

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a form of psychotherapy that aims to help individuals develop psychological flexibility, which involves learning to be more present in the moment, opening up to difficult experiences, and taking action in line with one's [values](#).

In ACT, acceptance refers to the willingness to open up and make room for uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, and sensations, rather than trying to avoid or suppress them. Acceptance involves acknowledging and being present with one's experiences, without judgment or resistance. This does not mean that one passively accepts their circumstances or resigns themselves to their situation; rather, acceptance involves actively choosing to be present with and respond to one's experiences in a more effective way.

Commitment refers to taking action towards one's values and goals, even in the face of discomfort or difficulty. It involves identifying what is most important to an individual and making a conscious decision to take steps towards those goals, regardless of the obstacles that may arise. Commitment involves aligning one's actions with one's values and making choices that are consistent with one's vision for a meaningful life.

Acceptance and commitment are two key components of ACT that work together to help individuals develop greater psychological flexibility, improve their ability to cope with difficult experiences, and live a more meaningful and fulfilling life.

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The ACT Hexagon Model

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy uses a hexagon model to represent its six core processes or therapeutic components. These six processes are interconnected and work together to help individuals develop psychological flexibility. The six components of the ACT hexagon along with their functions are:

Cognitive Defusion (or Deliteralization)

Helps individuals detach from unhelpful thoughts and cognitive patterns. Involves seeing thoughts as what they are (just thoughts) rather than as accurate reflections of reality. This process aims to reduce the impact of language on behavior.

Acceptance

Encourages individuals to embrace their emotions and thoughts without unnecessary judgment or avoidance. Involves making room for unpleasant emotions and allowing them to come and go without struggling against them. It's about being open and accepting of one's internal experiences.

Present Moment Awareness (Mindfulness)

Promotes conscious awareness of the present moment. Involves being fully engaged in the current experience without being overly influenced by past events or future concerns. Mindfulness techniques are often used to enhance present moment awareness.

Self-as-Context

Encourages individuals to see themselves from a broader perspective. Involves recognizing that one's thoughts, feelings, and sensations are transient aspects of experience and not the core of one's identity. This process helps individuals disentangle themselves from their thoughts and emotions.

Values Clarification

Helps individuals identify and connect with their core values. Involves exploring what is truly important and meaningful to the individual. By clarifying personal values, individuals can make choices that align with their deeper sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Committed Action

Encourages the development of goal-directed behavior based on one's values. Involves setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals that are in line with one's values. Committed action is about taking steps toward a rich and meaningful life, even in the presence of difficult thoughts and emotions.

These six components are interconnected and form a comprehensive approach to enhance psychological flexibility, which is the ability to be open, adaptable, and effective in the presence of changing and challenging circumstances. The ACT model is designed to help individuals move towards a more values-based and fulfilling life.