



ACT: Therapy Principles in DV Treatment

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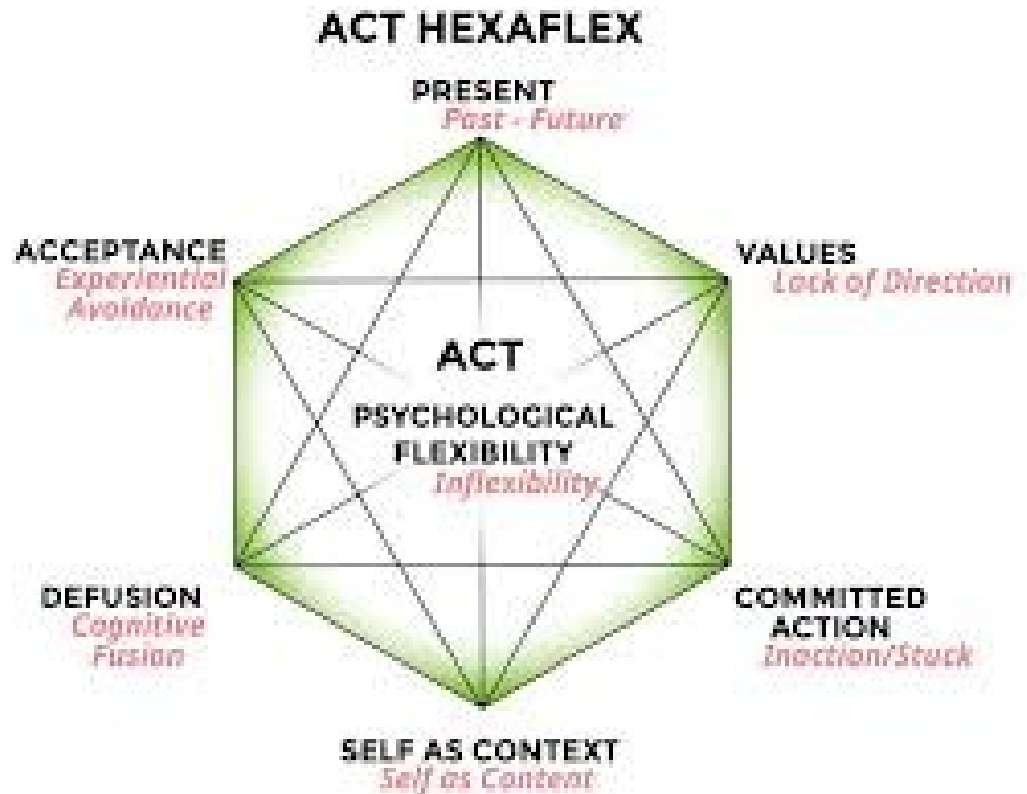
Introductions

