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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ACT Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Values

2 · Committed Action

3 · Acceptance

4 · Being Present

5 · Cognitive Defusion

How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

Contents

1. Values.....	5
Values Clarification	6
Values Card Sorts	7
Funeral Speech Exercise	10
The Bull's Eye Values Survey	12
Values Affirmation	14
2. Committed Action	15
Action Planning	16
Habit Reversal.....	18
Overcoming Barriers Exercise.....	21
Behavioral Experiments.....	23
3. Acceptance.....	26
Physicalizing the Feeling	27
Body Scan	29
Breathing into the Experience	30
Container Exercise	31
Softening, Soothing, and Allowing	32
Acting “As If”	34
Willingness vs. Willfulness.....	36
Willingness Scale.....	38
Saying Yes to Life	40
Tug of War with a Monster Metaphor	42
Broken Tools Analogy	43
4. Being Present.....	45
Mindfulness Meditation.....	46
Mindful Breathing	47
Mindful Eating Exercises.....	48
Mindful Walking	49
Mindful Listening	50
Mindful Observation.....	51
Single-Tasking.....	52
5. Cognitive Defusion.....	53
Thought Labeling	54
Saying Thoughts Aloud.....	55

Silly Voices	56
Playing with Word Speed and Volume	57
Thanking Your Mind	58
Visualizing Thoughts	59
The Courtroom Exercise	60
Writing Thoughts Down and Destroying the Paper	61
6. “The Observing Self”	62
Mirror Exercise	63
The Bus Metaphor	64
Leaves on a Stream	65
Observer on the Hill Exercise	66
Theater Screen Exercise	67
Using Third Person Self-Talk	68

1. Values

Values Clarification

Values are deeply held beliefs and principles that guide our attitudes, behaviors, and decisions in life. They represent what we consider important, worthwhile, and desirable.

1. Life Areas Exploration: Below is a list of different areas in life. Read through each area and reflect on its current satisfaction and importance.

Life Area	Description/Examples	Current Satisfaction (1-10)	Importance (1-10)
Family and Friends	Connections with family and friends.		
Romantic Relationships	Emotional and physical closeness, commitment, shared goals.		
Career and Work	Job role, career ambitions, workplace environment.		
Education and Growth	Ongoing learning, skills development, self-improvement.		
Physical Health	Fitness, diet, medical care.		
Mental Health	Emotional well-being, stress management, therapy, self-care practices.		
Recreation and Leisure	Hobbies, sports, travel, relaxation.		
Spirituality	Religious practices, personal ethics.		
Financial Stability	Income, savings, investment, financial planning.		

Values Card Sorts

The following are cards to print and cut. Each card contains a value.

Once the cards are in a stack, sort them into two piles, one representing values important to you and the other not important.

Try to go with your first instinct. Take the important values pile and sort the cards into three groups: very important, important, and of little importance.

Set aside the cards in the “of little importance” pile and repeat the process until you only have five cards left. These are your top five values.

Accountability: Accepting responsibility for one's actions and their consequences.	Achievement: Accomplishing goals and reaching set standards of success.	Adventure: Seeking new and exciting experiences.
Altruism: Selflessly caring for and helping others without seeking personal gain.	Authenticity: Being genuine and true to oneself.	Balance: Maintaining a healthy proportion of work, leisure, and other activities.
Bravery: Facing fear, danger, or adversity with courage.	Calmness: Maintaining a state of serenity and lack of agitation.	Charity: Generously giving to others in need.
Commitment: Dedication to a cause or activity.	Compassion: Showing sympathy and concern for others in distress.	Confidence: Trusting in one's abilities or qualities.

Courage: Doing what one believes is right despite fear.	Creativity: Using imagination or original ideas to create something.	Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.
Dependability: Being reliable and trustworthy.	Determination: Firmness of purpose; resoluteness.	Diligence: Careful and persistent work or effort.
Discipline: Training oneself to do something in a controlled and habitual way.	Empathy: The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.	Empowerment: The authority or power given to someone to do something.
Endurance: The ability to withstand hardship or adversity.	Fairness: Treating people equally without favoritism or discrimination.	Faith: Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.
Family: Valuing the emotional connection and support of family.	Flexibility: Willingness to change or compromise.	Freedom: The power or right to act, speak, or think without hindrance.
Friendship: A close and trusting relationship between friends.	Generosity: The willingness to give more of something than is strictly necessary or expected.	Gratitude: Being thankful for what one has.
Honesty: Being truthful and sincere.	Humility: A modest view of one's own importance.	Independence: Self-reliance and freedom from outside control.

