When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Mindful:

A Toolkit Based on the Principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Clinician Version

Created by:
Andrew Ahles: aahles@fcsok.org
Jeremy Jenkins: jjenkins@fcsok.org

Family & Children’s Services, Inc.: www.fcsok.org
# When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Mindful

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A working definition of ACT is this: ACT is the process of learning to observe and accept thoughts and emotions, in order to be able to take more effective action in the present to become a person who lives life according to their underlying values. The focus of ACT is not strictly the reduction of symptoms but rather the development of psychological flexibility that will allow clients to adapt effectively to a variety of problems and to live meaningful and rich lives. The “hexaflex” model summarizes the 6 basic components of psychological flexibility that you will address with your clients. Three of these components are skills related to acceptance and mindfulness, and 3 are related to commitment and behavior changes. This section contains a brief definition of each portion of the hexaflex so that you can easily refer to them as you proceed through the modules of this toolkit.

The Hexaflex
It is important to realize that when clients come for treatment they have usually tried to solve their problems in many different ways, including past treatment with other providers. Before working with the tools of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, it is often necessary to help clients think through what they have already tried and whether or not it was effective, both in the short term and the long term. Since they are coming to treatment, it is likely that past attempts at coping did not provide the relief they sought, or did so in a temporary way, or perhaps even led to some negative consequences.

Helping the client realize that their attempts at coping have ultimately fallen short in the long run is a process referred to as creative hopelessness. Since acceptance and mindfulness skills are often counterintuitive, some clients may not be ready to give them a try until they have fully explored other options. Creative hopelessness helps them to do this exploration by letting their experience be their ultimate guide, rather than their mind. The mind may try to tell the client “you just need to try harder” or “you need to learn to think more positively” or “you need to get to the root of the problem and understand why you do the things you do.” Creative hopelessness helps the client check these ideas against their experience by asking if these approaches have ever been effective for them in the long run.

This toolkit is laid out in a specific order and we do recommend starting with Module 1, which covers creative hopelessness. However, after Module 1 you can begin working with a client on any portion of the hexaflex and its corresponding section in the toolkit. We designed the toolkit to start with the Acceptance & Mindfulness half of the Hexaflex because most clients come to us wanting to learn what to do about their thoughts and feelings and how to deal with them. Values and Committed Action are the why of it all. Why bother learning new skills to deal with thoughts and feelings? So you can do what matters to you. If the client isn’t willing to try dealing with thoughts and feelings in a new and different way, even after exploring creative hopelessness, you can pivot to values and committed action and come back to acceptance and mindfulness later. It’s entirely possible that if the client has an important enough why, then the what and how will follow more easily, with or without what the client would call “acceptance” or “mindfulness.”
ACT Overview

Acceptance and Mindfulness Processes

1. Acceptance/Willingness

Acceptance is the process of allowing painful or negative experiences to be present in our lives. ACT emphasizes that by making room for these painful experiences we decrease the power they have to cause us pain. Acceptance also means we stop the ineffective coping techniques or responses we have been using to try to make our painful or negative experiences go away.

2. Defusion

Defusion is achieving cognitive distance from one’s thoughts and emotions. Instead of allowing our thoughts and emotions to dominate our experience, we step back and become an observer. Common metaphors for defusion include viewing thoughts and emotions as passing clouds or leaves floating down a stream. In ACT, we teach clients to defuse from their negative thoughts and emotions in order to diminish the power those experiences have over their behavior.

3. Sense of self as “Observer”

When we step back from our thoughts and emotions, we are activating the “observer” part of ourselves or the “self as context”. This is the part of ourselves that is able to view any part of our experience and observe what we are thinking, feeling, and doing without judgement. A common metaphor for this concept is that of a stage. All of a person’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are on the stage, while the observing self is the part of the individual in the audience, watching the play unfold. By connecting more effectively with our observer selves, it becomes easier to accept and defuse from our negative thoughts and emotions.
Commitment and Behavior Change Processes

4. Present Moment Awareness

Present moment awareness is purposefully reconnecting with what is going on in our bodies or environments in the immediate present. When we are lost in our thoughts or emotions, especially thoughts or emotions connected with the past or future, it becomes easy to fuse with these experiences and allow them to drive our behavior. In ACT, we teach clients to focus on the immediate present, the one part of time any of us have any level of influence on. This is often accomplished through mindfulness or grounding exercises.

5. Clarity and Contact with Values

Values are underlying beliefs and desires about life that form the essential answer to the question, “what kind of person do you want to be?” Values describe the kind of life we want to live or the kind of person we want to be, rather than what goals we want to accomplish. People with mental illness or addiction are often disconnected from their values. ACT helps clients identify their values and connect their values to specific behaviors in the present in order to create a more meaningful life.

6. Committed Actions

Committed action is putting forth the effort necessary to achieve a meaningful life based in values. This part of the model is perhaps most similar to standard behavioral interventions such as behavioral activation or exposure treatment with added emphasis on the behaviors being value based.

Clinical Notes

This Clinician’s Guide is meant to serve as a companion to the client toolkit and contains all of the same material as that toolkit with some additions meant to provide helpful background information and to provide one place to access multiple ACT related resources. In the portions of the toolkit that are shared with the client version, information that is only found in this version will be marked in italics. In addition, the appendices are collections of exercises and metaphors used throughout this toolkit in order to enhance a Clinician’s ability to use this model.
ACT Overview

Introducing ACT to Clients

When introducing ACT to clients it is best to avoid long winded explanations, so it is not recommended to show clients the hexaflex model and explain all the core processes in the first module. Instead, there are several metaphors or experiences that are far more effective at helping clients grasp the basic concepts of ACT. One primary metaphor is what Dr. Russ Harris refers to as “ACT in a nutshell.” A video of Dr. Harris explaining this metaphor can be found here: https://youtu.be/QS13jRcaufs. Below is a written explanation of this metaphor.

ACT in a Nutshell

Imagine that this clipboard (or some other similarly shaped object) are all your negative thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Hold the clipboard in front of you and slowly bring it closer and closer until it is in front of your face. Notice how this affects your ability to see what is around you. What would it be like to live like this? Would you be able to accomplish your goals or live your values? This is what happens when we fuse with our thoughts and allow them to dominate our lived experience. Now hold the clipboard as far away from yourself as possible. Really stretch your arms and muscles as you try to get distance between yourself and the clipboard (without dropping it). Again notice how difficult it is to do anything other than this struggle, and notice how uncomfortable it is to struggle with the clipboard like this. This is what happens when we spend all our time and energy struggling against our negative thoughts and emotions. Now slowly lower the clipboard away from you and place it in your lap. Even though the clipboard is still there, notice how much easier it is to connect with what is around you. ACT is all about learning how to make space for our negative thoughts and emotions, in order to allow us to invest our time and energy into doing what is truly meaningful to us.
General Information and What to Expect

- This Toolkit is based on an approach to treatment called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). At its most basic, this approach is about learning new skills to deal with painful thoughts and feelings in a way that allows you to live a better life.

- The general format for each module is:

  Step One: Rate how well your life is working
  Step Two: Review the practice exercises you’ve been working on
  Step Three: Learn and discuss the main ideas for the current module
  Step Four: Practice new skills
  Step Five: Plan your practice exercises for the next appointment

- As we work through this toolkit together, you will have the final say in what works and what doesn’t, based on your experience. If your experience shows that what you are doing works, keep doing it! If your experience tells you that your choices are not working for you, consider trying something different.

- What you get out of this toolkit will depend a great deal on how much you put into it. Your mind will probably try to get in the way of doing the exercises we recommend, by telling you things like “I don’t have time, this won’t help, it’s too difficult, I can just imagine doing the exercise instead of actually doing it,” etc. If this happens, you can choose to say to your mind, “Thanks for the advice, mind! But I’m going to give this a try anyway and see what happens. I’m going to let my experience decide instead of my thoughts.” If you do choose to say this to your mind and move ahead with the toolkit, we believe you will benefit a great deal from learning the information and practicing the exercises inside.

- Many sources were used directly and indirectly in the creation of this toolkit. Direct sources or adaptations are specifically credited, while other sources that informed and inspired this work are listed in the bibliography.
Weekly Rating Sheet

On a scale from 0 to 100, how well is your life working?

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The way I'm spending each day makes me feel alive and fulfilled

The way I'm spending each day makes life seem pointless, meaningless, and not worth living at all

Adapted from ACT Made Simple by Russ Harris
Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

Step One

Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two

Main Ideas:

1. Pain is a fact of life. Every human being experiences pain.

   ➔ Please watch “The 3 Happiness Myths” [4:02]:
   https://youtu.be/93LFFNtcR1Ok

Clinician Summary:

   Myth 1: Happiness is the natural state of human beings
   Reality: Our emotions are like the weather, constantly changing

   Myth 2: Happiness means feeling good
   Reality: Happiness means living a rich, full, and meaningful life with the
   full range of human emotional experiences

   Myth 3: If you’re not happy, you are defective
   Reality: If you’re not happy, you are normal! Life is difficult

My Notes (optional): ________________________________________________
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Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

2. We get to choose how we respond to pain. Some choices will make things worse and lead to suffering. Other choices will help us live a better life.

⇒ Please watch “The Choice Point - By Dr. Russ Harris” [3:55]:
https://youtu.be/tW6vWKVrmLc

*Human Behavior can be described as two major categories:*

Towards moves: moving towards our values and towards the kind of person we want to be.
Away moves: moving away from our values and away from the kind of person we want to be.

Getting hooked by difficult thoughts and feelings normally leads us towards away moves.

The purpose of ACT is to help clients have the skills and freedom to move towards their values, even in the midst of difficult situations.

Two helpers that make this possible: Values and Mindfulness skills

Values: define what you want your life to look like
Mindfulness: helps you unhook from powerful emotions so you can refocus on what is important and live in the present moment.

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3. It is common and normal to respond to pain by trying to control our thoughts and feelings. We want to cling to the good ones and push the bad ones away.

⇒ Please watch “Internal Struggles by Dr. Russ Harris” [2:28]:
https://youtu.be/dz_nexLqY_8

We all tend to get pulled into internal struggles with our thoughts and feelings.
Imagine a chess game, where the white pieces are our positive thoughts/feelings and the black pieces are our negative thoughts/feelings. If we play this game, our lives become a battle in which we attempt to dominate our negative feelings with our positive ones.

Two problems:

- Infinite combination of black and white emotions, the battle is never won but is constantly going on.
- White pieces (positive emotions) attract bad pieces (negative ones)

What if we learned to be like the board instead of like the pieces? To be involved in our emotions, but not involved in a battle.

My Notes (optional): ______________________________________________________

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4. The bad news: Over the long run, trying to control our thoughts and feelings does not often work very well. Our negative thoughts and feelings don’t tend to go away forever. Trying to control them might seem to help in the short term, but eventually it can lead to more suffering and cause other serious consequences.

⇒ Please fill in a few lines from “My Coping Strategies.” You can add more between appointments if you are willing to look deeper into how these attempted solutions have affected you.
### My Coping Strategies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Please list a few of the ways you have been coping with your difficult thoughts and feelings:</th>
<th>Does this strategy work in the short term? Do you feel better?</th>
<th>Does this strategy work in the long term? Do the difficult thoughts and feelings show up again?</th>
<th>Does this strategy have any negative consequences or cause any problems of its own? Does it help you live a better life?</th>
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If any of these coping skills are working for you and aren’t causing their own problems, keep using them! If any of them are not working or are creating other problems for you, this toolkit will offer you some alternative skills to try.
Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

5. The good news: There are psychological tools we can learn to use instead of trying to control our thoughts and feelings. These skills can help us live a better life.


*Imagine you decide to throw a party and invite all of your friends. You and your friends are having a great time until an “unwelcome guest” named Brian shows up. Brian is rowdy, smelly and you hate him being there, so you kick him out of the party. After a few minutes Brian shows back up again. You take him back to the door and send him on his way. But you realize that even though standing by the door ensures that Brian doesn’t come back, it keeps you from being with your other guests. Within a few minutes Brian comes back. While you can’t ignore him, you don’t let his presence keep you from enjoying time with your friends. You notice that even though Brian is still there, you can enjoy the party all the same. You also notice that when you’re not trying to throw Brian out of the party all the time he calms down and he isn’t as bad as you thought he was.*

My Notes (optional): _______________________________________________________
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Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

Step Three

There are two mindfulness techniques to practice in this module. Dropping anchor can be helpful for the client to use in intense situations outside of session as well as for the therapist to use during session when the client has fused with unhelpful thoughts or emotions. The “Introduction to ACT” exercise is a 5 to 10 minute exercise that the client can do at home after practicing in this module.

Practice new skills:

➤ Dropping Anchor: Sometimes when negative thoughts and feelings threaten to overwhelm us, the most effective response we can have is focusing on the present. This is like a ship dropping an anchor in the middle of a storm. It doesn’t stop the storm from happening, but it keeps the ship from getting blown off course. Here’s how you do it: Let your thoughts and emotions continue to run and at the same time press your feet firmly into the floor. Notice your body sitting in your chair. Pay attention to the air in your lungs as you take a few normal breaths. Look around the room and notice where you are. Notice that we are here working together and that you are in a safe environment. Let’s try that together now.

➤ The following exercise will help you experience the main concepts of the ACT approach. Sometimes it is easier to understand something if you experience it, rather than have someone try to explain it to you in words. As I read the following exercise to you, follow along as best you can with the instructions as I’m reading them. Don’t worry if you get distracted or lose focus. This is normal. Just refocus on the exercise as soon as you notice that your mind has wandered.
Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

Introduction to ACT

Please find a comfortable position in your chair; one where you can stay relatively still for about 5 to 10 minutes. I recommend feet flat on the floor with arms on your legs or folded in your lap, but feel free to do whatever is most comfortable for you.

If you feel comfortable closing your eyes, please do so; or you can simply pick a spot in the room to focus on.

Take a few moments to mentally scan your body from head to toe... Notice if there are any areas of tension such as your jaw or shoulders... If you notice any tension, see if you can let some of that tension go... If not, that’s okay, just notice what’s there.

