

Acceptance and Commitment Theory

Enhancing Psychological Flexibility
for Work-Parenting Success

Acceptance in ACT – Week 5

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Week 5 - Talking Points

- Recap – Week 4
- The Acceptance Process in ACT (Psychological Flexibility)
- The Avoidance and Control Trap
- Why Acceptance Matters for Working Parents
- Practical Strategies for Cultivating Acceptance
- Exercise/Activity – *Time permitting*



Opening Quote

"Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune."
(William James)



Recap Week 4

- ✦ 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



Six Core Processes of ACT

1. Cognitive Defusion

2. Acceptance

3. Self-as-context

4. Values-driven living

5. Present-moment awareness

6. Committed action



Psychological Flexibility

Acceptance ACT process:

Fosters psychological flexibility - Ability to adapt to situations, thoughts, and feelings in a way that is consistent with one's values, even when faced with difficult and uncomfortable emotions



What is Acceptance in ACT?

- Allow uncomfortable thoughts and emotions without resistance or avoidance
- NOT giving up or agree with negative experiences
- Make space for emotions while acting based on values
- Stay present and engaged – not try to fix or suppress



The Acceptance Process in ACT

- Allow uncomfortable thoughts, emotions, sensations
- Be present without control, judgment, struggle or avoidance
- Acknowledge uncomfortable feelings (guilt, frustration)
- Accept unpleasant emotional experience as human nature
- Open to unpleasant thoughts without avoidance



The Acceptance Process in ACT

- Teaches and strengthens non-judgment
- Unpleasant thoughts as passing, instead of objective truths
- Compassion for unpleasant thoughts or feelings
- Observe depressive thoughts without diagnosing or treating

The top of the slide features a corkboard background with several sticky notes. One note says 'TAKE A BREAK', another says 'DESCANSO', and others have checkmarks and the word 'WORK'. To the right of the corkboard is a large teal circle. The title 'Challenges of Working Parents Raising Adolescents' is written in a yellow, sans-serif font across the top.

Challenges of Working Parents Raising Adolescents

- Work demands, societal expectations, lead stress, anxiety, burnout
- Time constraints – balancing work and parenting
- Emotional exhaustion – manage work pressure
- Parental guilt – miss milestones due to work commitments
- Work-stress spillover – affecting child and home interactions
- Adolescent independence – push boundaries
- Parents try to maintain control and struggle to set limits

The background of the slide features a bulletin board on the left with several sticky notes. One note says 'TAKE A BREAK', another says 'DESCRIBE', and others have checkmarks and the word 'WORK'. On the right, there is a large teal circular graphic. The title 'The Avoidance and Control Trap' is written in a yellow, sans-serif font across the top of the image.

The Avoidance and Control Trap

- Avoid, ignore or minimize emotional experiences
- Distraction - work, sports or screen time (Short-term relief)
- Over react or lash out at children or colleagues
- Overly controlling to avoid uncertainty
- Limit emotional regulation and flexibility
- Diminish meaningful connection and engagement
- Rigidity and inflexibility

A bulletin board with several sticky notes. One note says 'TAKE A BREAK', another says 'DESCANSAR', and others have 'CANVA' and 'WANT'. A teal circular graphic is on the right side of the board.

The Power of Acceptance

- Lessen the psychological struggle
- Ability to experience negative emotions as human
- Allow emotions to come and go
- Be present rather than caught in emotional struggles
- Allow for thoughtful responses rather than reactive
- Build resilience and enhance emotional regulation

A bulletin board with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "WANT", "CANVA", and "WANT". A teal circular graphic is on the right side of the board.

Why Acceptance Matters?

- Moments of stress, frustration, and self-doubt
- Avoidance leads to exhaustion and reactivity
- Experience emotions without being controlled
- Fosters a calm and present approach to challenges



How to Build Acceptance

Awareness

Recognize when resisting an emotion or thought

Label

Name emotions (frustration, guilt)

Allow

Let emotions be, without trying to push them away

Self-Compassion

Treat yourself kindly instead of judging emotions

Commit to Values

Act based on values even with uncomfortable emotions



Exercise/Activity

Work and Parenting Related Emotional Struggles



Work-Related Emotional Struggles

- Career Sacrifices - Turned down promotion years ago
- Job Loss or Career Setbacks - Laid off from a high-paying job
- Unfairness and Workplace Trauma – Discrimination or bullying years ago
- Guilt - Frequently miss child's school events due to work demands
- Burnout and Chronic Stress - Years of overwork to provide for family

The top of the slide features a background image of a corkboard with several sticky notes. One note says 'TIME TO BREAK', another says 'DESCANS', and others have checkmarks and the word 'WORK'. To the right of the corkboard is a large teal circle. The title 'Parenting-Related Emotional Struggles' is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font.