Kindness: The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.	Learning: The acquisition of knowledge or skills through study or experience.	Loyalty: A strong feeling of support or allegiance.
Open-mindedness: Being willing to consider new ideas.	Optimism: Hopefulness and confidence about the future.	Passion: Strong and barely controllable emotion.
Patience: The capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.	Professionalism: The competence or skill expected of a professional.	Security: The state of being free from danger or threat.
Service: The action of helping or doing work for someone.	Simplicity: The quality of being easy to understand or do.	Trust: Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.
Understanding: The ability to understand something; comprehension.	Wisdom: The quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment.	

Funeral Speech Exercise

This exercise encourages individuals to consider the legacy they wish to leave behind, focusing on how they want to be remembered after they pass away. It's particularly effective in guiding individuals towards living a life aligned with their core values.

1. Family Member's Perspective: What would you hope a family member would say about you? What qualities would they highlight?

2. Friend's Perspective: What would a close friend mention about your character and your contributions to their life?

3. Colleague's Perspective: How would a coworker or professional acquaintance describe your work ethic, contributions to the field, and impact on colleagues?

4. Which qualities or achievements mentioned do you most value?

5. Was there anything that surprised you or made you want to change how you are currently living?

6. What steps can you take to ensure that your life aligns more closely with the values highlighted above?

The Bull's Eye Values Survey

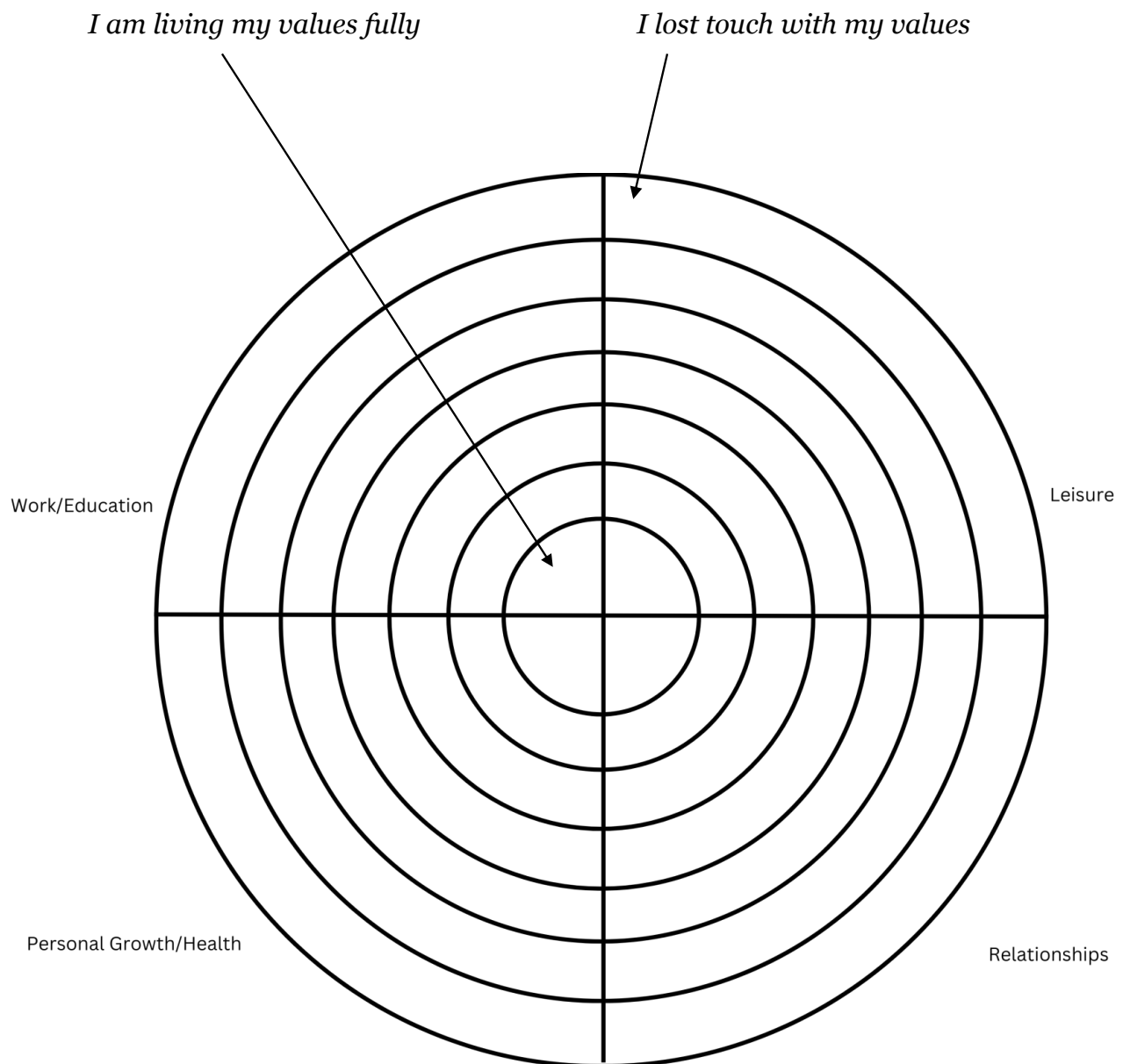
The Bull's Eye Values Survey is used to help individuals assess how closely their current behaviors align with their deeply held values across various life domains. It's designed to visually aid clients in recognizing areas where they may want to make changes or focus their efforts to live more congruently with their values.

