian F Rigsbee, LCSW, Orion Counseling & Consulting LLC

This workshop will include a practical and theoretical discussion of our experiences and approaches to integrating ACT with Motivational Interviewing (MI), a conversation style derived from clinical practice and person-centered counseling. MI's origins are in addiction treatment with demonstrated efficacy across a range of health behaviors and helping professions. Both MI and ACT have wide applicability across cultures and contexts and MI may be more effective with marginalized populations (Miller & Rollnick, 2023). In this workshop, we will compare and contrast key concepts in ACT and MI, including acceptance, values, behavior change, the role of language, and perspective-taking, all central in both approaches. We will include demonstrations of the integration of ACT and MI in the context of mental health and substance use behavior change in addition to experiential opportunities for participants. We will discuss how integrating MI and ACT has mutually enhanced and enriched both approaches in our practices; theoretical and practical challenges to integration; and explore questions raised about future directions for transdiagnostic and process-based psychotherapy (Hayes and Hoffman, 2018).

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify key similarities and differences between Motivational Interviewing and ACT.
2. Describe practical strategies for integrating Motivational Interviewing and ACT.
3. Explain the benefits of learning theoretical and practical skills to integrate Motivational Interviewing and ACT for enhancing therapeutic alliance and promoting behavior change and personal growth.

Sunday Morning 10:45 AM

### 144. Connecting to Our Common Humanity: Targeted Clinical Interventions for Cultivating True Belonging

**Workshop** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Yearning to Belong, Loneliness, Self-as-Context, Social Isolation

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Borgne**

Meg McKelvie, Ph.D., ImpACT Psychology Colorado  
Debbie Sorensen, Ph.D., Private Practice, Denver Colorado

Who among us does not yearn to belong? The longing to be loved and included is part of our evolutionary history; to belong meant our individual and collective survival. Yet, "while this yearning is healthy, many of the ways our minds try to satisfy it cause us psychic pain" (Hayes, *Liberated Mind*, 2019).

In our connection-starved and increasingly isolated culture, we can become entangled with the conceptualized self, attempting to gain acceptance by presenting ourselves as special, smart, or in need of great care. We misdirect our yearning to belong towards dead-end strategies like perfectionism, people pleasing, and achievement, becoming trapped in endless self-improvement. We settle for superficial self-esteem, but ultimately feel disconnected from ourselves and others.

In this workshop, we will discuss belonging work as a universal and compassionate framework to help us exit overly-binding self-narratives and behavioral patterns of control and avoidance. We will practice targeted clinical interventions to identify and redirect mismanaged yearning to belong, opening clients up to a deep-rooted sense of true belonging and interconnected sense of we.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Discuss the universal human experience of yearning for belonging.
2. Describe ways the desire for belonging can be mismanaged and lead to patterns of control and avoidance.
3. Demonstrate targeted clinical interventions for mismanaged belonging through experiential exercises and real-plays.

### 145. Clinicians as Caregivers: The Application of Psychological Flexibility With Marginalized Patients and Families

**Panel** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Original data*

Categories: Social justice / equity / diversity, Health / behavioral medicine, Caregiver, Psychological Flexibility, Vulnerable populations

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside A**

Chair: Crissy Oules, M.S., NYC Health + Hospitals Bellevue Hospital Center

Stephanie V Caldas, Ph.D., Hassenfeld Children's Hospital at NYU Langone

Ashlyne Mullen, Psy.D., Flexible Mind Therapy

Danielle Moyer, Ph.D., Oregon Health & Science University

Jackaira Espinal, Psy.D., New York Health + Hospitals/ Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center

This panel will identify challenges and concrete solutions for providing psychological tools to caregivers and families, while navigating care in a political era in which practitioners and caregivers alike face legal, social, and existential threats amplifying existing challenges in our healthcare system. Panelists will discuss the role of psychological flexibility at the systems level, practitioner level, and within family systems—how to use the principles to minimize burnout and maximize the impact of our work.

Discussion—based in clinical practice, research, and application to our work as practitioners—include: 1) practitioner-led initiatives working with migrant families in a pediatric setting; 2) community partnerships for private practitioners lacking institutional resources; 3) distrust in systems and power differentials in our role and use of cultural humility with underserved & diverse families; 4) transgender and gender diverse youth and caregivers, focusing on psychological flexibility among parents; 5) substance use population and housing insecurity in a city facing diminishing resources. Discussion will highlight the role of psychological flexibility-based tools in working with vulnerable populations.

Educational Objectives:

1. Apply psychological flexibility-based tools for providers supporting marginalized populations.
2. Apply findings from recent research in psychological flexibility on caregiver support in their role as providers in clinical practice with marginalized populations.
3. Identify, create, and connect with networks outside of the hospital setting to support their work as clinical mindfulness-based providers of marginalized populations.

#### **146. Embrace the Chaos: Increasing parent context sensitivity and resilience**

**Workshop** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Role play*

Categories: Processes of change, Clinical Parent-Child

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Bayside B&C**

Chris McCurry, Ph.D., Private Practice

Lisa Coyne, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School/McLean & New England Center for OCD and Anxiety

Family life can be chaotic. Parenting is often conducted on the fly, in contexts in which contingencies are delayed, inconsistent, or ambiguous. Competing agendas abound. Antecedents can be murky, with a poor “signal to noise” ratio. Immediate consequences for values-driven parenting behavior may be less than positively reinforcing: “I hate you!” The fruits of one’s parenting efforts in the present may be many years from

ripening. Unhelpful parenting self-stories and rules (new and old) can undermine context sensitivity and a parent’s ability to manage difficult situations. Parents are left feeling ineffective, frustrated, guilty, and depleted.

