

ACT Workbook

A seven-chapter client workbook with pre- and re-assessment

Research-informed use. ACT concepts are presented as processes in a psychological-flexibility model. Values are directions for action rather than achievements; defusion changes the relationship to thoughts rather than proving them false.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

A structured client workbook that walks through the ACT processes one chapter at a time, each with teaching, reflection prompts and exercises. It begins with a pre-assessment snapshot and ends with a re-assessment so progress can be compared, and adds a cognitive distortions reference and a set of ACT metaphors along the way.

HOW TO USE IT

Designed to be worked in order between sessions, one chapter at a time. The two assessments bookend the work.

AT A GLANCE

AUDIENCE	Client Resource
FORMAT	Workbook
FAMILY	ACT · values · mindfulness

71

PAGES

26

TEACHING PAGES

20

REFERENCE PAGES

19

WORKSHEETS

CONTENTS

1	Table of Contents	p. 2
2	Introduction to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy	p. 3
3	Pre-Assessment	p. 5
4	Chapter 1: Exploring Acceptance	p. 8
5	Chapter 2: Cognitive Defusion	p. 15
6	Cognitive Distortions Reference	p. 21
7	Chapter 3: Being Present	p. 27
8	Chapter 4: Discovering Self as Context	p. 36
9	ACT Metaphors	p. 41
10	Chapter 5: Uncovering Your Values	p. 48
11	Chapter 6: Committed Action	p. 55
12	Chapter 7: Putting It All Together	p. 63
13	Conclusion	p. 68
14	Re-Assessment	p. 70

Page numbers refer to this edition.

Table of Content

ACT Workbook · reference list

QUICK-REFERENCE LIBRARY

- Table of Content Introduction: Understanding Acceptance
- Chapter 7: Putting it All Together

- & Commitment Therapy Chapter 1: Exploring Acceptance
Chapter 2: Cognitive Defusion Chapter 3: Being Present
- Conclusion

- Chapter 4: Discovering Self as Context Chapter 5: Uncovering
Your Values Chapter 6: Committed Action

An Introduction To

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- An Introduction To ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY
- exercises and practical activities to help you understand and integrate this principle into your life. There will be
- INTRODUCTION Welcome to Embrace Your Journey, your companion for exploring and experiencing the transformative power of
- plenty of space for you to jot down your thoughts, feelings,
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Whether you're new to this therapeutic approach or you've dipped
- observations, and insights. Remember, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses in this workbook. It's your personal space to explore, reflect, and
- your toes into the waters of ACT, this workbook is designed to support you on your journey toward psychological
- grow. The goal isn't to finish the workbook as quickly as possible but to deeply engage with each principle and
- flexibility and living a more value-driven life. HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK This workbook is designed to be both flexible and
- exercise. Take your time, be honest with yourself, and
- structured. You can choose to work through it at your own pace, but we recommend following the order of chapters
- remember: this is your journey. Let's embark on this journey together toward a fuller,
- as each one builds upon the last. Each chapter will introduce a core ACT principle, explain how it works, and why it matters. Then, it offers reflective
- richer, and more meaningful life.

Understanding

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ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is a unique form of cognitive behavioral therapy that utilizes mindfulness, acceptance, and behavior change strategies to foster mental wellness. Unlike traditional therapy models that focus primarily on symptom reduction, ACT empowers you to accept the reality of your negative emotions while committing to actions that align with your personal values.

This therapy is built on the idea that fighting against our internal experiences, such as feelings, thoughts, and memories, often leads to an increase in psychological suffering. Instead, ACT encourages you to embrace these experiences without judgment and use them as a stepping stone to personal growth. **THE SIX CORE ACT PRINCIPLES** **ACCEPTANCE** Learning to accept your thoughts and feelings rather than avoiding or struggling against them.

COGNITIVE DEFUSION Learning to observe your thoughts without getting entangled in them or taking them too literally. **BEING PRESENT** Fostering mindfulness and awareness of the present moment, without judgment.

What stands out?

How might this inform one next step?

1. Keep in view

SELF AS CONTEXT Developing a sense of self that is separate from your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

2. Keep in view

VALUES Identifying what is truly meaningful and important in your life.

3. Keep in view

COMMITTED ACTION Making behavior changes that are aligned with your identified values.

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I struggle to stay focused on the present moment and often find my mind wandering. I believe that my thoughts, feelings, and experiences define who I am as a person.

How might this inform one next step?

3. Keep in view

I often find myself ruminating on past events or worrying about the future.

ACT Workbook · worksheet

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Pre-Assessment

ACT Workbook · worksheet

Pre-Assessment I feel like my life is being controlled by my worries, fears, or anxieties. I have a hard time accepting myself as I am, without judgment or criticism. I feel disconnected from my emotions or body sensations—I'm not always sure how I'm feeling. I don't feel like I'm living my life in alignment with my true self or deepest values. I have a hard time tolerating uncomfortable feelings or situations, and I often feel the urge to escape from them. This reflection will serve as your foundation as we delve into the principles and practices of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. We will revisit this pre-assessment later on to help you track your growth and progress through this journey. Remember, the goal is not to achieve a perfect score but to enhance your psychological flexibility and empower you to live a life that aligns with your core values. Approach this process with patience, openness, and self-compassion.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

When faced with a challenging decision, I tend to act impulsively rather than pausing to consider my values.

When I'm feeling emotional pain, I often try to distract myself or "numb" the pain in some way.

Once you've completed this self-assessment, spend some time reflecting on your responses. Are there patterns or recurring themes?

Are there specific areas where you'd like to see change?

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What stands out?

