

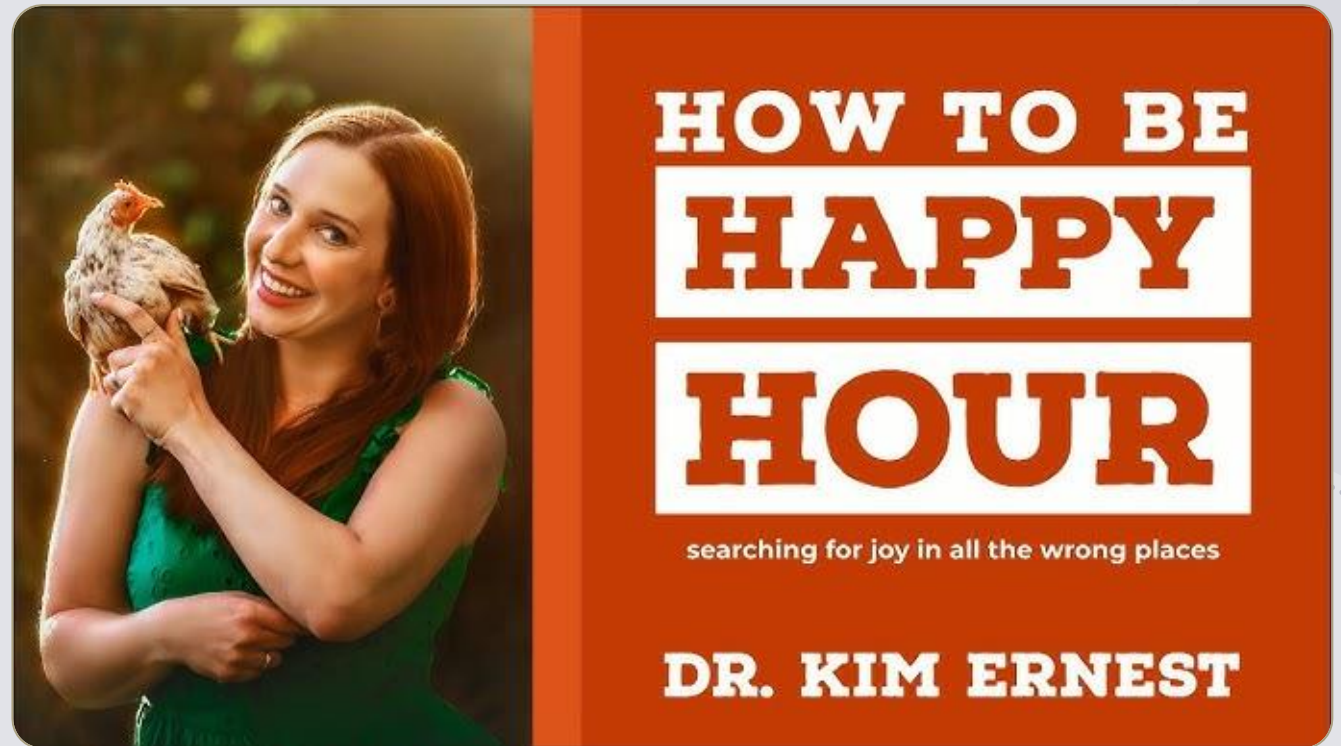


Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

DR. KIMBERLY ERNEST,
PH.D., LPC

About Me

- ♦ Dr. Kimberly Ernest, LPC, Psychologist
- ♦ President of Pennsylvania Counseling Services
- ♦ Founder of LiveUp Counseling
- ♦ Background in addictions, re-entry, and trained in family-systems therapy (structural family therapy; ESFT)
- ♦ Follow me on LinkedIn



Summer Family-Based Trainings

9 JULY INTRODUCTION TO ECOSYSTEMIC STRUCTURAL FAMILY THERAPY (ESFT)
This training is part of our lunch and learn, which runs for 1 hour from 12pm-1pm and provide the overarching practice of ESFT with Melanie Morgan, MS, LPC, CFT

23 JULY INTRODUCTION TO CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND USE OF THE ACES
A coffee chat from 8-9am with Melanie Morgan, exploring the impact of early trauma and how to assess with the ACES tool.

20 AUGUST CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT
This training is a part of our lunch and learn series, which run from 12-1pm with Melanie Morgan explores the impact of childhood trauma on relationships.

27 AUGUST ATTACHMENT IN ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILDREN
Our final lunch and learn within the series, offered from 12-1pm exploring the role of attachment in middle childhood

SAVE THE DATE!

To register visit
PACOUNSELING.COM/TRAINING

PA COUNSELING SERVICES



8/1 & 8/2

9AM - 3:30PM

VIA ZOOM OR IN LEBANON, PA

WORKING WITH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS WHO EXHIBIT PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

This **FREE** training program for direct care professionals is designed to equip attendees working with child sexual abuse victims (age 12 & younger) who may exhibit problematic sexual behaviors with the knowledge, skills, & tools necessary to provide effective care, support, & intervention.

12.00 APA CE Credits for psychologists, social workers, or professional counselors. *Attendees must be present/on camera for training in its entirety, no partial credit will be given.

Visit pacounseling.com/training to register!

****PCS Family Based staff must attend in person & email scwright@pacounseling.com to register if they wish to receive the stipend.****



This training is funded in part by the Endowment Act and a competitive grant awarded through the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency Children's Advocacy Center.

Register for Trainings at pacounseling.com/training

Let's begin with a mindful moment...

<https://youtu.be/QtE00VP4W3Y?si=WVpAraqqcTl-1CMb>



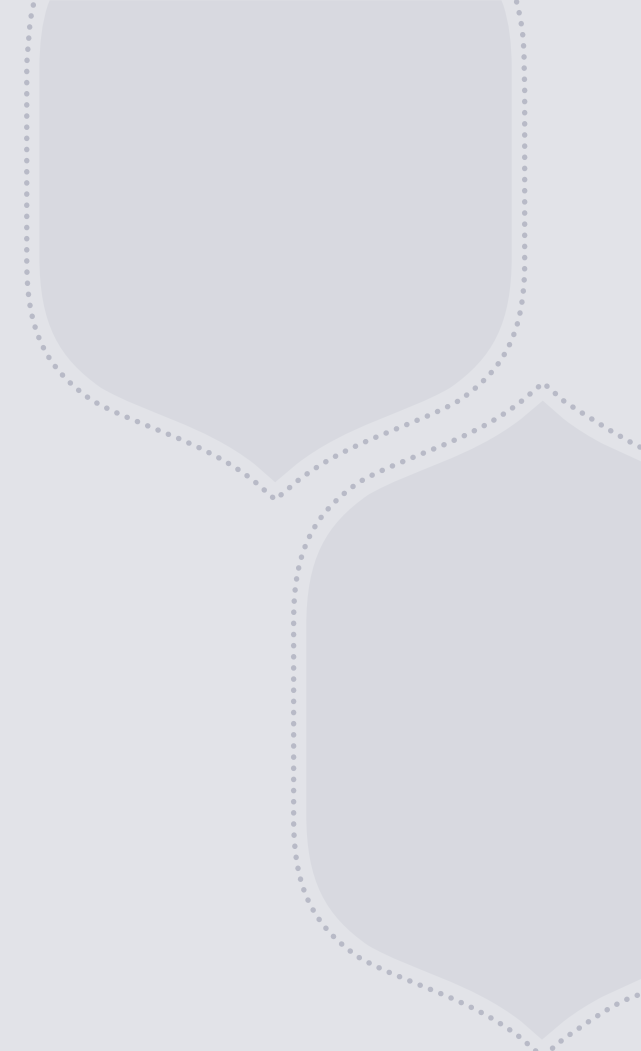
What is ACT?!

- ♦ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a form of psychotherapy that blends traditional cognitive behavioral techniques with mindfulness and acceptance strategies.
- ♦ It aims to help individuals develop psychological flexibility, which is the ability to be present in the moment, engage in values-based actions, and effectively handle difficult thoughts and feelings.



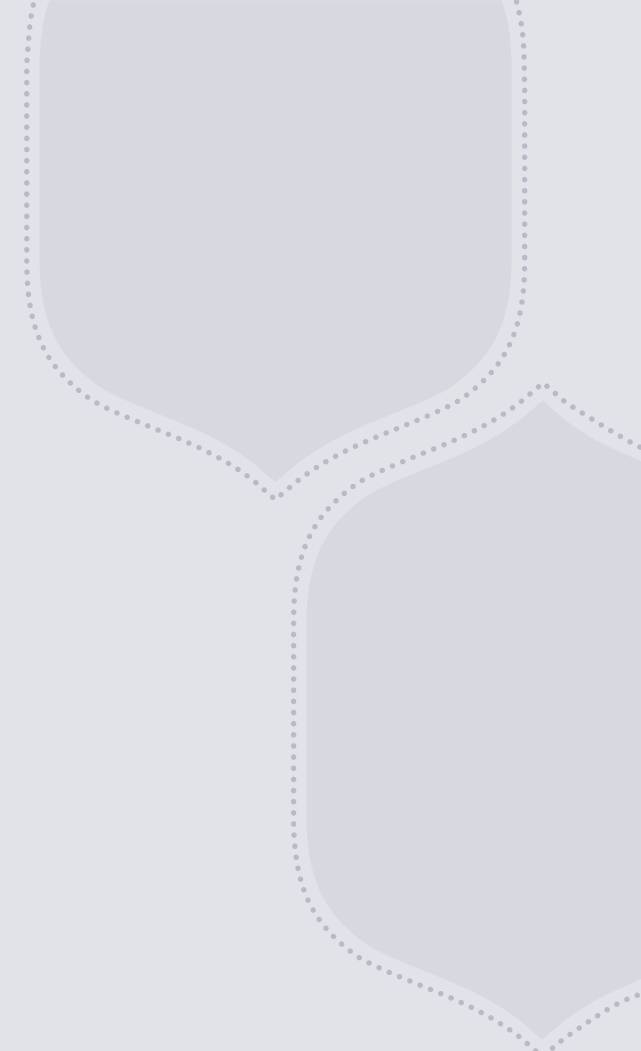
Where Did ACT Come From?

- ♦ Radical Behaviorism
- ♦ Functional Contextualism
- ♦ Relational frame Theory (RFT)



Radical Behaviorism

- ♦ Radical behaviorism was developed by B. F. Skinner and emerged during the popularity of behaviorism
- ♦ However, radical behaviorism differs greatly from other schools of behaviorism



More About Radical Behaviorism

- ♦ Radical behaviorism emphasizes the application of operant conditioning and reinforcement in daily life and especially emphasizes private experience
- ♦ Another key difference is that everything people do is considered behavior this includes private events such as thinking and feeling.



Functional Contextualism

- ♦ Functional contextualism is a modern theory which was developed through philosophical pragmatism, contextualism, and radical behaviorism
- ♦ It can be understood as an extension of the contextualistic interpretation of radical behaviorism, and emphasizes the significance of predicting and influencing psychological events such as thoughts, feelings, and behaviors



Relational Frame Theory

- ♦ Relational frame theory (RFT) is a psychological theory of human language and cognition.
- ♦ Relational Frame theory is based on the philosophical roots of functional contextualism, it concentrates on how humans learn language through interactions with the environment.
- ♦ Relational frame theory is a behavioral approach to language development.



What Is ACT?

- ♦ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a unique empirically based psychological intervention that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies, together with commitment and behavior change strategies, to increase psychological flexibility



How Is ACT Different?

- ♦ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy differs from traditional cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in it does not attempt to teach individuals to better control or change their thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories and other private events.
- ♦ Rather, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy teaches individuals to notice, accept, and embrace their private events, particularly if they are unwanted or unpleasant



More About ACT

- ♦ ACT assumes that psychological processes of a normal human mind are frequently destructive.
- ♦ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is comprised six core principles which are used to help clients develop psychological flexibility



What types of diagnoses is ACT recommended?

- ♦ Gambling Disorder
- ♦ SUDs
- ♦ Anxiety Disorders
- ♦ Depressive Disorders
- ♦ PTSD/Trauma
- ♦ Chronic Pain/Health Conditions
- ♦ Eating Disorders
- ♦ Psychotic
- ♦ Health Disorders
- ♦ Stress management/coping skills

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

"What you resist, persists.
What you accept, transforms."