1. Define what is most important to you in each life domain. What do you value most in your work, relationships, personal growth, and leisure?

Life Domain	Values
Work/Education	
Relationships	
Personal Growth/Health	
Leisure	

2. Below is a bull's-eye diagram divided into four quadrants, each representing one of the above life domains. Each quadrant has concentric circles with the center representing full alignment with one's values (the "bull's eye") and outer circles indicating lesser alignment.

Place an (X) mark in each quadrant where you currently stand in relation to your center values. Placing a mark towards the center suggests tyou are living closely aligned with their values in that area, while a mark towards the outer rim indicates a need for greater alignment.



3. For areas not in alignment, set realistic, actionable goals that move you closer to the center of the bull's eye.

Values Affirmation

1. For each identified value, create a positive, present-tense statement that affirms your commitment to that value. The affirmation should be phrased as if it's already being lived out.

- *Examples: "I am loving and present in my interactions with my family," or "I engage in my work with passion and integrity."*

2. Decide how you will integrate these affirmations into your daily routine. This might include saying them out loud every morning, writing them in a journal, or posting them where they will be regularly seen.

2. Committed Action

Action Planning

1. Begin by listing what values are important to you in the relevant domain of your life (e.g., family, career, health).

- *Example: If health is a value, you might write, "Maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle is important to me because it improves my quality of life and well-being."*

2. Based on your values, set a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goal.

- *Example: "I will exercise for at least 30 minutes, four days a week, for the next month."*

3. List the specific actions you need to take to achieve your goal. Make each step clear and manageable.

- *Example:*

- *"Register for a aerobic class nearby."*
- *"Schedule exercise time in my calendar."*
- *"Prepare workout clothes the night before."*

4. Anticipate challenges that might hinder your progress towards your goal.

- *Example: "I might feel too tired after work to exercise."*

5. For each obstacle, develop a strategy or plan to overcome it.

- *Example: "If I feel too tired after work, I will do a lighter workout at home instead of going to the gym."*

Habit Reversal

Habit Reversal is aimed at helping individuals identify unwanted habits that are incongruent with their values and to develop and implement healthier behaviors that are more aligned with their personal values.

1. Clearly define the habit you want to change. Include details about when, where, and how you typically engage in this habit.

