Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) in Mental Health Practice: A 5-Day Professional Training Retreat

Target Audience:
All levels of mental health professionals, including graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, are invited to attend. This is a beginner level course- familiarity with ACT is not required.

Course Objectives:

1. Define the three pillars of ACT that guides its practice;
2. Define each of the six ACT processes within the ACT model of human suffering;
3. Define each of the six ACT intervention processes (i.e., the hexaflex model);
4. Link each of the six elements of the ACT model of human suffering with six central treatment targets of ACT in practice;
5. Describe and conceptualize common mental health concerns (e.g., anxiety, depression) within an ACT framework
6. Describe the ACT therapeutic stance;
7. Describe how the Forsyth & Forsyth sphre-a-flex model may be useful in guiding ACT work
8. Identify exemplars of excessive struggle and avoidance
9. Identify exercises used to undermine control and struggle with psychological and emotional content within an ACT intervention context
10. Apply creative hopelessness exercises and values clarification exercises in dyads
11. Define values from an ACT point of view, discriminate values from goals, and identify values clarification exercises
12. Define barriers from an ACT point of view and further link barriers with ACT suffering processes
13. Identify exercises to clarify barriers to valued action
14. Identify the ACT functional approach to working with barriers – altering function vs. form to promote psychological flexibility
15. Define mindfulness and it’s role in ACT work
16. Define self-as-context and the exercises to cultivate an observer perspective with barriers to valued action
17. Apply mindfulness, self-as-context, and defusion exercises
18. Define psychological acceptance and it’s relation to mindfulness and self-compassion processes
19. Describe exercises to foster self-compassion and acceptance
20. Clarify how exposure is done within ACT vs. traditional CBT
21. Identify the role of values in ACT-based exposure work
22. Identify ACT processes in an ACT exposure session
23. Define SMART goals in an ACT context and describe how to identify barriers in the context of SMART goals
24. Identify common therapist traps when using ACT and strategies to address them
25. Describe ways to further develop ACT clinical competencies
### Course Agenda:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Content (Topics)</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State the timeframes for each session</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide an outline of the content of each session/objective</strong></td>
<td>List all course behavioral objectives under the timeframe they will be addressed.</td>
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| Day One – Session 1 9am – noon | • ACT Model of Human Suffering  
• ACT Intervention Model  
• ACT Case Conceptualization                                                                                                               | 1-7                                                                                                                                               |
| **LUNCH BREAK 12–2:30pm**        |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Session 2 2:30-5pm                | • Creative Hopelessness Work  
• Weakening the struggle and control agenda                                                                                                     | 8-10                                                                                                                                            |
| Day Two – Session 1 9am – noon   | • Values work in an ACT context  
• Values vs. goals  
• Clarifying values  
Values clarification exercises                                                                                                            | 11                                                                                                                                               |
| **LUNCH BREAK 12–2:30pm**        |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Session 2 2:30-5pm                | • Identifying barriers to valued action  
• Internal vs. external barriers  
Barrier clarification exercises                                                                                                               | 12-13                                                                                                                                           |
| Day Three – Session 1 9am – noon | • Nurturing a new relationship with barriers to valued action  
• Mindfulness processes in ACT  
• Self-as-Context process in ACT  
• Defusion process  
Exercises to promote mindfulness, self-as-context, and defusion                                                                            | 14-17                                                                                                                                           |
| Day Four – Session 1 9am – noon  | • The role of self-compassion in ACT  
• Acceptance defined  
• How to cultivate self-compassion and acceptance  
• ACT-based exposure work  
• How to do ACT-based exposure  
Identifying ACT processes in an ACT exposure session                                                                                   | 18-19                                                                                                                                           |
| **LUNCH BREAK 12–2:30pm**        |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Session 2 | 2:30-5pm | • Doing exposure work within an ACT context  
• Differences between ACT-based exposure and traditional CBT exposure  
• Integrating ACT processes in exposure work  
Compassionate exposure – process and general steps | 20-22 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Day Five – Session 1 | 9am – 12:00pm | • Moving with barriers in the service of value guided action  
• SMART goals  
• Good vs. poorly stated goals  
• Clarifying value-guided goals  
• Anticipating barriers  
• Common therapist errors & ways to catch them  
Steps to further develop ACT clinical competencies | 23-25 |
| END OF WORKSHOP | | | |