ACT Origins

- ♦ ACT is rooted in Relational Frame Theory (RFT) (Day, 1969), which emphasises the human ability to utilise language as a tool for making meaning and to make links between concepts (Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson, 1999).
- ♦ According to RFT, humans are able to experience fear and anxiety in objectively safe situations due to our ability to establish language-meaning relationships. Anxiety can be triggered simply through making a connection between a thought or idea and a particular meaning...



ACT on Suffering...

Suffering remains a basic human experience and maybe we should stop focusing on eradicating it and more on owning it (Sharp et al. 2004).

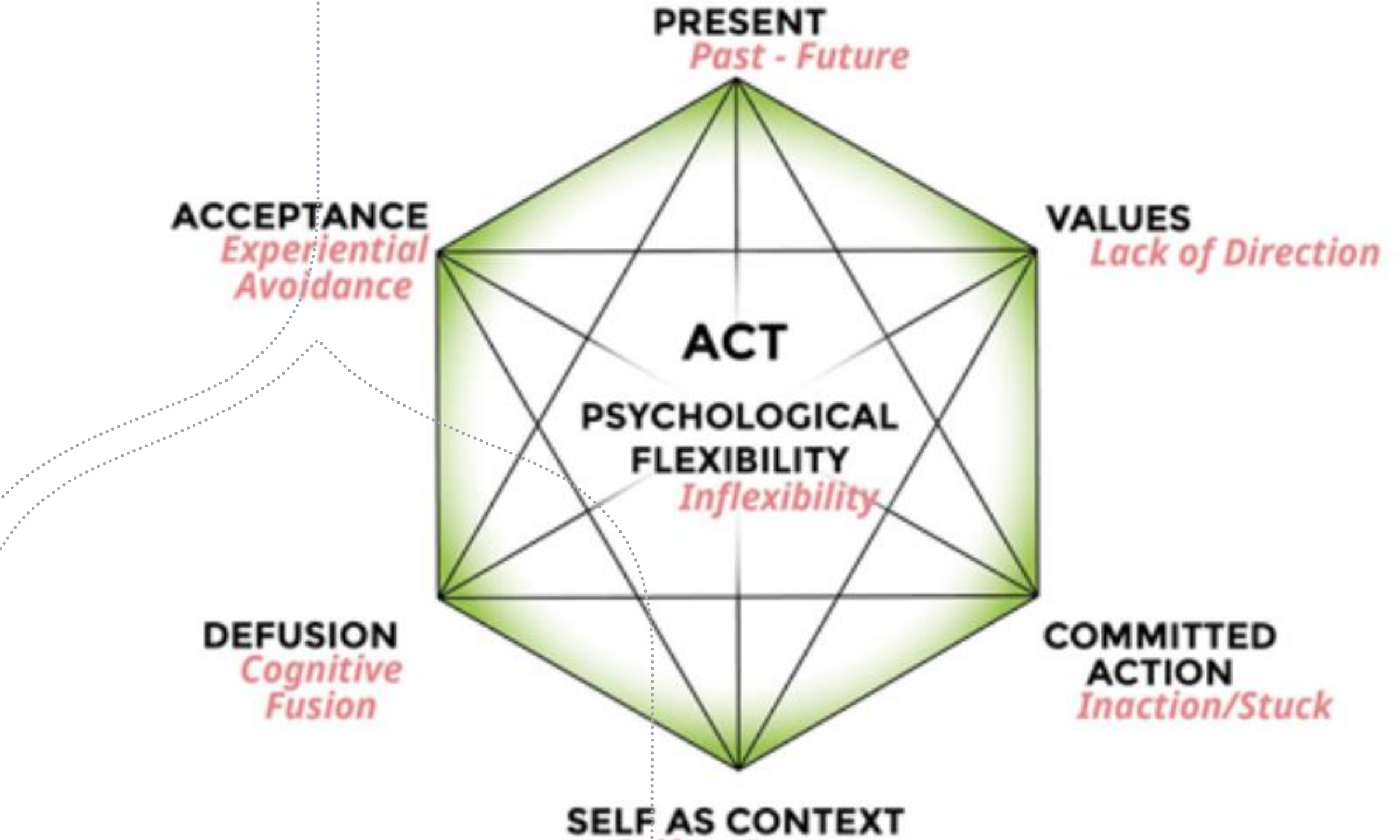


Nutshell Exercise

COULD I HAVE A
VOLUNTEER?

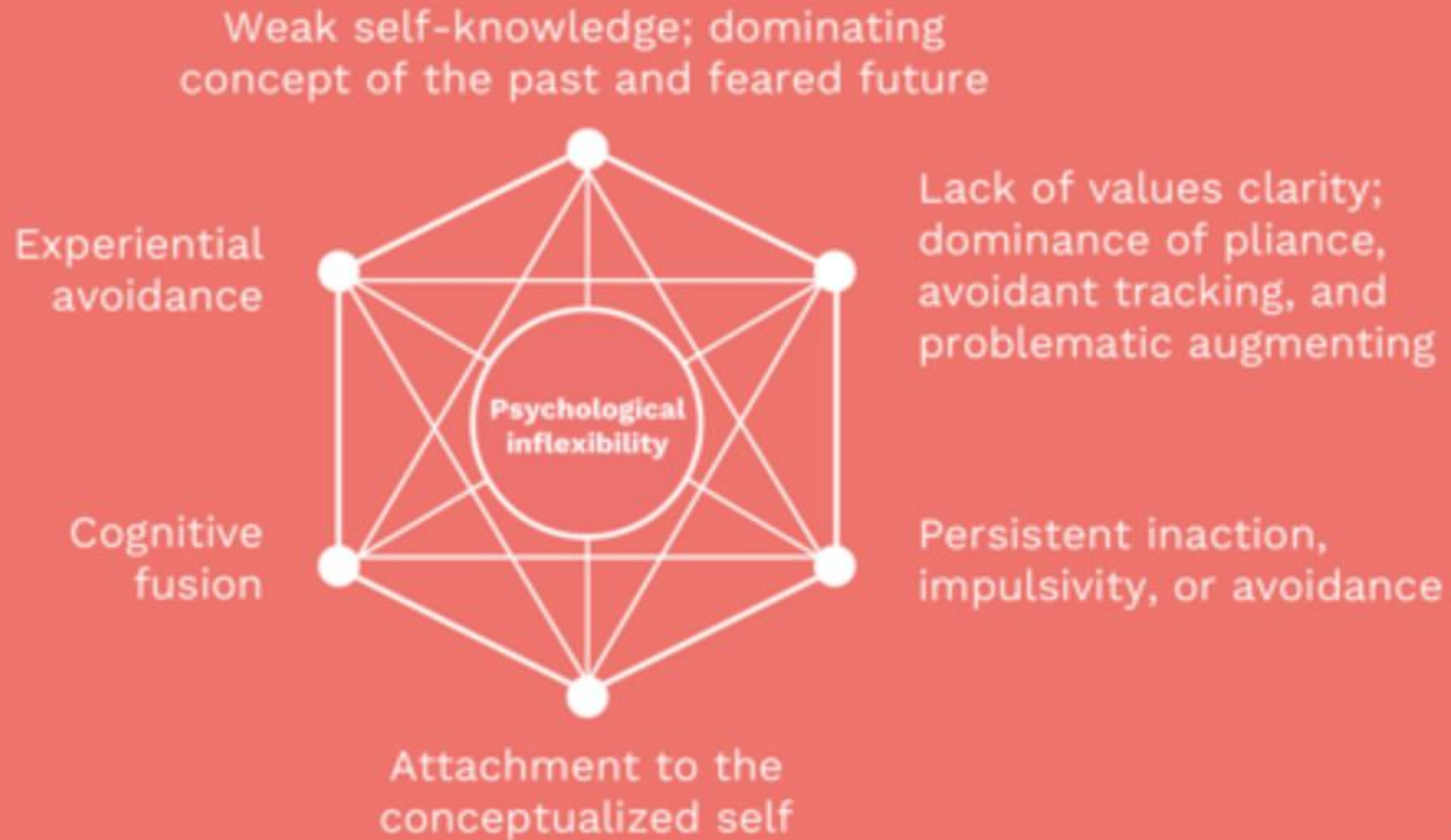
Six Core Processes of ACT

- ♦ Cognitive Defusion: Helps individuals distance themselves from unhelpful thoughts, seeing them as passing mental events rather than absolute truths.
- ♦ Acceptance: Encourages individuals to accept their thoughts and feelings without trying to control or avoid them, fostering a more flexible relationship with inner experiences.
- ♦ Being Present: Focuses on mindfulness, teaching individuals to be fully engaged in the present moment rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.
- ♦ Self-as-Context: Helps individuals develop a transcendent sense of self, allowing them to observe their thoughts and feelings from a more detached perspective.
- ♦ Values Clarification: Guides individuals in identifying their core values and setting goals that align with those values, promoting a sense of purpose and meaning in life.
- ♦ Committed Action: Encourages individuals to take meaningful actions consistent with their values, even in the presence of difficult thoughts and feelings.



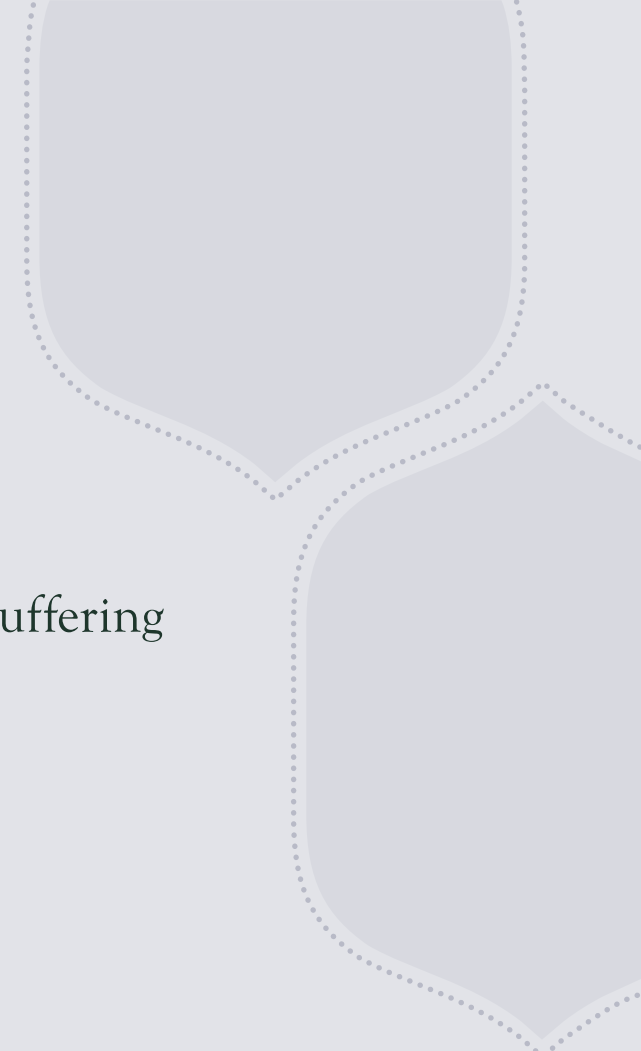
- ♦ Core processes of pathology in ACT

The Inflexahex model



Primary Goals of ACT

- ♦ Create a mindset of resilience and flexibility to live life on life's terms
- ♦ Obtain skills that allow us to engage with what “is” vs. compounded our own suffering in our quest for what we would like it to be.



Introduction Phases of ACT

- ♦ **Assessment and Goal Setting:** The therapist begins by conducting an assessment to understand the client's presenting issues, personal history, and goals for therapy. Together, they collaboratively set goals that are aligned with the client's values and aspirations.
- ♦ **Psychoeducation:** The therapist provides education about the key principles and processes of ACT, explaining concepts such as acceptance, mindfulness, cognitive defusion, values, and committed action. Clients learn how these principles can help them manage their psychological distress and live more fulfilling lives.

Early ACT

- ♦ Mindfulness Training: Mindfulness practices are introduced to help clients develop present-moment awareness and non-judgmental acceptance of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. Clients may engage in mindfulness exercises such as mindfulness meditation, mindful breathing, or body scan techniques.
- ♦ Cognitive Defusion: Clients learn techniques to distance themselves from unhelpful thoughts and beliefs. This involves recognizing that thoughts are not necessarily true or accurate representations of reality and learning to observe thoughts with greater detachment.