- Example: *"I automatically reach for my phone and scroll through social media when I start work, which distracts me from my tasks."*

2. Reflect on how this habit conflicts with your values and impacts your life negatively.

- Example: *"This habit prevents me from being productive at work, which conflicts with my value of being competent and efficient."*

3. List the values that are being undermined by the habit.

- Example: *"Efficiency, productivity, and personal development."*

4. Choose a new behavior that is aligned with your values and that can replace the unwanted habit.

- *Example: "At the start of my workday, I will spend 10 minutes planning my tasks instead of using my phone."*

5. Break down the new behavior into actionable steps, including when and where you will perform this new behavior.

- *Example:*

- *"Keep a planner on my desk."*
- *"Spend the first 10 minutes at my desk organizing tasks for the day."*
- *"Turn off notifications on my phone to reduce temptation."*

6. Recognize situations or emotional states that trigger the unwanted habit and anticipate possible obstacles.

- *Example: "Feeling overwhelmed triggers my social media use. An obstacle may be my habit of keeping my phone within easy reach."*

7. Develop strategies to manage triggers and overcome obstacles.

- *Example:*

- *"When feeling overwhelmed, take a three-minute breathing break instead of using my phone."*

- *"Store my phone in a drawer while working."*

8. Keep a record of your progress. Note successes and areas for improvement.

- *Example: "Keep a log in my planner noting each day I successfully start my day without my phone."*

Overcoming Barriers Exercise

1. Clearly state a specific goal that is aligned with your core values.

- Example: "To engage in physical activity at least three times a week to improve my health and well-being."

2. List any internal or external barriers that could impede your progress towards achieving this goal.

- Example: "Lack of time, feeling tired after work, bad weather, or feeling demotivated."

3. Determine whether each obstacle is under your control, influenced by you, or completely out of your control.

- Example: "Feeling tired after work (influenced by me); bad weather (out of control)."

Obstacle Under My Control	Obstacle Out Of My Control

4. For each identified obstacle, brainstorm practical strategies to mitigate or overcome it.

- *Example:*

- *"Feeling tired: Evaluate my diet and sleep schedule to improve energy levels."*

- *"Bad weather: Have a backup plan for indoor activities like yoga or home workout videos."*

Obstacle	Practical Strategies

5. Think about what might go wrong with your planned strategies and how you will address these challenges.

- *Example: "If I miss a scheduled workout, I'll make it up the next day. If I lose motivation, I'll review my goals and the reasons behind them."*

Behavioral Experiments

1. Clearly define the new behavior you want to try. Make sure it's specific, measurable, and relevant to your values and goals.

- Example: *"Attend a social event alone to improve social skills and reduce social anxiety."*

2. Describe the values that this behavior supports. This helps to reinforce the reason behind trying out the new behavior.

- Example: *"Value of courage and openness to new experiences."*

3. Before engaging in the behavior, hypothesize possible outcomes, including best-case and worst-case scenarios.

- Example:

- Best-case: "I meet new people, feel more confident, and enjoy the event."

- Worst-case: "I feel awkward and leave early without interacting much."

4. Think about potential barriers to successfully carrying out the behavior and how you might overcome them.

- *Example: "Feeling too anxious to initiate conversation, not knowing anyone at the event. Plan to prepare conversation starters ahead of time and set a minimum time to stay at the event."*

5. Plan when and where you will implement this new behavior. Make the commitment concrete.

- *Example: "Go to the local community center's networking event this Friday at 7 PM."*

6. After carrying out the behavior, record what actually happened. Note your feelings, thoughts, and the outcomes.

- *Example: "Felt anxious initially but started feeling more relaxed after talking to a few people. Stayed for the whole event and exchanged contacts with three attendees."*

7. Compare the actual outcomes with your hypotheses. Were the outcomes as bad as you feared? Better than expected?

- *Example: "It was better than expected. Although initially uncomfortable, the conversations flowed easier than I anticipated."*

8. Reflect on what you learned from this experiment. How does this learning influence your perception of the behavior?

- *Example: "I learned that my anxiety decreases as I engage more in conversation and that people are generally receptive."*

9. Based on what you learned, decide on your next steps. Will you repeat this behavior? Modify it? Try something else?

- *Example: "Plan to attend another event next month and try initiating conversation with at least five people."*

3. Acceptance

Physicalizing the Feeling

Physicalizing the Feeling is a technique that designed to help individuals connect with their emotions on a physical level.