Through didactics and discussion, we will explore the contributors to parental context insensitivity, ineffectiveness, and burnout. Case examples, exercises, and roleplays will provide process-based strategies for helping parents become more mindfully present, psychologically flexible, values-oriented, compassionate (child and self), and resilient when faced with a range of common parenting challenges.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the concept of, and factors contributing to, parent context insensitivity.
2. Utilize process-based ACT techniques to increase parents' context sensitivity.
3. Devise plans to help parents create kind environments in which to nurture their children and foster their own resilience.

**147. Innovations Coast to Coast: Listening to Veterans' Experiences to Tailor ACT in the Veterans Health Administration**

Symposium • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Original data*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Veterans' healthTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate***Location: Edgewood**

Chair: Erin D Reilly, Ph.D., Department of Veterans Affairs

Discussant: Wyatt R. Evans, Ph.D., ABPP, VA North Texas HCS

Carter H Davis, Ph.D., VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Victoria Ameral, Ph.D., VISN 1 New England MIRECC, VA Bedford Healthcare System

Megan M Kelly, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System/UMass Chan Medical School

Dan Tassone, Ph.D., Sierra Pacific MIRECC, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

U.S. Military Veterans report high rates of mental health concerns (Greenberg & Hoff, 2021) as well as elevated rates of chronic health conditions (Betancourt et al., 2021) compared to civilians. Veterans are a large population that is characterized by individual diversity and a distinctive culture shaped by shared experiences. Therefore, treatments should be designed with Veterans' unique needs and preferences at the forefront. ACT shows promise as an acceptable and effective treatment among Veterans (Donahue et al., 2024). Most prominently, ACT for depression (ACT-D; Walser et al., 2015) recently reached hundreds of Veterans nationwide through a large-scale implementation effort in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA; Grau et al., 2023). This symposium will describe how qualitative input from Veterans and collaborators has informed innovative ACT protocols to address other pressing needs within VHA, including the treatment of substance use disorders, men's sexual issues, and brain health. Data on the initial utility of these tailored interventions will be presented, along with lessons learned. Individualizing ACT using Veteran-centered, idiomonic approaches can expand care options for this unique population.

- *Veteran and Provider feedback on a values-based intervention for early medication treatment for Opioid Use Disorder*

Victoria Ameral, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Molly Sawdy, M.A., Suffolk University

Erin D Reilly, MEd, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Megan M Kelly, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

During early treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD), Veterans face significant psychosocial challenges including unemployment, housing instability, and disrupted relationships. Medications for OUD (MOUD) are the gold standard treatment, but do not directly address the psychosocial needs that drive positive treatment outcomes. Values work as conceptualized by Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) supports personally meaningful functional goals and has shown promise in experimental work with people in early OUD treatment. This presentation will focus on the development of a brief, values-based intervention to support Veterans in early MOUD treatment using feedback from Veterans and providers. We interviewed Veterans in MOUD treatment across the recovery continuum (n=12) and an interdisciplinary group of providers (n=14) to elicit feedback on the focus, structure, and content of the values-based intervention. Rapid qualitative analysis of these interviews illustrated the importance of valued goals in OUD treatment and informed content additions including Veteran-specific ideas for managing the challenges of early treatment and connecting valued goals with treatment engagement and adherence. Future directions, including the ongoing open pilot, will be discussed.

- *Shifting Gears in the Bedroom: Cultivating Psychological Flexibility in Men's Sexual Health*

Dan Tassone, Ph.D., Sierra Pacific MIRECC, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Stéphanie Boyer, Ph.D., Queen's University

Samantha Levang, M.Sc., Queen's University

Jason E. Owen, Ph.D., National Center for PTSD, Dissemination and Training Division, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Kendra Ractliffe, Ph.D., VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Caroline Pukall, Ph.D., Queen's University

Sexual functioning issues are frequently co-morbid with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Bird et al., 2021) and relatively common among Veterans (Shepardson et al., 2021). But despite the consistent associations between sexual issues and negative psychosocial outcomes (e.g., poorer quality of life; Nunnink et al., 2012), psychotherapeutic interventions targeting sexual issues are typically unavailable through the Veterans Health Administration. Drawing from a sample of U.S. Veterans with PTSD (N = 153), we will briefly present findings on Veterans' need for help with sexual issues and their experiences seeking treatment. Then we will describe a five-session transdiagnostic men's sexual health group that was adapted for a residential PTSD treatment program. Grounded in ACT's core processes, the men's group aims to cultivate psychologically flexible responses to sexual issues. Skills taught in the group include defusing from unhelpful self-criticism, attending to the present moment, and pursuing values-driven sexual activities. Finally, we will discuss the sexual health outcomes of a similar group delivered to three civilian cohorts, and how these findings can inform the further development of our Veterans' group.

