

ACT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Experiential Introduction to Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

Presented by Martin Wilks

Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 April 2020

Times: 10.00am to 5.00pm (Registration from 9.30am)

Venue: Quay Place Heritage & Wellbeing Centre, St Mary's Church, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 1BZ

ACT balances mindfulness and acceptance processes with commitment and behaviour change in the service of living a more vital life. ACT is both a form of therapy and an approach to living well, with evidence showing that it is useful for many forms of psychological and emotional suffering. ACT offers a fresh perspective on psychological health and a set of powerful clinical strategies that support meaningful life changes. In short, ACT teaches clients how to change their relationship with painful aspects of their experience and do what works – to live well, richly, and meaningfully, without first having to overcome sources of emotional and psychological pain.

Who might find this workshop helpful?

This workshop will be helpful to **relative newcomers to ACT** as there are sufficient pedagogical materials to fully introduce the ACT model as well as setting it in context. It will also be very helpful to **clinicians who already use ACT** but who have not yet had the opportunity to - for example - participate in a typical 2 day ACBS pre-conference ACT experiential introduction workshop where participants work through their own issues of stuckness; or psychological inflexibility; in order to "put the ACT model to the test" in a structured and systematic manner. Having done so, both beginners and those with prior experience will be in a better place to facilitate with the confidence, the authenticity, and the humility that comes from having found ACT beneficial when dealing with our own vulnerabilities

Day 1

Meeting each other

The first experiential group exercise: Meeting **willingness** and feeling the flavour of avoidance

Meeting the Model and the Context. (hexa-flex/**psychological flexibility**) Understanding the roots and interconnections with the Buddhist origins of mindfulness AND recognising ACT's place at the forefront of contemporary developments in Contextual Behaviour Science with its empirical underpinning in the relation framing theory (RFT) account of language acquisition.

Introduction to the ACT therapeutic stance:

Confronting the control agenda: When habitual attempts to control thoughts and feelings is unworkable, how do you ease a client (or yourself) out of the 'quicksand'? Demonstration followed by live practice. The use timing and function of **metaphor**.

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Establishing the “Pain/Values” connection

Identifying your personal “Bold Move” – a simple, achievable, behavioural step in the direction of what matters to you; a step to be taken before start of Day 2. Demonstration followed by live practice.

Acceptance/Willingness as workable alternative to unworkability of avoidance agenda:

Embodied experiences:

Learning to accommodate challenging private experiences, letting come, letting be, letting go, useful metaphors. Guided visualisation – personal practice in anticipation of bold move

Cognitive experiences / Minding – Cognitive Defusion

The trappings of language: Learn a spectrum of methods for loosening the grip of thought and language. Holding lightly those ideas that habitually push you or your client towards unworkable behaviour. 'I'm not good enough, therefore I...'

Guided visualisation - Personal practice in anticipation of bold move. Making commitment to the valued direction to be served by the bold move

Day 2

Debrief of the Bold move – techniques employed, lessons learned

Present moment: Examples of eyes-closed meditations and one on one interventions that bring a client out of her mind and into the present. The mindful therapist. Contrasting ACT's articulation of mindfulness with, eg MBSR. Mindfulness of the 'urge to fix it". Willingness to share in clients' confusion and stuckness. Self disclosure as modelling to be with the way things are.

Self-as-Context, SAC Psychological flexibility and self-concept issues: How to develop and foster a flexible sense of self. How to speak about the ineffable. Variety of group experiential exercises designed to 'point out' a tangible sense of observer self and thus give personal authority to your efforts to point this out to your clients.

Values. Finding your compass points: How to assess and articulate values that inspire new behaviour. How to overcome and respond to the pitfalls in values clarification. Use of common ACT values assessment tools: Values sort cards, Bulls eye, VLQ. Facilitating each other's precise articulation of a Values Mission statement that best addresses the issues that you have been working upon

Committed Actions Behaviour change: Do your action tendencies match your values? What does your mind have to say about the new path before you? Are you committed to your values? Bringing behaviour change to what you learnt in day one, you will coach and be coached to walk a new path. Establishing a system of immediate, short, medium and long- term values-oriented goals.

The Passengers on the bus – an organisational metaphor that makes space for all the hexa-flex processes – depending upon time available we will do a group enactment of a volunteers' bus driving challenge.

The majority of the learning will be experiential in the sense that will ask you to integrate what you learn through application in role-plays, real-plays or group exercises.

About the presenter

Martin became an internationally peer-reviewed ACT trainer in 2014, having developed and taught the experiential ACT introduction course for London based “Mindfulness training UK” since 2007. His membership of the BABCP ACT SIG dates back to 2008 - he has been Chair of the SIG for the last 4-5 years.

Martin has been a mindfulness teacher since the late 80's; it was his interest in mindfulness that bridged the gap between his humanistic person-centred training and behavioural change science as ACT began to emerge in the UK in the early 2000's. As an independent practitioner, 1994, he set up counselling services in HMP Brixton that

incorporated 'the mind/body workout group' for all the many people on the waiting list. The services progressively embraced the ACT model until he left in 2011.

He is now living in Suffolk where he is director of Flexible Psychological Solutions, FPS and co-director of "Being well in Suffolk" - BWIS, a community interest company. Here he has taught 8-week mindfulness courses since 2005 and throughout each year facilitates a variety of monthly drop-in practice groups, day and residential mindfulness retreats. He continues to teach regular two-day ACT experientials in London, and elsewhere with a couple of recent trips to teach ACT in south-east Asia.

Registration and General Information

BABCP Member fee: £120

Non-Member fee: £150

Lunch and refreshments will be provided

A CPD certificate for 12 hours will be issued.

For any event or booking queries please contact BABCP head office on 0330 320 0851 or email workshops@babcp.com

For venue enquiries please see website - <https://quayplace.co.uk/contact-us/>