Mid-ACT

- ♦ Values Clarification: Clients identify their core values—those qualities or principles that are most important and meaningful to them. Through various exercises and discussions, clients clarify what matters most in their lives and how they want to behave in alignment with those values.
- ♦ Committed Action: Clients set specific, actionable goals that are consistent with their values and commit to taking steps to achieve those goals. The therapist helps clients identify potential barriers or obstacles and develop strategies for overcoming them.

Final Phases of ACT

- ♦ **Experiential Exercises and Metaphors:** The therapist may use experiential exercises, metaphors, or storytelling to illustrate ACT concepts and help clients grasp them more deeply. These exercises often involve engaging the client's imagination and emotional experience.
- ♦ **Progress Monitoring and Feedback:** Throughout the therapy process, the therapist and client regularly review progress toward goals and adjust strategies as needed. Feedback is provided to help clients recognize their strengths and areas for growth.
- ♦ **Relapse Prevention and Integration:** As therapy nears completion, the focus may shift toward relapse prevention and integration of skills learned in therapy into daily life. Clients are encouraged to continue practicing mindfulness and other ACT techniques independently to maintain their gains over time.

ACT as a modality

- Based in the understanding that we are not unique in our suffering – rather suffering is a fundamental – unavoidable part of the human experience
- Charles Swindol “Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% what we make from it”
- Designed to assist us in identifying non-preferred experiences and holding them lightly.



How Many Sessions?

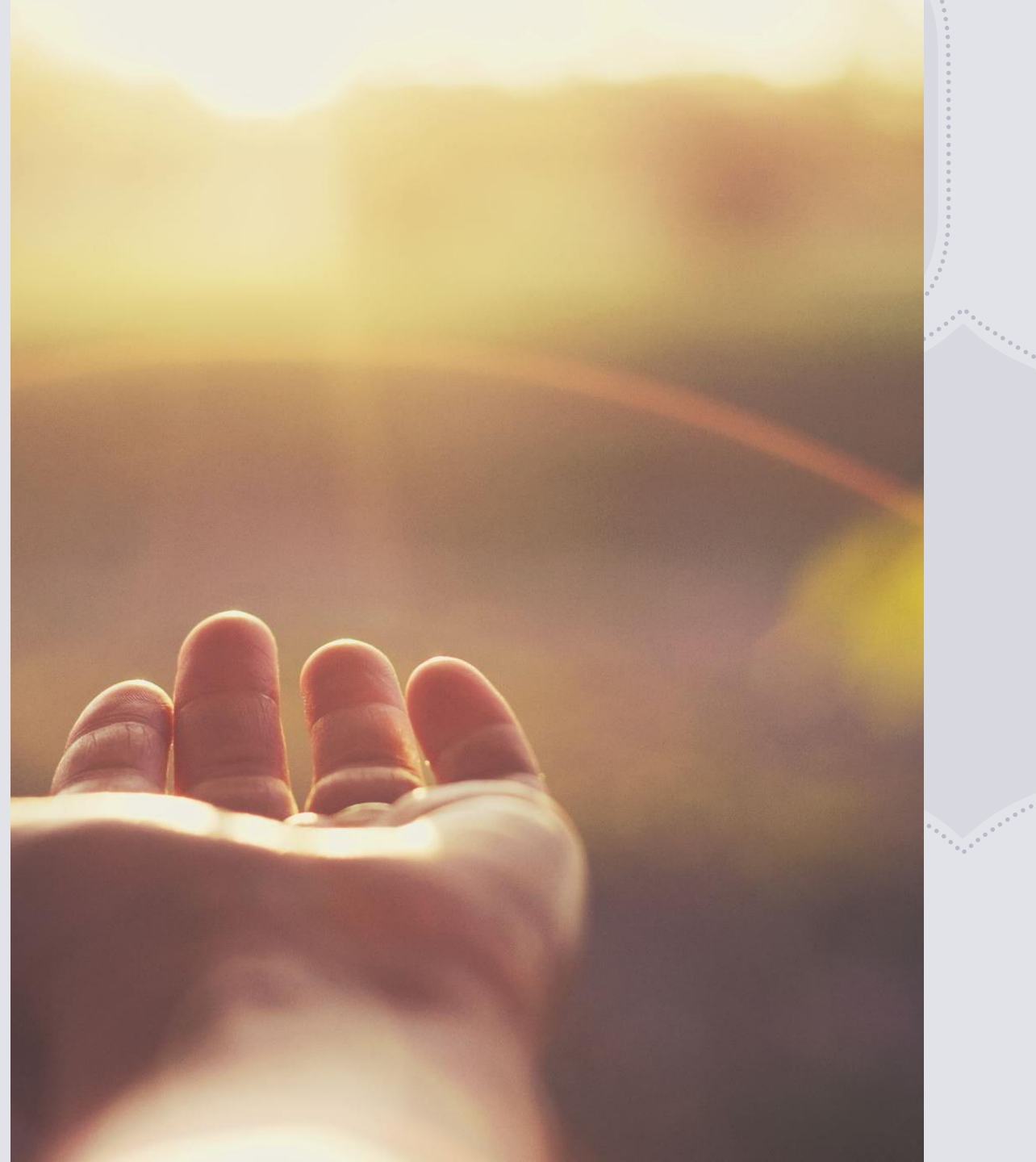
- ♦ ACT is flexible in the number of sessions
- ♦ Typically the more severe or problems a client is experiencing the longer they will be in therapy
 - Long-term therapy
 - Brief therapy
 - Very brief therapy
- ♦ 12 sessions is very typical



Mindfulness is defined as the practice of being fully aware and present in the moment.

It involves observing and describing thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment, allowing individuals to experience reality as it is.

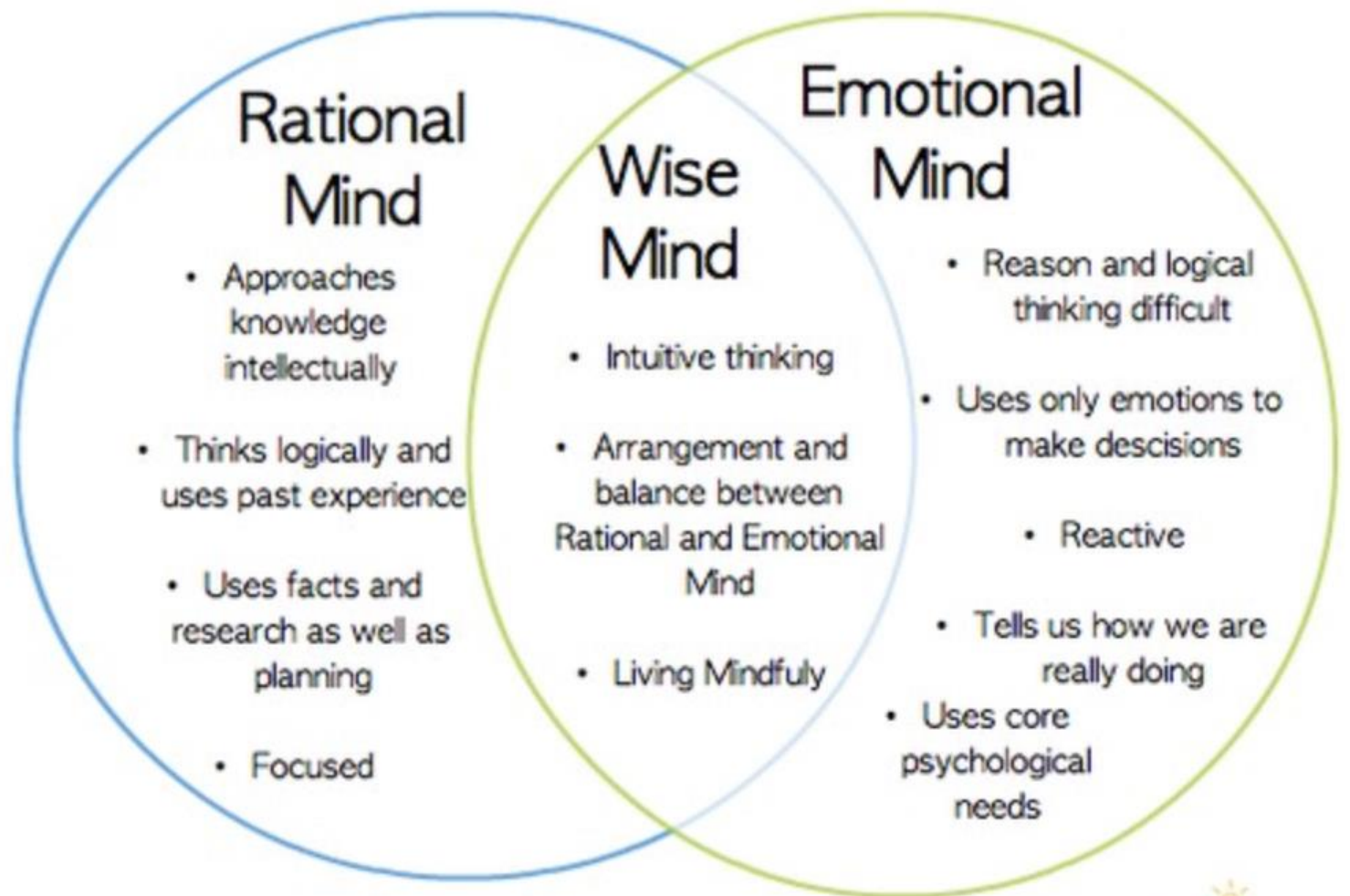
What is Mindfulness?



DBT Mindfulness Skills



Using Mindfulness Practice to Cultivate Wise Mind

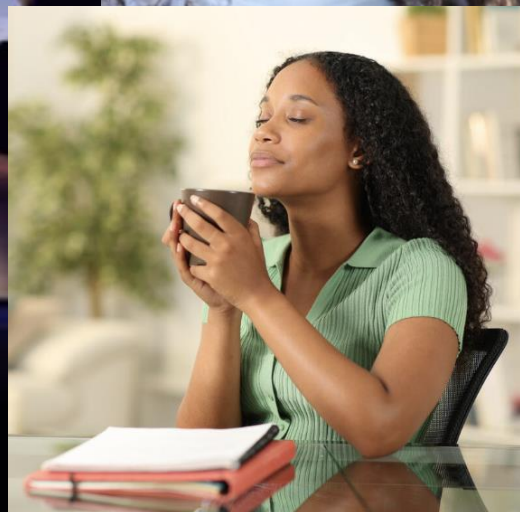
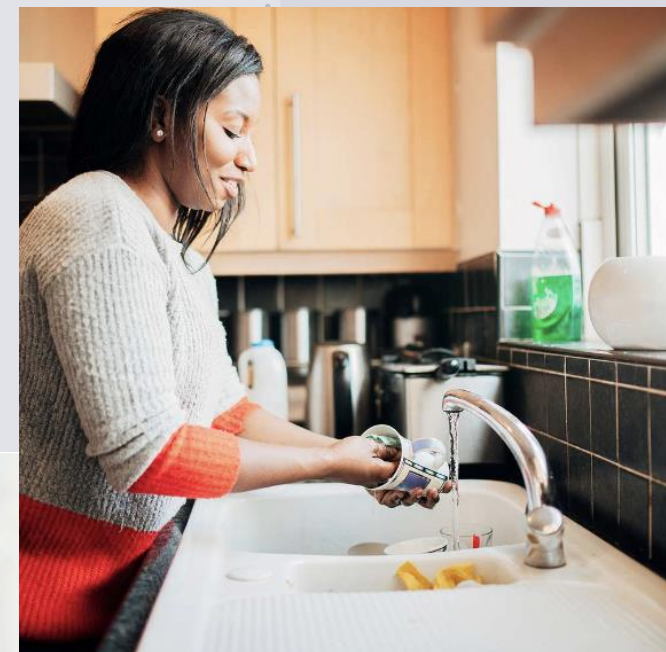