Chapter 1:

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- Chapter 1:
- suffering. Instead, it's about acknowledging the reality of
- EXPLORING ACCEPTANCE INTRODUCTION TO ACCEPTANCE Acceptance, in the context of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is the process of making room
- our internal experiences so that they don't control our lives. When we spend our energy trying to avoid or suppress
- for difficult feelings, thoughts, and sensations, and allowing them to be present without trying to control,
- uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, we often end up increasing our suffering and losing touch with what truly
- avoid, or get rid of them. It involves opening up and making space for negative experiences rather than
- matters to us. Research has shown that attempts to avoid or control internal experiences can often lead to increased distress
- struggling with them or letting them dictate our actions. At this point, you might wonder, "Why would I want to
- and can even contribute to conditions such as anxiety and depression. On the other hand, practicing acceptance can
- accept and make space for something that's painful?"
- help us to reduce the struggle with these experiences, increase our psychological flexibility, and free up our
- That's a valid question, and it brings us to the next section. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEPTANCE Acceptance is not about giving up or resigning ourselves to
- resources to focus on actions that align with our values.

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Reflection:

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Reflecting on past experiences where acceptance was challenging can be a helpful way to gain insights into your patterns of avoidance or struggle, and how they might have impacted your life. Reflective Exercise 1.2: Think about a recent situation where you found it hard to accept your feelings, thoughts, or sensations. Describe the situation and your response to it below. Consider what made acceptance difficult and how your response might have affected the situation.

Reflection:

WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH ACCEPTANCE?

Situation:

Your Response:

Why was Acceptance Difficult?

How did Your Response Affect the Situation?

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

PRACTICING ACCEPTANCE IN DAILY LIFE Now that we have explored the concept of acceptance and reflected on your personal challenges with it, let's move on to practicing acceptance in your daily life. For the following exercise, you will choose a situation where you typically struggle with acceptance. Perhaps it's a feeling of anxiety when you're about to give a presentation, or a rush of sadness when you think about a lost loved one. The aim is not to eliminate these feelings, but to create space for them, allow them to be there without judgment, and not let them control your actions. Next time you're in this situation, take a moment to acknowledge the difficult feelings or thoughts. You can say to yourself, "I'm noticing I'm having the thought that..." or "I'm feeling..." Make space for these feelings and thoughts without trying to control or avoid them. Breathe into and around them.

Exercise:

Identify a situation where you struggle with acceptance:

Reflect on the experience: What did you notice?

How did it feel to allow these feelings and thoughts to be there?

What happened when you didn't try to avoid or control them?

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- | | |
|--|------------------|
| ● Exercise: PRACTICING ACCEPTANCE IN DAILY LIFE Now that we have explored the concept of acceptance and reflected on your personal | ● next time you |
| ● challenges with it, let's move on to practicing acceptance in your daily life. | ● encounter this |
| ● Identify a | ● situation: |
| ● situation where | ● What does |
| ● you struggle with | ● making space |
| ● acceptance: | ● for these |
| ● What can you | ● emotions look |
| ● say to yourself | ● like for you? |

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

PRACTICING ACCEPTANCE IN DAILY LIFE Remember, practicing acceptance can be difficult, especially in the beginning. Be patient with yourself. It's not about doing it perfectly, but about exploring a different way of handling your internal experiences. As you continue this practice, acceptance will become a more natural part of your life, allowing you to live in a way that is more aligned with your values.

Exercise:

What did you notice?

How did it feel to allow these feelings and thoughts to be there?

What happened when you didn't try to avoid or control them?

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What stands out?

Chapter 2:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

COGNITIVE DEFUSION You may have noticed that thoughts come and go, much like cars on a road or leaves floating down a river. This exercise is a small step towards understanding that you are not your thoughts – a concept central to cognitive defusion.

Chapter 2:

RECOGNIZING YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS
RECOGNIZING YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS Welcome to Chapter 2, where we'll delve into another crucial component of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Cognitive Defusion. But before we dive into what cognitive defusion is, let's take a moment to talk about our thoughts. We all have thousands of thoughts each day. Some thoughts are practical, like "I need to buy milk," while others might be more evaluative, like "I did a good job in that meeting." We also have thoughts that can be quite negative and self-defeating, like "I'll never be good enough." In ACT, we don't categorize thoughts as good or bad. Instead, we focus on how we relate to our thoughts. Do we get caught up in them, seeing them as literal truths?

Or do we recognize them as mental events that may or may not be accurate?

LET'S TRY A SMALL EXERCISE For the next minute, sit quietly and observe your thoughts. What are you thinking?

How do these thoughts make you feel?

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For instance, imagine having the thought, "I'm going to fail." In a state of cognitive fusion, you might treat this thought as a fact, causing you to feel anxious and maybe even stop trying. However, with cognitive defusion, you might say, "Ah, there's that 'I'm going to fail' story again." You can see the thought as just that—a thought—not a prophecy.

Chapter 2:

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- Chapter 2: TECHNIQUES FOR COGNITIVE DEFUSION
Choose a recurring thought that you tend to get fused with.
Apply each of the three cognitive
- Thanking
- defusion techniques to this thought and jot down any observations about how the experience
- Your Mind:
- changes.
- Visualizing: As you continue through this workbook and in your daily life, start noticing when you're
- Recurring
- becoming fused with your thoughts. Practice these cognitive defusion techniques and observe how your relationship with your thoughts changes. This is all part of the journey towards greater
- Thought:
- psychological flexibility.
- Labeling:

Reflection:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

INSTANCES OF BEING FUSED WITH YOUR THOUGHTS Reflecting on times when you've been fused with your thoughts is a valuable step towards understanding your thought patterns and the impact they have on your life. Reflective Exercise 2.1: Think about a recent time when you felt stuck or overwhelmed by a particular thought. Write it down along with how it influenced your emotions and actions. This exercise can give you insight into the power of your thoughts and how cognitive defusion can shift your emotional and behavioral responses, providing you with more flexibility and choice in how you react.

Reflection:

The Thought:

Emotional Response:

Behavioral Response:

Reflecting on this, how might your emotional and behavioral responses have been different if you had applied cognitive defusion techniques to this thought?