- *Development, implementation, and acceptability of an acceptance and commitment therapy-based pilot intervention for promoting brain health in older Veterans*

Carter H. Davis, Ph.D., Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Lawrence Ma, M.D., Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Marika B. Humber, Ph.D., Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Christine E. Gould, Ph.D., Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Brain health, defined as the holistic integration of cognitive, emotional, and motor systems (Chen et al., 2021), is associated with reduced dementia risk (Livingston et al., 2024). To promote brain health, clinicians often recommend lifestyle interventions such as physical activity, healthy diet, and staying mentally active. However, patients often encounter educational, emotional, and motivational barriers that impede implementation of these recommendations. We developed a patient group, Balanced Brain, that infuses brain health psychoeducation with ACT principles to better address these barriers. We obtained qualitative feedback from geriatrics and mental health providers in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to inform the development of Balanced Brain. We then used video telehealth to deliver the program to a pilot cohort of older Veterans. In this talk, we will describe the iterative development process of Balanced Brain, the feasibility of implementation within VHA, and participant acceptability of the program. Implications of using ACT to support the cognitive wellbeing of older adults, such as through acceptance of age-related changes and behavioral commitments to support brain health, will be explored.

- *Adapting an ACT Approach to Improving Social Support for Veterans with PTSD in Early Recovery from Alcohol Use Disorder: Qualitative Findings*

Megan M. Kelly, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Victoria Ameral, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Tracy Claudio, A.A., VA Bedford Healthcare System

Hannah Grigorian, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Scott Reece, B.A., VA Bedford Healthcare System

Erin D. Reilly, Ph.D., VA Bedford Healthcare System, UMass Chan Medical School

Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and co-occurring alcohol use disorder (AUD) experience many challenges to obtaining social support, including PTSD-related irritability, anger, and mistrust of others, social supports who also use alcohol, and relationship erosion due to alcohol-related problems. Few treatments address the combination of PTSD and alcohol-related barriers to social support for Veterans with PTSD and AUD. The present study focused on qualitative data collection for an adaptation of ACT to Improve Social Support for Veterans with PTSD for Veterans in early recovery from AUD. Qualitative analyses of interviews with Veterans with PTSD in early recovery from AUD (remission < 12 months, n=15) identified themes regarding treatment barriers (e.g., lack of self-compassion), treatment facilitators (e.g., nonjudgmental therapeutic focus), and treatment recommendations (e.g., how to navigate substance treatment settings, new coping skills to manage emotions, PTSD symptoms, and cravings, mix of individual and group therapy formats, involving family members, managing people who enable alcohol use). Overall, results identified important elements for an ACT social support intervention for veterans with PTSD in early recovery from AUD.



## Educational Objectives:

1. Describe psychological risk and resilience factors unique to Veteran clients as distinct from civilian clients.
2. Apply transdiagnostic ACT processes of change to help Veterans address barriers to health promotion in the areas of substance use disorders, men's sexual issues, and brain health.
3. Utilize qualitative feedback from Veterans to design ACT-based protocols for new clinical target areas.

**148. Scaling Psychological Flexibility: ACT-Based Innovations for Prevention, Intervention, and Systems Change**

Symposium • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Original data, Strategic planning, Case presentation, Didactic presentation*Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Health / behavioral medicine, Supervision and training, Social justice / equity / diversity, Processes of change, Professional development, Gender Affirmation, SUD, sleep, Adolescents, Eating disorders, implementation, multiple EBPs, community mental healthTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate***Location: Gallier**

Chair: Sean Wright, M.A., M.S., LMHC, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Liz Jacobs, M.A., LMHC, CHAS Health

Eric Morris, Ph.D., School of Psychology &amp; Public Health, La Trobe University Academic Psychology Unit, Northern Health

Alison DeLizza, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center

Abril Rangel-Pacheco, M.A., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Serra Nebati, B.A., Ibn Haldun University

This session presents five studies that highlight the adaptability and reach of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and contextual behavioral science (CBS) across clinical, preventative, and systemic domains. One study describes the co-development of a gender-affirming ACT-based intervention for transgender adults addressing substance use and HIV risk, guided by extensive community input. A second study investigates psychological inflexibility mechanisms—such as cognitive fusion and limited present moment awareness—in poor sleep, highlighting their moderating effects alongside transdiagnostic stress factors. A third project introduces the Brief Adolescent Depression Group (BADG), a time-efficient group model integrating ACT and CBT to address rising teen depression rates. A fourth study evaluates the accessibility and feasibility of an ACT-based online prevention program for women at risk of eating disorders—one of the first ACT applications in this domain. Finally, a mixed-methods study shares findings from an eight-year implementation of CBS-aligned practices in a community mental health center, offering insights into sustainable integration across therapeutic models. Collectively, these efforts demonstrate the scalability, flexibility, and contextual relevance of ACT and CBS in advancing mental health care.