Parenting-Related Emotional Struggles

- Past Parenting Mistakes - Lost temper and said hurtful things
- Difficult or Traumatic Birth Experience - postpartum depression
- Estranged or Distant Relationship with an Adolescent
- Comparisons to Own Parent - grew up in emotionally distant household
- Unresolved Conflict with a Co-Parent or Ex-Partner

Dropping the Rope Metaphor





Dropping the Rope Metaphor

- Dropping the Rope Metaphor – imagine being in a tug-of-war
- The harder you pull, the more exhausted you become

*Acceptance is about dropping the rope - allow emotions to be there
without struggling against them*



Dropping the Rope Reflections

- Instead of fighting, accept it as a sign that you care
- Instead of struggling against frustration, acknowledge it
- Instead of drowning in exhaustion, accept that some days will be hard
- Struggle strengthens emotions - Acceptance allows moving forward
- Dropping the rope doesn't mean giving up
- Dropping the rope means choosing to focus on what truly matters
- Your emotions don't control your actions you do



The Impact of These Struggles

Linger in the background and shape interactions and relationships and may lead to:

- Avoidance behaviors (avoid difficult conversations)
- Overcompensate (try too hard to be the perfect)
- Unhelpful coping strategies (withdraw emotionally, limiting habits)

A bulletin board with several sticky notes. One note says "TAKE A BREAK", another says "DESCANSAR", and others have checkmarks and the word "WORK". A teal circular graphic is on the right side of the board.

Acceptance Approach

- Recognize and accept struggles rather than deny
- Create emotional space - engage more effectively
- Act in the present moment



Acceptance - Key Takeaways

- Critical component of psychological flexibility
- Self-Awareness - identify when avoiding difficult emotions
- Acknowledge/name difficult thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations
- Make space for these emotions - Without trying to avoid or control
- Take values based action (*patience, understanding*)
- Acceptance is not giving up or resigning to difficult emotions



Closing Quote

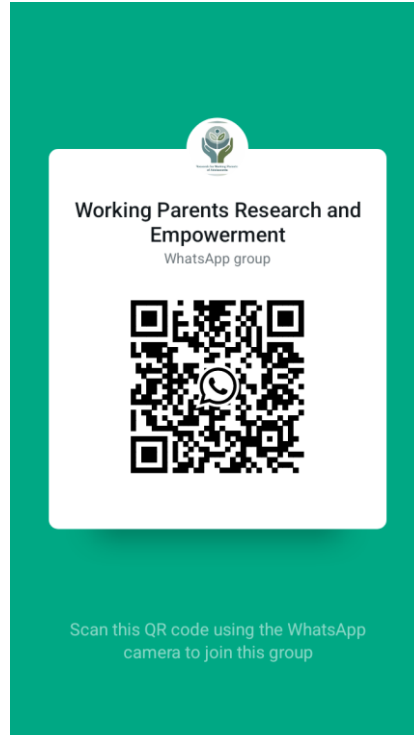
Remember: True acceptance does not mean surrendering to difficulties, but rather embracing them with the strength to act wisely.



Announcements!

- Focus Group Discussion Invitation
- WhatsApp group – Scan QR Code
- Website postings
- Homework will be shared
- Stay engaged and remain on this Train - give aways:
 - ✓ Check out the ACT Wise Breakfast!
 - ✓ Shopping Vouchers
 - ✓ One on One Coaching
 - ✓ Loading!

Scan QR Code



The background features a corkboard with several sticky notes. One prominent note says "TAKE A BREAK". Other notes have words like "DESCANSO", "CAMP", "WANT", and "WANT". A teal circular graphic is on the right side of the top banner.

Week 6 - Self-as-Context (Observe Self)

Objectives:

- Explore the concept of self-as-context
- Perspective for observing thoughts and feelings
- Explore self-as-content - attachment to specific thoughts



Thank you so much!