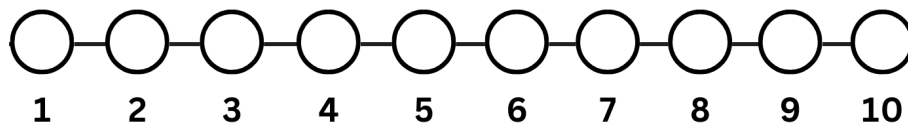
1. Name the emotion you are feeling. If you're experiencing multiple emotions, you may choose to focus on the most dominant one.

- *Example: Anxiety, anger, sadness, joy, etc.*

2. Identify where in your body you feel the emotion. Emotions can manifest in various physical locations.

- *Example: "I feel a tightness in my chest and a knot in my stomach."*

3. On a scale of 1-10, rate the intensity of the physical sensation.



4. Describe the nature of the sensation (e.g., sharp, dull, throbbing, tingling).

5. Note any changes in the sensation as you focus on it.

6. Try to express the emotion through facial expressions or body postures and notice any shifts in your emotional state. Notice if the intensity or quality of the sensation changes with movement.

- *Example: "When I allow my body to curl inward, the knot in my stomach tightens. Making a scared face seems to heighten the feeling."*

67. Pay attention to your breathing. Is it fast, slow, deep, or shallow?

8. Apply a relaxation technique, like deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation, and observe any changes in the physical sensations.

- *Example: "My breathing is shallow and fast. Using deep belly breaths for a few minutes helped reduce the tightness in my chest."*

9. Reflect on what you learned from physicalizing your feeling. Did the process of focusing on the physical sensations change your emotional experience?

Body Scan

Set aside 15-30 minutes in a quiet, comfortable place where you can lie down or sit without being disturbed.

- **Breathing:** Take a few deep breaths to begin. Notice the natural rhythm of your breath without trying to change it.
- **Feet:** Bring your attention to your feet. Notice any sensations you feel—temperature, pressure, discomfort, or even the absence of sensation.
- **Legs:** Slowly move your awareness up through your legs. Spend time noticing each part—your ankles, calves, knees, and thighs. Observe any tension or relaxation.
- **Midsection:** Move your focus to your lower back and abdomen. Feel the rise and fall with each breath. Notice any tightness or ease.
- **Upper Body:** Gradually shift your attention through your chest, back, and shoulders. Acknowledge areas of tension and areas that feel relaxed.
- **Hands:** Feel any sensations in your hands, each finger, and your palms. Are they warm, cool, tingling, numb?
- **Arms:** Slowly scan up from your wrists to your forearms, elbows, and upper arms. Notice the sensations without judgment.
- **Neck:** Observe any sensations in your neck. Is there stiffness, discomfort, or lightness?
- **Head and Face:** Pay attention to your jaw, mouth, nose, eyes, forehead, and the top of your head. Soften any areas of tightness.

Whole Body: Sense your body as a whole. Breathe deeply and allow a sense of relaxation to wash over you.

Are there areas that feel different now compared to when you started?

Breathing into the Experience

- Sit or lie down in a relaxed but attentive posture. If sitting, keep your back straight but not stiff; allow your hands to rest comfortably.
- Close your eyes and take a few moments to just notice your breathing. Observe the natural inhale and exhale without trying to change it.
- Pay attention to where you feel the breath most prominently. Is it in your nose, your chest, or your abdomen?
- Identify a current experience where you feel discomfort, stress, or emotional pain.
- Describe the experience briefly in your mind. Note any associated sensations, thoughts, or emotions.
- Imagine directing your breath towards the area of discomfort or emotional pain. Visualize your breath reaching and enveloping the experience.
- As you inhale, imagine the breath expanding the space around the discomfort, creating room for it.
- Each time you exhale, imagine the space around the discomfort softening, easing the tension.
- Continue this process for several minutes—breathing in to expand and create space, breathing out to soften and release.