Take a few moments to connect with your sense of touch... Notice what physical sensations are happening in your hands... See if you can feel where your hands make contact with each other or with your legs... See if you can feel your feet on the ground...

Next, take a few moments to notice what you can hear... There may be several sounds, or just one, or it may be silent. Just notice whatever is there...

When you’re ready, move your attention to your breathing... Watch the breath come in and go out on its own, without you having to control it... See if you can feel your breath in your nose or your belly...

As you breathe, you will notice that thoughts may come into your mind... They may be pleasant thoughts, or unpleasant thoughts, or neutral thoughts... This is what the human mind does, it is a thinking machine... Just see if you can notice the thoughts without getting caught up in them, and then return your attention to your breathing... Each time a thought pops up, notice it and then return your attention to your breath... This will happen over and over and over again, and that’s okay, it means you’re normal... With practice you can get better at noticing your thoughts, rather than getting carried away by them.

As you continue breathing, you will notice that certain feelings or emotions will also show up... Some of these may be pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, or neutral feelings... See if you can notice these feelings the same way you notice your thoughts... There is no need to try and change what’s there, just try to notice what you feel... When you notice a feeling, see if you can locate where it is in your body... Notice what sensations come along with the emotion... There may be heaviness, lightness, warmth, coolness, tingling, or tension... You may find these sensations in your head, shoulders, arms, legs, or abdomen... Whatever you feel and wherever it happens, just notice what’s going on and see if you can let it be...
And now see if you can return your attention to your breathing... See if you can notice that there is a part of you that’s able to watch your breathing, watch your thoughts, watch your feelings, watch the sensations that happen in your body... There is a part of you that does the thinking and feeling, and a part of you that can notice the thinking and feeling... Take a few moments to experience what it’s like to connect with the part of you that just notices...

And now take a few moments to consider what brought you here today... There is something you care so much about that you took steps to get here... Just reflect for a few moments about what it is that you really, truly care about most in your life... Recognize and appreciate the fact that you made a choice to take action for change... And as the exercise comes to a close, see if you can bring to mind an image of what kind of person you want to be when you are handling your pain effectively... Consider how you’ll be acting toward other people... How you’ll be acting toward yourself...

And when you’re ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room and back to where we are now. If you like, move your fingers and toes around and have a nice stretch.

My Notes (optional): ________________________________
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Module 1: Pain, Suffering, & Control

Step Four

Between now and the next appointment:

➔ If you are willing, fill in a few more lines from “My Coping Strategies” to see how effective your past or current coping strategies are.

➔ Please decide how often you are willing to read through the “Introduction to ACT” exercise from today’s module and write your answer in the space below. It can be once a day, every two days, or just one time between now and the next appointment. You decide. Just try your best to practice as many times as you are willing. Don’t worry if you don’t reach your target. We’re not aiming for perfection, just for trying our best. Whatever happens, come to the next appointment. Sometimes difficult thoughts and feelings interfere in our lives and keep us from doing the things we set out to do. This is normal! And this is exactly what we will be learning about in Module 2.

Between now and the next appointment, this is how often (or how many times) I am willing to practice the “Introduction to ACT” exercise:

___________________________________________________________________
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

Step One

Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two

Looking back at the last module, this is how often I was willing to practice the “Introduction to ACT” exercise: ____________________________

This is how often I did practice: ____________________________

This is what the experience was like for me -AND/OR- These are the thoughts and feelings that got in the way of practicing as often as I set out to (ex. “I don’t have time, this won’t help, it’s too difficult,” depression, anxiety, etc.):

____________________________________________________________________________

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Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

Step Three

Main Ideas:

1. Since we can’t always control our negative thoughts and feelings, the alternative is to make room for them. This doesn’t mean we like them or want them around, but we are willing for them to be there.


   Accepting a negative thought, feeling, physical sensation or memory involves interacting with it by:
   - Observing it curiously
   - Welcome it like an invited guest
   - Make space for it
   - Soften up around it
   - Hold it lightly
   - Breath into it
   - Put your arms around it with compassion
   - Carry it with you as you move forward in life

   My Notes (optional): _________________________________________________________
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2. When we spend less time trying to control our negative thoughts and feelings, we have more freedom to make choices that improve our lives.

   ➔ Please watch “The Struggle Switch - By Dr. Russ Harris” [3:02]: https://youtu.be/rCp1l16GCXI

   It can sometimes feel like there is a “struggle switch” in the back of our mind that is switched on as soon as we have an uncomfortable emotion, painful memory or painful emotion. When we struggle against these things our emotions can get amplified creating more anxiety and frustration. This amplification can impact and influence our life pulling us down or causing us
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

to engage in self-defeating behaviors. When an uncomfortable emotion, painful memory or painful emotion shows up and we keep the struggle switch off, we are deciding not to invest our time, energy and effort into struggling against it. Instead, we invest our energy into doing meaningful life enhancing activities.

My Notes (optional): __________________________________________________________
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3. We can make room for our negative thoughts and feelings by practicing skills called mindfulness and defusion.

➔ Please watch “Accepting the Mind” [1:06]:
https://youtu.be/qUcC71-W9Os

Imagine that the brain is a still pool of water. Rain drops or wind can create ripples which can churn up the water and make it cloudy. But there is always the potential to return to the still bowl of water through training the mind. As the water stills you can better see what is beneath the water, revealing both things we like and don’t like seeing. Through accepting what we see beneath the water, we become more accepting of ourselves and others, more content and at ease.

➔ Please watch “Changing Perspective” [1:16]:
https://youtu.be/iN6g2mr0p3Q

Training the mind can be like watching traffic go by. The cars represent our thoughts and feelings. Instead of being unsettled by the movement or chasing after certain thoughts or feelings, all we have to do is observe the traffic.

My Notes (optional): __________________________________________________________
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4. Research has shown mindfulness and defusion skills to be very effective.

- Please watch “Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower: An Animation” [2:43]: https://youtu.be/w6T02g5hnT4

**Mindfulness:** The ability to know what’s happening in your head at any given moment without being carried away by it. Mindfulness doesn’t meant that you never react to your thoughts and emotions, instead it helps you to respond wisely to things that happen instead of responding blindly.

- Please watch “What Do We Have All Wrong About Meditation? Featuring Dan Harris” [4:10]: https://youtu.be/BM2CP7A3HKk

**Top three excuses people don’t meditate:**

**Excuse #1:** “Meditation is for hippies or weirdos”
- Research shows an extremely long list of health benefits for those who meditate. As a result large corporations, athletes, people in pop culture, and US Military.

**Excuse #2:** “I can’t do it! My mind is too busy.”
- Everybody’s mind is too busy! That’s why we need meditation. The key words are, “Starting over.”

**Excuse #3:** “I don’t have time for this!”
- All it takes is 5-10 minutes a day.

- You can read more about the benefits of mindfulness before the next module if you are willing (see Step Five)

My Notes (optional): ____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

5. Mindfulness and defusion aren’t about controlling negative thoughts and feelings. The purpose is not to make us feel better (although sometimes this does happen), the goal is to reduce the *impact* that negative thoughts and
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

feelings have on us. Remember from Module 1 that negative thoughts and feelings never go away for good. The aim is to give ourselves the freedom to make choices that improve our lives.

Step Four

Practice new skills:

⇒ The following exercise will help you experience the process of mindfulness. Sometimes it is easier to understand something if you experience it, rather than have someone try to explain it to you in words. As I read the following exercise to you, follow along as best you can with the instructions as I’m reading them. Don’t worry if you get distracted or lose focus. This is normal. Just refocus on the exercise as soon as you notice that your mind has wandered.
Mindfulness of Emotions Script

Position yourself comfortably in the chair...feet flat on the floor, arms placed comfortably, chair fully supporting your body...allow your eyes to close...begin by paying attention to your breathing, taking a few long breaths to get settled...

Now gently guide your attention to how you are feeling emotionally within yourself at this moment...note whatever feelings arise within you, whether they be positive, neutral or negative...whether they be strong or weak in intensity...they are all just emotions...all just feelings to be felt. Whatever feelings arise, remind yourself that it is OK to allow yourself to feel it. Remember that you are not your emotions, you are the watcher of your emotions. Take some time just to observe your emotional experience, making no attempt to change how you are feeling...

You might label the emotion to yourself (i.e., “ah there is calmness/ happiness/ indifference/ surprise/ boredom/ frustration/ fear/ sadness, etc”)...You might describe where and how you feel the emotion in your body...take time to notice the physical signs that you are feeling the way you feel...

Watch as the emotion changes in intensity and nature. Bring whatever image to mind that helps you be the watcher of your emotions (e.g., seeing your emotion like an ocean wave, express train, cloud floating in the sky, leaf floating on a stream, an empty room, a naughty child, etc)...

You don’t have to buy into your emotions and get swept up in them. You don’t need to change your emotions, fight them or get rid of them. You are just here to watch, observe and experience what is going on right now. See if you can make some space for the emotion, seeing it as part of a broader landscape within you that contains lots of things like other feelings, thoughts, memories, body sensations, etc. Your emotions are just emotions...your feeling just feelings...nothing more and nothing less...

When you have fully experienced whatever emotion is there, and the experience has run its natural course, redirect your attention towards your breath...note each inhalation and each exhalation...bind your attention to the back and forth movement of the belly as you breathe in and out...note the sensations in your body as you draw breath in and then out again. Take some time now to allow your breath to be your anchor to the present moment...

If your mind wanders away from the breath to an emotion, or thought or sensation. That’s ok, that’s what minds do. Congratulate yourself for noticing, and give your mind the time to again observe and watch what you are experiencing... Once that observation has run its natural course, again gently bring your attention back to the breath as your anchor to the present...

Try to continue your mindfulness practice for the next 10 minutes or more...

When you feel ready, you can gradually open your eyes, bringing this mindfulness exercise to a close...
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

Step Five:

Between now and the next appointment:

➔ If you are willing, please read the article “7 Really Good Reasons to Start a Mindfulness Meditation Practice” by Jennifer Abbasi. If you are feeling ambitious, you can also read “The Skeptic’s Guide to Meditation” by Dan Harris.

➔ If you are willing, please select one or more of the methods listed below to help you practice mindfulness and defusion skills. You can also practice with the Mindfulness of Emotions script from today’s module:

YouTube Videos:

- “Leaves On a Stream” [7:57]: https://youtu.be/yIlZHoiOb0s

  This video is a mindfulness exercise. Sitting in a comfortable position, imagine that you are sitting next to a gentle stream with leaves flowing by on the water. When thoughts pop into your mind, imagine taking the thought and putting it on a leaf and watching it drift down the stream. As thoughts come to mind, continue to imagine putting your thoughts on leaves and watching them float down the stream. After 5-10 minutes you can draw your awareness back to your breath and surroundings.

- “Making space” [9:32]: https://youtu.be/Qkw89NRcowA

  The purpose of this mindfulness exercise it to make space for particularly difficult sensations or feelings that we may find in our body. In a comfortable seated position close your eyes and allow yourself to do a scan of your entire body. If you find that there is a particularly difficult sensation or feelings somewhere in your body allow yourself to focus on that area. Remain curious about that space and notice if that area has a particular size or shape or color. After exploring that space, allow yourself to take some deep breaths and send your breath to that area. In doing so create more space for that difficult
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

sensation or feeling within your body. After breathing into that space, notice if that feeling or sensation has changed at all. You can then open your eyes and draw your awareness back to your surroundings.

- “Exploring the Difficult Meditation” [24:00]: https://youtu.be/Qu7blXX1a8A
- “10 Min Sitting Meditation” [9:49]: https://youtu.be/2L00t5VeVjQ

Free Apps for Your Phone:

- Calm: Includes a free 7-day course on the basics of mindfulness
- Headspace: Includes a free 10-day course on the basics of mindfulness including explainer videos like the one from today’s module
- One Moment Meditation: Starts with a 5 minute video about how to meditate in just 60 seconds a day, then has a timer with an optional guided introduction and conclusion. https://youtu.be/F6eFFCi12v8
- Insight Timer: Has many free guided exercises
- Smiling Mind: Has many free guided exercises

At first glance, the method that looks most appealing to me is: ______________

I am willing to practice with this (or any other method I end up liking better) this many times before the next appointment: _________________________

Again, don’t worry if you don’t reach your target. We’re not aiming for perfection, just for trying our best. Whatever happens, come to the next appointment.
7 Really Good Reasons to Start a Mindfulness Meditation Practice

By Jennfier Abbasi

http://my.happify.com/hd/7-benefits-of-meditation/

Meditation used to feel like something reserved for yoga addicts, but growing research is showing benefits for the mind and body that every one of us could use.

**Meditation Helps You Sleep Sounder**

Researchers at the University of Minnesota looked at seven studies on mindfulness meditation and sleep, concluding that the practice helps some people get better rest. Meditation might help people break the cycle of obsessing about not being able to get to sleep, which makes it harder to your zzz’s, says Nicole Winbush, who co-authored the study. Reducing stress hormones like cortisol, which can interfere with sleep, may also help.

**Meditation Eases Pain**

Mindfulness meditation has been shown to help ease chronic discomfort like neck and back pain, arthritis, fibromyalgia and recurring headaches. It teaches you to open your senses to your breathing, the sound of the wind rustling or the feel of the sun on your skin, says Jeffrey Greeson, a clinical health psychologist at Duke University. “If some attention’s going toward other things, the pain’s not going to bother you as much,” Greeson says.

**Meditation Improves Your Ability to Focus**

“Mindfulness training improves your ability to maintain attention and regulate emotional distractions,” says Fadel Zeidan, a cognitive neuroscientist at Wake Forest School of Medicine. In one study he conducted, people who did 20-minute meditation sessions for just four days did significantly better on timed cognitive tests than a control group. The meditators were better able to ignore the timer and simply focus on the task, he explains.

