



Acceptance and Commitment Theory

Enhancing Psychological Flexibility for Work-Parenting Success

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“Don’t believe everything you think. Thoughts are not facts, just stories your mind tells. Learn to step back and choose which ones serve your work and parenting journey.”



Week 4- Talking Points

- Recap Week 3
- What is Cognitive Defusion?
- Destructive Normality and Avoidance
- Why Cognitive Defusion?
- What is Cognitive Fusion?
- Defusion Techniques

The image shows a corkboard with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "WANT", "CANVA", and "WITH". The title "Week 3 - Recap" is overlaid in yellow text on the left side of the corkboard. A large teal circle is on the right side of the image.


Week 3 - Recap

- Childhood to Adolescence
- Shift from control to collaboration
- Remain present and take values-based actions
- Guidance, not dictatorship
- Connection not control
- Psychological flexibility can parents to focus on what matters.




What is the Goal of ACT?

- Transform your relationships with difficult thoughts
- Perceive thoughts as harmless and transient
- Create a rich and meaningful life
- Accept the inevitable pain of unpleasant and unwanted thoughts and memories



Destructive Normality

- ACT assumes thought processes to often be destructive
- Create psychological suffering sooner or later
- Language is the root of human suffering (*used to manipulate and deceive, to slander, prejudice, incite hatred and violence, draw comparisons, judge, criticise others and ourselves*)



Destructive Normality

- Language used in two domains:
 - **Public** (speaking, talking, writing, singing, dancing)
 - **Private** (thinking, unpleasant imaginations, daydreaming, visualising, relive and dwell on painful past memories and events, to create fear and doubt of the future)



Six Core Processes of ACT

1. Cognitive Defusion

2. Acceptance
3. Present-moment awareness
4. Self-as-context
5. Values-driven living
6. Committed action



What is Cognitive Defusion?

- Step back from thoughts
- Not getting entangled/stuck with thoughts
 - “I am a bad parent.”
 - “I’m having the thought that I am a bad parent.”
- This shift reduces the power of negative thoughts.



Why Cognitive Defusion?

- ✦ Reduces stress from overwhelming thoughts
- ✦ Helps **respond** calmly rather than **react** emotionally
- ✦ Breaks patterns of self-criticism or guilt
- ✦ Creates space to focus on values-based actions



Thinking Traps!

"If I can't be a perfect parent and employee, I'm failing at both."

"If I don't make this deadline, I'll lose my job, and my family will suffer."

"My boss thinks I'm unreliable because I left early for my kid's event."

"My teenager's struggles mean I'm a bad parent."

"Every time I try to balance work and parenting, I fail."

"I feel guilty, so I must not be doing enough."

Common Thought Traps



❖ "I'm failing as a parent."

❖ "I am not competent"

❖ "I don't have enough time for my child."



❖ "My child doesn't respect me."

❖ "I am incompetent"

❖ "I am not good enough"



What is Cognitive Fusion?

- Tendency to become entangled with thoughts
- Strong belief in literal content of thoughts
- 'I am boring' or 'I am unattractive' Fusion → avoidance
- Cognitive fusion limits living in alignment with values



Signs of Cognitive Fusion?

- Taking thoughts literally:
 - “If child is moody, means I am a bad parent”
 - “Supervisor not happy, means I am incompetent”
- Over-identify with self-judgments (“I’m not good enough”)
- Get stuck in problem-focused thinking not flexible action
- Avoid difficult emotions instead of making room for them

Step Back from Thoughts





Quick Defusion Techniques

1. Is it true?
2. Can I absolutely know it is true?
3. What facts supports this view?
4. How do I feel when I have this thought?
5. Who would I be without this thought?

1	My colleagues never listen to my ideas.	That's not true. They often listen to me. Today, they were just distracted.
2	Everybody on Instagram has a more exciting life than mine.	I probably have many things in my life that they would envy.
3	I only came in second place in the ranking. I'm worthless.	Coming 2 nd out of 30 is a great accomplishment, and I should be proud.
4	I should stay late at work tonight.	I want to finish this project tonight because it's important to me.

