Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for all individuals.

SUMMARY

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a community-based psychotherapy program that is designed to promote awareness and acceptance of difficult thoughts; emotions; memories; and physical sensations, such as pain.

EVIDENCE

Numerous studies have focused on the effectiveness of ACT; although, the quality of such studies has been mixed. Results of recent randomized controlled trials suggest that ACT may help individuals cope with depressive symptoms, anxiety, and physical pain. However, these findings have not been consistently replicated in studies with long-term follow-ups. Numerous other studies have suggested possible effects of ACT on psychosis, substance use, and other mental health outcomes; however, such findings are less consistent than those for depression, anxiety, and pain. ACT has been implemented among Veterans and has demonstrated modest effects on levels of general distress.

COMPONENTS

ACT is a research-based intervention designed to promote mindfulness and acceptance among clients through teaching skills and strategies.

- Examine thoughts, feelings, memories, sensations, and experiences that have been painful or avoided in the past;
- Reframe and accept these events;
- Gain clarity related to personal values; and
- Commit to behavior modification, as necessary.

ACT is based on the premise that changing difficult thoughts, feelings, and sensations is often not realistic, and the use of the therapy's alternate strategies can be more powerful and helpful. Therapists typically integrate the ACT approaches into their practice, and the course of therapy depends on the specific needs of the client.

PREVIOUS USE

ACT has been implemented around the world since the 1980s and has been used with Veterans.
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TRAINING

Professional therapists facilitate this program, and those interested in incorporating ACT into their clinical work can use a variety of self-guided resources including books, DVDs, online consultation and learning opportunities, workshops, peer consultation groups, and phone consultations. Details are provided at https://contextualscience.org/list_of_resources_for_learning_act

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include recruiting therapists who have suitable educational and professional backgrounds, acquiring client buy-in and interest in a mindfulness-based approach, and finding time and space for therapy sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing ACT, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME

The number and duration of ACT sessions vary and depend on the unique needs of individual clients.

COST

Costs associated with implementing ACT vary depending on the availability of trained therapists.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move ACT to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, evaluations should consistently demonstrate sustained positive effects on primary program outcomes lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program or at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science by email acbsstaff@contextualscience.org or visit https://contextualscience.org/contact

SOURCE

https://contextualscience.org/act