- *Implementation of CBS-aligned practices in a community mental health center: Theory and initial outcomes*

Sean Wright, M.A., M.S., LMHC, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Liz Jacobs, LMHC, CHAS

Implementation of CBS-informed practices in systems of care that implement multiple evidence-based practices (including non CBS-aligned ones) has received limited empirical attention. We report the results of an 8 year project implementing CBS-aligned practices into routine care in a community mental health center. Using a mixed-methods approach, we describe the impact on several implementation strategies (primarily training and audit/feedback) on implementation outcomes (uptake, acceptability, practitioner confidence). We describe a model-agnostic approach to training that we have developed that is applicable to practitioners applying both CBS-aligned and other practices. This approach is consistent with recent calls for process-based therapy and avoids the stagnant debate among differing psychotherapy traditions. We demonstrate two tools developed to support clinical decision-making across time as practitioners develop professionally. Conceptualizing professional development as an equitable partnership between practitioners and supervisors/agencies, where the clinical interest of the practitioner can be harmonized with the evidence-base to ensure sustained delivery of high-quality care across diverse caseloads over

time, may be a key step in addressing the problem of experienced therapists leaving publicly-funded settings.

- *Examining psychological flexibility and other transdiagnostic psychological processes in poor sleep*

Eric M.J. Morris, La Trobe University & Northern Health, Melbourne Australia  
 Michael Glas, La Trobe University  
 Darcy Fahroedin, La Trobe University  
 Lauren Lawson, La Trobe University  
 Amanda Richdale, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University

This study explored the specific role of psychological inflexibility processes—experiential avoidance, cognitive fusion, and limited present moment awareness—in poor sleep quality, in the context of previously-identified transdiagnostic factors of intolerance of uncertainty, worry, rumination, and pre-sleep arousal. Previous research has shown that psychological inflexibility processes mediate the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and sleep quality, but these studies used unidimensional measures of psychological flexibility. Using a cross-sectional design, we tested hierarchical multiple regression and moderation models in a online survey sample of 318 individuals from Australia and New Zealand. Results indicated that poor sleep quality was associated with cognitive fusion, experiential avoidance, and limited present moment awareness. A full regression model explained 47% of sleep quality variance, with intolerance of uncertainty, rumination, and pre-sleep arousal as significant predictors of sleep quality. Additionally, cognitive fusion and limited present moment awareness were moderators that amplified the impact of moderate pre-sleep arousal on sleep quality. These findings add to the literature on the role of psychological inflexibility in the persistence of sleep difficulties.

- *Creation of a Brief, Values-Based Behavioral Group Intervention for Teens: The BADG Project*

Alison DeLizza, Ph.D., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Nichole Baker, Ph.D., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Melissa Hunter, Ph.D., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Abril Rangel-Pacheco, M.A., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Niki Pike, M.A., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Connor Kendzora, M.A., Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
 Brady Dobbs, Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

In 2020 an estimated 4.1 million adolescents in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode. Only 41.9% of depressed adolescents in the US receive treatment due in part to a lack of treatment options. Group therapy may provide an efficient and effective way to meet this treatment need. Most evidence-based group therapy models for teen depression include 2-hour weekly sessions for 14-16 weeks. However, research on temporal patterns of symptom improvement suggest that noticeable reductions in mental health symptoms occur, on average, between the 5th and 6th session, suggesting that brief therapy models can be effective. The Brief Adolescent Depression Group (BADG) was developed in response to the need for an efficient and updated group treatment model. BADG incorporates elements of ACT and CBT into eight, 60-minute weekly sessions. The proposed presentation will provide an overview of the process of development of the BADG protocol as well as session goals and content. The process of outcome assessment will be reviewed, and preliminary data on effectiveness of the BADG model will be presented.

- *ACT-ED: Accessibility and Feasibility of an ACT-Based Eating Disorder Prevention Program*

Emine Serra Nebati, Ph.D. (c), Ibn Haldun University  
 Hasan Turan Karatepe, M.D., Istanbul Medeniyet University  
 Ömer Mücahit Öztürk, M.D., Ibn Haldun University

Eating disorders are a group of serious disorders that typically show a chronic trend. An effective preventative intervention will not only protect individuals from the negative effects of eating disorders but also reduce the cost of eating disorder treatment for clinics and mental health professionals. To date, studies are mostly focused on the clinical group, with insufficient emphasis on the at-risk group, especially adults. Although studies have shown the efficacy of ACT in treatment of eating disorders, no research yet has studied ACT as a preventive intervention (as a Indicated Prevention Program) in high-risk adults. The target population of this research is women who demonstrate body dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviors.

This study sought to investigate the accessibility and feasibility of an online group prevention program developed for women at risk for eating disorders.

I will present the findings of this study which includes data from pretest and posttest. Participants completed the EDE-Q, BSQ-34, BI-AAQ, SAQ, FFMQ, CFQ, and PBQ (obsessive-compulsive and borderline subscales) and additional questions to assess accessibility.

## Educational Objectives:

1. Analyze practitioner interventions using the three dimensions of a model-agnostic framework for evidence-based practice.
2. Describe the role that psychological inflexibility processes play in insomnia and poor sleep quality.
3. Describe the Brief Adolescent Depression Group (BADG), including an overview of development and implementation of the model.