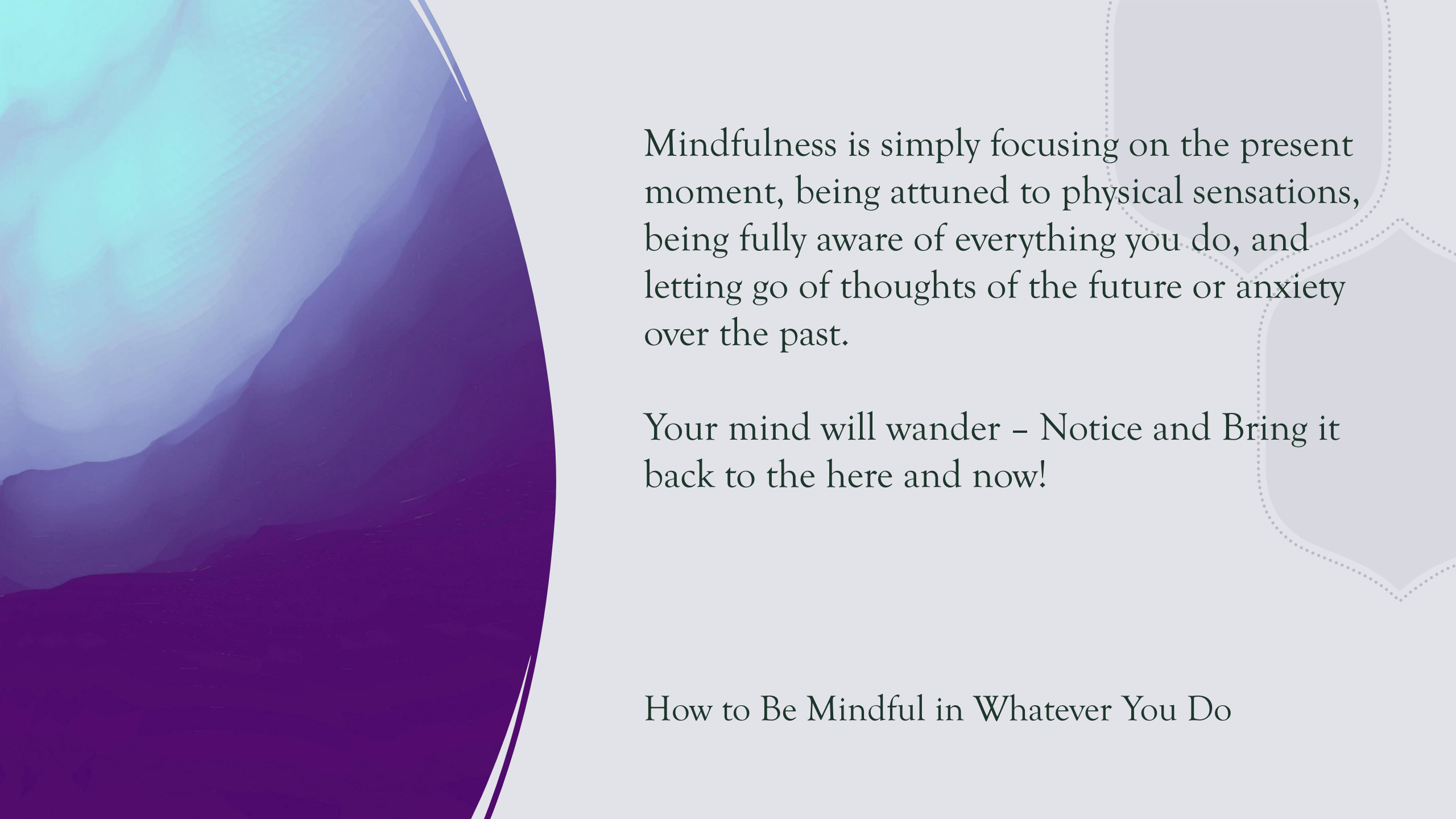
What does mindfulness look like?!

Start with
me Today





What does mindfulness ALSO look like?!



Mindfulness is simply focusing on the present moment, being attuned to physical sensations, being fully aware of everything you do, and letting go of thoughts of the future or anxiety over the past.

Your mind will wander – Notice and Bring it back to the here and now!

How to Be Mindful in Whatever You Do

Reduced Stress: Mindfulness helps lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, leading to a reduction in overall stress and anxiety.

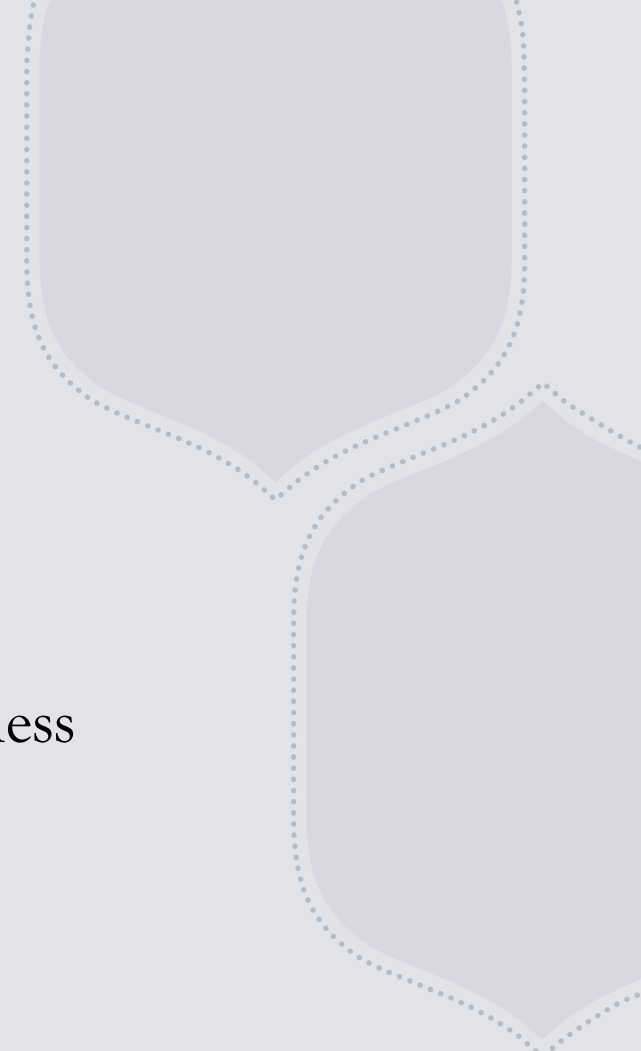
Improved Emotional Regulation: Regular mindfulness practice enhances the ability to manage and respond to emotions in a healthy way.

Enhanced Focus and Concentration: Mindfulness improves attention span and the ability to concentrate on tasks.

Better Mental Health: It can reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.

Increased Self-Awareness: Mindfulness promotes greater awareness of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, leading to improved self-understanding.

Benefits of Mindfulness



Improved Physical Health: It can lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and reduce symptoms of chronic pain.

Enhanced Relationships: Mindfulness fosters better communication and empathy, improving relationships with others.

Greater Resilience: Regular practice builds emotional resilience, helping individuals cope better with life's challenges.

Increased Compassion: Mindfulness cultivates compassion for oneself and others, promoting a more positive outlook.

Enhanced Well-Being: Overall, mindfulness contributes to a greater sense of happiness and life satisfaction.

More Benefits of Mindfulness



Improve your Ability to Provide Treatment to Others?

- Increase Attunement
- Increase Co-Regulation
- Higher Client Ratings

How to Build a Sustainable Mindfulness Practice?

Step 1: **Start Small**

Begin with short sessions, such as 2-3 minutes a day. Gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable.

Step 2: **Set Realistic Goals**

Establish achievable goals for your practice. For example, aim to practice mindfulness 3-4 times a week initially.

Step 3: **Choose a Specific Time**

Integrate mindfulness into your daily routine by choosing a specific time each day to practice, such as first thing in the morning or before bed.

How to Build a Sustainable Mindfulness Practice?

Step 4: **Be Flexible**

Allow flexibility in your practice. If you miss a session, don't be hard on yourself—just resume as soon as possible.

Step 5: **Incorporate Mindfulness into Daily Activities**

Practice mindfulness during routine activities, such as eating, walking, or washing dishes. Focus on the sensations and experience in the present moment.

Step 6: **Explore Different Techniques**

Experiment with various mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, body scans, mindful walking, or guided meditations, to find what resonates best with you.

How to Build a Sustainable Mindfulness Practice?

Step 7: **Use Apps and Resources**

Utilize mindfulness apps, books, or online resources to guide and support your practice. Set reminders or timers to remind you to engage in your practice.

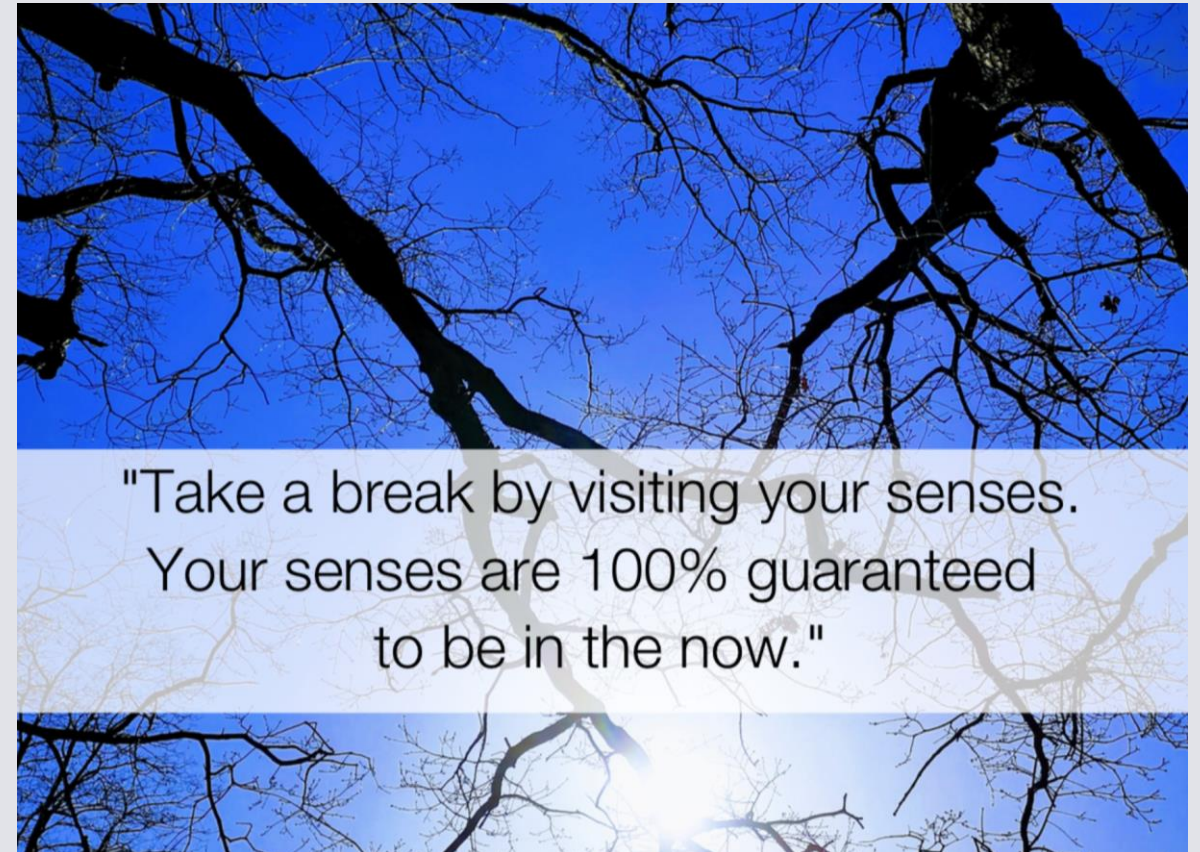
Step 8: **Track Your Progress**

Keep a journal to record your experiences, challenges, and progress. Reflecting on your practice can help you stay motivated and make adjustments as needed.

Step 9: **Be Patient and Compassionate:**

Understand that developing a mindfulness practice takes time. Be patient with yourself and practice self-compassion as you navigate the process. Seek Support and assistance as needed.

Contact with the Present Moment



"Take a break by visiting your senses.
Your senses are 100% guaranteed
to be in the now."

Virtual Mindfulness

1. Set an intention

Set the energy for the meeting as a whole, or invite each participant to set their own.

2. Yawn and stretch

One of the easiest ways to bring yourself back to your body (especially in the morning).

3. Release distractions

Let go of any mental clutter or challenges you're bringing with you into the meeting.

4. Mindful background

Set a mindful Zoom background as a way to set the mood for a mindful meeting.

5. Ambient music

Ambient music is another way to set a relaxing mood (especially during breaks).

6. Simply listen

Allow your participants to simply pay attention to whatever they hear in their environment.