**Meditation Reduces Anxiety and Stress**

Recent studies are proving that meditation can actually lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies. And in a new study by Zeidan, levels of everyday anxiety decreased by a whopping 39 percent after just four 20-minute mindfulness meditation classes. How? Being more aware of our immediate experiences through meditation may keep us from stewing over the past or worrying about the future.
Meditation Makes You Feel Less Moody

Many of us automatically interpret things in a negative way and assume the worst about ourselves and others. This can cause depression, which meditation has been shown to alleviate. “One of the reasons why meditation is effective for mood and depression is because it helps us not believe these automatic thoughts that we have,” says Greeson. “It involves focusing on what’s possible, not what’s impossible.”

Meditation Improves Your Sex Life

Your sex life could get a boost with mindfulness meditation, which enhances the connections and size of an area of the brain called the insula that’s important for awareness. Strengthening the insula may be what helps some women pay better attention to arousal after meditation training—and even have better orgasms—says Marsha Lucas, Ph.D., a neuropsychologist in Washington, D.C.

Meditation Helps You Heal Faster and Live Longer

In a study last year, people who took eight weeks of mindfulness meditation training had far fewer cases of colds and flu and less severe infections compared to a group of non-meditators. Daniel Muller, a doctor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who worked on this study, says meditation may help to restore the body’s homeostatic balance. It may even help us live longer by keeping our DNA from degrading over time, according to recent research at the University of California, San Francisco.
The Skeptic's Guide to Meditation

If you've ever considered (but instantly dismissed) the practice, this one's for you.

Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

THE 4 BIGGEST MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MEDITATION

You may have heard about all those studies suggesting a long list of health benefits from meditation, from reducing stress to boosting resilience, but perhaps one of these assumptions prevented you from giving it a shot.

1. I don’t have time to meditate.

   **In reality...**
   
   **5 minutes** is all it takes. I don’t care if you have four jobs and 27 children, everybody has five minutes. And that’s all you need to start with. If you increase your time gradually, great. If not, totally fine.

2. Meditation is only for hippies, gurus, and fans of Enya.

   **In reality...**
   
   It’s for everyone, even skeptics who are allergic to all things touchy-feely. Some of the hardest-charging, highly-functioning people in society — executives, scientists, even marines — are embracing the practice as “exercise” for the brain. (More on that below.)

3. I can’t meditate because my mind is too busy.

   **In reality...**
   
   The good news and the bad news is... you’re not special. Everyone’s mind is out of control—even experienced meditators struggle with distraction. You don’t need to “clear your mind” to meditate.

4. Getting happier will make me lose my edge.

   **In reality...**
   
   If you’re already the ambitious, striving sort, you’ll likely stay that way—but meditation may help you realize that certain outcomes are out of your control. It’ll teach you how to fail, get up, dust yourself off, and get back in the ring.
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

THE SCIENCE

What Does Meditation Do to the Brain?

In a 2011 study at Harvard, researchers took people who had never meditated before, and had them do short, daily doses of the practice.

Then they scanned their brains—and found that the gray matter in the areas associated with wellbeing and compassion literally grew, while areas associated with stress literally shrank.

The practice has also been shown to boost focus and decrease age-related cognitive decline.

Meditation Reduces Stress

Mindfulness doesn’t just make us feel less stressed, it’s also linked to lower levels of cortisol (the stress hormone).

An average of 12.5 minutes of meditation per day for 8 weeks increased Marines’ resistance to stress, according to a 2011 study.

Try to meditate every day. Regularity, many experts believe, is more important than duration. Remember: just 5 minutes!

Meditation Makes Us More Compassionate

There’s a type of meditation called “compassion meditation.”

It’s been shown to make:

- Preschoolers more willing to give their stickers away to strangers.
- Grown-ups to laugh more, socialize more, and use the word “I” less.
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

Meditation Boosts Self-Acceptance

People who regularly practice mindfulness meditation are more accepting of their emotions, which in turn, boosts self-control, resilience, and performance.

When meditating, every time you get lost in thought, just return your attention to feeling your breath.

(Yes, you’ll have to start over countless times—that’s the whole game!)

The List of Health Benefits is Almost Laughably Long

Brain imaging studies show that meditation can:

- Lower high blood pressure
- Lessen chronic pain
- Reduce anxiety
- Fight depression

Meditation has also been shown to help with:
- ADHD
- Psoriasis
- Irritable bowel syndrome

40-60% of high-blood pressure patients in a study at Massachusetts General Hospital experienced a significant reduction in blood pressure after meditating regularly for 3 months.

It May Help You Sleep Better, Too

A University of Utah study found that higher mindfulness was associated with lower cognitive and physiological activation at bedtime, which could have benefits for sleep quality.
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

WHY MINDFULNESS MATTERS

WHAT IS

It’s a boring-sounding word, but it’s a game-changing, life-altering proposition.

It’s the ability to be aware of your thoughts and emotions, without judging them. Or, to put it more simply, it allows you to see what’s going on in your head without getting carried away by it.

This is a basic human capacity we all have. Think of mindfulness as a muscle. When you build this muscle through the exercise of meditation, it can help you in the following, phenomenally useful ways:

1. You’ll get better at not being carried away by passing emotional squalls.
2. You’ll learn to respond, rather than react, to the stuff that comes up in your life.
3. Your happiness will depend less on unstable, constantly changing external circumstances.

EXAMPLE

Normally, when someone cuts you off in traffic, you automatically think, “I’m pissed.” — and then you actually become pissed. Mindfulness allows you to slow that process down so you can respond thoughtfully instead of react mindlessly. It provides space between impulse and action.

The simple act of feeling the breath can break the habits of a lifetime.
Module 2: Mindfulness & Defusion

MEDITATION 101

To get started, all you need to do is...

1. Sit up straight with eyes closed. (You don’t have to sit cross-legged if that’s uncomfortable – a chair is fine.)

2. Focus your full attention on the feeling of your breath coming in and going out.

3. Every time your mind wanders (which it will - a million times), just return your attention to the feeling of the breath.

“If you don’t waste your energy on variables you cannot influence, you can focus much more effectively on those you can.”

—Dan Harris, ABC News anchor & author of 10% Happier
Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

Step One
Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two
Looking back at the last module, this is how many times I was willing to practice mindfulness and defusion: _________________________________

This is how often I did practice: _________________________________

This is the method or methods I used: _________________________________

These are the articles I read (Please circle one, both, or neither):
  - 7 Really Good Reasons to Start a Mindfulness Meditation Practice
  - The Skeptic’s Guide to Meditation
  - Neither

This is what the experience was like for me -AND/OR- These are the thoughts and feelings that got in the way of practicing as often as I set out to (ex. “I don’t have time, this won’t help, it’s too difficult,” depression, anxiety, etc.):
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

Step Three

Main Ideas:

1. Pain and suffering come from negative thoughts and feelings about the past or the future.

2. The present moment is a safe place that we can learn to connect with at any time.


Clinician Summary

   Being present in the moment means paying attention to your five senses

My Notes (optional):

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. When we practice being in the present, negative thoughts and feelings about the past or future have less impact on us.


Clinician Summary:

   Studies have shown that short daily doses of meditation can actually grow the gray matter in various areas of your brain associated with self-awareness and compassion and shrink areas related to stress. In addition, people who practice meditation set a new “default” mode in the brain that is more focused on the present moment than it is on the worries of the past or the future.
Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

My Notes (optional): ____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

4. Connecting with the present isn’t about controlling how we think and feel, it’s about having the freedom to make choices that improve our lives.

Step Four

Practice new skills:

➡ Please choose one of the options below to help you experience the process of present moment awareness. Sometimes it is easier to understand something if you experience it, rather than have someone try to explain it to you in words. As you listen to whichever exercise you choose, follow along as best you can with the instructions. Don’t worry if you get distracted or lose focus. This is normal. Just refocus on the exercise as soon as you notice that your mind has wandered.

Option 1:

3 minute body scan from UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center

Please click here: http://marc.ucla.edu/mpeg/01_Breathing_Meditation.mp3

Option 2:

7 minute Five Sense Mindfulness Meditation

Please click here: https://youtu.be/q07XlqX3RpI

Option 3:

9 minute exercise on noticing the details of your hand

Double-click the orange traffic cone icon to play the exercise:
Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

My Notes (optional): ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Step Five:

Between now and the next appointment:

➔ If you are willing, please select one or more of the methods listed below to help you practice connecting with the present moment:

YouTube Videos:

“Meditation 101: A Beginner’s Guide Animation” [2:00]:
https://youtu.be/rqoxYKtEWEc

“10 Minute Guided Mindfulness Meditation Awareness Focus Present Moment” [10:00]: https://youtu.be/kRGwFuJ9KyY

“Automatic Breathing Mindfulness Exercise With Naomi Goodlet” [6:45]:
https://youtu.be/Hk__YDdDVCQ


Free Mindfulness Resources:

- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center: Recordings of a variety of mindfulness exercises for use in various situations.
  http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations

- One Moment Meditation: Starts with a 5 minute video about how to get present in just 60 seconds a day, then has a timer with an optional guided introduction and conclusion. https://youtu.be/F6eFFCi12v8
Other Exercises (found on the pages that follow, in order):

- Eating One Raisin: A First Taste of Mindfulness *(feel free to substitute a different piece of fruit, chocolate or other candy if you prefer)*

- Mindful Breathing

- Mindfulness Exercises

At first glance, the method that looks most appealing to me is:

_____________________________________________________________________________

I am willing to practice with this (or any other method I end up liking better)
this many times before the next appointment: ________________________________

Again, don’t worry if you don’t reach your target. We’re not aiming for perfection, just for trying our best. *Whatever happens, come to the next appointment*, where we will be talking about the part of you that is able to notice your thoughts and feelings.
Eating One Raisin: A First Taste of Mindfulness

Holding
First, take a raisin and hold it in the palm of your hand or between your finger and thumb. Focusing on it, imagine that you’ve just dropped it in from Mars and have never seen an object like this before in your life.

Seeing
Take time to really see it; gaze at the raisin with care and full attention. Let your eyes explore every part of it, examining the highlights where the light shines, the darker hollows, the folds and ridges, and any asymmetries or unique features.

Touching
Turn the raisin over between your fingers, exploring its texture, maybe with your eyes closed if that enhances your sense of touch.

Smelling
Holding the raisin beneath your nose, with each inhalation drink in any smell, aroma, or fragrance that may arise, noticing as you do this anything interesting that may be happening in your mouth or stomach.

Placing
Now slowly bring the raisin up to your lips, noticing how your hand and arm know exactly how and where to position it. Gently place the object in the mouth, without chewing, noticing how it gets into the mouth in the first place. Spend a few moments exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth, exploring it with your tongue.

Tasting
When you are ready, prepare to chew the raisin, noticing how and where it needs to be for chewing. Then, very consciously, take one or two bites into it and notice what happens in the aftermath, experiencing any waves of taste that emanate from it as you continue chewing. Without swallowing yet, notice the bare sensations of taste and texture in the mouth and how these may change over time, moment by moment, as well as any changes in the object itself.

Swallowing
When you feel ready to swallow the raisin, see if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow the raisin.

Following
Finally, see if you can feel what is left of the raisin moving down into your stomach, and sense how the body as a whole is feeling after completing this exercise in mindful eating.¹

Mindful Breathing

The primary goal of mindful breathing is simply a calm, non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them.

- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine reasonably straight.
- Bring your attention to your breathing.
- Imagine that you have a balloon in your tummy. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice the sensations in your abdomen as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your abdomen rising with the in-breath, and falling with the out-breath.
- Thoughts will come into your mind, and that’s okay, because that’s just what the human mind does. Simply notice those thoughts, then bring your attention back to your breathing.
- Likewise, you can notice sounds, physical feelings, and emotions, and again, just bring your attention back to your breathing.
- You don’t have to follow those thoughts or feelings, don’t judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. It’s okay for the thoughts to be there. Just notice those thoughts, and let them drift on by, bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- Whenever you notice that your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted, and then gently bring the attention back to your breathing.

It’s okay and natural for thoughts to enter into your awareness, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.

www.get.gg

www.getselfhelp.co.uk/mindfulness.htm
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Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness Meditation

Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. To begin, you might want to set a timer for about 10 minutes, but after some experience you should not be too concerned about the length of time you spend meditating.

Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That’s ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what’s happening in your brain. Take note, and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That’s fine—these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend, or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going, and accept what’s happening.

Whenever you are able to, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.

Body Scan

During the body scan exercise you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn’t to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don’t worry too much about how long you practice, but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body— to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.

Mindful Eating

Choose a food you would like to practice with (preferably something you can hold in your hand without getting messy). Something as simple as a single raisin will work well. Move slowly through these steps, taking a moment to focus on each one.

Before you pick up your food, notice how it looks on the table in front of you. Notice its color, how the light reflects from its surface, and its size.
Module 3: Past, Future, & Present

Mindfulness Exercises

Now, pick up the food. Notice the weight, and how the food feels against your skin. Roll the object between your fingers, or roll it in your hand, and notice its texture. Notice if it’s smooth, rough, slick, soft, firm or if it has any other properties. Hold the food to your nose, and pay attention to its smell.

Next, place the food in your mouth, on your tongue, but don’t eat it. Notice how it feels in your mouth. Does the texture feel the same as on your hand? What do you taste? Roll the food around in your mouth and pay attention to the feeling.

Finally, begin to slowly chew your food. Notice how your teeth sink into it, and how the texture is different inside. Pay close attention to the flavor, and how it spreads across your tongue. Notice how your body changes—does your mouth fill with saliva? Does your tongue feel hot or cold? Continue to chew your food, paying close attention to the many sensations as you finish.

Five Senses

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

What are 5 things you can see? Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn’t noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

What are 4 things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

What are 3 things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

What are 2 things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn’t have to be a nice smell either: maybe there’s an overflowing trash can or sewer.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. “Taste” the air to see how it feels on your tongue.

