

Incorporating Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness with Clients who Stutter

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Complete handouts will be provided via email after conference

The field of communication disorders, specifically fluency and fluency disorders has a long history of counseling clients who stutter using psychotherapy techniques. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (pronounced as one word – ACT) is a clinical psychotherapy approach used to help clients of all ages to address basic human suffering and negative thoughts related to stuttering. The hope is that they will become more psychologically flexible with all thoughts related to talking and life in general throughout the therapeutic process.

The purpose of this course is to provide participants with an experiential means of learning the six core processes of ACT.

The ACT model consists of six principles (Palasik, Hudock, & Yates, 2015):

- 1) *Contact with the Present Moment* – Being aware of your thoughts before, during, and after speaking situations.
- 2) *Acceptance and Willingness* – Being willing to open up and accept any of your stuttering-related thoughts and behaviors.
- 3) *Thought Defusion* – Observing your thoughts about stuttering and being able to let them go without judgment.
- 4) *Self as a Context* – Seeing yourself as a whole person and understanding that stuttering, along with your thoughts related to stuttering is only one aspect; many other characteristics, behaviors, and experiences make up you.
- 5) *Defining Values* – Knowing and defining what matters to you and relating your values to speaking situations, stuttering moments, and beliefs and attitudes toward yourself.
- 6) *Committed Actions* – Creating goals of self-acceptance and overcoming experiential avoidances by speaking in situations and interacting in the ways that you want based on your values.

This workshop is experiential in nature; therefore, attendees will participate in specific activities related to each of the core principles in order to learn ACT. That way, attendees can better apply ACT to themselves, their clients, and the clinician-client relationship.

These activities may include the following:

Acceptance and Willingness – Got Milk?; What’s the cure for anxiety?; Look into my eye...; It melts in your mouth and not in your hand; A pocket full of sunshine (or rain)

Contact with the Present Moment – Walk with me through my mind, please!; Just six breaths?

Defining Values – You’ll oh gee!; Go climb a tree

Thought Defusion – Word Prisons; Rip it Up! (kind of like “Shake it Off”); Get off your soap box!

Self as a Context – The next blockbuster!; My, Myself, and I (conversation)

Committed Actions – Baby steps and giant leaps; speech ladder; talking pie

All experiential individual and small group activities performed will be followed by large group debriefing/discussions so that attendees can ask questions and learn from each other. In these discussions, the presenters will share personal stories and preliminary results from clients who have used ACT, and, how to connect ACT with more traditional stuttering therapy techniques (e.g., stuttering modification and/or fluency shaping).

For more information for using ACT with people who stutter, see:

Michise, J., & Palasik, S. (2017). Acceptance & Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Journey for Clinicians & People Who Stutter. *eHearsay*, 7(1), 14-26.

Palasik, S., & Hannan, J. (2013). The clinical application of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with clients who stutter. *Perspectives on Fluency and Fluency Disorders*. November 2013, Vol. 23; 54-69.

Palasik, S, Hudock, D, & Yates, C. (2015, October). Taking ACTion and committing yourself to your values: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for People who Stutter. *Online manuscript conducted for the International Stuttering Awareness Day Convention (ISAD)*, <http://isad.isastutter.org/>.

And/or feel free to contact us directly for more information:

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Figure 1. The ACT Hexaflex; shows the six core principles.

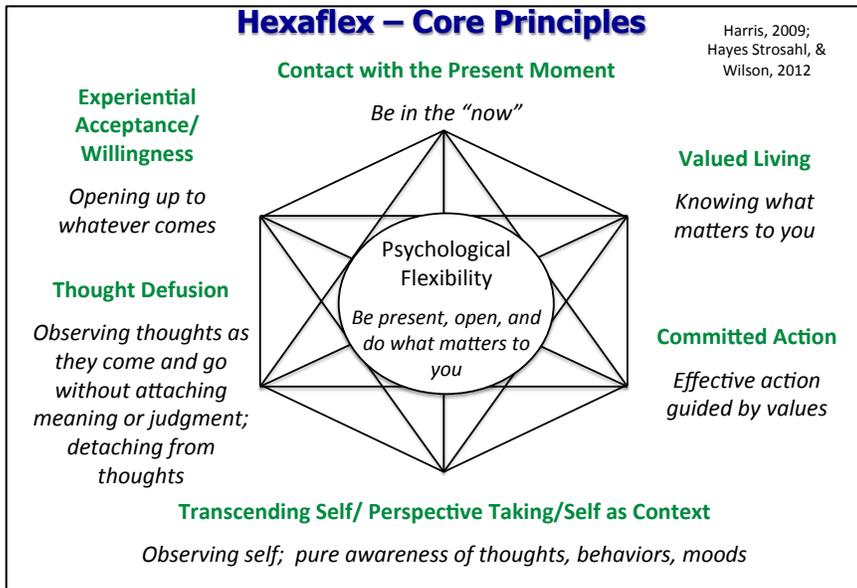


Figure 2. The ACT Hexaflex applied to a moment of stuttering.

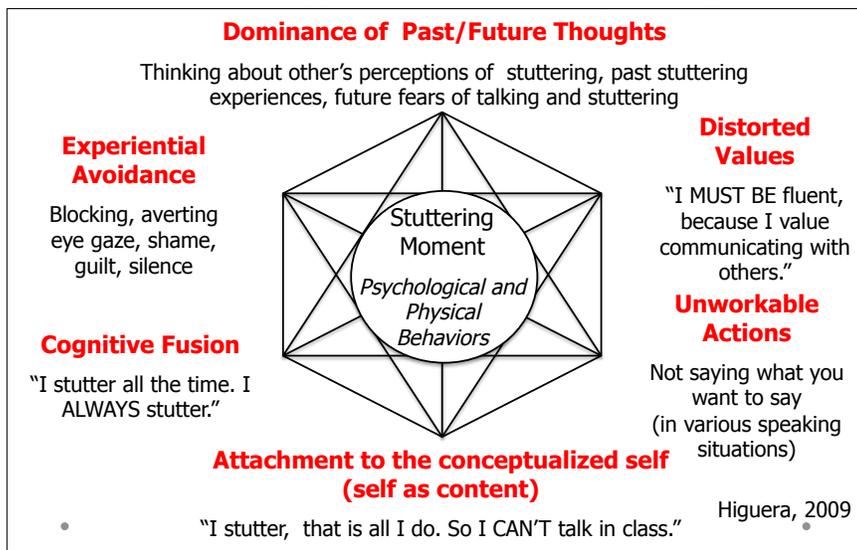


Figure 3. The ACT Hexaflex applied to stuttering treatment.