After completing the breathing exercise, take a few moments to reflect. Did the discomfort change in any way? Did your relationship to it shift?

Container Exercise

This exercise helps individuals compartmentalize overwhelming thoughts, feelings, or memories that may be intrusive or distressing, allowing for better focus and presence in daily activities.

Instructions:

- Visualize a container that feels secure and strong to you. This could be a box, a safe, a chest, or any form of containment that resonates with you. Imagine it as vividly as possible, noting its size, shape, color, and texture.

- Think about the thoughts, feelings, memories, or sensations that are currently causing you distress or distraction. List these:

- One by one, imagine taking each of these items and placing them into your container. As you do this, visualize the item shrinking and becoming manageable enough to fit comfortably inside.

- Once all items are placed inside, imagine closing the container securely. You might visualize a lock, a seal, or simply a lid that fits snugly.

- Imagine putting the container somewhere safe where it can stay locked and secure. This is a place you can access anytime you need to, but where its contents can no longer distract or overwhelm you.

After completing the visualization, note any immediate changes in how you feel. Are you more relaxed? Do you feel a sense of relief?

Softening, Soothing, and Allowing

This exercise is designed to help individuals manage difficult emotions or physical sensations by cultivating a gentler, more compassionate approach towards themselves.

Instructions:

- Identify a specific emotion or physical sensation that is causing discomfort. Describe it briefly:

- Try to pinpoint where in your body you feel this emotion or sensation.

- Focus on the area where you feel the discomfort. Consciously attempt to soften any physical tension there. You might imagine the tension melting away or a warm sensation that relaxes the muscles.

- Gently breathe into this area, imagining your breath reaching into the tight or painful spot and creating space and softness with each exhale.

- Speak to yourself with kindness and understanding about what you're feeling. You might use phrases like "It's okay to feel this," or "I am here with you."

- Visualize a soothing image, person, or scene that brings you comfort. Imagine this soothing presence is with you, offering warmth and compassion towards your pain.

- Make a conscious decision to allow the feeling or sensation to be there, without trying to change or eliminate it. Acknowledge its presence and give it permission to exist.

- Recognize that emotions and sensations are temporary and that allowing them can facilitate their natural passage. Note any changes in intensity or quality as you practice allowing.

Acting “As If”

The Acting "As If" exercise encourages you to act as if you are the type of person you want to be, even if it feels unnatural or difficult at first. This approach helps you move toward your values and desired behaviors, bypassing mental barriers.

1. Reflect on what qualities or goals you value most in areas such as personal development, relationships, career, or health. Write these down clearly.

- *Example: “I want to be more confident in social situations.”*

2. Honestly describe how you currently feel or behave in situations related to your desired change.

- *Example: “I often feel shy and reserved at parties, usually sticking to the corners and avoiding conversations.”*

3. Describe actions you can take to mimic the behavior of having already achieved your goal.

- *Example: “At the next party, I will initiate conversations with at least three people and introduce myself with a smile, maintaining eye contact.”*

4. After practicing the behaviors, reflect on the experience. Note any changes in feelings, thoughts, or further actions you noticed.

- *Example: “After initiating conversations, I noticed I felt more involved and less anxious as the evening progressed. People responded positively, which boosted my confidence.”*

5. Based on your reflections, outline how you can continue to use "Acting 'As If'" in everyday life or in other challenging situations.

- *Example: “At future social events, I will prepare some conversation starters beforehand and aim to speak to more people each time. I will also join a local club to practice speaking in front of groups.”*

Willingness vs. Willfulness

The "Willingness vs. Willfulness" exercise helps you distinguish between being open and accepting ("willingness") and being rigid and resisting reality ("willfulness").