**149. CBS for Diverse Professional Contexts**

Symposium • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Literature review, Original data, Didactic presentation*Categories: Health / behavioral medicine, Mobile or digital technology, Behavior analysis, Processes of change, Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Organizational / Industrial psychology, Academics or education, Processes of change, Professional development, Workplace mental health, ACT, Nurses, Psychological well-being, Treatment Adherence, Perceived Trauma Coping Abilities, Self-Compassion and Cultural Differences in Adaptation, Career Counseling, Vocational Choice, Career Interventions, Higher EducationTarget Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced***Location: Oakley**

Chair: Timothy Moore, Ph.D., University of Minnesota Medical School  
 Khamisi Musanje, Ph.D., Makerere University  
 Andrés J Beltrán, B.S., Western Michigan University  
 Ching-yee Lam, Ph.D., Hong Kong Metropolitan University  
 Ela Ari, Ph.D., Faculty in Istanbul Medipol University, Psychology Department

Across diverse global and cultural contexts, working-age adults face mounting psychological demands that challenge their mental health and well-being. These five studies explore the application of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and related acceptance-based approaches to enhance psychological flexibility in vocational, healthcare, and crisis-response settings. From Ugandan mental health providers evaluating the social relevance and acceptability of ACT in low-resource workplaces, to new graduate nurses in China benefiting from ACT-enhanced well-being, findings reveal promising avenues for cultural adaptation and feasibility. Additional studies examine how ACT-informed strategies can improve adherence in clinical care, support trauma coping through experiential Psychological First Aid training among multicultural psychology students, and foster value-aligned vocational decision-making. Across studies, results highlight the significance of tailoring interventions to local needs, reducing stigma, and promoting resilience through psychological flexibility and self-compassion. Collectively, these papers underscore the broad applicability of ACT processes for supporting emotional, social, and professional adaptation—particularly in transitional, under-resourced, or high-stress contexts where mental health support is limited yet critically needed.

- *Social validity of acceptance-based workplace mental health training for use in a low resource setting*

Khamisi Musanje, Ph.D., Makerere University  
 Paul E. Flaxman, Ph.D., St. George, City University of London  
 Ross McIntosh, St. George, City University of London  
 Rosco Kasujja, Makerere University

In low-resource settings, working-age adults suffer a disproportionately higher mental health burden due to precarious work environments; yet access to evidence-based worksite mental health promotion programs remains limited because of costs and lack of professionals. Affordable and easy-to-implement programs need to be introduced in such contexts, but these programs should be of social importance to the beneficiaries. Acceptance-based approaches meet these criteria but have mainly been implemented and evaluated in high-income countries. Gauging the appropriateness of such programs for low-resource workplace settings is necessary. We engaged n=14 mental health providers working in Kampala-Uganda in a one-day workshop focused on using acceptance and commitment training. The providers shared feedback on the social importance of the program's goals and effects, and the acceptability of its procedures to Ugandan society. A deductive thematic approach was used to analyze data. The program's goals and effects were gauged as socially significant and the training process was acceptable. However, adjustments such as introducing communal values into the program, reducing session load, and integrating mental health awareness strategies, were suggested.

- *ACT and Vocational Choice: How Can Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Enhance Vocational Interventions?*

Andrés J. Beltrán, Western Michigan University

Vocational choice is a pivotal process that significantly impacts individuals' emotional, social, and economic well-being. Career choice interventions aim to support individuals in identifying vocational paths that align with their goals and values. This presentation explores the application of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to the challenges inherent in vocational decision-making. Drawing on a theoretical review and a clinical case study, it underscores the role of ACT processes and psychological flexibility in facilitating value-driven career decisions. Although empirical research in this area remains limited, preliminary evidence suggests that ACT offers substantial promise in addressing the complexities of vocational choice across diverse contexts. This presentation also reviews emerging literature on ACT-based interventions for career decision-making.

- *Acceptance and commitment therapy for supporting psychological well-being in new graduate nurses: A pilot RCT*

Ching-yee Lam, Hong Kong Metropolitan University  
Yim-wah Mak, Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
Sau-fong Leung, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Role transition induces significant stress in new graduate nurses (NGNs), affecting their psychological well-being (PWB). This paper presents findings from a pilot RCT aimed at evaluating the preliminary efficacy of an online group-based ACT combined with a career information seminar, compared to a control group receiving only the career seminar, in enhancing the PWB of NGNs. The study also assesses its feasibility. Data were collected from two universities, and outcomes were analyzed using generalized estimating equations (GEE). The measures included the World Health Organization Well-being Index (WHO-5), Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL), and Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II. Results indicated significant time-by-condition interactions for WHO-5 and ProQOL-Burnout in intention-to-treat sample. The control group experienced increased burnout and decreased well-being and ProQOL-Compassion satisfaction from baseline to three months post-intervention, whereas the ACT group showed no significant changes. Between-group comparisons revealed that the ACT group exhibited greater psychological flexibility and lower ProQOL-Secondary traumatic stress. This research underscores the effectiveness of this approach for adolescent nursing students and suggests potential for future cultural adaptations of ACT in Chinese contexts.

- *The Impact of Experiential Psychological First Aid Training on Trauma Coping and Cultural Adaptation*

Ela Ari, Ph.D., Istanbul Medipol University

Psychological First Aid (PFA) provides crisis support, yet its effects on aid providers' trauma-coping abilities and adaptation remain underexplored. This study examines the impact of experiential PFA training, integrating self-compassion practices and preparation phases to enhance readiness.

Participants included 75 psychology students: 25 Turkish students received experiential PFA training in Turkish, 25 international students received the same training in English, and 25 formed a control group without training. Findings revealed significant improvements in perceived trauma-focused coping ( $p < .05$ ) and self-compassion ( $p < .05$ ) in both trained groups.

