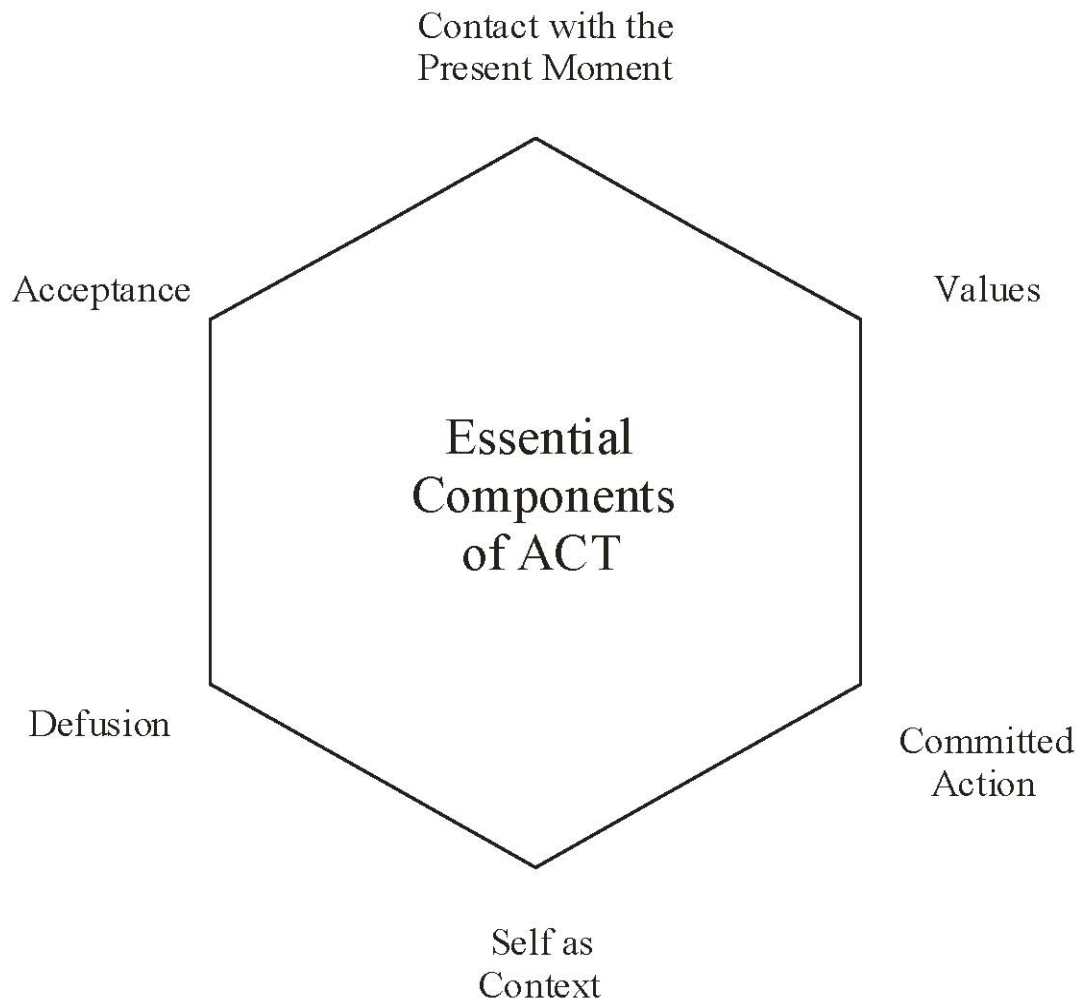


**Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a mindfulness-based, values-directed behavioural therapy. There are six core processes in ACT:**



### **The Essence of ACT: 2 major goals**

- Acceptance of unwanted private experiences which are out of personal control
- Committed action towards living a valued life

In other words ... “Embrace your demons, and follow your heart!”

Put simply:

–The aim of ACT is to create a rich, full and meaningful life, while accepting the pain that inevitably goes with it.

Put more technically:

–The goal of ACT is to increase psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility has two components: 1) the ability to be psychologically present – i.e. aware, attentive, open to, and engaged in your experience; 2) the ability to control your behaviour to serve valued ends

Official ACT definition: The goal of ACT is to increase psychological flexibility: the ability to contact the present moment and the psychological reactions it produces, as a fully conscious human being, and based on the situation, to persist with or change behaviour for valued ends

**N.B. In ACT, there is no goal of symptom reduction. Symptom reduction frequently happens, but it is simply a fortuitous byproduct, not a goal.**

**There are six core processes in ACT:**

***1. Contact with the Present Moment***

Conscious awareness of your experience in the present moment enables you to perceive accurately what is happening

Gives you important information about whether to change or persist in behaviour

Enables you to ‘catch’ cognitive fusion ‘in flight’

Allows you to engage fully in what you are doing

***2. Acceptance***

Actively contacting psychological experiences directly, fully, and without needless defense

Definition: defused, open, undefended contact with the present moment, as a fully conscious human being.

Colloquial: ‘Opening yourself fully to experience, as it is, not as your mind says it is’

***3. Defusion***

Looking *at* thoughts, rather than *from* thoughts

Noticing thoughts, rather than being caught up in thoughts

Seeing thoughts as what they are, not as what they seem to be

Aim of Defusion is ***NOT*** to feel better, nor to get rid of unwanted thoughts

Aim of Defusion ***IS*** to reduce influence of unhelpful cognitive processes upon behaviour; to facilitate being psychologically present & engaged in experience; to facilitate awareness of language processes, in order to enhance psychological flexibility

***4. Self-as-context***

A transcendent sense of self: a consistent perspective from which to observe and accept all changing experiences. (Often called The Observing Self)

It is a process, not a thing: an awareness of awareness itself: ‘pure awareness’

***5. Values***

Chosen life directions

*‘Your heart’s deepest desires for the sort of person you want to be and the things you want to do in your time on this planet; in other words, what you want to stand for in life’*

Provide motivation & inspiration

Provide guidance for your actions

Give life meaning

Give a sense of abundance

Are different to goals

***6. Committed Action***

Overt behavior in the service of values

(may require skills training)

*Committed* action is: values-guided, effective & mindful