# FACT SHEET:
Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

WHAT IS ACT?

In a nutshell

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a form of psychotherapy that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies, alongside commitment and behaviour change techniques, to increase psychological flexibility

Goals of ACT

- To increase your ability to adapt to a situation with **openness**, **awareness**, and **focus**
- To help you take effective action guided by your values
- By embracing thoughts and feelings (rather than fighting them), support you to lead a more fulfilling life
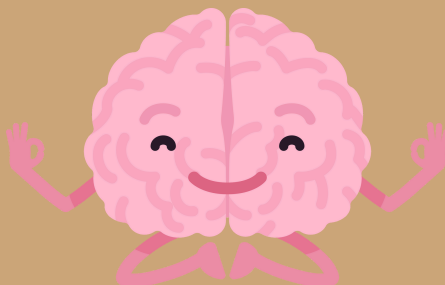
WHAT IS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACT?

Applications

ACT is effective across a range of conditions, including anxiety, depression, stress, chronic pain, OCD, eating disorders, and substance use disorders

Psychological flexibility

increasing psychological flexibility, the core aim of ACT, is associated with lower levels of psychological distress and higher levels of wellbeing

Longer term benefits

Studies suggest that the benefits of ACT may be maintained longer after treatment ends compared to other therapies - this could be due to the emphasis on acceptance and mindfulness practices that clients can continue to use independently

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CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Acceptance
Embracing thoughts and feelings without trying to change them. Acknowledging emotions and experiences as they are.

2. Cognitive diffusion
Learning to see thoughts as just thoughts, rather than commands. Techniques include observing thoughts, repeating them out loud, and visualising them.

3. Being present
Developing mindfulness skills to stay connected with the present moment and to focus on the here and now.

4. Self as context
Understanding that you are more than your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Viewing oneself from a broader perspective.

5. Values
Identifying what is truly important and meaningful to you; guiding your life choices based on these personal values.

6. Committed action
Setting goals according to values and taking concrete steps towards achieving them. Encourages behaviour change in alignment with your personal values.