Cultural differences emerged: international students exhibited higher impulsivity, emotion regulation difficulties, anxiety, and depression ( $p < .05$ ) but also greater resilience and future-oriented trauma coping ( $p < .05$ ). Turkish students showed higher trauma-focused coping ( $p < .05$ ) but lower resilience and distress tolerance self-efficacy ( $p < .05$ ). The control group showed no significant changes.

These findings highlight how experiential self-compassion training and psychological preparedness influence adaptation in crisis intervention, emphasizing cultural differences, language, and context sensitivity in coping strategies.

- *Supporting Treatment Adherence in Clinical Care: What we are doing now and how we can use CBS to do better*

Timothy R. Moore, Ph.D., LP, BCBA-D, University of Minnesota Medical School  
Ty Callahan, University of Minnesota Medical School

Suboptimal adherence is a common concern among clinicians across healthcare, including Contextual Behavioral Scientists (Graham et al., 2022). Discussing adherence and related influencing variables during clinical encounters can set the conditions for improving adherence (Erb et al, 2017; White, 2013). The current study involved searching the electronic health record in an interdisciplinary outpatient mental health clinic to identify clinical notes referring to adherence, measuring adherence, identifying barriers to

adherence, and indicating efforts to enhance adherence. Of 1000 randomly-selected notes, 812 involved treatment (vs assessment), 53% of which mentioned adherence or related term, and 62% contained a self- or clinician-reported measure of adherence (none included any validated or other formal measure). Individual therapy and medication management were the most common interventions. Clinicians identified barriers to adherence in no more than 15% of notes, and planned for adherence enhancement in no more than 3%. Discussion will highlight the emerging literature supporting an adherence-enhancement approach grounded in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Arch et al., 2022; Sadeghi et al., 2024) and behavior analytic frameworks (Moore & Amado, 2021).

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Apply ACT Principles to Career Choice Interventions: Participants will be able to identify at least two ACT-based strategies that can be incorporated into vocational counseling to facilitate value-driven decision-making.
2. Discuss the implications of the study findings and how these approaches might be employed in future or ongoing studies.
3. Evaluate the effects of Experiential PFA training on trauma-focused and future-oriented coping, compare cultural differences in emotion regulation, resilience, and context sensitivity.

### 150. Toward Us, By Us: Addressing Stigma Against Mental Health Professionals with Lived Experience

**Panel** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Experiential exercises*

Categories: Other, Social justice / equity / diversity, Stigma

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Southdown**

Chair: Daniel P Johnson, Ph.D., William James College; Private Practice  
 Maya Nauphal, Ph.D., New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine  
 Marta Pagan-Ortiz, Ph.D., William James College  
 Laurie Gallo, Ph.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine/ Montefiore Medical Center  
 Michaela B. Swee, Ph.D., ABPP, McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School

Mental health professionals are uniquely positioned to address mental health and substance use stigma ("MH/SU stigma") given their intersecting roles as clinicians, researchers, and educators. However, members of our field with lived experience of MH/SU struggles remain at risk of prejudice and discrimination in professional contexts. Empirical and experiential evidence suggest that MH/SU stigma "toward us, by us" is prominent, with profound individual and profession-wide impacts. The principles and applications of contextual behavioral science (CBS) have incredible potential to undermine MH/SU stigma and catalyze meaningful change in the mental health professions. This panel will highlight how undermining MH/SU stigma within our field – and beyond it – with CBS is essential to developing and delivering effective interventions, supporting trainees, and creating inclusive paths for professionals with lived experience to thrive in our field. Panelists span diverse backgrounds, clinical interests, and professional roles (e.g., trainee, clinic director, training director, educator, clinician, clinical researcher), and will draw upon professional and lived experiences to share actionable strategies and empower attendees to address MH/SU stigma in their professional contexts.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. Identify and describe how stigma manifests and is experienced at systemic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels among mental health professionals.
2. Analyze how reducing stigma toward mental health professionals with lived experience can enhance the field and contribute to broader stigma-reduction efforts.
3. Apply the principles of contextual behavioral science (CBS) to actionable stigma-reduction strategies in everyday clinical, research, and educational/training settings.

### 151. An Interpersonal Behavior Therapy Framework for Relational Problems: Effecting Change In- and Out of Session

**Workshop** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Role play*



Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Behavior analysis, Case conceptualization, interpersonal problems, Interpersonal Behavior Therapy, Functional Analytic Psychotherapy

Target Audience: *Beginner, Intermediate*

**Location: Nottoway**

Glenn M Callaghan, Ph.D., San Jose State University

Contextual Behavioral Therapies most often focus on intrapersonal (private) experiences. An Interpersonal Behavior Therapy framework (IBT; Callaghan & Follette, 2020), grounded in clinical behavior analysis and psychological principles, represents an expansion and evolution of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy to conceptualize a range of social behaviors from more instrumental social interactions to close connected relationships. From an IBT framework, this workshop focuses on helping participants recognize the importance of case conceptualization of interpersonal processes and how those are both a primary focus of clinical change and a context for clinical work on intrapersonal difficulties. Using video roleplays and discussions, participants will learn to recognize how suffering shows up in the context of human relationships outside of therapy as well in-session with the therapist. IBT offers a unique approach to understanding complex client relationships and creating behavior change both in-session (consistent with FAP) as well as outside with community members where clients learn to behave with intention, relating more effectively and forming connected relationships with others.

