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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

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Acceptance and commitment therapy may seem confusing. How do acceptance and commitment paired with mindfulness form an effective treatment? If you are aiming to be more accepting of your thoughts and feelings, how does commitment play a role? What are you committing to? In the case of ACT, you are committing to facing the problem head-on, instead of avoiding your problems, you commit to actions that will help you stop struggling against the inevitable and facilitate thriving instead. ACT is effective for a wide range of psychological disorders, but it is also effective as a life-affirming and inspirational perspective on the world. ACT can show you exactly what happens, and how you can harness the power of acceptance to get the life you want.

ACT in simple terms: It is a type of therapy that aims to help patients accept what is out of their control and commit to actions that can improve and enrich their lives.

Core Processes: There are six core processes of ACT that guide patients through therapy and provide a framework for developing psychological flexibility-

- Acceptance
- Cognitive Diffusion
- Being Present
- Self as Context
- Values
- Committed Action

ACT is built on the Relational Frame Theory, a theory that is well supported by psychological research. This theory is based on the idea that the human ability of “relating” is the foundation of language and cognition. We can apply mindfulness to accept our feelings and change how we react and relate to them instead of trying to avoid them.

ACT Metaphors: Metaphors play a big role in acceptance and commitment therapy, as they provide clients with a simple way to understand how their feelings and thoughts influence their actions, allowing them to see how adjusting the way they think can result in extremely positive outcomes. The sailing boat metaphor, The mind bully quick sand metaphor are few common metaphors.

ACT for treating disorders: While ACT, like the practice of mindfulness itself, can be applied in any individual’s life, it has also proved to be effective in treating many psychological disorders, including general anxiety disorders, chronic pain, depression, OCD, eating disorders, and social anxiety.

Applying ACT in Group Therapy: ACT can be applied on an individual level, but it is also effective when delivered via a treatment group. The association for contextual behavioral science acknowledges the effectiveness of group ACT treatments for anger, depression and general anxiety, social anxiety, chronic pain, and for struggling adolescents. ACT apps that can help as technology flourishes, so too does the set of treatment options available to us. As with so many other problems, issues, or opportunities, there’s an app for that! The two most popular apps are described below. The Happiness Trap App and the ACT coach. ACT has the potential to produce extremely positive results, not only for those suffering from psychological disorders, but also for those suffering from the pain inherent in everyday life. With so many resources available online, it’s easier than ever to give ACT a try.

Biography

Najiha Saheda is an International Counselor who has worked in Saudi Arabia, Australia and UAE, with a proven track record of 13 years of experience in the education field. Her educational qualifications include MSc in Counseling and Psychotherapy, Bachelors in Psychology and Post Graduate Diploma in Child and Youth Counselling. She is a Member of American School Counselor Association (ASCA), International Association for Counselling (IAC) and Affiliate Member of Psychotherapy and Counseling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

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