5	I'm an idiot.	I made one stupid mistake, but I usually make good decisions, and I can learn from my mistake.
6	This year's finances are going to be terrible.	I can't predict this without having some proof.
7	My boss looked bored during my presentation. She must have hated it.	I can't know what she is thinking. For all I know she might have a bad day.
8	If only I would get promoted to the Manager position, then I would be happy and start really living my life.	I can be happy now and can live my life fully now.
9	It's your fault that I failed.	I need to look at my part in the problem and learn what I can do better



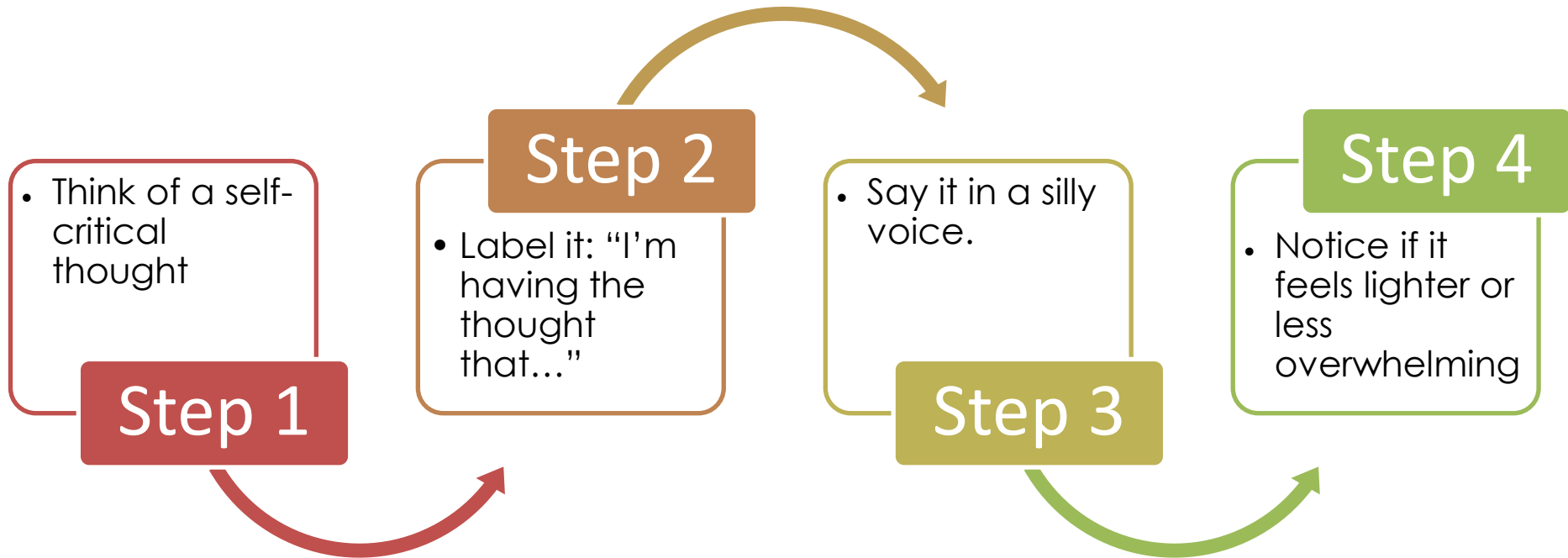
Takeaway

- ✦ Your thoughts are not orders
- ✦ You don't have to believe every thought
- ✦ Defusion makes space for intentional work and parenting
- ✦ Notice when you're fused with a thought
- ✦ Take a step back - hold the thought lightly
- ✦ Refocus on what truly matters - Values



"A flexible mind creates a secure child. The less you hold onto rigid beliefs, the more you create space for connection and growth."

Homework = Exercise

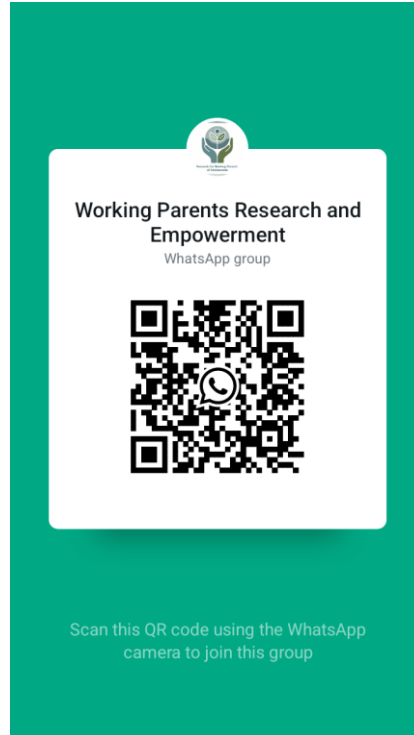




Announcements!

- During Week Four – Focus Group Discussion Invitation
- WhatsApp group – Scan QR Code
- Website postings
- Homework will be shared
- Stay engaged and remain on this Train:
 - ✓ Special give aways to make your stay worthwhile
 - ✓ Check out the ACT Wise Breakfast!
 - ✓ Shopping Vouchers
 - ✓ Loading!

Scan QR Code





Week 5 - Acceptance and Openness

Objectives:

- Understand the difference between acceptance and avoidance.
- Learn acceptance strategies for handling difficult emotions
- Learn acceptance strategies for psychological flexibility



Thank you so much!