👉 You and me

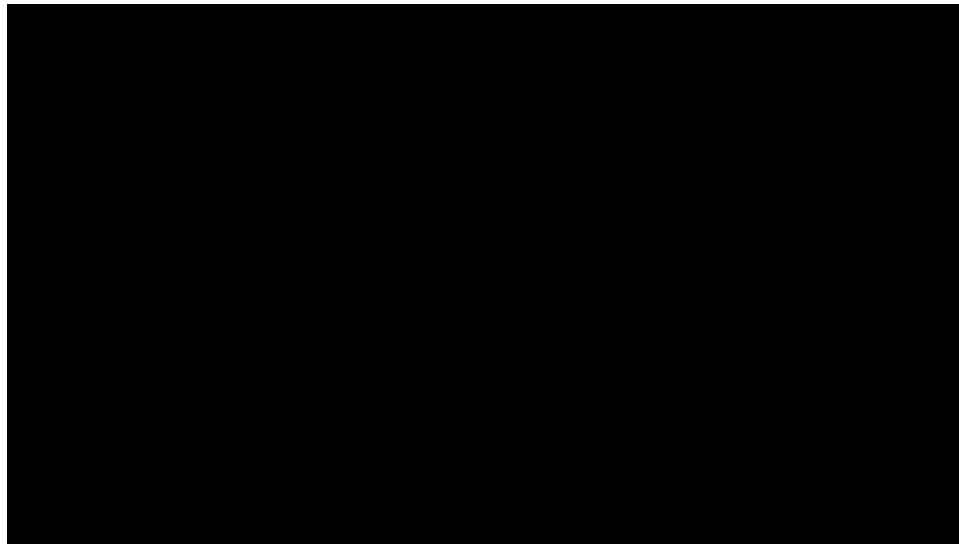


Review of ACT

🌀 The Hexaflex!



Mindi's Flight



News Flash!

- 🔗 New ACT Research:
- 🔗 **A review of anger, hostility, and aggression from an ACT perspective**
- 🔗 [Olga V.Berkout^{a1}DianaTinsley^bMaureen K.Flynn^c](#)
- 🔗 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2018.12.001>
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Definitions

- ✿ Anger – “negative emotional reaction to perceived provocation”
- ✿ Hostility – “cognitive/attitudinal antagonistic view of others and the world”
- ✿ Aggression – “behavior aimed at harming others”
- ✿ Psychological flexibility – “ability to flexibly relate to private experiences and behave in a manner that is responsive to both environmental contingencies and consistent with ones values”

CBT vs ACT

- CBT emphasizes altering private experiences of thought, feelings, and behaviors
- Distress reduction
- ✿ ACT emphasizes accepting private experiences of thought and feelings as they are
- ✿ Focusing on continuing to follow what one values in spite of what one thinks or feels

ACT & A, H, and A

- 🌀 Defusion – people who struggle with anger may be more strongly attached to their anger provoking thoughts (fusion)
- 🌀 Self in context – people who feel unable to control their anger may be attached to their conceptualized self *need to widen perspective

ACT & A, H, & A

- ✿ Acceptance – people may use anger to avoid unpleasant private events (i.e.: guilt/shame) thereby clinging to experiential avoidance
- ✿ Present focus – people may hold tightly to hostility when they continue with a past or future focus - *need to add a component of perspective, maybe gratitude, and compassion

ACT & A, H, & A

- ✿ Values – people may act on impulse mindlessly acting on emotion rather than mindfully choosing to act on a cherished value
- ✿ Committed Action – people may be more likely to commit violence to protect their ego if they are not committed to pro-social behaviors required of intimate relationships or stuck in habit patterns

Evidences of link between A, H, and A with ACT principles

- ✧ All forms of dating violence were positively related to psychological inflexibility
- ✧ Men who had lower psychological flexibility were reported to be more physically aggressive toward their partners
- ✧ Psychological inflexibility was associated with intimate partner violence perpetration (also linked with experiential avoidance)

Evidences of link between A, H, and A with ACT principles

- 🌀 Psychological inflexibility was found to interact with hostility and predicted problematic interpersonal behaviors
- 🌀 Additional studies conclude: links between anger and PTSD d/t avoidance of emotional pain, a link between psychological inflexibility and depression and delay of gratification with focus on short term needs

Evidences of link between A, H, and A with ACT principles

- 🌀 Psychological inflexibility associated with both anger and aggression and emotional inexpressivity leading to symptoms of PTSD
- 🌀 Some socially anxious individuals may become angry and aggressive in response to perceived rejection (avoidance of experiencing emotions)
- 🌀 Inflexible responding to private events leading to aggression and other problematic behaviors

ACT Interventions – Effective?

- ✿ Decreased physical aggression, and decreased psychological inflexibility
- ✿ Decrease in physical and verbal aggression, perceived stress, and increase in emotion management, decrease in perception of powerful others having control over one's life, also significant decrease in alcohol use
- ✿ Values-consistent behaviors increased

ACT Interventions – Effective?

- ✿ Less psychological and physical aggression, and greater reduction in psychological and physical aggression at 6 month follow up
- ✿ Significantly fewer ACT participants committed new offenses leading to charges, 12 months after treatment, lower percentage of those engaged in general violent crime

ACT Interventions – Effective?

