Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum

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Speaker Disclosure Information

Lauren Eaton, M.A., BCBA, LBA, is a behavior analyst with Itineris and is speaking at the Conference on a voluntary basis. She has no relevant financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

Objectives

- Describe Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Identify prerequisite skills needed to access ACT, and some options for teaching prerequisite skills
- Experience a model ACT group and how to start this when you get back to work
- Practice leading and participating in your own ACT groups

Mind Full, or Mindful?

ringo

- Where does a ringo grow?

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- What’s something better than a ringo?

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- What color is a ringo?
- What’s something better than a ringo?
- What is similar to a ringo?

MEETS

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  - Basic: labeling, vocabulary, prepositions, adjectives, pronouns, awareness of others, imitating, matching, understanding functions and classes, attending/sitting, receptive listening/understanding

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  - Basic: labeling, vocabulary, prepositions, adjectives, pronouns, awareness of others, imitating, matching, understanding functions and classes, attending/sitting, receptive listening/understanding
  - Intermediate & Advanced: simple metaphors, relationships, transitivity (orange example)

now we know…

- Psychological Flexibility is a skill (not a inherent characteristic)
- Students can increase their psychological flexibility by participating in ACT
- Increases in psychological flexibility are linked to decreases in suffering (anxiety, depression, pathological gambling, stressors associated with parenting children with autism) and externalizing behavior and increases in happiness and engagement
- There are many prerequisite skills needed to use skills and participate in ACT
- One of the most important is the ability to derive language and information from unlearned connections
- This ability is a blessing and a curse ☺

What now?

Interventions to Increase Language, Thinking, and Psychological Flexibility

ACT

Psychological Flexibility

- Acceptance
- Diffusion
- Self as Context
- Values
- Committed Actions
- Present Moment Awareness

Acceptance

- Noticing without trying to change

Diffusion

- Separating yourself from your thoughts

Present Moment Awareness

Self as Context

Values

Division Submitted Values

Committed Actions

Contact with the Present Moment
Acceptance
Values
Psychological Flexibility
Cognitive Defusion
Committed Action
Self as Context

ACT GROUP:

- Group Values
- Make/review Hexaflex
- Complete Activity
- Reflect “why did we just do this?” or “what was the point of this?”

Model

Small Group Practice

- Break into 6 groups
- ID a group leader
- Make group values
- Complete Activity
- Each group present
- Q&A

Reflect on Objectives

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