7. Belly breathing

Take a deep breath for 5 seconds, hold for 5 seconds, and release. Repeat.

8. Nostril breathing

Alternate nostril breathing is an easy way to become aware of your breathing.

9. Sensory experience

Perfect for kids and adults alike. Have participants interact with their environment.

10. Stand up

Stand up and move around a bit. Get in tune with your body. Perfect for breaks.

11. Finger tapping

A grounding exercise. Tap one finger to your thumb and breathe. Repeat with other fingers.

12. Read something

Read a short mindfulness quote or passage to set the tone or create inspiration.

13. Go barefoot

What's more mindful than walking around barefoot and simply noticing what it feels like?

14. Group meditation

Meditate as a group. Consider using a guided recording to make this easier.

15. Loving kindness

Loving kindness meditation helps people feel warmth towards themselves and others.

16. Self-compassion

We all need moments of self-compassion. Let your meeting be a reminder.

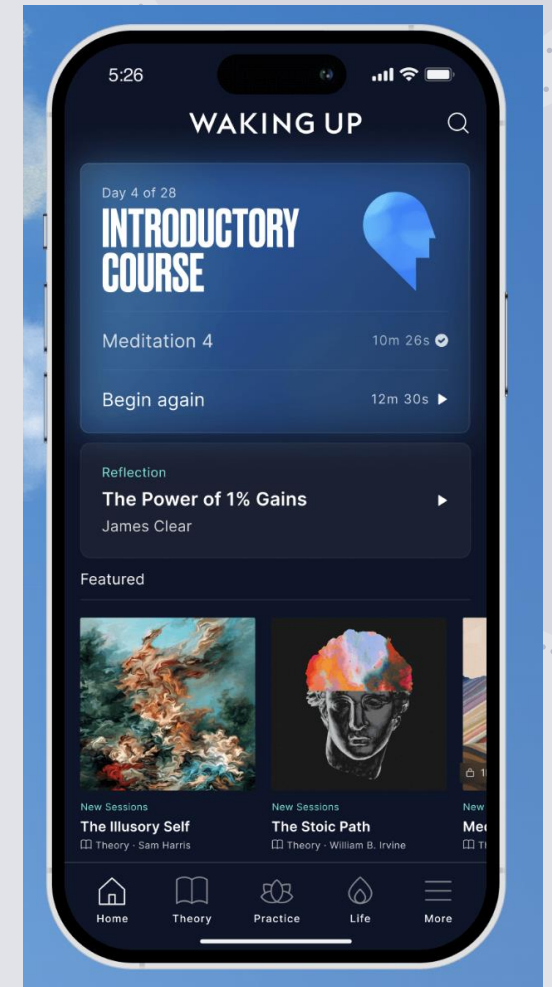
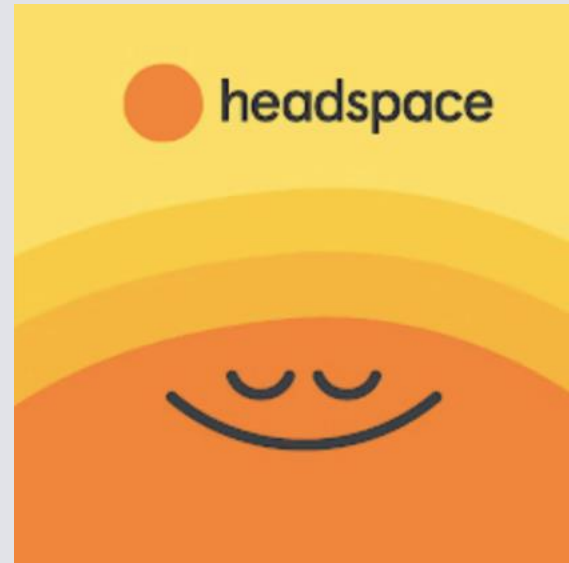
17. Gratitude

The perfect way to close your meeting. Send participants out into the world gratefully.

- 
1. Set an Intention
 2. Focus on your Breath
 3. Engage your Senses
 4. Slow Down
 5. Pay Attention to Details
 6. Single-Task
 7. Non-Judgmental Stance
 8. Body Awareness
 9. Mindful Pauses
 10. Curiosity
 11. Gratitude
 12. Mindful Transitions
 13. Environmental Cues
 14. Affirmations “I am Present”
 15. Regular Practice (Daily)

How to do Anything Mindfully

Apps for Mindfulness



Free App:

Insight
Timer



Settle In:

Begin by sitting comfortably in your seat with both hands on the steering wheel. Ensure your posture is upright but relaxed.

Deep Breathing:

Take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your abdomen expand.

Slowly exhale through your mouth, letting go of any tension. Repeat this two more times, maintaining awareness of your breath.

Focus on Your Hands:

Bring your attention to your hands on the steering wheel. Notice the texture of the wheel beneath your fingers and the slight movements of your hands as you steer.

Engage Your Senses:

Observe the road ahead. Notice the colors, shapes, and movements without labeling or judging them.

Listen to the sounds around you—the hum of the engine, the noise of other cars, or the wind.

Feel the Drive:

Pay attention to the sensation of the car moving. Feel the vibrations through the seat, the pressure of your foot on the pedal, and the way the car responds as you steer.

Gratitude Moment:

Take a moment to feel grateful for your car and the journey you are on. Appreciate the ability to travel and the opportunities that come with it.

Reconnect with Your Breath:

Conclude by taking one more deep breath in and out, returning your focus to the present moment, feeling centered and calm.

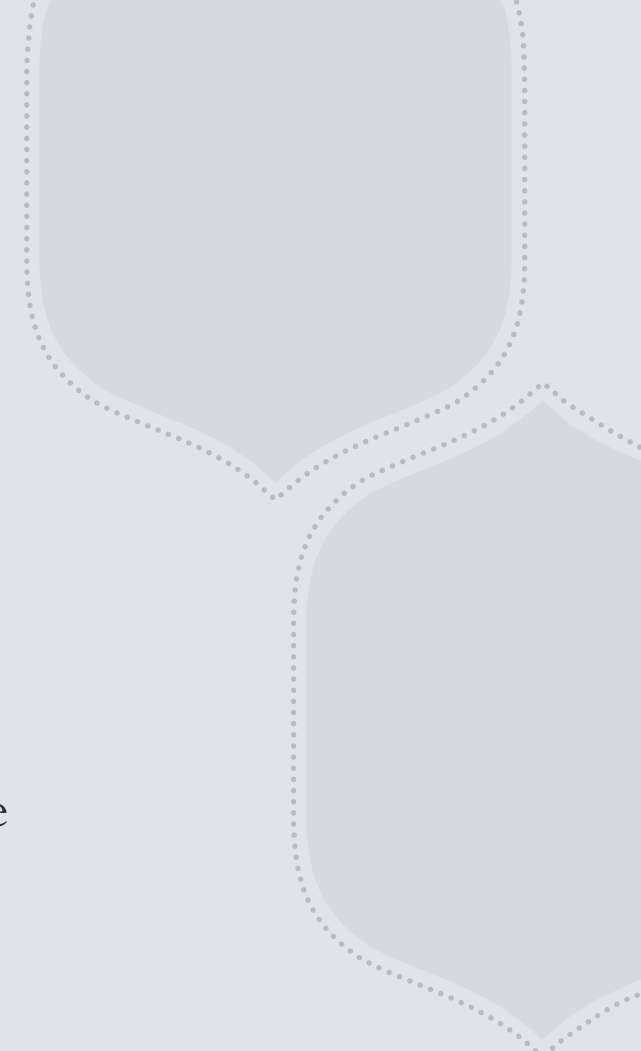
***Remember, while it's essential to stay mindful, always prioritize safety and remain fully aware of the road and your surroundings.*

Driving Mindfulness Moment

Contact with the Present Moment

The ability to fully engage with and experience the here and now.

It involves being fully aware of one's thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the environment without judgment or attachment.

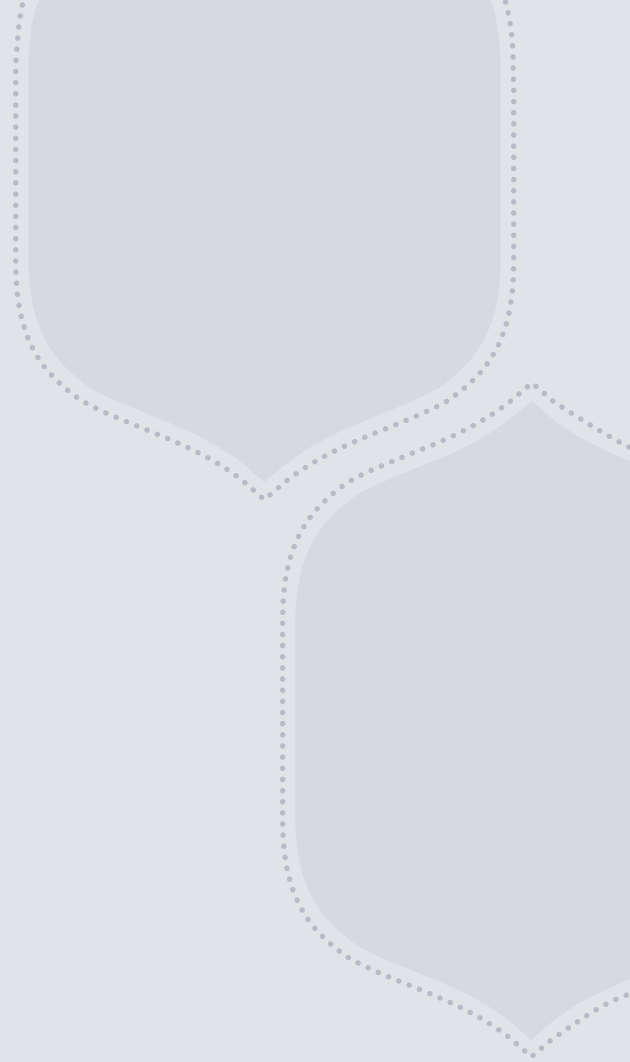


Contact with the Present Moment

- **Mindfulness:** Contact with the present moment is closely tied to mindfulness, which is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity, and acceptance. Mindfulness involves being fully present and engaged in whatever is happening right now, whether it's pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
- **Non-Judgmental Awareness:** Contact with the present moment involves observing one's experiences without judgment or evaluation. Instead of labeling experiences as "good" or "bad," individuals practice simply noticing them as they are, allowing them to come and go without getting caught up in reactive patterns.
- **Acceptance:** Contact with the present moment also involves accepting one's experiences as they arise, even if they are uncomfortable or distressing. Rather than trying to avoid or suppress unwanted thoughts or emotions, individuals learn to acknowledge and make room for them, recognizing all experiences are a temporary part of the human condition.
- **Engagement:** Contact with the present moment requires active engagement with one's experiences rather than passive observation. This may involve fully immersing oneself in an activity, paying attention to the details of sensory experiences, or engaging with others in meaningful ways.
- **Connection to Values:** Contact with the present moment is often connected to living in alignment with one's values and aspirations. By being fully present and engaged in the here and now, individuals can better connect with what truly matters to them and make choices that are consistent with their values.