Potential Emotional Response with Cognitive Defusion:

Potential Behavioral Response with Cognitive Defusion:

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- Exercise: IMPLEMENTING COGNITIVE DEFUSION TECHNIQUES
- techniques: Thank your mind: "Thanks, mind, for this interesting perspective." Visualize: Imagine the thought as an object, letting it exist without trying to push it away or hold onto it.
- Now that you have learned about cognitive defusion techniques, let's put them into practice. The goal of this exercise is to help you become more comfortable with these techniques so
- Reflect on the
- that they become a part of your natural response to challenging thoughts.
- experience: Remember, cognitive defusion is not about getting rid of your thoughts or changing them; it's
- Choose a challenging situation in your day-today life where you tend to experience repetitive
- about changing your relationship with your thoughts. It takes time and practice to get comfortable with this approach, but over time, it can have a profound impact on your psychological flexibility
- or negative thoughts. Label the thought: "I'm having the thought that..."
- and your overall quality of life. Be patient and kind with yourself on this journey!
- Anticipate the thoughts you're likely to have in this situation and apply
- the cognitive defusion

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For instance, if you're preparing a meal for the first time and it doesn't turn out well, overgeneralization might lead you to think, "I'm terrible at cooking, I can't make anything right," even though it's just one attempt. This distorted thinking ignores the possibility that you could improve with practice or that a single mistake doesn't define your overall ability.

How might this inform one next step?

[illegible]

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"I'll get fired." Conversely, if you achieve a big success, like landing a key client, and you're prone to minimization, you might think, "It's not a big deal, anyone could have done it." This thinking pattern can cause undue stress and anxiety in the case of catastrophizing or prevent you from acknowledging and celebrating your achievements in the case of minimization.

[illegible][illegible]

Working Through Your COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

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Emotional Reasoning Emotional reasoning is a cognitive distortion where individuals believe that what they feel must be true, regardless of the evidence. They assume their emotional reactions define reality. For example, if you're feeling nervous about a presentation at work, you might think, "I feel nervous, so I must be bad at public speaking." This is emotional reasoning, and it's a distortion because feeling nervous doesn't necessarily mean you're bad at public speaking.

It could be a normal response to the situation or a sign that you care about doing well, not a reflection of your skills or competence. **Should Statements** "Should" statements are a type of cognitive distortion where individuals impose rigid expectations on themselves or others, often leading to disappointment, frustration, or guilt. For example, a person may often think, "I should always be productive," or "I should never make mistakes." These thoughts can create unnecessary pressure and stress, because they set an unattainable standard.

It's human to have unproductive days or to make mistakes sometimes. Another example is directing "should" statements towards others: "My partner should always know how I'm feeling." This is unrealistic and can lead to disappointment, as no one can read minds or perfectly understand someone else's feelings all the time.

What stands out?

How might this inform one next step?

Working Through Your

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COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS Labeling and Mislabeling: Labeling and Mislabeling are cognitive distortions where individuals assign fixed, global labels to themselves or others based on specific behaviors or incidents, often leading to an oversimplified and inaccurate perception. For example, if you do poorly on a test, you might label yourself as a "failure" or "stupid". This kind of labeling overlooks the complexity of human abilities and reduces you to a single characteristic based on a single event. Mislabeling involves describing an event with language that is emotionally loaded and not factually accurate.

For instance, if someone turns down your invitation to hang out, you might say they "rejected" you, even though they might simply have been busy. This could lead to feelings of rejection that are not proportional to the situation.

Personalization Personalization is a cognitive distortion where individuals take things personally or assume excessive responsibility for events that may not be directly related to them.

What stands out?

How might this inform one next step?

1. Keep in view
For example, if someone is whispering and laughing nearby, you might assume they're talking about you and don't like you.

2. Keep in view
This kind of thinking ignores the possibility that their conversation might have nothing to do with you.

3. Keep in view
Personalization can lead to unnecessary self-blame and anxiety.

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I deserve that promotion more than they do." This thinking ignores other factors and can lead to feelings of resentment and frustration.

How might this inform one next step?

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Mental Filter The mental filter is a cognitive distortion where individuals magnify negative aspects of a situation while ignoring positive aspects. For example, if you receive mostly positive feedback with one constructive criticism, the mental filter leads you to focus solely on the criticism and overlook the positive feedback.

How might this inform one next step?

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What stands out?

Chapter 3:

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- Chapter 3:
 - you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them as good or bad. It's about experiencing the world
- BEING PRESENT
 - directly, engaging fully with your present experience, rather than being caught up in your thoughts about the past, the future, or
- THE CONCEPT
 - judgments about what is happening. Have you ever been so caught up in your thoughts or worries that you've missed out on
- OF MINDFULNESS Welcome to Chapter 3! So far, we've explored acceptance and cognitive defusion as ways to change how we relate to our
 - what's happening around you? Maybe you were worrying about a presentation while spending time with a loved one, or your mind
- internal experiences. Now, let's turn our focus to another key concept in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): mindfulness, or
 - was replaying a past conversation while you were trying to focus on a task. That's where
- the practice of being fully present. Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention to the present. When you're mindful,
 - mindfulness can help.

Chapter 3:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- Chapter 3: THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN ACT THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN ACT In ACT, mindfulness is used to help us become more
- Without mindfulness, you might get caught up in this thought, leading to feelings of anxiety and perhaps even
- psychologically flexible. Remember when we talked about
- influencing your performance. However, with mindfulness, you can notice this thought, see it for what it is - just a
- 'being present' as one of the six core principles of ACT?
- thought - and choose not to let it dictate your actions. Mindfulness takes practice, but with time, it can become a
- That's essentially what mindfulness is all about! By practicing mindfulness, we can become more aware of
- natural part of your life. In the following sections, we will explore some practical mindfulness exercises that you can
- our thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the present moment, without getting swept away by them. This
- incorporate into your daily life. Remember, being present and mindful is not about achieving a state of constant relaxation or having only
- awareness gives us a choice in how we respond to our internal experiences, rather than automatically reacting to
- positive experiences. It's about opening up to the full range of your experiences - good, bad, and neutral - and
- them. For example, let's say you're about to give a presentation and you notice the thought, "I'm going to mess this up."
- engaging with them in a conscious and flexible way.

