



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

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Areas of psychological flexibility and how they promote increased flexibility

Engagement practices	Awareness practices	Openness practices
Connect practitioners with their own personal values (e.g. kindness, creativity, intimacy)	Mindfulness practice to build skills in noticing one's thoughts, feelings and urges.	Practice stepping back from unhelpful entanglement with thoughts, to help disengage with patterns of thinking that get in the way of meaningful activity.
Example practices		
Reflect on the qualities of people you do and do not admire	Mindfulness	Cognitive diffusion tasks

Source: Prudenzi et al., 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iad.2021.07.084>

What is the Evidence for ACT and Health Promotion?

Prudenzi, et al., 2021.-

- ACT intervention **effectiveness increases** over time.
- Studies with a higher number of treatment sessions were associated with larger effect sizes for general stress.
- **Improvement** in work-related distress may necessitate more time to improve than what is needed to reduce general distress.

Towey-Swift, et al., 2022.

- ACT **significantly reduced** burnout in people-oriented professions (health and social care professionals)
- ACT-based interventions using a wide range of formats that **decrease** burnout across a range of health and social care professionals. Nine studies reported a statistically significant improvement in burnout compared to controls from baseline to post-intervention or follow-up.

Frögéli, et al., 2015.

- **Increased** mindful awareness - Increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings, paying attention in the present moment non-judgmentally.
- **Decreased** Experiential avoidance - The avoidance of stressful thoughts, feelings, and sensations related to the experience of human suffering, including burnout.



What are the Mechanisms for the Health Effects of ACT?

- ACT Balances the Response of the Limbic System
- Restructures the Response of the Amygdala

Small Group Activity, ACT Engagement Practices



ACT Matrix: Perspective-taking exercise

Watch the following video (Time: 7:11):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQ1sVPqwxgw>

Prompt: After watching the video, use the ACT matrix to identify and guide you to decisions and behaviors that will help you increase your psychological flexibility around a topic of your choosing.

- Consider a situation that is currently causing you anxiety, stress or burnout.
- Use the ACT matrix on the following page to guide you through other perspectives you can use to navigate the scenario.



Source: Polk, K. (N.D.). The ACT Matrix. Association for Contextual Behavioral Science. https://contextualscience.org/act_matrix



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