

2017 ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

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11:00 am-12:00 pm

2A: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): An Introduction

Jessica DeBoom, MA, NCC, LMHC

Capstone Behavioral Healthcare / Prairie Wellness

*PowerPoint Slides available at <https://www.trainingresources.org/> *

Summary

- ACT is a 3rd wave behavior therapy that been thoroughly researched and been shown to be effective with many diagnoses and life challenges.
- ACT is based on a behavioral theory of language and cognition called Relational Frame Theory (RFT).
- The ACT approach is different in some important ways from other therapies, namely the focus is not on symptom reduction.
- The goal of ACT is Psychological Flexibility – to create a rich, full, meaningful life while accepting the pain that inevitably goes with it.
- ACT does this through teaching skills for handling painful thoughts and feelings effectively so that they have less impact and influence on behavior AND by helping people clarify what's truly important and meaningful to them so they can use that knowledge to guide, inspire, and motivate them to set goals and take action that enriches their life.
- The 6 core processes underlying Psychological Flexibility are: Acceptance/Willingness, (Cognitive) Defusion, Contact with the Present Moment, Self-as-context, Values, and Committed Action
- There are many ACT techniques, but nearly any technique can be ACT consistent if increases one of the core processes (and thereby overall psychological flexibility).

Resources

- ACBS (Association of Contextual Behavioral Science) www.contextualscience.org
 - Much is accessible to visitors, you must join the organization for full access
- A wide variety of books on ACT exist, both self help/workbooks and clinician texts
 - Russ Harris
 - *The Happiness Trap*, *The Reality Slap* (self-help)
 - *ACT Made Simple* (for clinicians)
 - <http://www.thehappinesstrap.com/> - free resources, some intro chapters to his books
- TEDx talks – Steven Hayes (2)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnSHpBRLJrQ>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o79_gmO5ppg

Clinician Training

- ACBS – ACT Training Page https://contextualscience.org/act_training
- ACBS World Conference 16 Montreal, Quebec, Canada July 24-29, 2018 (pre-conference workshops July 24 & 25)
- ACBS Chicago Chapter
- Praxis (in person and online) <https://www.praxiscet.com/>
- PESI (Jan 9-10, 2018, DJ Moran in Des Moines)
- Online trainings
 - Russ Harris <https://imlearningact.com/>
 - Kevin Polk, The ACT Matrix <http://www.drkevinpolk.com/>
- Iowa professional organization conferences (IPA has had some in recent past, had Kirk Strohsal in Iowa a few years ago)

Jessica DeBoom

Prairie Wellness, 3209 Ingersoll Ave Ste 100 Des Moines, IA 50312

jessica@prairiewellness.com

Ph: 515-318-7381