Educational Objectives:

1. Describe the value of case and IBT conceptualization that includes interpersonal relating skills with others in the context of intrapersonal forms of suffering.
2. Describe the process of developing client skills for interpersonal relationships with the therapist in-session and with others their community.
3. Create a plan identifying members of the community with whom the client could practice their emerging skills to be more interpersonally effective and create more connected relationships.

## **152. Finding the Functional Fit: Exploring Cultural Adaptation of ACT**

**Panel** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Literature review, Strategic planning*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, ACT

Target Audience: *Intermediate, Advanced*

**Location: Oak Alley**

Chair: Lauren E Venable, B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Chair: Mst Tajlima Tamanna, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Yukie Kurumiya, Ph.D., BCBA-D, IBA, The Chicago School

Robert D. Zettle, Ph.D., Wichita State University

Vanessa B. Del Aguila Vargas, Lic., Valued Actions for Change

ACT helps people create personally meaningful change by enhancing psychological flexibility (Hayes et al., 2006). Given its emphasis on contextual factors and personal values, ACT may be well-suited for diverse cultural groups and can be adapted to meet their unique needs. Culturally adapted ACT improves engagement and well-being across various populations, including Japanese (Muto et al., 2011) and Chinese college students (Xu et al., 2020), Black adults in smoking cessation programs (Santiago-Torres et al., 2022), sexual minorities facing work stress (Singh et al., 2020), and Latino caregivers of autistic children (Cañón et al., 2023). Additionally, ACT remains effective when delivered via a translator or self-administered, increasing accessibility for communities with limited mental health resources (Woidneck et al., 2012).

This panel will explore the challenges and benefits of culturally adapting ACT. Panelists-practitioners from diverse backgrounds actively adapting ACT in their communities will share practical strategies for increasing cultural responsiveness. Attendees will gain insight into best practices for making ACT more inclusive and effective across different cultural contexts.

Educational Objectives:



1. Describe key challenges and ethical considerations in culturally adapting ACT to diverse populations.
2. Analyze how cultural factors influence the effectiveness and engagement of ACT interventions in different communities.
3. Identify practical strategies for adapting ACT to increase accessibility and effectiveness in underserved populations.

### 153. From Stress to Salam: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with Arab and Muslim Clients

**Workshop** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Conceptual analysis, Didactic presentation, Experiential exercises, Literature review, Role play*

Categories: Clinical intervention development or outcomes, Social justice / equity / diversity, Arab culture, Muslim clients

Target Audience: *Intermediate*

**Location: Proteus / Zulu**

Nehjla Mashal, Ph.D., Al-Ahliyya Amman University (AAU)  
Marwan Salameh, Ph.D., Al-Ahliyya Amman University

This workshop examines the integration of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) processes with key cultural and religious values relevant to Arab and Muslim clients. The exploration includes the incorporation of including ghibtah and rahmah (tied to compassion and common humanity), sabr (patience and acceptance), shukr (gratitude and mindfulness), Ilm (a love of knowledge, intellectual curiosity, relates to cognitive defusion), qadr (acceptance to foster resiliency) and tawakkul (a deep trust in a wisdom that expands beyond ourselves and intersects with all ACT processes).

In this context, ACT's Hexaflex model will be explored through culturally-responsiveness lenses, respecting spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions of Arab and Muslim clients. The workshop will involve experiential mindfulness exercises, the use of poetry, relevant Hadith, and Quranic quotes, as well as a functional analytic roleplay to facilitate the application of these concepts. This framework aims to provide a compassionate, culturally-sensitive approach for promoting resilience, psychological flexibility, and a sense of harmony in individuals seeking to align their therapeutic work with their religious and cultural values.

Educational Objectives:

1. Explain how the Hexaflex model can be applied through a culturally responsive lens, considering the spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions of Arab and Muslim clients.
2. Describe the importance of cultural humility and responsiveness in working with Arab and Muslim clients, using specific examples from quotes, poetry, and colloquialisms.
3. Implement a number of ACT-consistent techniques while integrating key cultural and religious values relevant to Arab and Muslim clients.

### 154. Both/And: Interbehavioral Conceptualizations of Philosophical Paradoxes

**Symposium** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Conceptual analysis*

Categories: Theory and philosophical foundations, Social justice / equity / diversity, Interbehaviorism, Clinical Applications

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Endymion / Mid-City**

Chair: Wesley Malvini, M.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Discussant: Janani Vaidya, M.S., National Louis University; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Worner Leland, M.S., Collab Lab; Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group; Sex Ed Continuing Ed

Michael C May, M.A., Mandala House, LLC, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group (Affiliate Researcher)

MaKensey Sanders, M.A., University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Multiple things can be true at once. In this symposium, presenters will examine three philosophical paradoxes through the lens of Kantor's Interbehaviorism (Kantor, 1924). Presenters will examine the Paradox of Tolerance, the Paradox of Diagnostic Language, and the Paradox of Good Intentions, identifying and defining critical components of each. An interbehavioral conceptualization will be addressed for each paradox using a multi-level analysis of selectionism (Skinner, 1953; Skinner, 1969). Direct contingencies and meta-contingencies will be examined, and a prosocial approach to behavior change at the individual and cultural levels will be discussed. Additional prosocial action implications will be provided for each paradox and participants will be invited to consider at least one practical step they might take at the clinical level, community level, or systemic change level in order to create a context that may more probabilistically occasion accountability, restorative and transformative justice (Malik, 2018), and equity in degrees of freedom (Goldiamond, 1965).