Reflection:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

OBSERVING YOUR MINDFULNESS MOMENTS Before we start practicing mindfulness, let's take a moment to reflect on instances in your life where you've already experienced being fully present. Reflective Exercise 3.1: Consider a moment when you felt deeply connected with the present moment. This could be anything from being immersed in a good book, to watching a beautiful sunset, to simply enjoying a cup of coffee. Write down your experience, focusing on the details of what you were doing, thinking, and feeling. By recognizing these naturally mindful moments, you're already taking the first step towards increasing your everyday mindfulness.

Reflection:	Your Mindful Moment:
What You Were Doing:	What You Were Thinking:
What You Were Feeling:	Why do you think this was a mindful moment for you?

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- Exercise: DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICES Now that we've reflected on your natural moments of mindfulness, let's incorporate some
 - simple mindfulness practices into your daily routine. Remember, mindfulness is not about emptying your mind of thoughts; it's about observing them without judgment and with full
 - attention to the present moment. Mindful Breathing: Spend 510 minutes each day focusing on your breath. Notice how it
 - feels as it enters and exits your body. When your mind wanders (and it will!), gently bring it
 - back to your breath. Mindful Eating: During one meal or snack each day, eat
 - slowly and focus on the experience. Notice the taste,
 - texture, and smell of
 - the food. Mindful Observation: Choose an object in your environment and
 - focus on it for a few minutes. Notice its color, shape, texture, and any other details. If your mind
 - wanders, gently bring it back
 - to the object. Make a note of your observations and insights after each practice. Over time, you'll likely
 - notice an increase in your ability to stay present, and in your overall sense of well-being. Remember, mindfulness is a skill that takes practice, so be patient with yourself. As you
 - continue to engage in these practices, you'll find it becomes easier to connect with the present
 - moment, even in the midst of challenging circumstances.

Mindfulness Technique

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- Mindfulness Technique
- Things you can feel
- GROUNDING 5 SENSES
- Things you can smell
- Things you can see
- Thing you can see taste
- Things you can hear

Mindfulness Technique

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MINDFULNESS SCRIPT This body scan script incorporates the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT emphasizes accepting your experiences as they are and committing to actions that align with your personal values. Throughout this script, you'll be guided to notice your bodily sensations without judgement, and to allow them space instead of trying to change or avoid them.

Settling in: Begin by finding a comfortable and quiet space where you can sit or lie down undisturbed. Allow yourself to settle in, gently closing your eyes if that feels comfortable for you. **Grounding:** Take a moment to connect with the sensation of the surface supporting you. Notice the points of contact between your body and the chair or floor. Simply notice these sensations, without trying to change anything. **Breathing:** Shift your focus to your breath.

Notice the rise and fall of your chest or belly as you breathe in and out. Notice the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Do not attempt to alter your breath; simply be present with it as it is. **Scanning the body:** Now, we will begin to scan the body. Start from the top of your head, moving down slowly to your feet. Notice any sensations that are present. You might notice warmth, coolness, tension, relaxation, or perhaps you don't notice anything at all.

All experiences are valid, and the goal is not to feel a certain way but simply to observe what is there. **Accepting what is:** As you move through your body, you may come across sensations that are uncomfortable or painful. Instead of trying to push these sensations away, allow them space.

Recognize that they are there and that it is okay for them to be there. This is part of the practice of acceptance, acknowledging things as they are without trying to change them. **Staying present:** If your mind wanders away, gently bring it back to the body scan. It is perfectly normal for the mind to wander. Each time it happens, gently and without judgment, guide your attention back to the sensation in your body.

Moving through the body: Continue moving through your body in this way, noticing, accepting and being with what is. You might move from your head to your neck, your shoulders, down through your arms and hands, your chest and back, your stomach, your hips, your legs, and finally, your feet. **Reflecting on your values:** As you finish the body scan, take a moment to reflect on how this practice might align with your personal values. Perhaps it aligns with a value of self-care, mindfulness, or inner peace.

Use this moment to reinforce your commitment to these values. **Closing:** To finish, bring your attention back to your breath. Notice how your body feels now, after the body scan.

1. Keep in view
When you're ready, gently open your eyes and take a moment to adjust to your surroundings.

2. Keep in view
Remember, the purpose of this body scan is not to feel any particular way, but to cultivate awareness and acceptance of your experiences as they are.

3. Keep in view
This script is just a guideline, feel free to adjust it to suit your needs and comfort level.

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ACT Workbook · question bank

COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

— REFLECTION:

— TO CHANGE THEM? WAS IT EASY OR CHALLENGING TO DO SO?

— MINDFULNESS SCRIPT

— DISTRACTION AND REFOCUSING: HOW OFTEN DID YOUR MIND WANDER DURING THE EXERCISE? HOW DID YOU

— SENSATIONS: WHAT WERE SOME OF THE SENSATIONS YOU NOTICED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF YOUR BODY? WERE

— HANDLE BRINGING YOUR FOCUS BACK TO YOUR BODY?

— THERE ANY SENSATIONS THAT SURPRISED YOU?

— COMFORT AND DISCOMFORT: DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY UNCOMFORTABLE SENSATIONS? HOW DID YOU

— ACCEPTANCE: HOW DID IT FEEL TO SIMPLY OBSERVE AND ACCEPT YOUR BODILY SENSATIONS WITHOUT TRYING

— RESPOND TO THEM? HOW DID IT FEEL TO ACCEPT AND MAKE SPACE FOR DISCOMFORT?

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ACT Workbook · question bank

COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

— REFLECTION:

— OVER THE COURSE OF THE BODY SCAN?

— MINDFULNESS SCRIPT

— VALUES ALIGNMENT: HOW DOES THE PRACTICE OF BODY SCANNING ALIGN WITH YOUR PERSONAL VALUES?

— EMOTIONAL RESPONSES: DID ANY EMOTIONS ARISE DURING THE EXERCISE? IF SO, WHAT WERE THEY, AND

— HOW DOES IT SUPPORT THE GOALS YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF?

— HOW DID YOU REACT TO THEM?