- 🌀 1-year post treatment completion, experiential avoidance decreased, lower rate of DV recidivism
- 🌀 Interventions research with youth are limited, but show promise

Conclusions of Meta-analysis

- ✿ Anger and aggression are seen as ways to avoid unpleasant private events
- ✿ Individuals who are more psychologically flexible may experience less anger and aggression
- ✿ An individual's response to private events, rather than whether they are experienced or not, is ultimately most important!

The Impact of ACT Interventions

- ✿ The relationships with anger, hostility, and aggression have overall been consistent with the psychological flexibility model and ACT interventions appear to be effective
- ✿ Decreased engagement in aggressive behavior
- ✿ Decreased recidivism for DV
- ✿ Increase in psychological flexibility processes

Examples of ACT interventions

- ✿ Using metaphors – relational frame theory
 - ✿ Getting hooked, going down a rabbit hole, jumping on the train
 - ✿ Defusion from prison sentences



Acceptance

- 🌀 AA manual page 217
- 🌀 The coffee mug
- 🌀 Tug-o-war
- 🌀 Digging out of hole

Acceptance

And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation – some fact of my life unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I could not be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.

Alcoholics Anonymous
417

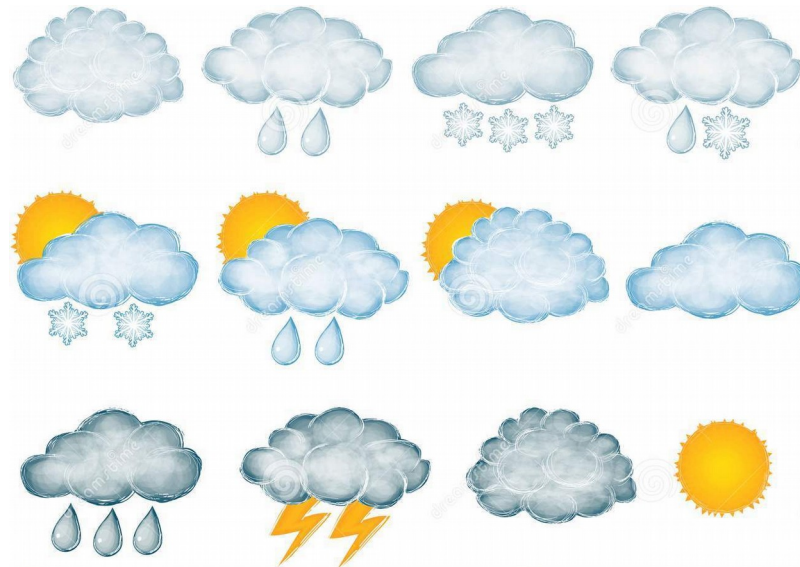
Staying in the Present

- 🌀 Mindful meditation
- 🌀 Grounding/five senses
- 🌀 Notice and Describe
- 🌀 The road less traveled poem
- 🌀 Accepting discomfort
 - 🌀 Goal is to accept what is in the present, not to escape



Self as Context

- ✿ Labeling activity
- ✿ Desert island/memorial service activity
- ✿ Metaphor of the sky and the weather



Values and Committed Action

- ✧ Identify valued areas of life
- ✧ Define values in terms of how “I” want to be in relation to this valued area of life
- ✧ Assess what you
 - ✧ need to do
- ✧ Set up
 - ✧ small meaningful steps



Great Resources:

- ❧ ACBS Network: <https://contextualscience.org/>
- ❧ ACT Made Simple by Russ Harris, New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2009
- ❧ The Wisdom to Know the Difference by Kelly Wilson, New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2012
- ❧ Essentials of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy by Sonja V. Batten, Sage Publications, 2011
- ❧ Lots of youtube videos on ACT therapy by Steven C. Hayes, Russ Harris, and others
- ❧ USU's Psychology Dept: Mike Twohig

Questions?

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🌀 DV Group Workbooks for sale at cost - \$5 each