1. Choose a recent situation where you experienced difficulty or distress.

- *Example: "I was assigned a new project at work with a tight deadline."*

2. Identify aspects of your reaction that were willful.

- *Example: "Complaining about the unfairness, procrastinating on the project, and wishing the situation were different."*

3. Consider how you could respond with willingness instead.

- *Example: "Acknowledging the challenge but choosing to focus on planning and executing the work efficiently. Asking for help or resources as needed."*

4. Reflect on the potential outcomes of willfulness vs. willingness.

- Example:

- *Willfulness Outcome: Increased stress, strained relationships at work, and potential delay in project completion.*

- *Willingness Outcome: More productive work, maintaining good relationships, and personal growth despite challenging circumstances.*

5. Identify specific actions you can take to practice willingness in daily life or in similar situations.

- *Example: "Next time I feel overwhelmed, I will take a few deep breaths, acknowledge the reality of the situation, and then list the immediate next steps I can take."*

Willingness Scale

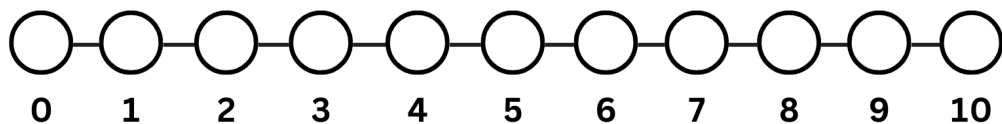
The Willingness Scale helps individuals assess and enhance a client's willingness to accept and experience difficult emotions or sensations as part of the therapeutic process of increasing psychological flexibility and decreasing avoidant behaviors.

1. Think about a specific emotion, thought, or situation that you find difficult or distressing. Describe the situation and the associated feelings or thoughts.

- Example: "being asked to give a presentation at work in front of a large group of colleagues. The thought of standing up in front of everyone, being the center of attention, and potentially making a mistake makes me feel extremely anxious."

2. The willingness scale is typically from 0 to 10, where 0 represents complete unwillingness to experience the emotion or situation, and 10 represents full willingness to allow and accept the experience without any resistance.

Rate your current level of willingness to experience the emotion or situation without trying to change it or push it away.



3. Identify any thoughts, beliefs, or feelings that might be preventing you from increasing your willingness score.

- *Example: “I’m going to mess up,” or “Everyone will think I’m incompetent.”*

4. Imagine what it would be like if your willingness score was higher. What would change in your behavior? How might you feel differently about the distressing situation or emotion?

- *Example: “With a higher willingness score, I might proactively seek opportunities to practice your speech, ask for feedback beforehand, or use strategies to manage anxiety rather than avoiding preparation.”*

5. Define specific actions you can take to increase your willingness to accept and experience the emotion or situation. These might include mindfulness exercises, exposure techniques, or other behavioral experiments.

- *Example:*

Saying Yes to Life

The "Saying Yes to Life" exercise is designed to encourage individuals to embrace life experiences fully, even those that are difficult or uncomfortable.

1. Recognize situations where you typically say "no" or avoid engagement. Describe your reasons for avoidance.

Example:

- Situation: Avoided attending a close friend's party.

- Reason for Avoidance: Feeling anxious about socializing and fearing awkward conversations.

2. Consider what saying "no" or avoiding these situations has cost you in terms of relationships, personal growth, and other areas.

- Example: Missed the opportunity to strengthen friendships and experience joy. Increased feelings of loneliness and regret.

3. Now, outline potential positive outcomes if you had chosen to engage rather than avoid.

Example: Could have enjoyed good company, shared laughter, and deepened relationships.

4. Create actionable steps to begin saying "yes" more often. Include support systems or resources you might need.

- Example: Accept the next social invitation I receive, ask a friend to accompany me for support, and plan to stay at the event for a minimum of one hour.

5. After saying "yes" more frequently, write down how it felt, what you learned, and how it impacted your life.

Tug of War with a Monster Metaphor

The "Tug of War with a Monster" exercise helps individuals realize the futility of fighting these "monsters" and the potential benefits of letting go of the rope to stop struggling.

1. Imagine you are in a tug of war with a large, intimidating monster. This monster represents your difficult thoughts, feelings, or memories.

Visualize a deep pit between you and the monster, symbolizing the potential consequences of continuing the struggle.

3. Recognize the effort and pain involved in the struggle. Consider the emotional and physical sensations of pulling the rope.