— LEARNING POINTS: WHAT ARE SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS OR INSIGHTS FROM THIS PRACTICE? HOW CAN THESE

— CHANGE OVER TIME: DID YOU NOTICE ANY CHANGES IN YOUR SENSATIONS OR YOUR RESPONSES TO THEM

— INSIGHTS APPLY TO OTHER AREAS OF YOUR LIFE?

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What stands out?

Chapter 4

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- Chapter 4 DISCOVERING SELF AS CONTEXT
 - and their roles. This idea is different from the usual understanding of self that is tied to our experiences, roles, or personal
- UNDERSTANDING SELF
 - characteristics (like "I'm a parent," "I'm an employee," "I'm a kind person," etc.). Instead, self as context is a viewpoint that remains
- AS CONTEXT As we open Chapter 4, we're going to embark on a journey to a concept that may seem abstract at first but is central to
 - constant amidst the constant flux of our internal and external experiences. It's the part of you that has been there observing
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). This concept is known as "self as context" or "the observing self."
 - and experiencing since you were born and
- Self as context refers to the perspective from which you can observe your own experiences. It's like the stage on which the
 - will continue to be until the end.
- actors (your thoughts, emotions, sensations) play out their scenes. The stage remains constant, unaffected by the changing actors

Chapter 4

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QUICK-REFERENCE LIBRARY

- Chapter 4 DISCOVERING SELF AS CONTEXT
DIFFERENTIATING YOUR 'THINKING SELF' FROM
'OBSERVING SELF' In ACT, we talk about two different senses
of self: the
- thoughts like "What if I mess up?" or "I'm not good enough for
this job." The "observing self" can notice these thoughts
- "thinking self" and the "observing self." The "thinking self" is the
part of us that is always planning,
- and feelings, recognizing them as transient experiences
- judging, evaluating, and narrating our lives. It's the part of us
that gets entangled in stories about who we are, what
- that don't define who you are. Recognizing and connecting with
the observing self can help create a sense of stability and
continuity in the face of
- we should be doing, and how we should feel. The "observing
self," on the other hand, is the part of us
- life's challenges and changes. It can also help you step back
from distressing thoughts and feelings, reducing their
- that can notice all these thoughts, feelings, and sensations. It's
the part of you that is aware of and can observe
- impact on your life.
- everything else that is happening. For example, let's say you're
feeling anxious about a job interview. The "thinking self" might
get caught up in

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Reflect on this metaphor: How does it feel to consider yourself not as the individual pieces (your thoughts, emotions, sensations), but as the board (the observing self)?

How might this inform one next step?

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

The Sky and the Weather Metaphor Another way to explore this concept is through the metaphor of the sky and the weather. Consider for a moment your mind as the sky and your thoughts, emotions, and sensations as the weather. The weather constantly changes—sometimes it's sunny, sometimes it's stormy, and sometimes it's cloudy. But no matter what the weather is like, the sky remains. It's vast and unchanged by the weather happening within it.

Exercise:

EXERCISES TO EXPLORE SELF AS CONTEXT To better understand and experience the concept of self as context, let's try a couple of exercises:

Reflect on this metaphor: How does it resonate with your experiences of thoughts, emotions, and sensations?

How does it feel to see yourself as the sky (the observing self), instead of the weather (your changing experiences)?

ACT Metaphors

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- ACT Metaphors
 - client pulls on the rope (resists or fights against the painful thoughts/feelings), the stronger the monster (pain) gets. The solution is to let go of the rope, which represents
- SELF AS CONTEXT
 - acceptance of the thoughts and feelings rather than battling against them.
- PASSENGERS ON THE BUS: This metaphor illustrates the idea of acceptance and defusion. The client is the bus driver, and their thoughts,
 - feelings, and sensations are the passengers. Sometimes these passengers (negative thoughts or feelings) can be
 - often used to depict the idea of experiential avoidance. When we attempt to push away our thoughts and
- loud and disruptive, and can try to direct where the bus (client) goes. However, the driver (client) is ultimately in
 - feelings (like pushing a beach ball underwater), it takes a lot of effort and eventually the ball pops back up,
- control and can choose to keep driving in the direction of their values, regardless of what the passengers are
 - often with more force. This is to illustrate that avoiding or suppressing thoughts and feelings can lead to more
- doing or saying.
 - distress.
- TUG OF WAR WITH A MONSTER: This metaphor is used to convey the struggle with inner experiences. The more the

ACT Metaphors

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- ACT Metaphors
 - imagines their values as seeds they want to grow in their garden. They must tend to these seeds consistently
- SELF AS CONTEXT
 - (committed action), in order to help them grow.
- THE QUICKSAND: This metaphor is another way of explaining experiential avoidance. Struggling in quicksand can make a person
 - THE CLASSROOM: Students (aka thoughts) could be well-behaved, badlybehaved, or in between. This is when metacognition
- sink faster, similar to how struggling against painful
 - (thinking about thinking) enters the picture. The teacher's job includes assessing those kids and attempting to keep them in line. The classroom comes
- thoughts and feelings can make them feel worse. Instead, the client is encouraged to "lie back" and accept the feelings rather than struggling against them,
 - next. It is simply there, holding the entire class; it is not judging. You are the classroom in your imagination; you
- which would be the equivalent of floating in quicksand.
 - are neither the pupils nor the teacher.
- THE GARDEN: This metaphor is used to illustrate the concept of committed action aligned with values. The client

ACT Metaphors

ACT Workbook · worksheet

ACT Metaphors SELF AS CONTEXT THE RIP TIDE: If you get caught in a riptide and make hasty attempts to swim to shore, you won't go far and you can drown as a result. Instead, if you give up and let it carry you for a while, it will release you and you may swim to shore. Accepting it is the quickest route out even though you don't want to be in that riptide and are certainly not celebrating it. THE DECK OF CARDS: You are dealt a certain hand when playing a card game. Even if you may not like your current hand, playing it as it is now will offer you a better chance of winning than trying to play the hand you wish you had. The likelihood is that the junk mail will continue to arrive, thus the simplest course of action is to identify a piece of mail as junk and then ignore it. Similar to this, you can recognize garbage thoughts for what they are and move on with your life after noticing them.