The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

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Module 4: The Observing Self

Step One
Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two
Looking back at the last module, this is how many times I was willing to practice connecting with the present moment: ____________________________

This is how often I did practice: ____________________________

This is the method or methods I used: ____________________________

This is what the experience was like for me -AND/OR- These are the thoughts and feelings that got in the way of practicing as often as I set out to (ex. “I don’t have time, this won’t help, it’s too difficult,” depression, anxiety, etc.):

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Module 4: The Observing Self

Step Three

Main Ideas:

1. There is a part of us that thinks, a part of us that feels, and a part of us that is able to notice and observe our thinking and feeling.

2. We can call this part of us the Observing Self, the Noticing Self, the Watching Self, Pure Awareness, or any other name that makes sense to us.

   ➔ Please watch “Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Observing Self” [1:45]: https://youtu.be/kl5cyCXelZc

   The observing self is the part of you that notices thoughts and emotions without getting caught up in them. Imagine the sky being your observing self; and the specific weather being your various thoughts and feelings. No matter how intense the weather may be the sky has enough room to make space for those weather events. Likewise, the more we are in touch with our observing self the more effectively we are able to make room for even negative thoughts and emotions.

My Notes (optional): _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. This Observing Self is a safe place that we can learn to connect with at any time.

4. When we connect with our Observing Self, our thoughts and feelings have less impact on us.

   ➔ Please watch “Underlying Calm” [1:14]: https://youtu.be/F0WYFXxhPGY

Imagine that your mind is like the sky. When we are calm and happy, there are probably only a few clouds in that sky. When we experience negative thoughts and emotions, it’s as if the sky is cloudy and stormy. However, the calmness and brightness of the sky is there above the clouds even in the
Module 4: The Observing Self

worst storm. Through connecting with our observing self we learn to access that calm part of the mind even during an emotional storm.

My Notes (optional): _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

5. Connecting with our Observing Self isn't about controlling how we think and feel, it's about having the freedom to make choices that improve our lives.

This is a vitally important point that must be stressed throughout ACT treatment. At first, clients will naturally view these skills as methods of controlling their unpleasant emotions and will judge the success or failure of their efforts based on the extent to which their negative emotions decrease. ACT is about giving up those underlying motives of control and living a values-oriented, committed life.

Step Four

Practice new skills:

➤ Please choose one of the options below to help you experience the process of connecting with the Observing Self. Sometimes it is easier to understand something if you experience it, rather than have someone try to explain it to you in words. As you listen to the exercise, follow along as best you can with the instructions. Don’t worry if you get distracted or lose focus. This is normal. Just refocus on the exercise as soon as you notice that your mind has wandered.

Option 1:

6 Minute Observer Self Exercise

Please click here: https://youtu.be/fUZfjl2H24
Module 4: The Observing Self

Option 2:

Brief Observer Self Exercise (13 Minutes)


Or double-click here:

Brief Observer Self Exercise (13 Minutes) - Portland Psychotherapy.mp3

My Notes (optional):

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Step Five

Between now and the next appointment:

➔ If you are willing, please decide how often you are willing to practice with the 6 Minute Observer Self Exercise or the Brief Observer Self Exercise (13 Minutes) and write your answer in the space below. It can be once a day, every two days, or just one time between now and the next appointment. You decide. Just try your best to practice as many times as you are willing. Don’t worry if you don’t reach your target. We’re not aiming for perfection, just for trying our best. Whatever happens, come to the next appointment, where we will be learning how to take committed action to make your life better.

Between now and the next appointment, this is how often (or how many times) I am willing to practice the 6 Minute Observer Self Exercise or the Brief Observer Self Exercise (13 Minutes):
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

Step One

Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two

Looking back at the last module, this is how many times I was willing to practice connecting with the Observer Self: __________________________

This is how often I did practice: __________________________

This is what the experience was like for me -AND/OR- These are the thoughts and feelings that got in the way of practicing as often as I set out to (ex. “I don’t have time, this won’t help, it’s too difficult,” depression, anxiety, etc.):

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

Step Three

Main Ideas:

1. Values are what we care most about in our hearts. They are different from goals because goals can be completed and marked off a list, but values are always there to guide us. They are like points on a compass.


Often in our society we focus on goals, specific outcomes that we hope to accomplish in our life, and use these goals as a way of finding happiness. However, what often happens is that we find ourselves pursuing goal after goal after goal, and never arriving at a truly meaningful and satisfying life. In contrast, a life lived based on values allows us to have a meaningful life even if we do not fully accomplish all our goals. Values are about how we want to act and what kind of person we want to be, rather than what we want to accomplish.

A metaphor is this: imagine two children on a trip to Disneyland. One child is completely goal focused. The only thing he cares about is arriving at his destination, so he becomes frustrated during the long car ride. The second child, on the other hand, is values focused. During the car ride, he is able to live out his values of being adventurous and curious and notice the world around him. Both children arrive at Disneyland and have a wonderful time, but the first child had a frustrating experience up to that point while the second child had a more meaningful experience. In addition, say the car breaks down on the way to Disneyland. Even though both children will be upset and frustrated, the value focused child will have had the satisfaction of living based on his values up to that point in the journey.

My Notes (optional):

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______________________________________________________________________________

48
2. Values are about how we want to act, not how we want to feel or think. There are no “right” or “wrong” values. We all get to choose what we care the most about in life, and we don’t all have to have the same values.

⇒ Please take a look at the handout “Reflecting on Your Values” for help with figuring out some of your values.

Note: Appendix C has an alternative worksheet from Russ Harris called “A Quick Look at Your Values.” You can substitute this for “Reflecting on Your Values” if you feel your client would prefer it, or you can use both.
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

Reflecting on Your Values

Below is a list of values. As you read through them, please circle the ones that are most important to you. Or, you may want to circle all the ones that are even somewhat important, and then go back and star the ones that are most important. There are many other values besides the ones listed here. We encourage you to list any other values that come to mind that you don’t see on the list.

Remember, values are about desired, ongoing action. They describe HOW we want to live our life. They are not about accomplishing a specific goal or achieving a certain level of “success”. We can’t always control whether or not we meet our goals, but we can choose to act according to our values even if our goals are not met. In addition, values are about our own actions, not the actions of others. So, for example, if you decide that “Compassion” is one of your values, your focus should be on you acting compassionately toward other people and toward yourself, not having other people be compassionate to you (although that would be nice!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accepting</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Respectful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Loyal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Mellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Open-minded</td>
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<td>Bold</td>
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<td>Brave</td>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Humble</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>Tolerant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Playful</td>
<td>Wise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disciplined</td>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>Powerful</td>
<td>Other: _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Other: _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Other: _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

3. Committed action means living in line with our values even when we have difficult thoughts and feelings.


Imagine you are in a rowboat with a compass trying to go north across a lake. A storm comes and batters your boat with wind, rain, and waves. What do you do? You could try to fight the storm and stubbornly go against the wind and waves. You could also succumb to the storm and let it take you wherever the wind blows. Or, using your compass, you could use your rudder to stay pointed in the right direction, even in the middle of the storm.

My Notes (optional): _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________________________

4. It takes careful planning to set the right goals, and it often takes mindfulness and defusion skills to follow through on those goals in the face of painful thoughts and feelings.


Imagine you are sailing a ship at sea. Underneath your deck are an assortment of scary, nasty demons. You’ve made an agreement with the demons, as long as you keep the boat adrift, not moving in any particular direction, they will remain out of sight and not bother you. You do this for a while, but then you notice other ships going towards shore and you think of all you want to accomplish. So you turn your ship towards your desired destination. Suddenly all the demons come up on the deck and bare their fangs and threaten to kill you. Intimidated, you let go of the wheel of the boat and apologize to the demons, asking them to return below deck and promising that you will keep the boat adrift. This happens several times; you work up enough courage to point your ship towards the shore, only to stop when the demons come and threaten to kill you. But even though the demons consistently threaten to harm you, they have never acted on those threats. In fact, they aren’t able to actually harm you, the only power they have over you is their threats. So if that is true, what do you need to do? You need to keep
your boat pointed towards the shore, your hands on the wheel. Of course the demons will try to threaten and intimidate you, but they can’t actually harm you. As you accept their presence you begin to realize that they aren’t actually as powerful as they led you to believe. They were using special effects to make themselves look bigger and scarier than they truly are. The more you keep your boat pointed in the direction you want to go, the more you realize how many adventures you can have, if you simply keep your boat moving.

Notes (optional):

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Step Four

Practice new skills:

➤ Please take a look at “My Action Plan.” Begin by thinking of a small but specific goal that you would like to set. It’s best to choose one you can realistically accomplish between now and the next appointment, so we can talk about how things turned out.

Note: Keep in mind that clients will often need some guidance in setting appropriate goals for this exercise. Several categories of unworkable goals are described below:

- “Dead Person’s Goals” are those that a dead person could accomplish better than a living person, usually because the goal is to stop doing something. For example, if the client’s goal is to “not yell at my wife,” this is something that a dead person could do better than the client. Try to help the client reframe this in terms of something positive, such as “talk to my wife in a calm, clear voice even when I’m angry.”

- Emotional Goals have to do with feeling or not feeling a certain way. As we’ve covered several times throughout the toolkit, we can’t always control how we feel. So if the client’s goal is to “feel less depressed,” try to help them reframe this in terms of behavior by asking, “What would you be doing if you weren’t
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

depressed?” Then help them to set a goal based on this desired and valued behavior.

- Goals that depend on things the client cannot control. If the client’s goal is “for my mom to quit pestering me,” remind the client that this is not entirely within their control, and reframe the goal in terms of how the client would like to respond to the pestering. Alternatively, you can help the client experiment with different actions that they can choose to see if these have any effect on the pestering. By refocusing on what the client can control (i.e. his/her own behavior), you reinforce the concept of flexibility and choice.
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

My Action Plan

Set a SMART goal (Specific, Meaningful, Action-oriented, Realistic, Time-specific): *Ex, Between now and the next appointment, I will call one friend and ask if they are available to meet for lunch next week.*

This goal is meaningful to me because I value: ________________________________

These are the uncomfortable or painful thoughts and feelings I’m willing to make room for in order to reach my goal: ________________________________

If these uncomfortable or painful thoughts and feelings show up, these are some skills I can use to deal with them effectively: ________________________________

I am willing to take the first small step toward this goal on this day and at this time: ________________________________
Module 5: Values & Committed Action

Step Five

Between now and the next appointment:

➔ Try your best to follow through on your Willingness and Action Plan.

➔ If you need more help, you may also want to read the article “Ten Tips for Motivating Yourself to Practice New Skills or Pursue Important Goals” by Russ Harris. Don’t worry if you don’t reach your target. We’re not aiming for perfection, just for trying our best. Whatever happens, come to the next appointment.
TEN TIPS FOR MOTIVATING YOURSELF TO PRACTISE NEW SKILLS OR PURSUE IMPORTANT GOALS – by Russ Harris

1. Link the Goal To Values
Values can provide a deep motivation that helps to sustain the practice of new skills, or the pursuit of challenging goals, even when it’s boring, tedious or anxiety-provoking (as it so often is). Ask yourself: is this really important to you? What is it that matters enough, that you’d even think about doing something like this? What values would underlie this course of action? How would doing this make a positive difference in your life? If we can link our new behavior to something personally meaningful, we’re far more likely to do it!

2. Set Goals Effectively
A wealth of research shows that if we set goals effectively, we significantly increase the chances of following through on them. A simple acronym for goal-setting is: S.M.A.R.T.

S = Specific
What specific actions will you take?
If a goal is vague and non-specific (e.g. I’m going to really be there for my kids this week) it’s going to be hard to know if you have achieved it or not. So change it to a specific goal (e.g. I’m going to get home at 4pm on Friday and take the kids to the park to play basketball.)

M = Meaningful
What values will you be living by, when you do this?
If the goal is not meaningful – i.e. aligned with values – why bother? Either set a new one that is meaningful, or explicitly link the current goal to values, so it becomes meaningful (e.g. remind yourself “Doing this would be living my values of being loving and caring.”)

A = Adaptive
How will this action be adaptive for your life (i.e. make your life better)? What are the likely benefits?
If the goal seems likely to have more costs than benefits – then change it. For example, if the value is justice, and the goal is to “Punch anyone who treats me unfairly”, then clearly this is going to be maladaptive (i.e. make your life worse).
Be clear about the benefits, and remind yourself what they are (e.g. “Practicing this mindfulness skill will help me to handle anxiety-provoking situations more effectively.”)

R = Realistic
Is the goal realistic for the resources currently available – which may include time, energy, money, physical health, social support, and so on?
If not, modify the goal so that it is realistic for the available resources; or else put it to one side and make a new goal. (Of course the new goal might be to get the necessary resources for the original goal.)

T = Time-framed
What day, date, and time will this occur, and for how long will you do it?
A time-frame contributes to the specificity of the goal.

3. Take Small Steps
The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. So if the goal seems too big, make it smaller. If ten minutes of mindfulness practice is too much, cut it back to five. If doing it daily is unrealistic, perhaps do it every second or third day, or weekly.
Ask yourself: “On a scale of zero to ten, where ten is ‘I’ll definitely do this no matter what’ and zero is ‘There is absolutely no chance I’ll ever do this’ – then how likely are you to actually do this?” If you score less than seven, best to change the goal to something smaller and easier.

4. Carrot Versus Stick
Many people try to motivate themselves through being harsh, judgmental, self-critical, or punitive. But if beating yourself up were a good way to change behavior, wouldn’t you be perfect by now?
Learn to “drop the stick”: unhook yourself from excessive expectations and harsh self-judgments, and instead practice self-acceptance and self-compassion. Then “create a carrot” by linking your action to values, and reflecting on the likely positive outcomes. For example, ask yourself, “If I do this, what will I be standing for?” or “If I do this, what will the benefits be, in the long term?”

Module 5: Values & Committed Action

TEN TIPS FOR MOTIVATING YOURSELF TO PRACTISE NEW SKILLS OR PURSUE IMPORTANT GOALS – by Russ Harris

4. Carrot Versus Stick - continued
Acknowledge every little step "in the right direction". Pay attention to what you are doing, and notice what difference it makes in your life. Find ways to reward yourself for following through. These rewards may be as simple as saying to yourself “Well done. You did it!”, or keeping a record in a journal, or reporting your progress to others who are supportive.