- *Intolerance Is as Intolerance Does: An Interbehavioral Look at the Paradox of Tolerance*  
MaKensey Sanders, M.A., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Karl Popper's paradox of tolerance posits that in order to preserve a tolerant society, we must be intolerant of intolerance. While this paradox is philosophical in origin, it has significant behavioral implications for individuals and groups. It has received a resurgence of attention due to its relevance in the current political climate and has been applied at the systemic level to bring awareness to governments' negligence and failure to protect the citizens therein (Chinweuba & Nwobodo, 2022). As intolerant ideologies targeting differing identities gain traction in public discourse and within communities, it becomes increasingly critical to understand the factors perpetuating intolerance so that we can implement harm reduction strategies and protect identity-based safe spaces. This paper will discuss an interbehavioral conceptualization of the paradox of tolerance at both the group and individual level, the interlocking behavioral and meta contingencies, implications and applications of such a conceptualization, and offer recommendations for self-evaluation for those committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- *Crossed Consequences of Classification: The Paradox of Diagnostic Language?*  
Michael May, M.A., LPCC-S, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
Worner Leland, M.S., BCBA, LBA-MO, Collab Lab, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, Sex Ed Continuing Ed  
MaKensey Sanders, M.A., Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
Janani Vaidya, M.S., BCBA, IBA, National Louis University, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group  
Emily K. Sandoz, Ph.D., BCBA, Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group

Diagnosis in behavioral health (APA, 2022; WHO, 2024) has multiple functions, adaptive and detrimental, depending on the specific conditions (Popkewitz, 2020). Psychiatric nosology has been the subject of scrutiny (Frances & Widiger 2012; Hayes, Hofmann, & Ciarrochi, 2020; Maj, 2018; Young, 2016) throughout the history of natural science of human behavior, oftentimes emphasizing the detrimental functions of discrete and static diagnostic constructs. This discourse may obfuscate the aims of the contextual behavioral scientist-clinician in applied settings. Rather than centering the dilemma of the epistemic/ontological validity and/or utility of diagnostic categories, the present paper will conceptualize diagnosis as a situated-and-unique event of interaction of stimulating functions and response functions (Kantor, 1924). This provides the contextual clinician-scientist the opportunity to reorient to what is most important: how the situated action(s) involving diagnostic labels covary with response functions within the unique flow of interaction between client and clinician.

- *Intent vs. Impact: Interlocking Prosocial Accountability and the Paradox of Good Intent*  
Worner Leland, M.S., BCBA, LBA (MO), Collab Lab, The Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, Sex Ed Continuing Ed

The Paradox of Good Intent states that a proactive behavior may be well intended, but may have harmful outcomes. In dyadic experience, a well intended behavior of one person may cause unanticipated harm to the other. And in consequent flow of the interlocking behavioral stream, further harm may be caused when intention is centered over impact. This paper will provide an interbehavioral conceptual analysis for "intention" and behavioral "impact" in the context of a Psychological Event (Kantor, 1977). Power dynamics impacting the psychological event will be considered, and practical implications for interlocking prosocial and restorative accountability will also be discussed.

#### Educational Objectives:

1. List at least one paradox present in the Paradox of Tolerance, the Paradox of Diagnostic Language, and the Paradox of Good Intent.
2. Differentiate an interbehavioral vs. non-behavioral conceptualization of each paradox.

3. Describe and conduct at least 1 prosocial clinical, community, or systemic practical action implication step for each paradox.

### **155. Liberated Motherhood: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders**

**Workshop** • 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Components: *Case presentation, Didactic presentation*

Categories: Other, Postpartum depression, anxiety/OCD, trauma/PTSD

Target Audience: *Beginner*

**Location: Bacchus / Iris / Muses**

Carissa Gustafson, Psy.D., Private Practice

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) are the number one complication associated with pregnancy and postpartum impacting an estimated 20% of mothers. However, clinicians typically do not receive any specific training on PMADs.

There is some emerging research on ACT for PMADs, but very few trainings despite the promise ACT holds for the treatment of PMADs. ACT can help mothers learn how to defuse from unhelpful thoughts, have compassion for themselves while struggling with the often difficult realities of pregnancy/postpartum, and identify as well as engage in actions that align with their values as a mother without holding themselves to unrealistic standards.

Clinicians who attend this training will learn about the etiology, risks factors, symptoms, and diagnostic features of PMADs as well as ways to assessment for PMADs. They will also develop an understanding of the six processes in ACT and associated ACT interventions. Additionally, they will learn how to conceptualize a PMAD case from an ACT perspective and develop an ACT treatment plan.

#### **Educational Objectives:**

1. Describe the etiology, risks factors, symptoms, and diagnostic features of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) as well as how to assess for them.
2. Explain the six processes in acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and how to practice ACT interventions.
3. Conceptualize a PMAD case from an ACT perspective and develop an ACT treatment plan.