THE MAILBOX You probably receive junk mail in both your postal and email inboxes. How do you feel when you see these?

In an effort to stop the flow of junk mail, do you chase down each of the senders and yell at them?

How successful would that be if you did it?

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Exercise:

NORA MARKARIAN, LMHC-D, NCC 44 / 71

Reflection:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

Reflecting on times when you've naturally stepped into the role of the observing self can be a powerful way to understand this concept. Let's explore such an instance in your life. Reflective Exercise 4.3: Think about a time when you were able to observe your thoughts, feelings, or sensations without getting caught up in them. It might be a time when you noticed a thought like "I'm not good enough," but instead of believing it or fighting it, you were simply able to see it as a thought. Write down your experience and how it influenced your reaction to the situation. By recognizing these moments, you can begin to see the power of the observing self in action.

Reflection:

WHEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED YOUR SELF AS CONTEXT?

Your Experience:

Thoughts/Feelings/Sensations You Observed:

How Your Observing Self Influenced Your Reaction:

Exercise:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- Exercise: CULTIVATING THE OBSERVING SELF Now, let's try to cultivate our observing self with a simple exercise. Remember, this is not about
- might notice the feeling of your feet on the floor, the temperature of the room, or the sensation of your breath entering
- suppressing or changing your thoughts and feelings, but about noticing them from a distance. Observing Thoughts: Close your eyes
- and leaving your body. Just
- and take a few deep breaths. For a few
- observe these sensations. Observing Feelings: Now, shift your attention to your feelings. Again, just
- minutes, simply observe your thoughts. Don't try to change them, just notice them. If it's helpful, you can imagine your
- observe them. You might notice feelings of
- thoughts as leaves floating by on a
- calm, anxiety, excitement, or boredom. Whatever you're feeling, just notice it
- stream, or clouds passing in the sky. Notice how your thoughts come
- without trying to change it. By practicing this exercise, you can cultivate your ability to connect with your observing self. It's
- and go, just like the
- a skill that takes practice, but over time, you may find it easier to observe your thoughts, feelings, and sensations without getting caught up in them. This can provide you with a sense
- leaves or clouds. Observing Sensations: Finally, shift your attention to your physical sensations. You
- of peace and stability, even in the face of life's challenges.

ACT Workbook · information

What stands out?

ACT Workbook · information

What stands out?

Chapter 5

ACT Workbook · reference list

QUICK-REFERENCE LIBRARY

- Chapter 5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VALUES IN ACT
 - values are not goals. While goals can be achieved or completed, values are directions we continue to move
- THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
 - in throughout our lives. For example, one might have a goal to write a book, stemming from a value of creativity, or a goal to lose
- VALUES IN ACT As we dive into Chapter 5, we're going to explore an aspect of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
 - weight, originating from a value of health. Regardless of whether these goals are achieved, the underlying
- that helps make it so powerful: values. Values in ACT are described as chosen life directions or what matters most to you in life. They represent who
 - values of creativity and health persist. In ACT, connecting with your values is important
- you want to be and what you want to stand for. They guide our actions and give them meaning. Importantly,
 - because it provides a foundation for making lifeenhancing decisions and taking committed action.

Chapter 5:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

Use a recent, manageable example. Fragments are fine; skip any prompt that does not fit.

Chapter 5:

UNCOVERING YOUR VALUES IDENTIFYING YOUR CORE VALUES Identifying your values isn't always a straightforward task. Often, our true values get obscured by societal expectations, pressures, or our own critical thoughts. However, getting clear on your values is a critical step in ACT as it provides you with a compass, guiding you toward a rich, full, and meaningful life. Your values are unique to you and are a reflection of what is most important in your personal and professional life. To help you start thinking about your values, consider these areas: relationships, career, health, personal growth, and leisure. What qualities or ways of being are important to you in these areas?

HOW VALUES INFLUENCE ACTIONS Once you have a clear understanding of your values, you can use them to guide your actions. This is called "committed action" in ACT, which involves taking concrete steps that align with your values. For example, if one of your values is health, a committed action might be incorporating a daily exercise routine. If kindness is a value, a committed action might be performing a random act of kindness each day. These actions may not always be easy, especially when barriers arise, but they are more fulfilling because they're aligned with what truly matters to you. In the next sections, we'll delve deeper into exploring your personal values and identifying committed actions that align with these values. This process is a key aspect of ACT, which can provide a direction and sense of purpose, even in challenging times.

☐ Not yet ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

Reflection:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

For example, in the personal realm, you might value honesty or courage. In the professional realm, you might value achievement or teamwork. Personal Growth Health Spirituality Education Friends Family Leisure Career This exercise should provide you with a broad spectrum of what's important to you across various aspects of your life. It's okay if some areas have more values than others or if some values overlap. This is your unique set of core values.

Reflection:

RECOGNIZING YOUR VALUES Reflecting on your values is a key step towards understanding what truly matters to you and what directions you want your life to take. Let's take some time to delve into this. Reflective Exercise 5.1: Consider the different aspects of your life, what do you value in each of these areas?

What qualities or ways of being are important to you?

Exercise:

EXERCISES TO EXPLORE SELF AS CONTEXT

What really matters to you, deep in your heart? What do you want to do with your time on this planet? What sort of person do you want to be? What personal strengths or qualities do you want to develop?

Make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today. The closer your X is to the middle, the more aligned you feel with your values.



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If kindness is a value, a committed action might be calling a friend to check in on them. Personal Growth Health Spirituality Education

How might this inform one next step?

Exercise:

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- Exercise: ALIGNING YOUR ACTIONS WITH YOUR VALUES
- Keep going until you have at least one action for each of your values. Remember, the purpose of this exercise isn't to create a lengthy to-do list that feels
- Friends
- overwhelming. Instead, it's to help you align your actions with your values, creating a life that
- Family
- feels meaningful and fulfilling. Be sure to be kind to yourself as you embark on this journey.
- Leisure
- Small steps are still steps in the right direction!
- Career

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What stands out?