5. Anticipate Obstacles
When you commit to a goal, it’s helpful to ask yourself, “What might get in the way of that?” As the saying goes, “forewarned is forearmed”. So once we have identified obstacles to action, we can then plan how to get around them. And if there is no possible way around an obstacle? Then clearly we’ll need to set a different goal, and make room for our inevitable disappointment or frustration.
Some of the most common obstacles to the intended course of action are activities that compete with it for time and energy. In such cases, we can ask ourselves, “What am I willing to give up, or do less of, or say ‘no’ to, in order to free up time and energy for doing this?”

6. Confront the Costs
Although the ‘carrot’ is far more useful than the ‘stick’, at times it is important for us to realistically and deeply connect with the costs of not following through. We may compassionately and gently ask ourselves, “If I keep on doing what I’m doing: What is it costing me in terms of health/wellbeing/relationships? What am I missing out on? What will my life be like: one year from now? Two years from now? Ten years from now?”

7. Cultivate Willingness
The practice of new skills is often boring or tedious; and the pursuit of goals that pull us out of the “comfort zone”, almost always generates significant anxiety. So if we are unwilling to make room for discomfort, then obviously we will not take action. So we can ask ourselves: “Am I willing to feel some discomfort, in order to do what matters?” or “Am I willing to make room for sweaty hands, and a knot in my stomach, and a tightness in my chest, and a voice in my head that tells me scary things, if that’s what I need to make room for in order to do the things that really matter?” This of course, overlaps with our first strategy: linking the goal to values.
If you are unwilling to make room for the inevitable discomfort, you may need to a) work on acceptance skills; b) enhancing the link to your values; or c) setting an easier goal that elicits less discomfort.

8. Delus From Reason-giving
The mind is a reason-giving machine, and as soon as we even think about doing something that pulls us out of our comfort zone, it cranks out all the reasons why we can’t do it, shouldn’t do it, or shouldn’t even have to do it. I’m too tired, I’m too busy, it’s not important, it’s too hard, I’m not good enough, I can’t do it, I’ll fail, I’m too anxious, and so on. And if we wait until the day our mind stops reason-giving, before we do the things that really matter in life … we’ll never get started. So if fusion with reason-giving is a major barrier to action, then naturally we target it with defusion: e.g. “Aha! Here it is again. The ‘I can’t do it story’. Thanks, mind!”

9. Enlist Support
Social support is often hugely motivating. Can you find a partner, friend, relative, co-worker, or neighbor, with whom you can share his aspirations and achievements? Someone who will encourage and support you? Acknowledge your successes and cheer you on? Is there a group or a course you could join that might serve this purpose? Can you find an “exercise buddy” to go running with, or a “study buddy” to help you with homework?

10. Use Reminders
It’s very easy for us to forget what our goals are. So how can we create “reminders”? Can we put messages or alerts in the computer, mobile phone, calendar, or journal? Can we ask people in our support network to remind us? Can we stick up notes on the mirror or the fridge or the car dashboard? Can we put a sticker on our watch strap, or an elastic band around our wrist, or a gadget on our key ring, so that whenever we see these things they remind us of our goals?
Can we use a recurring event to cue our new behavior: for example, we might do a breathing exercise for ten minutes immediately after dinner, or as soon as our alarm clock goes off in the morning? Can we schedule the activity into a calendar or diary or onto our daily “To Do” list – and highlight it in some way, to emphasize its importance? (This of course also gives the goal a time-frame, and helps avoid competing activities.)

Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

Step One

Using the Weekly Rating Sheet, please rate how well your life is working.

Step Two

This is how “My Action Plan” went for me -AND/OR- This is what I learned from the thoughts and feelings that got in the way:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Step Three

Main Ideas:

1. If we fall short of our goal, we have two choices:
   
   A. Give up
   
   B. Be mindful of our negative thoughts and feelings, learn something, focus on our values, and re-commit.

=> Consider these words by Dr. Russ Harris, from ACT Made Simple:

“When we do go off-track, what helps is being kind and accepting toward ourselves: we accept the painful thoughts and feelings, then reconnect with our values, and get moving again. What doesn’t help is beating ourselves up. I mean, if beating yourself up was a good way to change your behavior, wouldn’t you be perfect by now?”
Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

2. All the skills you have been learning and practicing – mindfulness, defusion, connecting with the present, connecting with the Observing Self – have the same purpose: To give you the flexibility to make choices that improve your life. Remember, we aren’t trying to control negative thoughts and feelings; that doesn’t always work in the long run. Instead, we are trying to make room for our negative thoughts and feelings so that we can live a better life.

➢ Take a look at the image below. This is a visual representations of the processes you’ve been working on in this toolkit.

**Psychological Flexibility**

[Diagram showing the processes: Being Present, Acceptance, Defusion, Values, Commitment, Self as Context]

https://headsted.co.uk/static/img/act/act-processes.jpg
Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

3. You can remember these skills by remembering a very basic acronym for the word ACT:

A = Accept your thoughts and feelings, and be present

C = Choose a valued direction

T = Take action


Note: This metaphor is similar to the one Demons on a Boat

Imagine you are the pilot of a large jet, and all the passengers on the plane are your thoughts and feelings. As the pilot, you know you would like to fly the plane east, towards your desired destination, but whenever you do so, some of the more unpleasant passengers frequently come up to the cockpit and say all sorts of unpleasant and nasty things about you. You land the plane and demand that they leave, but once you open the doors more unpleasant passengers come aboard. In despair, you make a deal with the passengers; as long as they leave you alone, you will travel in whatever direction they want you to. So you travel every direction but the one in which you want to go, and become exhausted from the constant struggle. Then you hear a message from the air traffic controller, reminding you that you are the one in control of the plane, all you have to do is make space for the unpleasant passengers, and choose to point your plane in the desired direction. So you turn your plane towards your destination, and as you do so, you realize that the unpleasant passengers aren’t able to do anything more than threaten; they can’t actually take control of the plane unless you let them. They try to make you as uncomfortable as possible, but the more you make space for them, the less scary they seem. And as you go towards your destination, the more you are satisfied with your life.

My Notes (optional): _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

Step Four

Practice new skills:

→ Now that you have worked through these modules and learned some new skills, let us return to the Introduction to ACT exercise to put it all together. As I read the exercise to you, follow along as best you can with the instructions as I’m reading them. Don’t worry if you get distracted or lose focus. This is normal. Just refocus on the exercise as soon as you notice that your mind has wandered.
Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

Introduction to ACT

Please find a comfortable position in your chair; one where you can stay relatively still for about 5 to 10 minutes. I recommend feet flat on the floor with arms on your legs or folded in your lap, but feel free to do whatever is most comfortable for you.

If you feel comfortable closing your eyes, please do so; or you can simply pick a spot in the room to focus on.

Take a few moments to mentally scan your body from head to toe... Notice if there are any areas of tension such as your jaw or shoulders... If you notice any tension, see if you can let some of that tension go... If not, that’s okay, just notice what’s there.

Take a few moments to connect with your sense of touch... Notice what physical sensations are happening in your hands... See if you can feel where your hands make contact with each other or with your legs... See if you can feel your feet on the ground...

Next, take a few moments to notice what you can hear... There may be several sounds, or just one, or it may be silent. Just notice whatever is there...

When you’re ready, move your attention to your breathing... Watch the breath come in and go out on its own, without you having to control it... See if you can feel your breath in your nose or your belly...

As you breathe, you will notice that thoughts may come into your mind... They may be pleasant thoughts, or unpleasant thoughts, or neutral thoughts... This is what the human mind does, it is a thinking machine... Just see if you can notice the thoughts without getting caught up in them, and then return your attention to your breathing... Each time a thought pops up, notice it and then return your attention to your breath... This will happen over and over and over again, and that’s okay, it means you’re normal... With practice you can get better at noticing your thoughts, rather than getting carried away by them.

As you continue breathing, you will notice that certain feelings or emotions will also show up... Some of these may be pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, or neutral feelings... See if you can notice these feelings the same way you notice your thoughts... There is no need to try and change what’s there, just try to notice what you feel... When you notice a feeling, see if you can locate where it is in your body... Notice what sensations come along with the emotion... There may be heaviness, lightness, warmth, coolness, tingling, or tension... You may find these sensations in your head, shoulders, arms, legs, or abdomen... Whatever you feel and wherever it happens, just notice what’s going on and see if you can let it be...
And now see if you can return your attention to your breathing... See if you can notice that there is a part of you that’s able to watch your breathing, watch your thoughts, watch your feelings, watch the sensations that happen in your body... There is a part of you that does the thinking and feeling, and a part of you that can notice the thinking and feeling... Take a few moments to experience what it’s like to connect with the part of you that just notices...

And now take a few moments to consider what brought you here today... There is something you care so much about that you took steps to get here... Just reflect for a few moments about what it is that you really, truly care about most in your life... Recognize and appreciate the fact that you made a choice to take action for change... And as the exercise comes to a close, see if you can bring to mind an image of what kind of person you want to be when you are handling your pain effectively... Consider how you’ll be acting toward other people... How you’ll be acting toward yourself...

And when you’re ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room and back to where we are now. If you like, move your fingers and toes around and have a nice stretch.

My Notes (optional): ____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
Module 6: Where Do We Go From Here?

Step Five

Congratulations on completing this ACT-based toolkit! We hope you have found these new skills helpful in moving toward a life based on what you care about the most.

Going forward:

➤ Feel free to re-use this toolkit in whatever way helps you the most. You might want to work through it again and try new exercises that you haven’t practiced with yet. Along with the tools and skills you have used thus far, you can find countless other resources on the Internet by searching online for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Mindfulness, Defusion, or Present Moment Awareness.

➤ Remember that the most common obstacle to progress is not doing the exercises. With mindfulness and defusion skills, it is very easy to think about using them instead of actually trying them out. So if you haven’t made as much progress as you’d hoped, consider if you are willing to do more of the exercises, do them more consistently, or do them more often.
This section contains the text for all the mindfulness exercises used in this tool-kit, as well as others that you may find helpful in your work with clients.

**Introduction to ACT**

Please find a comfortable position in your chair; one where you can stay relatively still for about 5 to 10 minutes. I recommend feet flat on the floor with arms on your legs or folded in your lap, but feel free to do whatever is most comfortable for you.

If you feel comfortable closing your eyes, please do so; or you can simply pick a spot in the room to focus on.

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Next, take a few moments to notice what you can hear... There may be several sounds, or just one, or it may be silent. Just notice whatever is there...

When you’re ready, move your attention to your breathing... Watch the breath come in and go out on its own, without you having to control it... See if you can feel your breath in your nose or your belly...

As you breathe, you will notice that thoughts may come into your mind... They may be pleasant thoughts, or unpleasant thoughts, or neutral thoughts... This is what the human mind does, it is a thinking machine... Just see if you can notice the thoughts without getting caught up in them, and then return your attention to your breathing... Each time a thought pops up, notice it and then return your attention to your breath... This will happen over and over and over again, and that’s okay, it means you’re normal... With practice you can get better at noticing your thoughts, rather than getting carried away by them.

As you continue breathing, you will notice that certain feelings or emotions will also show up... Some of these may be pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, or neutral feelings... See if you can notice these feelings the same way you notice your thoughts... There is no need to try and change what’s there, just try to notice what you feel... When you notice a feeling, see if you can locate where it is in your body... Notice what sensations come along with the emotion... There
Appendix A: Mindfulness Exercises

may be heaviness, lightness, warmth, coolness, tingling, or tension... You may find these sensations in your head, shoulders, arms, legs, or abdomen... Whatever you feel and wherever it happens, just notice what’s going on and see if you can let it be... And now see if you can return your attention to your breathing... See if you can notice that there is a part of you that’s able to watch your breathing, watch your thoughts, watch your feelings, watch the sensations that happen in your body... There is a part of you that does the thinking and feeling, and a part of you that can notice the thinking and feeling... Take a few moments to experience what it’s like to connect with the part of you that just notices...

And now take a few moments to consider what brought you here today... There is something you care so much about that you took steps to get here... Just reflect for a few moments about what it is that you really, truly care about most in your life... Recognize and appreciate the fact that you made a choice to take action for change... And as the exercise comes to a close, see if you can bring to mind an image of what kind of person you want to be when you are handling your pain effectively... Consider how you’ll be acting toward other people... How you’ll be acting toward yourself...

And when you’re ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room and back to where we are now. If you like, move your fingers and toes around and have a nice stretch.
Appendix A: Mindfulness Exercises

Facing Your Feelings

Mindfulness of Emotions Script

Position yourself comfortably in the chair...feet flat on the floor, arms placed comfortably, chair fully supporting your body...allow your eyes to close...begin by paying attention to your breathing, taking a few long breaths to get settled...

Now gently guide your attention to how you are feeling emotionally within yourself at this moment...note whatever feelings arise within you whether they be positive, neutral or negative...whether they be strong or weak in intensity...they are all just emotions...all just feelings to be felt. Whatever feelings arise, remind yourself that it is OK to allow yourself to feel it. Remember that you are not your emotions, you are the watcher of your emotions. Take some time just to observe your emotional experience, making no attempt to change how you are feeling...

You might label the emotion to yourself (i.e., “ah there is calmness/ happiness/ indifference/ surprise/ boredom/ frustration/ fear/ sadness, etc”)...You might describe where and how you feel the emotion in your body...take time to notice the physical signs that you are feeling the way you feel...

Watch as the emotion changes in intensity and nature. Bring whatever image to mind that helps you be the watcher of your emotions (e.g., seeing your emotion like an ocean wave, express train, cloud floating in the sky, leaf floating on a stream, an empty room, a naughty child, etc)...

You don’t have to buy into your emotions and get swept up in them. You don’t need to change your emotions, fight them or get rid of them. You are just here to watch, observe and experience what is going on right now. See if you can make some space for the emotion, seeing it as part of a broader landscape within you that contains lots of things like other feelings, thoughts, memories, body sensations, etc. Your emotions are just emotions...your feeling just feelings...nothing more and nothing less...