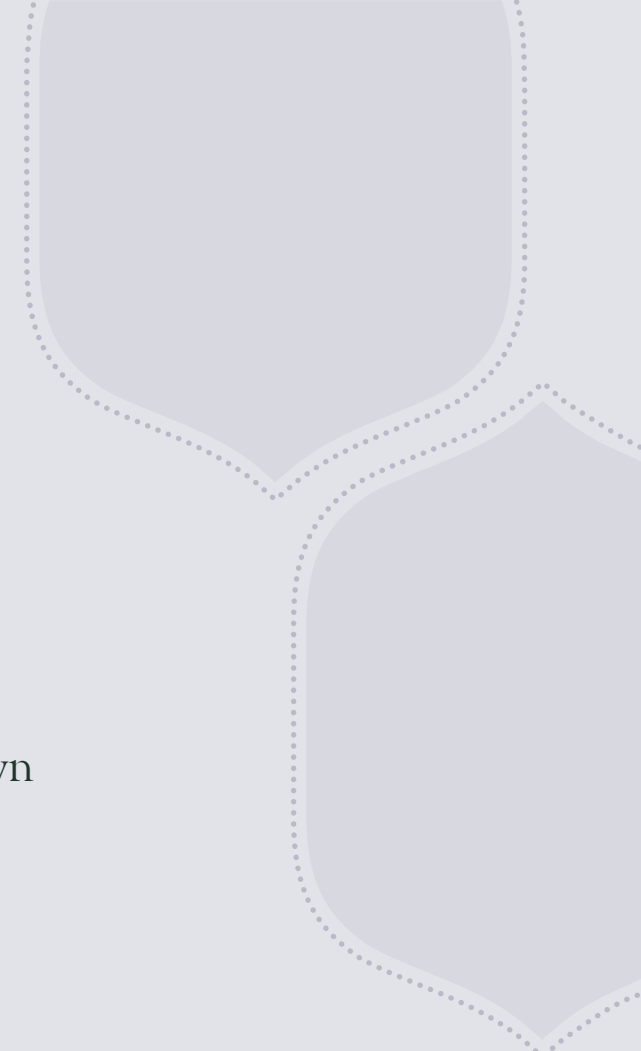
Experiential Avoidance

- ♦ Trying to get rid of, avoid, or escape from unwanted private experiences such as thoughts, feelings, and memories



Dominance of the Conceptualized Past and Future/ Limited Self-Knowledge

- ♦ Fusion and avoidance readily lead to loss of contact with our here-and-now experiences and readily get caught up in conceptualized past and future
- ♦ Contacting the present moment includes the world around us and inside us
If we lose contact with our inner psychological world- become out of touch with our own thoughts and feelings then we lack self-knowledge



"Your mind is the sky.
Thoughts and feelings merely weather."



Cognitive Defusion



Cognitive Defusion

- It is the process of learning to see thoughts as what they are—just thoughts—rather than as literal truths or commands that must be followed.
- The term "defusion" suggests a loosening or separation of the individual from their thoughts.
- In cognitive defusion, individuals learn to step back from their thoughts and observe them with greater perspective and detachment.
- This allows them to reduce the influence that their thoughts have over their emotions and behaviors.



Reframing with Defusion Language

- ♦ “I’m a loser” vs. “I am telling myself that I’m a loser in this moment”
- ♦ Reframe it so that we recognize our ability to have some agency over where our minds take us



Benefits of Defusion



Allows us to understand the impact our self talk has on our overall wellness

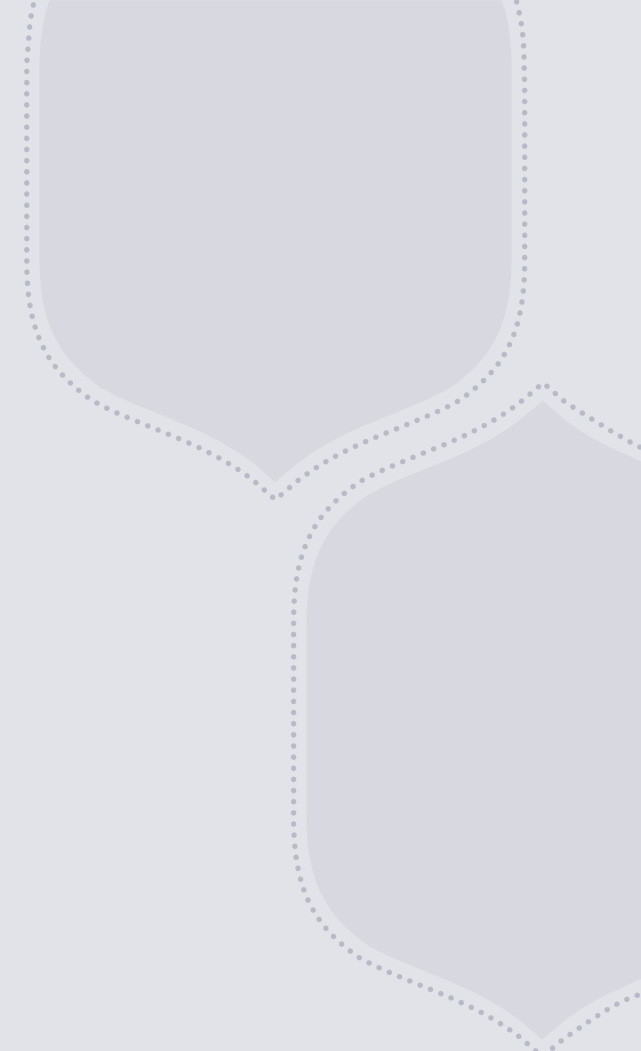


Step away from accepting our thoughts as true without taking the time to evaluate if they actually are?

Observing Self

- ♦ Write down “I Am” 24 times going down a blank piece of scratch paper.

- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...
- ♦ I am...



Cognitive Defusion Interventions

- ♦ Labeling: Clients learn to label their thoughts as "just thoughts" or to prefix them with phrases like "I'm having the thought that..." This helps to create psychological distance and reduce the power of thoughts to dictate behavior.
- ♦ Metaphors and Imagery: Therapists may use metaphors or imagery to illustrate the transient nature of thoughts. For example, they might ask clients to imagine their thoughts floating by on leaves on a stream, emphasizing that thoughts come and go like passing objects.
- ♦ Experiential Exercises: Clients engage in experiential exercises where they directly experience the process of defusion. For example, they might repeat a word aloud many times until it loses its meaning, demonstrating that thoughts are not inherently true or meaningful.
- ♦ Humor: Humor can be a powerful defusion technique. Clients may be encouraged to treat their thoughts with humor, recognizing the absurdity or exaggerated nature of some of their cognitive patterns.
- ♦ Externalization: Clients can externalize their thoughts by writing them down, drawing them, or even giving them a name or persona. This can help individuals see their thoughts as separate from themselves, reducing identification with them.

Defusion Exercise

- ♦ Take a moment to jot down a thought that often creates discomfort for you.
- ♦ Consider the thought as you typically do...
- ♦ Jot down some of the emotions that result from that thought



Defusion Exercise Pt. 2

- ♦ Now consider that same thought but in a funny voice
- ♦ Imagine it on a t-shirt





"You don't need to eliminate your negative thoughts. Take them with you and do what matters."

Acceptance

- ♦ In Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), acceptance involves embracing and making room for unwanted thoughts, emotions, sensations, and experiences rather than trying to control or avoid them.



Acceptance in Practice

- **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a core component of acceptance in ACT. Clients are encouraged to cultivate present-moment awareness and non-judgmental observation of their internal experiences. Through mindfulness practices such as meditation, mindful breathing, or body scan exercises, clients learn to accept whatever arises in their awareness without trying to change it or push it away.
- **Defusion:** Acceptance often involves cognitive defusion techniques, which help clients create distance from their thoughts and see them as passing mental events rather than literal truths. By defusing from their thoughts, clients can acknowledge them without becoming entangled in them or allowing them to dictate their actions.
- **Experiential Exercises:** Therapists may facilitate experiential exercises that allow clients to directly experience acceptance. For example, clients might be asked to hold an ice cube in their hand and observe the sensations without reacting or trying to alleviate discomfort. This exercise teaches them to tolerate discomfort and accept it as part of their experience.
- **Values Clarification:** Acceptance is closely linked to living in alignment with one's values. Clients are encouraged to clarify their core values—those qualities or principles that are most important and meaningful to them. By committing to values-based action, clients learn to accept the discomfort or uncertainty that may arise as they pursue their goals.
- **Self-Compassion:** Acceptance involves treating oneself with kindness and compassion, especially in the face of difficult thoughts or emotions. Clients learn to respond to themselves with warmth and understanding rather than self-criticism or judgment.
- **Acceptance of Emotions:** Clients learn to accept their emotions as natural and valid responses to their internal and external experiences. Instead of trying to suppress or avoid emotions, they learn to acknowledge and explore them with curiosity and openness.
- **Radical Acceptance:** Radical acceptance involves fully embracing reality as it is, without judgment or resistance. Clients learn to accept the things they cannot change and focus their energy on responding effectively to the challenges they face.

Constructionist

- ♦ Previous experiences, social location, and personal narratives impact the way in which we experience the world, encode those memories, and ultimately recall them in a form of personal narrative



Attachment to the Conceptualized Self

- If we hold our story lightly it can give us a sense of self that helps to define who we are and what we want in life
- If we fuse with our story-if we begin to think we are the story-it creates problems
- Both positive and negative conceptualized-self or self-as-description can be problematic

Self as Context

- ♦ The transcendent aspect of one's identity. It involves the ability to observe and experience thoughts, feelings, sensations, and experiences from a detached and objective perspective, without becoming overly identified with them.



Self as Context

- Transcendence of Ego: Self as Context involves transcending the ego or the sense of self that is tied to specific thoughts, emotions, or roles. Instead of being defined by one's thoughts or experiences, individuals recognize themselves as the observing consciousness that is capable of witnessing those thoughts and experiences.
- Observational Perspective: Self as Context allows individuals to adopt an observational perspective toward their inner experiences. Rather than being fully immersed in the content of their thoughts or emotions, individuals learn to step back and observe them with curiosity, openness, and acceptance.
- Stable Awareness: Self as Context represents a stable and continuous awareness that remains present regardless of the content of one's thoughts or experiences. It is the unchanging aspect of consciousness that provides a sense of continuity and coherence to one's sense of self.
- Relational Frame Theory: The concept of Self as Context is informed by Relational Frame Theory, which suggests that human language and cognition allow individuals to create complex relational networks that shape their perception of self and reality. Self as Context involves transcending these relational frames and recognizing oneself as the context within which thoughts and experiences occur.
- Freedom from Identification: Self as Context enables individuals to experience greater freedom from identification with their thoughts, emotions, and roles. By recognizing themselves as the observing consciousness, individuals can create psychological distance from their inner experiences and respond to them more flexibly and skillfully.

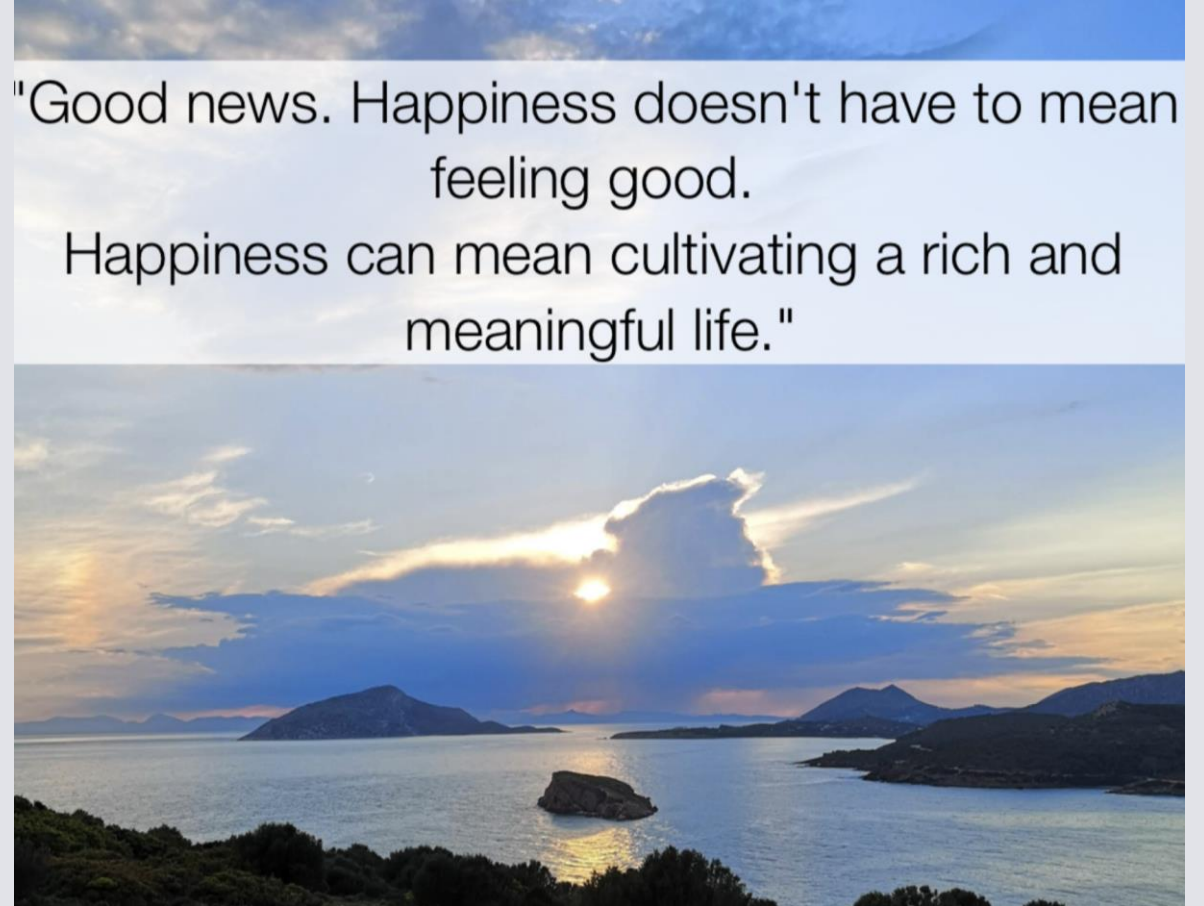
Conference Room Exercise

- ♦ Grab another blank piece of paper...