Chapter 6

ACT Workbook · reference list

QUICK-REFERENCE LIBRARY

- Chapter 6
 - values. It's not just about doing things for the sake of being busy, but rather, it's about doing things
- COMMITTED ACTION
 - that truly matter to you, things that move you closer to the kind of person you want to be and the life
- UNDERSTANDING
 - you want to lead. Committed Action is about behavioral change, and change often requires courage. It can be
- COMMITTED ACTION Welcome to Chapter 6! Now that we've spent time identifying your values, it's time to consider how to
 - challenging to step out of your comfort zone and take actions that, while aligned with your values,
- take effective action guided by those values. This is where the principle of Committed Action comes
 - might also evoke discomfort or fear.
- into play. In ACT, Committed Action refers to actions that are consciously chosen and guided by your core

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Instead, they are ongoing patterns of action that are driven by your values. For example, if one of your values is learning, a goal might be to read one book per month. If one of your values is family, a goal might be to spend quality time with your family without distractions at least once a week.

What stands out?

[illegible]

How might this inform one next step?

[illegible]

1. Keep in view

In the next sections, we'll explore ways to overcome barriers and set effective goals that align with your values.

2. Keep in view

Remember, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

3. Keep in view

Let's take that step together.

Reflection:

ACT Workbook · worksheet

TIMES WHEN YOU'VE TAKEN COMMITTED ACTION Think about a time when you did something that was in line with your values, even if it was difficult. Maybe you stood up for someone, even though you were scared of the consequences, or perhaps you took care of your health by choosing a healthy meal over junk food, even though it was tempting to do otherwise.

Reflection:

Situation:

Connected Value:

How it Felt:

Reflecting on these moments can reinforce the power of committed action and provide motivation when you're facing obstacles.

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This exercise is your roadmap for committed action. Keep in mind that it's okay to adjust your goals as you progress. The key is to keep moving towards your values, regardless of the speed or the hurdles you might face along the way. Remember, every step counts!

How might this inform one next step?

Committed Action

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- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Committed Action WILLINGNESS AND ACTION PLAN Now it's time to create an action plan, aligning your values with concrete goals. Remember, | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● sensations, urges I'm willing to make room for (in order to achieve this |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● these goals are ongoing patterns of action, not one-time events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● goal): |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● My Goal is to | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● It would be |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● (be specific): | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● useful to remind |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The values | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● myself that: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● underlying my | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● If necessary, I can |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● goal are: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● break this goal |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The actions I will | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● down into smaller |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● take to achieve | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● steps, such as: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● that goal are (be | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The smallest, |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● specific): | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● easiest step I can |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The thoughts/ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● begin with is: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● memories, feelings, | |

ACT Workbook

ACT Workbook · question bank

COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

— COMMITTED ACTION

— S.M.A.R.T GOALS

— SMART

— A. WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

— SPECIFIC

— B. WHO IS INVOLVED OR RESPONSIBLE?

— C. WHERE WILL IT TAKE PLACE (IF APPLICABLE)?

— D. WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?

— A. HOW WILL YOU TRACK PROGRESS?

— MEASURABLE

— B. WHAT ARE THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)?

— C. HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN THE GOAL IS ACCOMPLISHED?

— A. IS THE GOAL REALISTIC GIVEN YOUR RESOURCES AND

— ACHIEVABLE

— CONSTRAINTS?

— B. WHAT STEPS OR ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE TO REACH THE GOAL?

— C. DO YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND SUPPORT?

— A. DOES THE GOAL ALIGN WITH YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES?

— RELEVANT

— B. WILL IT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR LONG-TERM SUCCESS AND GROWTH?

— C. IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME TO PURSUE THIS GOAL?

— A. WHEN WILL YOU START WORKING ON THE GOAL?

— TIME-BOUND

— B. WHAT IS THE TARGET COMPLETION DATE?

— C. ARE THERE ANY MILESTONES OR CHECKPOINTS ALONG THE

— WAY?

ACT Workbook · information

What stands out?

ACT Workbook · information

What stands out?

Chapter 7:

ACT Workbook · reference list

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- Chapter 7:
- Self as Context: We explored the concept of the 'Observing Self', enabling us to differentiate between our thoughts,
- PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER We've come a long way in our journey through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)! In
- feelings, and the constant, observing part of
- this final chapter, let's take a moment to review and consolidate what we've learned.
- ourselves.
- Acceptance: We started by learning to accept our thoughts and feelings, particularly the uncomfortable ones, rather
- Values:
- than trying to avoid or suppress them.
- Committed Action: We identified our core values, which serve as a
- Cognitive Defusion: We learned to step back and observe our thoughts from a distance, recognizing them as mere events of
- compass to guide our actions and decisions. Lastly, we learned to take actions that are aligned with our values, making us more fulfilled and
- the mind rather than absolute truths.
- satisfied with our lives. Together, these six processes help us live a richer, more meaningful life, even in the face of
- Being Present: We practiced being fully engaged and present in our current experiences, helping us live more in the
- challenges. They are not one-off strategies but ongoing skills that we can continue to develop
- moment.
- and refine throughout our lives.

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COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

— REFLECTION:

— HOW HAVE YOU GROWN DURING THIS PROCESS?

— REFLECTION: HOW HAVE YOU GROWN DURING THIS PROCESS?

— HOW HAVE YOU GROWN

— DURING THIS PROCESS?

— WHAT HAVE BEEN THE

— MOST SIGNIFICANT

— INSIGHTS OR

— REALIZATIONS?

— HOW HAVE THE

— EXERCISES AND

— REFLECTIONS HELPED YOU

— CONNECT WITH YOUR

— VALUES AND TAKE

— COMMITTED ACTION?

— WHAT OBSTACLES HAVE

— YOU ENCOUNTERED, AND

— HOW HAVE YOU

— OVERCOME THEM?

— WHAT CHANGES HAVE

— YOU NOTICED IN YOUR

— THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND

— ACTIONS?