When you have fully experienced whatever emotion is there, and the experience has run its natural course, redirect your attention towards your breath...note each inhalation and each exhalation...bind your attention to the back and forth movement of the belly as you breathe in and out...note the sensations in your body as you draw breath in and then out again. Take some time now to allow your breath to be your anchor to the present moment...

If your mind wanders away from the breath to an emotion, or thought or sensation. That’s ok, that’s what minds do. Congratulate yourself for noticing, and give your mind the time to again observe and watch what you are experiencing... Once that observation has run its natural course, again gently bring your attention back to the breath as your anchor to the present...

Try to continue your mindfulness practice for the next 10 minutes or more...

When you feel ready, you can gradually open your eyes, bringing this mindfulness exercise to a close...
Eating One Raisin: A First Taste of Mindfulness

Holding
First, take a raisin and hold it in the palm of your hand or between your finger and thumb. Focusing on it, imagine that you’ve just dropped in from Mars and have never seen an object like this before in your life.

Seeing
Take time to really see it; gaze at the raisin with care and full attention. Let your eyes explore every part of it, examining the highlights where the light shines, the darker hollows, the folds and ridges, and any asymmetries or unique features.

Touching
Turn the raisin over between your fingers, exploring its texture, maybe with your eyes closed if that enhances your sense of touch.

Smelling
Holding the raisin beneath your nose, with each inhalation drink in any smell, aroma, or fragrance that may arise, noticing as you do this anything interesting that may be happening in your mouth or stomach.

Placing
Now slowly bring the raisin up to your lips, noticing how your hand and arm know exactly how and where to position it. Gently place the object in the mouth, without chewing, noticing how it gets into the mouth in the first place. Spend a few moments exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth, exploring it with your tongue.

Tasting
When you are ready, prepare to chew the raisin, noticing how and where it needs to be for chewing. Then, very consciously, take one or two bites into it and notice what happens in the aftermath, experiencing any waves of taste that emanate from it as you continue chewing. Without swallowing yet, notice the bare sensations of taste and texture in the mouth and how these may change over time, moment by moment, as well as any changes in the object itself.

Swallowing
When you feel ready to swallow the raisin, see if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow the raisin.

Following
Finally, see if you can feel what is left of the raisin moving down into your stomach, and sense how the body as a whole is feeling after completing this exercise in mindful eating.

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Appendix A: Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness Exercises

**Mindfulness Meditation**

Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. To begin, you might want to set a timer for about 10 minutes, but after some experience you should not be too concerned about the length of time you spend meditating.

Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That’s ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what’s happening in your brain. Take note, and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That’s fine—these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend, or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going, and accept what’s happening.

Whenever you are able to, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.

**Body Scan**

During the body scan exercise you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn’t to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don’t worry too much about how long you practice, but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body—to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.

**Mindful Eating**

Choose a food you would like to practice with (preferably something you can hold in your hand without getting messy). Something as simple as a single raisin will work well. Move slowly through these steps, taking a moment to focus on each one.

Before you pick up your food, notice how it looks on the table in front of you. Notice its color, how the light reflects from its surface, and its size.

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Appendix A: Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness Exercises

Now, pick up the food. Notice the weight, and how the food feels against your skin. Roll the object between your fingers, or roll it in your hand, and notice its texture. Notice if it’s smooth, rough, slick, soft, firm or if it has any other properties. Hold the food to your nose, and pay attention to its smell.

Next, place the food in your mouth, on your tongue, but don’t eat it. Notice how it feels in your mouth. Does the texture feel the same as on your hand? What do you taste? Roll the food around in your mouth and pay attention to the feeling.

Finally, begin to slowly chew your food. Notice how your teeth sink into it, and how the texture is different inside. Pay close attention to the flavor, and how it spreads across your tongue. Notice how your body changes—does your mouth fill with saliva? Does your tongue feel hot or cold? Continue to chew your food, paying close attention to the many sensations as you finish.

Five Senses

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

What are 5 things you can see? Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn’t noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

What are 4 things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

What are 3 things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

What are 2 things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn’t have to be a nice smell either: maybe there’s an overflowing trash can or sewer.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. “Taste” the air to see how it feels on your tongue.

The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

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Appendix A: Mindfulness Exercises

Mindful Breathing

The primary goal of mindful breathing is simply a calm, non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them.

- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine reasonably straight.
- Bring your attention to your breathing.
- Imagine that you have a balloon in your tummy. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice the sensations in your abdomen as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your abdomen rising with the in-breath, and falling with the out-breath.
- Thoughts will come into your mind, and that’s okay, because that’s just what the human mind does. Simply notice those thoughts, then bring your attention back to your breathing.
- Likewise, you can notice sounds, physical feelings, and emotions, and again, just bring your attention back to your breathing.
- You don’t have to follow those thoughts or feelings, don’t judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. It’s okay for the thoughts to be there. Just notice those thoughts, and let them drift on by, bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- Whenever you notice that your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted, and then gently bring the attention back to your breathing.

It’s okay and natural for thoughts to enter into your awareness, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.

www.get.gg  www.getselfhelp.co.uk/mindfulness.htm
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Appendix B: ACT Metaphors and Experiences

This section contains various ACT metaphors used in this toolkit as well as others you may find helpful. Next to the name of each metaphor is a list of the components of the ACT model that they correspond to.

**ACT in a Nutshell** (acceptance, defusion, present moment awareness, values, committed action)

Imagine that this clipboard (or some other similarly shaped object) are all your negative thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Hold the clipboard in front of you and slowly bring it closer and closer until it is in front of your face. Notice how this affects your ability to see what is around you. What would it be like to live like this? Would you be able to accomplish your goals or live your values? This is what happens when we fuse with our thoughts and allow them to dominate our lived experience. Now hold the clipboard as far away from yourself as possible. Really stretch your arms and muscles as you try to get distance between yourself and the clipboard (without dropping it). Again notice how difficult it is to do anything other than this struggle, and notice how uncomfortable it is to struggle with the clipboard like this. This is what happens when we spend all our time and energy struggling against our negative thoughts and emotions. Now slowly lower the clipboard away from you and place it in your lap. Even though the clipboard is still there, notice how much easier it is to connect with what is around you. ACT is all about learning how to make space for our negative thoughts and emotions, in order to allow us to invest our time and energy into doing what is truly meaningful to us.

**Chess Board** (acceptance, defusion, observing self)

Imagine a chess game, where the white pieces are our positive thoughts/feelings and the black pieces are our negative thoughts/feelings. If we play this game, our lives become a battle in which we attempt to dominate our negative feelings with our positive ones. There are two problems with this. First, there are an infinite combination of black and white emotions, the battle is never won but is constantly going on. Second, white pieces (positive emotions) attract bad pieces (negative ones), so no matter how hard we try to eliminate the black pieces, we will never be able to. What if we learned to be like the board instead of like the pieces? To be involved in our emotions, but not involved in a battle.

**The Unwelcome Party Guest** (acceptance, defusion)

Imagine you decide to throw a party and invite all of your friends. You and your friends are having a great time until an “unwelcome guest” named Brian shows up. Brian is rowdy, smelly and you hate him being there, so you kick him out of the party. After a few minutes Brian shows back up again. You take him back to the door and send him on his way. This time, to ensure that he doesn’t come back, you stand by the door. But you realize that even though
standing by the door ensures that Brian doesn’t come back, it keeps you from being with your other guests. Within a few minutes Brian comes back. While you can’t ignore him, you don’t let his presence keep you from enjoying time with your friends. You notice that even though Brian is still there, you can enjoy the party all the same. You also notice that when you’re not trying to throw Brian out of the party all the time he calms down and he isn’t as bad as you thought he was.

**The Struggle Switch** (acceptance, defusion, committed action)

It can sometimes feel like there is a “struggle switch” in the back of our mind that is switched on as soon as we have an uncomfortable emotion, painful memory or painful emotion. When we struggle against these things our emotions can get amplified creating more anxiety and frustration. This amplification can impact and influence our life pulling us down or causing us to engage in self-defeating behaviors. When an uncomfortable emotion, painful memory or painful emotion shows up and we keep the struggle switch off, we are deciding not to invest our time, energy and effort into struggling against it. Instead, we invest the pain, emotions or memories into doing meaningful life enhancing activities.

**The Brain as a pool of water** (defusion, present moment awareness)

Imagine that the brain is a still pool of water. Rain drops or wind can create ripples which can churn up the water and make it cloudy. But there is always the potential to return to the still bowl of water through training the mind. As the water stills you can better see what is beneath the water, revealing both things we like and don’t like seeing. Through accepting what we see beneath the water, we become more accepting of ourselves and others, more content and at ease.

**Thoughts as Traffic** (defusion, acceptance, present moment awareness)

Training the mind can be like watching traffic go by. The cars represent our thoughts and feelings. Instead of being unsettled by the movement or chasing after certain thoughts or feelings, all we have to do is observe the traffic.

**Demons on a Boat** (values, committed action, acceptance)

Imagine you are sailing a ship at sea. Underneath your deck are an assortment of scary, nasty demons. You’ve made an agreement with the demons, as long as you keep the boat adrift, not moving in any particular direction, they will remain out of sight and not bother you. You do this for a while, but then you notice other ships going towards shore and you think of all you want to accomplish. So you turn your ship towards your desired destination. Suddenly all the demons come up on the deck and bare their fangs and threaten to kill
Appendix B: ACT Metaphors and Experiences

you. Intimidated, you let go of the wheel of the boat and apologize to the
demons, asking them to return below deck and promising that you will keep
the boat adrift. This happens several times; you work up enough courage to
point your ship towards the shore, only to stop when the demons come and
threaten to kill you. But even though the demons consistently threaten to harm
you, they have never acted on those threats. In fact, they aren’t able to actually
harm you, the only power they have over you is their threats. So if that is true,
what do you need to do? You need to keep your boat pointed towards the
shore, your hands on the wheel. Of course the demons will try to threaten and
intimidate you, but they can’t actually harm you. As you accept their presence
you begin to realize that they aren’t actually as powerful as they led you to
believe. They were using special effects to make themselves look bigger and
scarer than they truly are. The more you keep your boat pointed in the
direction you want to go, the more you realize how many adventures you can
have, if you simply keep your boat moving.

Passengers on a Plane (values, acceptance, committed action)

Imagine you are the pilot of a large jet, and all the passengers on the plane are
your thoughts and feelings. As the pilot, you know you would like to fly the
plane east, towards your desired destination, but whenever you do so, some of
the more unpleasant passengers frequently come up to the cockpit and say all
sorts of unpleasant and nasty things about you. You land the plane and
demand that they leave, but once you open the doors more unpleasant
passengers come aboard. In despair, you make a deal with the passengers; as
long as they leave you alone, you will travel in whatever direction they want
you to. So you travel every direction but the one in which you want to go, and
become exhausted from the constant struggle. Then you hear a message from
the air traffic controller, reminding you that you are the one in control of the
plane, all you have to do is make space for the unpleasant passengers, and
choose to point your plane in the desired direction. So you turn your plane
towards your destination, and as you do so, you realize that the unpleasant
passengers aren’t able to do anything more than threaten; they can’t actually
take control of the plane unless you let them. They try to make you as
uncomfortable as possible, but the more you make space for them, the less
scary they seem. And as you go towards your destination, the more you
are satisfied with your life.

Tug of War (acceptance, defusion)

Imagine you are playing a game of tug of war with your problem (depression,
anxiety, etc.). You both have one end of the rope and between you is a pit of
mud and slime. No matter how hard you try, it always seems like your problem
is stronger than you and easily pulls you into the mud. But what would
happen if you let go of the rope? The problem is still there on the other side of
the pit, but it no longer has any ability to pull you in.
Appendix B: ACT Metaphors and Experiences

**The Sky and the Weather** (observing self, acceptance)

Imagine the sky being your observing self, and the specific weather being your various thoughts and feelings. No matter how intense the weather may be the sky has enough room to make space for those weather events. Likewise, the more we are in touch with our observing self the more effectively we are able to make room for even negative thoughts and emotions.

**Choice to Feel** (acceptance, values)

What if you had a choice? You could choose to never feel your negative feeling again, but lose all capacity to love, or you are able to love and care but when what you care about and what is happening in your life don’t match each other, you experience these negative feelings. Which would you choose?

**The Master Storyteller** (acceptance, defusion, present moment awareness)

The mind is like a master storyteller, always looking for new and interesting stories to tell. When it finds a particularly compelling story, it is easy to become hooked and allow that story to distract us from the present moment. These stories may be pleasant to hear, but often our mind also tells us very unpleasant stories about our lives and our value. Regardless of what kinds of stories our minds tell it is normally to get hooked by a good story. Mindfulness is being able to acknowledge this happening and return our focus to the present moment.