Values Consistent Living

"Good news. Happiness doesn't have to mean
feeling good.
Happiness can mean cultivating a rich and
meaningful life."



Values Clarification

- ♦ The process of identifying and clarifying one's core values—the qualities, characteristics, or principles that are most important and meaningful to an individual. Values represent the desired qualities of how one wants to behave or live their life, rather than specific goals or outcomes.

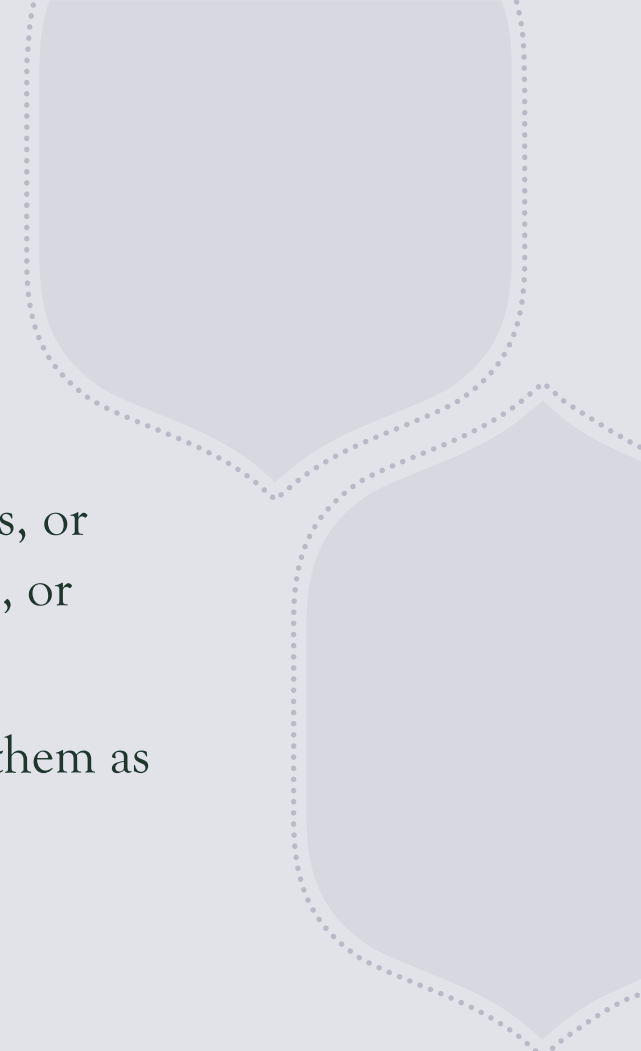


Values Clarification

- ♦ Identifying Core Values: Values clarification involves reflecting on and identifying the fundamental principles or qualities that guide and inspire one's life. These values may encompass various domains such as relationships, career, health, personal growth, spirituality, or community involvement.
- ♦ Personal Exploration: Values clarification encourages individuals to engage in personal exploration and introspection to uncover what truly matters to them. This process may involve reflecting on past experiences, considering role models or inspirational figures, and envisioning the kind of person one wants to be.
- ♦ Differentiating Values from Goals: Values are distinct from goals in that they represent ongoing qualities or directions in life rather than specific achievements or outcomes. While goals may change over time, values remain relatively stable and enduring.
- ♦ Prioritization and Ranking: Once identified, individuals may prioritize or rank their values to determine their relative importance. This can help individuals make decisions and allocate resources in a way that aligns with their most cherished values.
- ♦ Living in Alignment with Values: Values clarification is not merely an intellectual exercise but a call to action. Individuals are encouraged to live their lives in alignment with their values, making choices and taking actions that honor and reflect their deepest principles.
- ♦ Values-Driven Behavior: In ACT, values-driven behavior is emphasized as a key to psychological well-being and fulfillment. By committing to values-based action, individuals can experience a sense of purpose, meaning, and vitality, even in the face of difficult circumstances or challenging emotions.

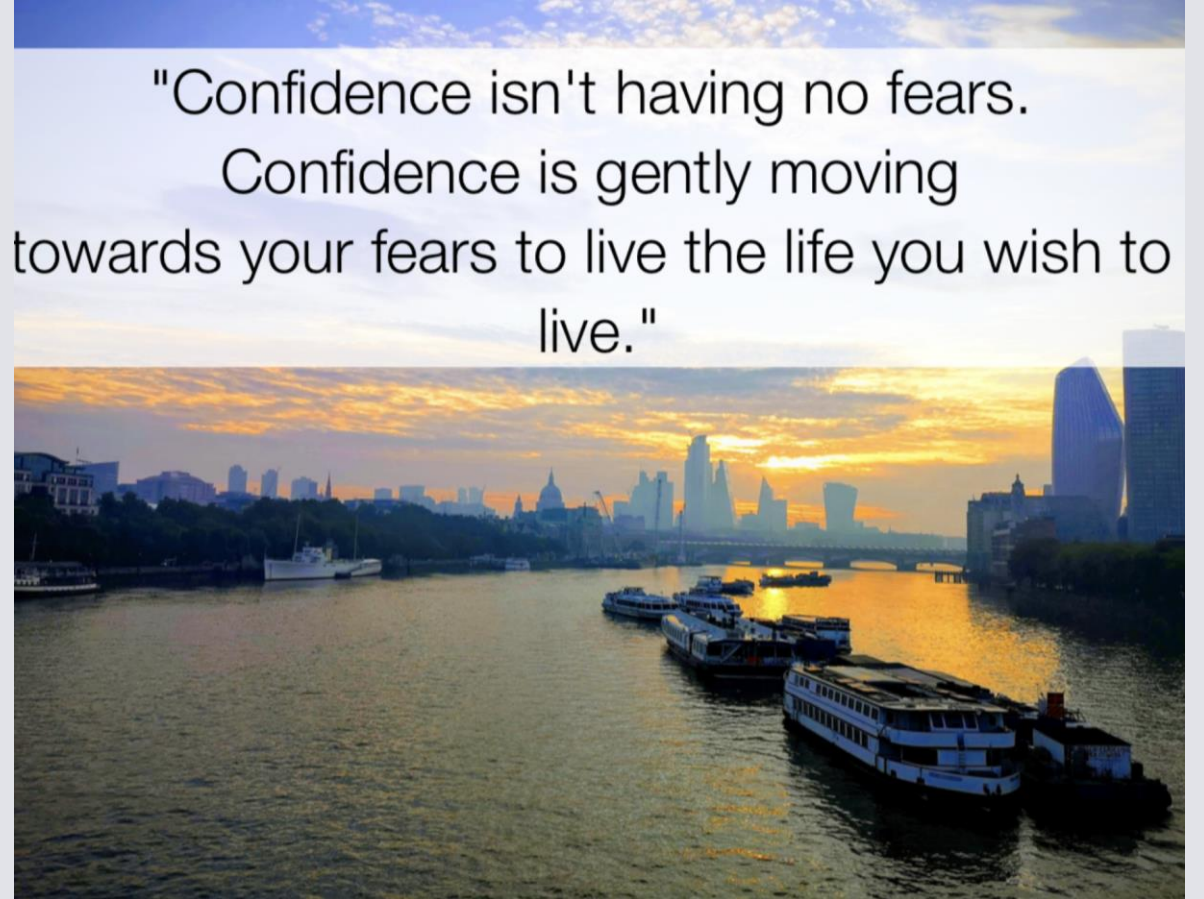
Lack of Values Clarity/ Contact

- ♦ As our behavior becomes increasingly driven by fusion with unhelpful thoughts, or attempts to avoid unpleasant private events, our values often get lost, neglected, or forgotten
- ♦ If we are not clear about our values or in contact with them then we can't use them as an effective guide for our actions



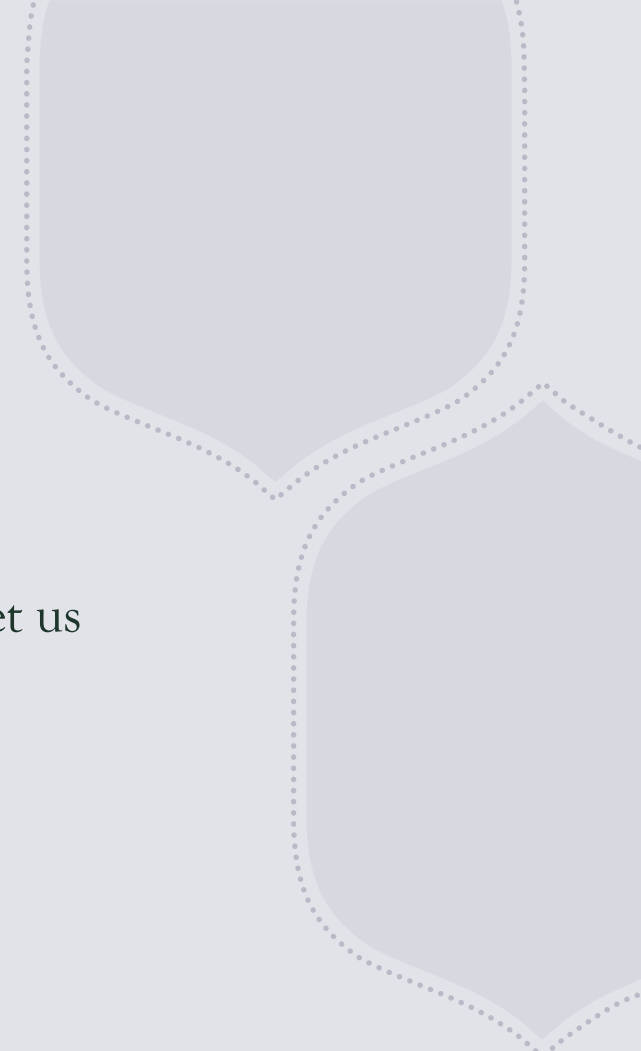
Committed Action

"Confidence isn't having no fears.
Confidence is gently moving
towards your fears to live the life you wish to
live."



Unworkable Action

- ♦ Patterns of behavior that pulls us away from mindful, valued living
- ♦ Patterns of action do not work to make our lives richer and fuller, but rather get us stuck or increase our struggles



Committed Action

- ♦ The process of taking meaningful, values-based steps toward achieving one's goals and living a fulfilling life. It involves making a conscious and deliberate commitment to engaging in actions that align with one's core values, even in the presence of obstacles, discomfort, or difficult emotions.



Committed Action

- ♦ Alignment with Values: Committed action begins with clarifying and identifying one's core values—the principles, qualities, or aspirations that are most important and meaningful. These values serve as a compass for guiding behavior and decision-making.
- ♦ Setting Goals: Once values are clarified, individuals set specific, actionable goals that are consistent with those values. These goals represent concrete steps or milestones that individuals strive to achieve as they move toward living a values-based life.
- ♦ Overcoming Barriers: Committed action involves acknowledging and addressing the obstacles or challenges that may arise on the path toward achieving one's goals. This may include internal barriers such as self-doubt or fear, as well as external barriers such as practical constraints or social pressures.
- ♦ Acceptance of Discomfort: In ACT, individuals learn to accept and make room for uncomfortable emotions or sensations that may arise as they pursue their goals. Rather than avoiding or trying to suppress these experiences, individuals acknowledge them as part of the human condition and continue moving forward in alignment with their values.
- ♦ Persistence and Flexibility: Committed action requires persistence and flexibility in the face of setbacks or failures. Individuals learn to adapt their approach, problem-solve, and persevere, recognizing that progress may be nonlinear and that setbacks are a natural part of the learning process.
- ♦ Behavioral Activation: Committed action often involves behavioral activation—taking concrete steps toward one's goals, even when motivation is low or when faced with resistance. By engaging in valued actions, individuals can experience a sense of accomplishment, mastery, and fulfillment.
- ♦ Mindful Awareness: Throughout the process of committed action, individuals cultivate mindful awareness—being fully present and engaged in the here and now. This allows individuals to make intentional choices and respond effectively to the demands of the present moment.