— REMEMBER, THE GOAL OF ACT IS NOT TO REACH A DESTINATION BUT TO CONTINUE ON A JOURNEY OF

— GROWTH, ACCEPTANCE, AND COMMITTED ACTION, GUIDED BY YOUR VALUES. THIS WORKBOOK IS NOT THE

— END, BUT RATHER A STEPPING STONE TOWARDS A RICHER, MORE FULFILLING LIFE. KEEP PRACTICING, KEEP

— EXPLORING, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, KEEP MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR VALUES. YOU ARE CAPABLE

— OF INCREDIBLE GROWTH AND RESILIENCE. WELL DONE ON TAKING THESE STEPS TOWARDS YOUR VALUED LIFE!

Creating A Long-Term Plan

ACT Workbook · worksheet

Creating A Long-Term Plan FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY Daily Mindfulness Practices Regular Check-ins with Values Acceptance and Cognitive Defusion Remember, this plan is not set in stone. It's okay (and expected) to adjust it as you continue your journey. The most important thing is to stay committed to practicing psychological flexibility.

Psychological flexibility, the core aim of ACT, is not a destination but an ongoing journey. It involves continuously practicing the six ACT processes in your everyday life. To maintain and enhance your psychological flexibility, let's create a long-term plan. How will you incorporate mindfulness into your everyday life?

How often will you reassess your values and ensure your actions are still aligned with them?

How frequently will you review and adjust your committed action plan?

How will you continue to apply these processes when you encounter difficult thoughts and feelings?

ACT Workbook

ACT Workbook · question bank

COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

- | | |
|--|--|
| — WEEKLY PRACTICE LOG | — ACTION PLAN REVIEW: DID YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR PLANNED ACTIONS FOR THE WEEK? IF NOT, WHAT |
| — A WEEKLY PRACTICE LOG IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK WITH YOUR LONG-TERM PLAN. | — OBSTACLES DID YOU ENCOUNTER, AND HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME THEM IN THE FUTURE? DO YOU NEED |
| — YOU CAN USE IT TO RECORD YOUR EXPERIENCES, NOTE ANY CHALLENGES OR SUCCESSES, AND KEEP TRACK OF | — TO ADJUST ANY OF YOUR GOALS? |
| — YOUR PROGRESS. | — ACCEPTANCE AND COGNITIVE DEFUSION PRACTICES: WERE THERE ANY DIFFICULT THOUGHTS OR |
| — MINDFULNESS PRACTICES: WHAT MINDFULNESS EXERCISES DID YOU ENGAGE IN THIS WEEK? HOW DID | — FEELINGS THAT YOU PRACTICED ACCEPTING THIS WEEK? WHAT DEFUSION TECHNIQUES DID YOU USE? |
| — THEY MAKE YOU FEEL? WHAT DID YOU NOTICE? | — ADDITIONAL NOTES: (ANY INSIGHTS, REFLECTIONS, OR OBSERVATIONS YOU HAVE FROM THE WEEK) |
| — VALUE CHECK-IN: WHAT ACTIONS DID YOU TAKE THIS WEEK THAT WERE ALIGNED WITH YOUR VALUES? | — THIS LOG WILL SERVE AS A VALUABLE TOOL TO MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS, CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES, AND |
| — WERE THERE ANY INSTANCES WHERE YOUR ACTIONS DID NOT ALIGN WITH YOUR VALUES? WHAT MIGHT | — IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE YOU MIGHT NEED ADDITIONAL PRACTICE OR ADJUSTMENT. REMEMBER, THE GOAL |
| — YOU DO DIFFERENTLY? | — ISN'T PERFECTION, BUT RATHER CONTINUAL GROWTH AND LEARNING. KEEP GOING! |

ACT Workbook · information

What stands out?

Celebrating Your Progress

ACT Workbook · information

TAKE A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE YOUR PROGRESS UNDERSTANDING SELF AS CONTEXT As we come to the close of this workbook, the first thing we want to do is take a moment to celebrate your progress. Working through these exercises, reflections, and concepts is not always easy. It requires courage, openness, and a willingness to confront discomfort in the service of growth.

You've taken important steps on the journey to a richer, more fulfilling life, and that's something to be proud of. Remember, progress isn't about being perfect or getting it right all the time. It's about continuous growth, learning, and making a commitment to live in a way that aligns with your values. Every step you've taken, no matter how small it may seem, is a sign of progress. **ANTICIPATING FUTURE CHALLENGES** While it's important to celebrate your progress, it's equally crucial to acknowledge that you'll encounter challenges in the future.

This is a part of life, and it doesn't mean you've failed or fallen off the path. It simply means you're human. The goal of ACT is not to eliminate discomfort or challenge but to help you develop the skills to handle these experiences more effectively when they show up. As you move forward, you'll likely find yourself falling back into old patterns at times. This is completely normal.

What stands out?

How might this inform one next step?

1. Keep in view
When it happens, simply notice it, without judgment, and gently guide yourself back towards your values and the six ACT processes.

2. Keep in view
Remember, psychological flexibility is not a state but a process - a continuous journey of growth and learning.

3. Keep in view
You have the tools to navigate this journey, and every moment is an opportunity to practice these skills.

ACT Workbook · worksheet

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

NORA MARKARIAN, LMHC-D, NCC 70 / 71

Pre-Assessment

ACT Workbook · worksheet

Pre-Assessment I feel like my life is being controlled by my worries, fears, or anxieties. I have a hard time accepting myself as I am, without judgment or criticism. I feel disconnected from my emotions or body sensations—I'm not always sure how I'm feeling. I don't feel like I'm living my life in alignment with my true self or deepest values. I have a hard time tolerating uncomfortable feelings or situations, and I often feel the urge to escape from them. Remember, the objective of this re-assessment is to provide a reflection point for you to see how far you've come. Don't judge your responses. Instead, celebrate your progress and acknowledge the journey ahead. This is just one step on the lifelong path of psychological flexibility, and every step counts. Well done!

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

When faced with a challenging decision, I tend to act impulsively rather than pausing to consider my values.

When I'm feeling emotional pain, I often try to distract myself or "numb" the pain in some way.