**Metaphors for the Mind** (defusion)

There are several other metaphors like the master storyteller metaphor above that you can use to help explain how the mind works to clients. Some of them are as follows: a word machine, a “radio doom and gloom machine”

**Life is a Stage** (observing self)

Imagine that your life is like a stage play. All of your experiences, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are like actors on a stage. Our observing self is the part of us that can sit in the audience and watch the play unfold around us, rather than getting caught up on stage chasing the characters (our thoughts and feelings) around. Your observing self can also control the lights on the stage, choosing to turn down the lights on certain characters and turn up the lights on others.
Appendix B: ACT Metaphors and Experiences

Trip to Disneyland (values, committed action)

Imagine two children on a trip to Disneyland. One child is completely goal focused. The only thing he cares about is arriving at his destination, so he becomes frustrated during the long car ride. The second child, on the other hand, is values focused. During the car ride, he is able to live out his values of being adventurous and curious and notice the world around him. Both children arrive at Disneyland and have a wonderful time, but the first child had a frustrating experience up to that point while the second child had a more meaningful experience. In addition, say the car breaks down on the way to Disneyland. Even though both children will be upset and frustrated, the value focused child will have had the satisfaction of living based on his values up to that point in the journey.
## Techniques for Accepting Feelings, from ACT Made Simple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALING HAND</th>
<th>THE CHOICE TO FEEL</th>
<th>COMPASSION</th>
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<td>Lay a hand on the part of your body where you feel this most intensely. Imagine this is a healing hand—the hand of a loving nurse or parent or partner. Send some warmth into this area— not to get rid of the feeling, but to open up around it, make room for it, hold it gently.</td>
<td>Suppose I could give you a choice: (a) you never have to have this feeling ever again, but it means you lose all capacity to love and care, or (b) you get to love and care, but when there’s a gap between what you want and what you’ve got, feelings like this one show up. Which do you choose?</td>
<td>Hold this feeling gently as if it’s a crying baby or a whimpering puppy.</td>
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<tr>
<th>SOFTENING</th>
<th>THE STRUGGLE SWITCH</th>
<th>NORMALIZING</th>
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<td>See if you can soften up around the feeling, loosen up, and hold it gently.</td>
<td>Is the struggle switch on, off, or at the halfway point we call “tolerating it”? If the switch was like a dial with a scale of 0 to 10, and 10 is full on struggle, and 0 no struggle at all, then right now, what level are you? Are you willing to see if we can bring it down a notch or two?</td>
<td>This feeling tells you that you’re a normal human being who has a heart and who cares. This is what humans feel when there’s a gap between what we want and what we’ve got.</td>
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<th>ALLOWING</th>
<th>METAPHORS</th>
<th>BREATHE INTO IT</th>
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<td>See if you can allow this feeling to be there. You don’t have to like it or want it—just allow it.</td>
<td>Quicksand Passengers on the Bus Demons on the Boat Wade Through the Swamp Pushing Against a Clipboard</td>
<td>Breathe into this feeling. It’s as if your breath flows into and around it.</td>
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<th>EXPANSION</th>
<th>PHYSICALIZING</th>
<th>NOTICING</th>
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<td>See if you can open up and expand around the feeling. It’s as if, in some magical way, all this space opens up inside you.</td>
<td>Imagine this feeling is an object. Is it liquid, solid, or gaseous? How big is it? Is it light or heavy? What temperature is it? Is it at the surface or inside you? What shape does it have? What color? Is it transparent or opaque? What does the surface feel like—hot or cold, rough or smooth, wet or dry?</td>
<td>Notice where this feeling is. Notice where it’s most intense. Notice the hot spots and cold spots. Notice the different sensations within the feeling.</td>
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| THE OBSERVING SELF | |
|--------------------| |
| Take a step back and look at this feeling from your observing self. | |

| THE CURIOUS SCIENTIST | |
|----------------------| |
| Notice where this feeling is in your body. Zoom in on it. Observe it as if you are a curious scientist who has never encountered anything like this. Where are the edges? Where does it start and stop? Is it moving or still? Is it at the surface or inside you? Hot or cold? Light or heavy? | |
Appendix B: ACT Metaphors and Experiences

Techniques for Defusing from Thoughts, from ACT Made Simple

PRAGMATISM
If you go along with that thought, buy it, and let it control you, where does that leave you? What do you get for buying into it? Where do you go from here? Can you give it a go anyway, even though your mind says it won’t work?

WORKABILITY
If you let that thought dictate what you do, how does it work in the long run? Does buying into it help you create a rich, full, and meaningful life?

SECONDARY GAINS
When this thought shows up, if you take it at face value/go along with it let it tell you what to do, what feelings, thoughts, or situations might it help you avoid or escape from (in the short run)?

INTERESTED
That’s an interesting thought.

MEDITATIVE
Let your thoughts come and go like: passing clouds; cars driving past your house; etc.

YOUR MIND IS LIKE ....
- a "don't get killed" machine
- a word machine
- radio “doom and gloom”
- a masterful salesman
- the world’s greatest story teller
- a fascist dictator
- a judgment factory

THOUGHTS

BULLYING REFRAME
What’s it like to be pushed around by that thought/belief/idea? Do you want to have it run your life, tell you what to do all the time?

PROBLEM SOLVING
This is just your mind problem solving. You’re in pain, so your mind tries to figure out a way to stop the pain. Your mind evolved to solve problems. This is its job. It’s not defective; it’s doing what it evolved to do. But some of those solutions are not very effective. Your job is to assess whether your mind’s solutions are effective: do they give you a rich and full life in the long run?

THE CLASSICS
I’m having the thought that ...
... Say it in a silly voice.
Sing it.
Say it very slowly.
Repeat it quickly over and over.
Write thoughts on cards.
Passengers on the Bus Metaphor.
Thank your mind for that thought.
Who’s talking here: you or your mind?
Leaves on a Stream Exercise.
How old is that story?

FORM AND LOCATION
What does that thought look like? How big is it? What does it sound like? Your voice or someone else’s? Close your eyes and tell me, where is it located in space? Is it moving or still? If it’s moving, in what direction and at what speed?

COMPUTER SCREEN
Imagine this thought on a computer screen. Change the font, color, and format. Animate the words. Add in a bouncing ball.

INSIGHT
When you buy into this thought, or give it all your attention, how does your behavior change? What do you start or stop doing when it shows up?

NAMING THE STORY
If all these thoughts and feelings were put into a book or movie, titled “the something something story,” what would you call it? Each time this story shows up, name it: “Aha, there’s the XYZ story again!”

NOTICING
Notice what your mind is telling you right now. Notice what you’re thinking.

THE OBSERVING SELF
Take a step back and look at this thought from your observing self.
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

Treatment Plan Objectives:

Comprehensive Objectives

(Understanding the Problem)
Cl will ID and process 12 ways in which control strategies and lack of contact with values have influenced psychological inflexibility.

(Working Toward the Solution)
Cl will ID and process 12 ways to improve psychological flexibility through present moment awareness; acceptance/willingness to experience emotions; cognitive defusion; developing sense of self as context; committed actions; and clarifying and contacting values.

Specific Objectives

(Avoidance and Control)
Cl will ID and process at least 3 current and past coping strategies. Cl will evaluate how effective these strategies have been over the short term and long term and will process any negative consequences of these strategies.

(Mindfulness and Defusion)
Cl will ID and process at least 3 ways to practice willingness to experience difficult thoughts and feelings as an alternative to current or past strategies that have not been effective. Cl will use experience to evaluate the effectiveness of any new skills tried.

(Present Moment Awareness)
Cl will ID and process at least 3 ways to focus attention on the present moment when thoughts and feelings about the past or future are interfering with making valued choices.

(Observer Self)
Cl will ID and process at least 3 ways to connect with the Observer Self when problems with self-identity are interfering with making valued choices.

(Values and Committed Action)
Cl will ID and process at least 3 ways to identify important values and 3 ways to take committed action that reflects most important values.

Learning ACT Training Playlist

The following YouTube playlist is a collection of videos that demonstrate ACT and how to implement it in your work with clients.
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8v13C0mxgwnCk8h8M5N3Bd9d78MPO_j8&feature=em-share_playlist_user
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

ACT Therapy Personalization Form

In order to make counseling as effective as possible for you, please take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1) What (or who) made you want to get counseling?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

2) What results do you want or expect out of counseling?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

3) How will you know when it’s time to finish your counseling?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

4) What have you already tried? (Let’s not spend time re-doing what you already know doesn’t work). Look back at your answer to Question 2 about what you want. Now please list everything you can think of that you’ve ever tried in order to get that outcome, either with counseling or on your own. Then grade each item from A to F for how effective it was in getting you what you want in the short run and the long run. (Also see back side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Have Tried</th>
<th>Short Term Grade</th>
<th>Long Term Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Venting to my counselor while he/she just listened</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D (nothing really changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Going gambling to numb my feelings</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D (feelings keep coming back)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Going for a 15 minute walk</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B (pretty effective)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix C: Clinical Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Have Tried</th>
<th>Short Term Grade</th>
<th>Long Term Grade</th>
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Appendix C: Clinical Tools

A Quick Look at Your Values – page 1

Values are your heart’s deepest desires for how you want to behave as a human being. Values are not about what you want to get or achieve; they are about how you want to behave or act on an ongoing basis.

There are literally hundreds of different values, but below you’ll find a list of the most common ones. Probably, not all of them will be relevant to you. Keep in mind there are no such things as ‘right values’ or ‘wrong values’. It’s a bit like our taste in pizzas. If you prefer ham and pineapple but I prefer salami and olives, that doesn’t mean that my taste in pizzas is right and yours is wrong. It just means we have different tastes. And similarly, we may have different values. So read through the list below and write a letter next to each value: V = Very important, Q = Quite important, and N = Not so important; and make sure to score at least ten of them as Very important.

1. Acceptance: to be open to and accepting of myself, others, life etc
2. Adventure: to be adventurous; to actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences
3. Assertiveness: to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want
4. Authenticity: to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself
5. Beauty: to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment etc
6. Caring: to be caring towards myself, others, the environment etc
7. Challenge: to keep challenging myself to grow, learn, improve
8. Compassion: to act with kindness towards those who are suffering
9. Connection: to engage fully in whatever I am doing, and be fully present with others
10. Contribution: to contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference to myself or others
11. Conformity: to be respectful and obedient of rules and obligations
12. Cooperation: to be cooperative and collaborative with others
13. Courage: to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty
14. Creativity: to be creative or innovative
15. Curiosity: to be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover
16. Encouragement: to encourage and reward behaviour that I value in myself or others
17. Equality: to treat others as equal to myself, and vice-versa
18. Excitement: to seek, create and engage in activities that are exciting, stimulating or thrilling
19. Fairness: to be fair to myself or others
20. Fitness: to maintain or improve my fitness; to look after my physical and mental health and wellbeing
21. Flexibility: to adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances
22. Freedom: to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others do likewise
23. Friendliness: to be friendly, companionable, or agreeable towards others
24. Forgiveness: to be forgiving towards myself or others
25. Fun: to be fun-loving, to seek, create, and engage in fun-filled activities
26. Generosity: to be generous, sharing and giving to myself or others
27. Gratitude: to be grateful for and appreciative of the positive aspects of myself, others and life
28. Honesty: to be honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others
29. Humor: to see and appreciate the humorous side of life
30. Humility: to be humble or modest; to let my achievements speak for themselves
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

A Quick Look at Your Values – page 2

31. Industry: to be industrious, hard-working, dedicated
32. Independence: to be self-supportive, and choose my own way of doing things
33. Intimacy: to open up, reveal, and share myself – emotionally or physically – in my close personal relationships
34. Justice: to uphold justice and fairness
35. Kindness: to be kind, compassionate, considerate, nurturing or caring towards myself or others
36. Love: to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself or others
37. Mindfulness: to be conscious of, open to, and curious about my here-and-now experience
38. Order: to be orderly and organized
39. Open-mindedness: to think things through, see things from others’ points of view, and weigh evidence fairly
40. Patience: to wait calmly for what I want
41. Persistence: to continue resolutely, despite problems or difficulties.
42. Pleasure: to create and give pleasure to myself or others
43. Power: to strongly influence or wield authority over others, e.g., taking charge, leading, organizing
44. Reciprocity: to build relationships in which there is a fair balance of giving and taking
45. Respect: to be respectful towards myself or others; to be polite, considerate and show positive regard
46. Responsibility: to be responsible and accountable for my actions
47. Romance: to be romantic; to display and express love or strong affection
48. Safety: to secure, protect, or ensure safety of myself or others
49. Self-awareness: to be aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions
50. Self-care: to look after my health and wellbeing, and get my needs met
51. Self-development: to keep growing, advancing or improving in knowledge, skills, character, or life experience
52. Self-control: to act in accordance with my own ideals
53. Sensuality: to create, explore and enjoy experiences that stimulate the five senses
54. Sexuality: to explore or express my sexuality
55. Spirituality: to connect with things bigger than myself
56. Skillfulness: to continually practice and improve my skills, and apply myself fully when using them
57. Supportiveness: to be supportive, helpful, encouraging, and available to myself or others
58. Trust: to be trustworthy; to be loyal, faithful, sincere, and reliable
59. Insert your own unlisted value here:
60. Insert your own unlisted value here:

***

Once you’ve marked each value as V, Q, N (Very, Quite, or Not so important), go through all the Vs, and select out the top six that are most important to you. Mark each one with a 6. to show it’s in your top six. Finally, write those six values out below, to remind yourself this is what you want to stand for as a human being.
### Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Core Competency Self-Rating Form

From Learning ACT by Luoma, Hayes, & Walser (2007)

Below are listed a number of statements. Please rate how true each statement is for you when you use ACT, by circling a number next to it. Use the scale below to make your choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>never true</td>
<td>very seldom true</td>
<td>seldom true</td>
<td>sometimes true</td>
<td>frequently true</td>
<td>almost always true</td>
<td>always true</td>
<td>don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Core Competencies Involved in the Basic ACT Therapeutic Stance

The basic psychological stance of the ACT therapist is an especially important factor in providing good treatment. This involves being able to make contact with the “space” from which ACT naturally flows, as well as modeling certain facets of psychological flexibility that we seek to impart to the client. Like many treatment traditions, ACT emphasizes the importance of therapist warmth and genuineness. This stance emerges quite naturally from the core understanding of human suffering from an ACT perspective. When we see our clients trapped by language, we see ourselves and the traps which generate our own pain. An “I and thou” perspective is the natural precipitant of this recognition. Collectively, the following attributes define the basic therapeutic stance of ACT.

