



Acceptance and Commitment Theory

Enhancing Psychological Flexibility for Work-Parenting Success

Introduction to Psychological Flexibility– Week 2

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Week 1 - Summary and Takeaways

- ACT is about increasing psychological flexibility.
- It is about changing one's relationship with unwanted thoughts not about eliminating them.
- Functional contextualism and RFT help explain how we interpret experiences.
- Practicing ACT leads to greater interpersonal interactions, resilience, and fulfillment.



Week 2 – Introduction - Talking points

- Real-Life applications – Homework Battle
- Understand Psychological Flexibility and Inflexibility
- How these Concepts Impact Parenting
- Role of Psychological Flexibility in Parent-Adolescent Relationships
- Practical Strategies to Cultivate Flexibility in Parenting
- Key Takeaways for Everyday Parenting Challenges



‘Parenting is not just about raising children – it is about shaping the future. Every moment, every conversation, and every choice you make matters in ways you may not always see, but your child feels it every day, so keep going don’t give up!’ *unknown*

<https://youtu.be/lpLUh1J4JKY>

The background of the slide features a bulletin board on the left with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "WANT", "WANT", and "WANT" written on them. To the right of the bulletin board is a large teal circular graphic. The title "Why Psychological Flexibility Matters?" is overlaid in a yellow, sans-serif font across the top of the image.

Why Psychological Flexibility Matters?

- Parenting is full of challenges.
- Balancing work and parenting can be overwhelming.
- How we respond to pressure and distress impacts our children.
- Stronger parent-child relationships - better adolescent outcomes.
- A psychologically flexible parent accepts difficult emotions like frustration because they understand that emotions are, passing, transient, temporary, part of life and normal



What is Psychological Flexibility?

- Ability to adapt, stay present, and act in alignment with values.
- Helps parents respond thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally.
- Supports resilient, open communication with adolescents.

Key Components:

- ✓ Openness – Willingness to experience emotions and thoughts without avoidance.
- ✓ Awareness – Being present in the moment.
- ✓ Committed Action – Acting in line with parenting values.

Tree bend in strong wind, symbol of resilience





What is Psychological Inflexibility?

- Stuck in negative thought patterns, emotions, or reactions.
- Leads to rigid, reactive, or avoidant parenting.
- Creates conflict, disconnection, and increased stress.
- Psychological inflexibility cause parents to react to children's behaviour based on emotions, automatic thoughts, stress and anger

Common Signs in Parents:

- ✗ Overreacting to adolescent behaviors.
- ✗ Avoiding difficult conversations.
- ✗ Letting work stress dictate home interactions.
- ✗ Being controlled by emotions rather than values.

The background of the slide features a corkboard with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "DESCANSO", "CANA", "WITH", and "WANT". To the right of the corkboard is a teal circular graphic. The title "Characteristics of Psychological Inflexibility" is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font.

Characteristics of Psychological Inflexibility

1. Experiential avoidance (suppress difficult thoughts/feelings).
2. Cognitive fusion (over-identification with thoughts).
3. Disconnection from the present moment (lost in worry & regrets).
4. Over-identification with self-concept (Cling to labels).
5. Lack of value-driven action (decision on emotion/fear).
6. Rigid and ineffective behaviors (Repeat unhelpful responses).

Tangled net, symbol of complexity and struggle.



The image shows a bulletin board with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "WANT", "WANT", and "WANT" written on them. There are also some checkmarks and other markings on the notes. A teal circular graphic is on the right side of the image.

Tangled Net

- **The Complexity of Roles:** Overlapping roles can feel exhausting.
- **Cognitive Fusion:** Getting entangled in our thoughts - “I’m failing as a parent” - step back and untangle from unhelpful narratives.
- **Defusion Strategies:** Learn to acknowledge difficult thoughts – not controlled by them - act according to values



Flexibility vs. Inflexibility in Parenting

Psychologically Flexible Parenting:

- ✓ Listens before reacting.
- ✓ Encourages open conversations.
- ✓ Stays calm during conflict.
- ✓ Adapts to the child's needs.

Psychologically Inflexible Parenting:

- ✗ Reacts impulsively out of frustration.
- ✗ Shuts down communication.
- ✗ Struggles to manage stress.
- ✗ Becomes stuck in rigid expectations.



How to Cultivate Psychological Flexibility as a Parent

- 1 Practice Mindfulness – Stay present in interactions.
- 2 Accept Emotions – Allow emotions without them dictating actions.
- 3 Identify Parenting Values – What kind of parent do you want to be?
- 4 Pause Before Reacting – Respond thoughtfully not impulsively.
- 5 Commit to Actions that Align with Values – Even when difficult.
- 5 When parents make space for uncomfortable emotions instead of avoidance and denial they practice, acceptance, emotional openness, psychological flexibility.

Roadmap - Progress.





Roadmap: The Journey of Intentional Parenting

- **Values as the Destination:** Set a course guided by values.
- **Milestones and Course Corrections:** Challenges (traffic, wrong turns), but flexibility allows for adjustments without abandoning the journey.
- **Committed Action:** Parenting – not need for perfection - keep moving toward goal and values.



Metaphor Reflections

Represents a core principle of psychological flexibility:

- Bend - not breaking under stress (acceptance and adaptability).
- Untangling from overwhelming thoughts (defusion).
- Navigate parenting with direction and purpose (values and committed action).

The top of the slide features a background image of a bulletin board with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". To the right, there is a large teal circular graphic. The title "The Impact on Adolescents" is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font.

The Impact on Adolescents

- Emotionally secure adolescents (better wellbeing and self-esteem).
- Stronger parent-child relationships (open communication, trust).
- Better decision-making skills in adolescents.
- Reduced family conflicts and stress.

A corkboard with several sticky notes is visible in the top left corner. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "DESCANSO", "CAMA", and "MIND". To the right of the corkboard is a large teal circular graphic. The title "Key Takeaways" is written in a yellow, sans-serif font across the top right of the slide.

Key Takeaways

- Psychological Flexibility empowers parents to be present, responsive, and value-driven.
- Helps to reduce stress and enhance relationships.
- Improve adolescent outcomes.
- Mindset changes and response patterns - lasting benefits.
- Children don't need a perfect parent.
- Children need a present, mindful, and flexible parent.



Announcements!

- During Week Four – Focus Group Discussion Invitation
- WhatsApp group
- Website postings
- Homework will be shared
- Stay engaged and remain on this Train:
 - ✓ Special give aways to make your stay worthwhile
 - ✓ Loading!



“Adolescence is a critical season in your child’s life, and you are their anchor. No matter how busy life gets, your connection with them is the foundation that shapes their confidence, resilience, and future success.”



Thank you so much!