Rate your Values

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Valued Living Questionnaire

Below are areas of life that are valued by some people. We are concerned with your quality of life in each of these areas. One aspect of quality of life involves the importance one puts on different areas of living. Rate the importance of each area (by circling a number) on a scale of 1-10. 1 means that area is not at all important. 10 means that area is very important. Not everyone will value all of these areas, or value all areas the same. Rate each area according to **your own personal sense of importance**.

<u>Area</u>	not at all important										extremely important
1. Family (other than marriage or parenting)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2. Marriage/couples/intimate relations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3. Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. Friends/social life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. Education/training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. Recreation/fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8. Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9. Citizenship/Community Life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10. Physical self care (diet, exercise, sleep)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Rate your Behavior

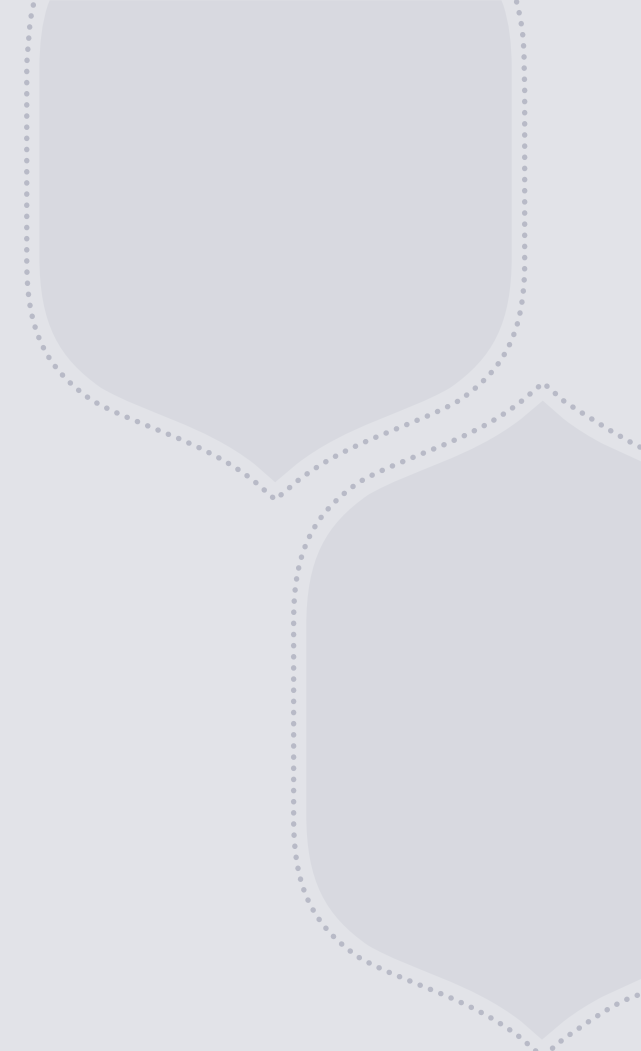
In this section, we would like you to give a rating of how consistent your actions have been with each of your values. We are **not** asking about your ideal in each area. We are also **not** asking what others think of you. Everyone does better in some areas than others. People also do better at some times than at others. **We want to know how you think you have been doing during the past week.** Rate each area (by circling a number) on a scale of 1-10. 1 means that your actions have been completely inconsistent with your value. 10 means that your actions have been completely consistent with your value.

During the past week

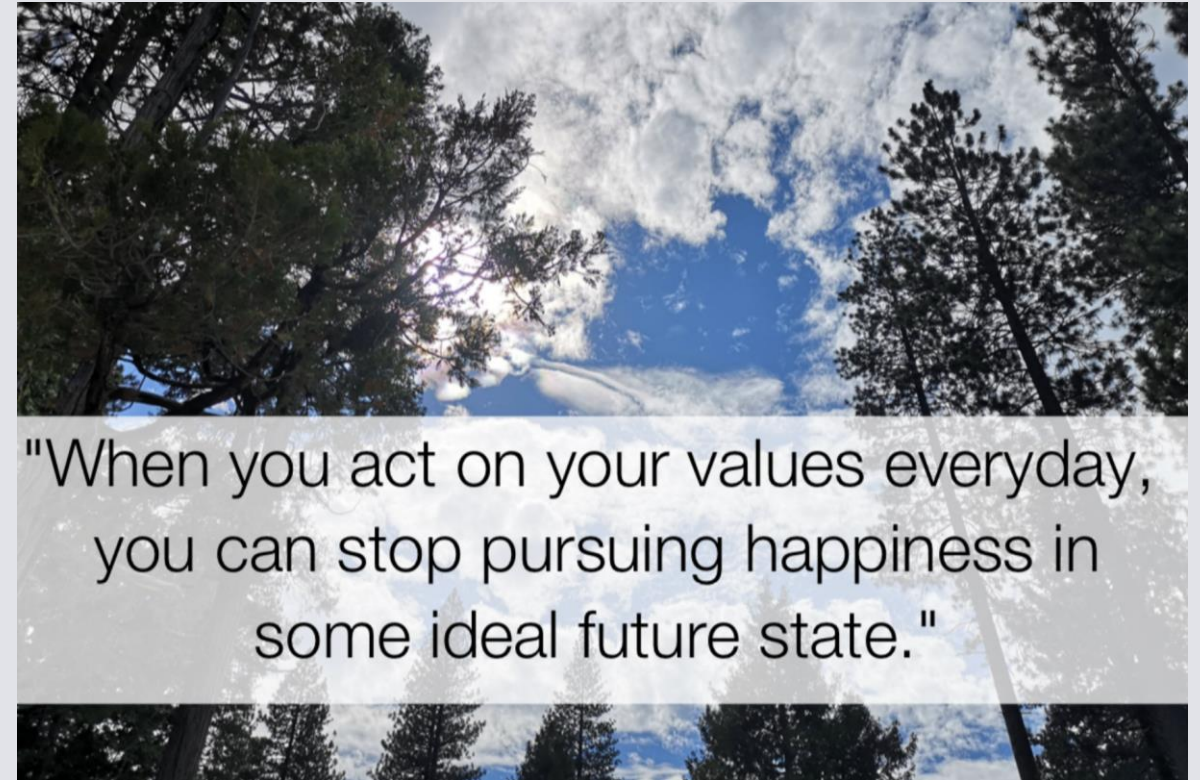
<u>Area</u>	not at all consistent with my value					completely consistent with my value				
1. Family (other than marriage or parenting)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Marriage/couples/intimate relations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Friends/social life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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10. Physical self care (diet, exercise, sleep)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Create your Self-Care Plan

- ♦ Measurable/Obtainable
- ♦ Include goals across each of the following zones:
 1. Spiritual
 2. Emotional
 3. Social
 4. Physical Self
 5. Employment Self

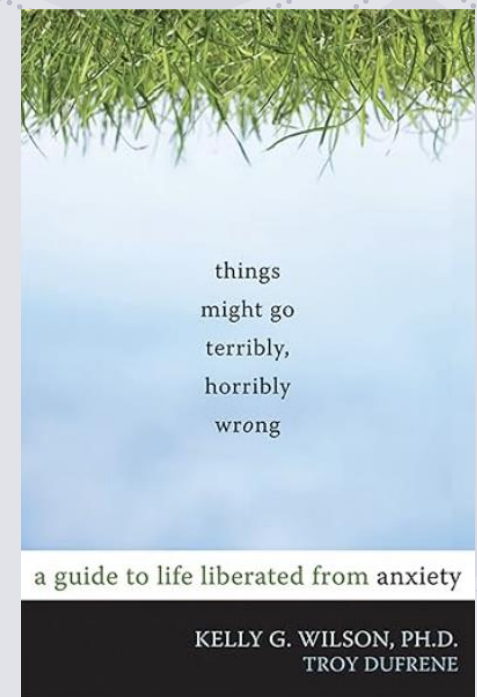
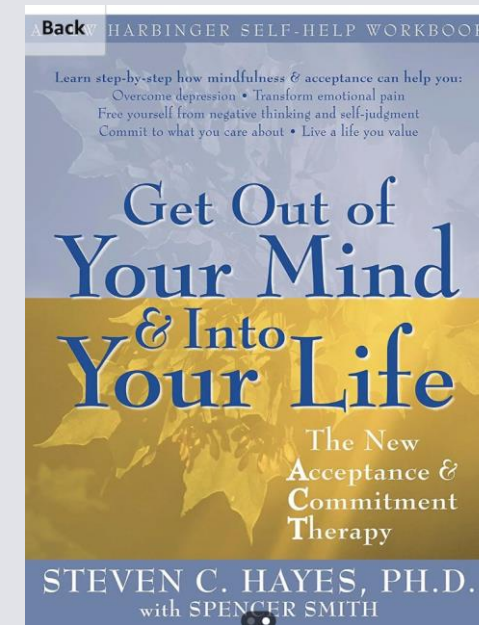
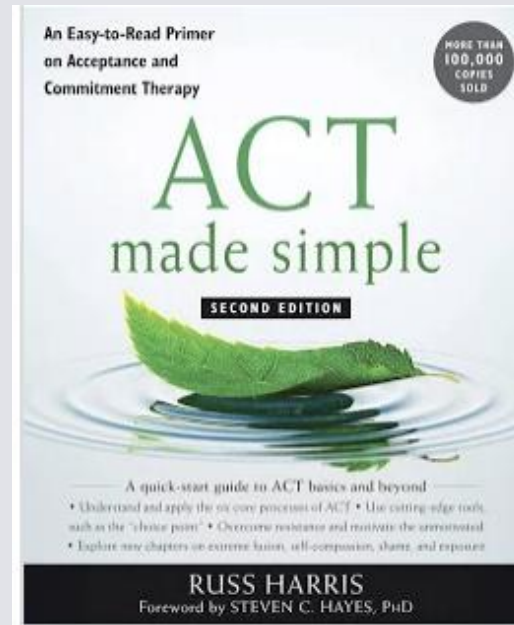
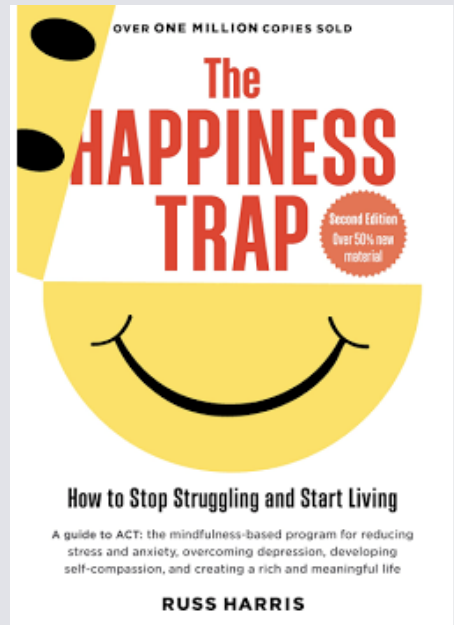
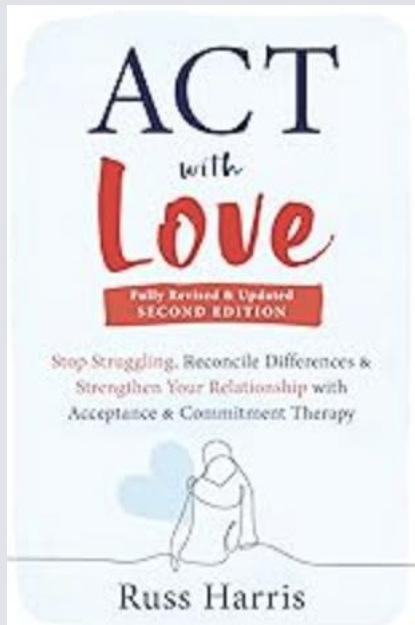


Values Consistent Living



"When you act on your values everyday,
you can stop pursuing happiness in
some ideal future state."

Best ACT Books



Questions?

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Jobs.pacounseling.com

Pacounseling.com/trainings

Liveupcounseling.com

Connect on LinkedIn

How to be Happy Hour!

