

ACT: Values, Acceptance & Cognitive Defusion

Changing your relationship with difficult thoughts and feelings while moving toward what matters.

What ACT emphasizes

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) focuses on psychological flexibility: making room for internal experiences while choosing actions that reflect your values.

Defusion skills

- Add the phrase “I am having the thought that...” before a difficult thought.
- Name the process: “My mind is predicting,” “My mind is comparing,” or “My mind is warning me.”
- Imagine thoughts as words passing across a screen rather than instructions that must be followed.

Values vs. goals

A goal can be completed; a value is an ongoing direction. “Exercise three times this week” is a goal. “Take care of my health” is a value.

Committed action

- Choose one small action that reflects a value even if discomfort is present.
- Measure success by whether the action was value-consistent, not whether anxiety disappeared.
- Practice willingness: “I can make room for this feeling while I do what matters.”

Try this reflection

Choose one value you want to embody this week. What is one action under your control that would express it?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.