

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) uses acceptance and mindfulness practices to achieve a more values-based pattern of living and to increase the capacity for “psychological flexibility”. This type of therapy trains clients to respond to “unhelpful” thoughts in flexible ways and as a result, this may reduce the negative impact these thoughts have on behavior.

ACT targets six core skills to improve one’s wellbeing and sense of meaning in life.

1. **Acceptance** is the practice of being open to all aspects of one’s experience, including painful thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. An openness to unpleasant thoughts or feelings at times is key to live the life one truly wants to live.
2. **Cognitive Defusion** is creating distance from a person’s intruding thoughts and recognizing them as separate from the person. For example, if one believes “I could never run a marathon”, they are likely to engage in avoidance-behaviors. However, if one can notice this simply as a thought and nothing more, then they can make a better choice in response.
3. **Contact with the Present Moment** is like the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness focuses on awareness of thoughts and feelings while being present in the moment.
4. **Self-As-Context** is the ongoing and stable observer perspective that experiences the world from a particular point-of-view. It is the “I” or “me” that remains as thoughts or feelings stay a while, and then pass.
5. **Values** are the personal qualities an individual wants to express in their actions such as kindness or honesty. These values are very personal to the individual and they reinforce patterns of behavior.
6. **Committed Action** is behaving in a way that is consistent with one’s personally chosen values, even when doing so might be hard at times.

The purpose of ACT is not to get rid of undesirable thoughts and feelings, but rather reducing the amount to which these experiences impact one’s life and behaviors.

For more information on ACT click here: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2018.1446911>