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The therapist realizes that he or she is in the same soup as the client and speaks to the client from an equal, vulnerable, genuine, and sharing point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The therapist models willingness to hold contradictory or difficult ideas, feelings, memories, and the like without needing to “resolve” them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The therapist takes a compassionate and humanizing stance toward the client’s suffering and avoids criticism, judgment or taking a “one up” position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The therapist always brings the issue back to what the client’s experience is showing, and does not substitute his or her opinions for that genuine experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The therapist does not argue with, lecture, coerce or even attempt to convince the client of anything. If you find yourself attempting to change a client’s mind, stop. You are not doing ACT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The therapist does not explain the “meaning” of paradoxes or metaphors to develop “insight”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The therapist is willing to self-disclose about personal issues when it makes a therapeutic point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The therapist avoids the use of “canned” ACT interventions. Interventions are responses to the particular client we are treating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The therapist tailors interventions to fit the client’s language and immediate life experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The therapist sequences and applies specific ACT interventions in response to client needs, and is ready to change course to fit those needs at any moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>New metaphors, experiential exercises and behavioral tasks are allowed to emerge from the client’s own experience and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ACT relevant processes are recognized in the moment and where appropriate are directly supported in the context of the therapeutic relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C: Clinical Tools

### Developing Acceptance and Willingness/Undermining Experiential Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Therapist communicates that client is not broken, but is using unworkable strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Therapist helps client examine direct experience and detect emotional control strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Therapist helps client make direct contact with the paradoxical effect of emotional control strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Therapist actively uses concept of “workability” in clinical interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Therapist actively encourages client to experiment with stopping the struggle for emotional control and suggests willingness as an alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Therapist uses shifts between control and willingness as an opportunity for the client to directly experience the contrast in vitality between the two strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Therapist helps client investigate relationship between levels of willingness and sense of suffering (willingness suffering diary; clean and dirty suffering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Therapist helps client make experiential contact with the cost of being unwilling relative to valued life ends (Are you doing your values; listing out value, emotional control demand, cost, short term/long term costs and benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Therapist helps client experience the qualities of willingness (a choice, a behavior, not wanting, same act regardless of how big the stakes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Therapist uses exercises (jumping; cards in lap, eye contact) and metaphors (box full of stuff, Joe the bum) to help client contact willingness the action in the presence of difficult material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Therapists structures graded steps or exercises to practice willingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Therapist models willingness in the therapeutic relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Therapist detects struggle in session and teaches the clients to do so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C: Clinical Tools

### Undermining Cognitive Fusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Therapist identifies client’s emotional, cognitive, behavioral or physical barriers to willingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Therapist suggests that “attachment” to the literal meaning of these experiences makes willingness difficult to sustain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Therapist actively contrasts what the client’s “mind” says will work versus what the client’s experience says is working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Therapist uses language tools (get off our buts, both/and), metaphors (bubble on the head, two computers, monsters on the bus) and experiential exercises (tin can monster) to create a separation between the client and client’s conceptualized experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Therapist uses various interventions to both reveal the flow of private experience and such experience is not “toxic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Therapist works to get client to experiment with “having” these experiences, using willingness as a stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Therapist uses various exercises, metaphors and behavioral tasks to reveal the “hidden” properties of language (milk, milk, milk; what are the numbers?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Therapist helps client elucidate the client’s “story” and helps client make contact with the arbitrary nature of causal relationships within the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Therapist helps client make contact with the evaluative and reason giving properties of the client’s story (no thing matters, good cup/bad cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Therapist detects “mindiness” (fusion) in session and teaches the client to detect it as well</td>
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</table>

### Getting in Contact with the Present Moment

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Therapist can defuse from client content and direct attention to the moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Therapist can bring his or her own feelings or thoughts in the moment into the therapeutic relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Therapist uses exercises to expand the client’s sense of experience as an ongoing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Therapist tracks content at multiple levels and emphasizes the present when it is useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Therapist models coming back to the present moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Therapist detects client drifting into past and future orientation and comes back to now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Therapist teaches the client to do likewise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C: Clinical Tools

### Distinguishing the Conceptualized Self from Self-as-context

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Therapist helps the client differentiate self-evaluations from the self that evaluates (thank your mind for that thought, calling a thought a thought, naming the event, pick an identity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Therapist employs mindfulness exercises (the you the you call you; chessboard, soldiers in parade/leaves on the stream) to help client make contact with self-as-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Therapist uses metaphors to highlight distinction between products and contents of consciousness versus consciousness (furniture in house, are you big enough to have you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>The therapist employs behavioral tasks (take your mind for a walk) to help client practice distinguishing private events from self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Therapist helps client understand the different qualities of self conceptualization, just noticing events and simple awareness</td>
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### Defining Valued Directions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Therapist helps client clarify valued life directions (values questionnaire, value clarification exercise, what do you want your life to stand for, funeral exercise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Therapist helps client “go on record” as wanting to stand for valued life ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Therapist puts his or her own therapy relevant values in the room and models their importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Therapist teaches clients to distinguish between values and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Therapist distinguishes between outcomes and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Therapist respects client values and if unable to support them, finds referral or other alternatives</td>
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</table>

### Building Patterns of Committed Action

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Therapist helps client identify valued life goals and build an action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Therapist encourages client to “have” barriers and make and keep commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Therapist uses exercise and non-traditional uses of language to reveal hidden sources of interference to committed actions (fish hook metaphor, forgiveness, who would be made right, how is your story every going to handle you being healthy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Therapist encourages client to take small steps and to look at the quality of committed action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Therapist keep clients focused on larger and larger patterns of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Therapist integrates slips or relapses into the experiential base for future effective action</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

ACT ADVISOR Psychological Flexibility Measure

In this diagram there are six double-headed arrows, each with contrasting statements at either end. The arrows represent sliding scales, numbered 1-10, between each set of statements. For each scale, choose whereabouts you would place yourself (i.e., at which number), depending on how closely, or otherwise, you feel the statements apply to you. If you feel that the statements apply equally, or that neither statement applies to you, score 5. Enter your scores in the box below, then total them to give a Psychological Flexibility score.

Developed by David Chantry.
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

Control of Thoughts and Feelings Questionnaire

© Russ Harris 2008 www.thehappinesstrap.com

This questionnaire has been adapted from similar ones developed by Steven Hayes, Frank Bond, and others. For each pair of statements, please circle the one that most accurately fits how you feel. The answer you choose doesn’t have to be absolutely 100 percent true for you all the time; just pick the answer which seems to be more representative of your general attitude.

1a. I must have good control of my feelings in order to be successful in life.
1b. It is unnecessary for me to control my feelings in order to be successful in life.

2a. Anxiety is bad.
2b. Anxiety is neither good nor bad. It is merely an uncomfortable feeling.

3a. Negative thoughts and feelings will harm you if you don’t control or get rid of them.
3b. Negative thoughts and feelings won’t harm you even if they feel unpleasant.

4a. I’m afraid of some of my strong feelings.
4b. I’m not afraid of any feelings, no matter how strong.

5a. In order for me to do something important, I have to get rid of all my doubts.
5b. I can do something important, even when doubts are present.

6a. When negative thoughts and feelings arise, it’s important to reduce or get rid of them as quickly as possible.
6b. Trying to reduce or get rid of negative thoughts and feelings frequently causes problems. If I simply allow them to be, then they will change as a natural part of living.

7a. The best method of managing negative thoughts and feelings is to analyze them; then utilize that knowledge to get rid of them.
7b. The best method of managing negative thoughts and feelings is to acknowledge their presence and let them be, without having to analyze or judge them.

8a. I will become “happy” and “healthy” by improving my ability to avoid, reduce, or get rid of negative thoughts and feelings.
8b. I will become “happy” and “healthy” by allowing negative thoughts and feelings to come and go of their own accord and learning to live effectively when they are present.

9a. If I can’t suppress or get rid of a negative emotional reaction, it’s a sign of personal failure or weakness.
9b. The need to control or get rid of a negative emotional reaction is a problem in itself.
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

10a. Having negative thoughts and feelings is an indication that I’m psychologically unhealthy or I’ve got problems.
10b. Having negative thoughts and feelings means I’m a normal human being.

11a. People who are in control of their lives can generally control how they feel.
11b. People who are in control of their lives do not need to control their feelings.

12a. It is not okay to feel anxious and I try hard to avoid it.
12b. I don’t like anxiety, but it’s okay to feel it.

13a. Negative thoughts and feelings are a sign that there is something wrong with my life.
13b. Negative thoughts and feelings are an inevitable part of life for everyone.

14a. I have to feel good before I can do something that’s important and challenging.
14b. I can do something that’s important and challenging even if I’m feeling anxious or depressed.

15a. I try to suppress thoughts and feelings that I don’t like by just not thinking about them.
15b. I don’t try to suppress thoughts and feelings that I don’t like. I just let them come and go of their own accord.

To score your test, count the number of times you selected option “a” or “b.”
You may like to repeat this test and see how your ideas have changed, after you have finished reading The Happiness Trap, or completed several sessions of ACT.
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

**AAQ-II (Acceptance and Action Questionnaire)**

Below you will find a list of statements. Please rate how true each statement is for you by circling a number next to it. Use the scale below to make your choice.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never true</td>
<td>very seldom true</td>
<td>seldom true</td>
<td>sometimes true</td>
<td>frequently true</td>
<td>almost always true</td>
<td>always true</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My painful experiences and memories make it difficult for me to live a life that I would value.  
2. I'm afraid of my feelings.  
3. I worry about not being able to control my worries and feelings.  
4. My painful memories prevent me from having a fulfilling life.  
5. Emotions cause problems in my life.  
6. It seems like most people are handling their lives better than I am.  
7. Worries get in the way of my success.

This is a one-factor measure of psychological inflexibility, or experiential avoidance. Score the scale by summing the seven items. Higher scores equal greater levels of psychological inflexibility.

## Appendix C: Clinical Tools

### Case Conceptualization Form from *Getting Unstuck in ACT*, by Russ Harris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does the client want from therapy/coaching? What does he/she describe as the main problem(s)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any external barriers (as opposed to psychological barriers) to a rich and full life - e.g. legal, social, medical, financial, occupational problems that will require active problem solving and/or skills training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNWORKABLE ACTION**
What is the client doing that makes his life worse, or keeps her stuck, or worsens his problems, or inhibits her growth, or prevents healthy solutions, or worsens health, or damages relationships etc?

What people, places, events, activities, situations and challenges is the client avoiding or escaping (e.g. withdrawing from, quitting, procrastinating, or staying away from)?

**FUSION:** (include examples of specific thoughts, as well as of processes such as worrying, etc.)

**PAST & FUTURE:** (rumination, worrying, fantasizing, blaming, predicting the worst, reliving old hurts, idealizing the past or the future, flashbacks, ‘if only ...’, why did it happen? etc.)

**SELF-DESCRIPTION:** (self-judgments, self-limiting ideas about ‘who I am’ or ‘what I can and can’t do’)

**REASONS:** (reasons the client gives for why she can’t, won’t or shouldn’t change, or why his life can’t be improved)

**RULES:** (about how myself, others, life should be: look for key words such as: ‘should’, ‘have to’, ‘must’, ‘ought’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’, ‘always’, ‘never’, ‘can’t because’, ‘won’t until’, ‘shouldn’t unless’ etc)

**JUDGMENTS:** (mostly these will be negative, but sometimes positive; may be about anyone or anything: other people, oneself, one’s job, one’s body, one’s thoughts and feelings, the past, the future, or even life itself)

**OTHER:** (any other unhelpful cognitions: beliefs, ideas, attitudes, assumptions, etc. Include anything the client says that upsets, annoys, confuses or scares you, or makes you feel stuck.)

**EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE:** (Private experiences the client is trying to avoid, get rid of, or is unwilling to have)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thoughts/Images/Memories</th>
<th>Feelings/Sensations/Urges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Clinical Tools

Case Conceptualization Form from Getting Unstuck in ACT, by Russ Harris

VALUES & COMMITTED ACTION

IMPORTANT LIFE DOMAINS: (What domains of life seem most important to this client - e.g. work, study, health, parenting, intimate relationship, friends, family, spirituality, community, environment?)

VALUES: (What values seem important within those domains?)

GOALS & ACTIONS: (What values-congruent goals and activities does the client: a) already have; and b) want to pursue?)

NEED FOR SKILLS-TRAINING: (What important skills does the client lack or fail to use e.g. problem solving, goal setting, self-soothing, assertiveness, communication, conflict resolution, time management, relaxation, empathy?)

NEED FOR TRAINING ATTENTION SKILLS: Does the client have the ability for “task-focused attention”: to maintain, shift, broaden, or narrow the focus of attention as required for the task at hand?

RESOURCES: (What strengths, skills and personal resources does the client already have, that could be utilized? What external resources could potentially be accessed?)

MY PERSONAL BARRIERS: (What difficult thoughts and feelings show up for me?)

BRAINSTORM: What questions, exercises, worksheets, metaphors, tools, techniques and strategies can I use in the next session? What sort of skills-training may be required? Is practical problem-solving required for external barriers?)
### Functional Analysis Form from Getting Unstuck in ACT by Russ Harris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Behavior (what you do)</th>
<th>Payoffs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(situation, thoughts, and feelings that immediately precede the behavior)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(immediate outcomes of the behavior that keep it going)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 common payoffs to consider:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>avoid/escape an unpleasant situation/event</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>avoid/escape unpleasant thoughts/feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>feel good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gain attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>get my needs met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>feel like I am ‘problem solving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>feel like I am ‘making sense’ of things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: ACT Resources for Children and Adolescents

1. Thriving Adolescent (0-18)
- Video on DNA approach (Discoverer, Noticer, Advisor) for ages 12-18: http://thrivingadolescent.com/adolescent-resources/new-ideas-for-you/video-ideas/
- Values cards for working with ages 12-18: http://thrivingadolescent.com/adolescent-resources/other-downloads/

2. Smiling Mind Research Project (Primary School – High School)
- Anchor your mind with movement [2:00]: https://youtu.be/buPuB4Sa0zU
- Sea creatures and noticing emotions [2:28]: https://youtu.be/8NB3ihqPQGw
- Playlist – Back to School Meditations: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp3vpYbUmIqdvcm0iwswX__VXE7ldTGvp
- Smiling mind helps with focus and bullying [0:52]: https://youtu.be/L6URx67-zgY


Changes Since Last Edition

- Changed “session” to “module” to enhance flexibility of use