4. Explore the potential benefits of letting go of the rope. What relief might you feel? How might your focus change?

5. Based on your reflections, outline steps you can take to metaphorically "let go of the rope" in your daily life.

Broken Tools Analogy

The "Broken Tools Analogy" exercise to help individuals recognize when their coping strategies are no longer effective or helpful—similar to trying to use tools that are broken.

1. Think about recent challenges or stressors and list the methods you used to cope with them.

- Example: Avoiding social events to cope with social anxiety.

2. Evaluate whether these coping strategies (tools) are effective or broken, leading to long-term problems. Rate the effectiveness of each tool on a scale from 1 (completely ineffective) to 10 (highly effective).

3. Consider alternative strategies to replace your ineffective coping strategies (broken tools). The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ **Scheduling Time for Worry:** Designate a specific time each day to worry, allowing yourself to acknowledge and address concerns without dwelling on them constantly.
- ☐ **Deep Breathing Exercises:** Practice slow, deep breaths to activate the body's relaxation response and reduce stress.

- ☐ **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and release muscle groups throughout the body to promote relaxation and release tension.
- ☐ **Guided Imagery:** Visualize peaceful scenes or scenarios to induce relaxation and calm the mind.
- ☐ **Journaling:** Write about thoughts, feelings, and experiences to gain insight, process emotions, and reduce rumination.
- ☐ **Positive Affirmations:** Repeat affirming statements to challenge negative self-talk and enhance self-esteem.
- ☐ **Creative Expression:** Engage in artistic activities such as drawing, painting, or writing to express emotions and foster self-discovery.
- ☐ **Physical Exercise:** Participate in regular physical activity to reduce stress, improve mood, and promote overall health.
- ☐ **Problem-Solving Skills:** Break down problems into manageable steps and brainstorm potential solutions to address challenges effectively.
- ☐ **Humor and Laughter:** Engage in activities that elicit laughter or watch comedy to lighten mood and reduce stress.
- ☐ **Grounding Objects:** Carry or keep objects with sensory significance, such as a smooth stone or comforting scent, to provide a sense of security and grounding during times of stress.
- ☐ **Self-Care Rituals:** Establish regular self-care practices, such as baths, skincare routines, or relaxation rituals, to nurture well-being and replenish energy.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

4. Being Present

Mindfulness Meditation

This exercise helps to enhance awareness of the present moment and cultivate a non-judgmental attitude towards one's experiences, facilitating greater acceptance and psychological flexibility.

Instructions:

- Sit in a comfortable position, either on a chair or on the floor, with your back straight but not stiff. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to settle into the space.
- Shift your attention to your natural breathing pattern. Notice the sensation of air entering and leaving your nostrils or the rise and fall of your chest.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath without judgment.
- Begin to notice bodily sensations, such as any tension, warmth, or relaxation.
- Expand your awareness to sounds around you, whether distant or close. Embrace whatever you notice about your environment or body, observing without attachment or criticism.
- As thoughts or emotions surface, acknowledge them and let them pass without engaging or judging them. Label thoughts as "just thoughts" and feelings as "just feelings" to reinforce their transient nature.
- Gradually bring your attention back to your surroundings.
- Open your eyes slowly and take a moment to notice how you feel.
- Set an intention to carry this mindfulness into the rest of your day.

Mindful Breathing

This technique is designed to help individuals learn to use their breath as an anchor to maintain awareness of the present moment, especially when their mind starts to wander.

Instructions:

- Set a timer for the duration of your practice, typically 5-10 minutes when starting out.
- Take a few deep breaths to signal to your body that you are entering a period of focused attention.
- Let your breathing return to its natural rhythm and simply observe the breath as it enters and exits your body.
- Keep your attention on the physical sensations of breathing.
- When you notice your mind wandering, acknowledge the distraction and gently return your focus to your breath without judgment.
- As you become more comfortable with keeping your focus on your breath, begin to explore the full cycle of each breath, from the inhalation to the pause that follows, then the exhalation and the pause before the next breath. Feel the subtle movements and sensations in your body with each breath cycle.
- Gradually widen your attention to include your body and then the surrounding environment.
- Take a moment to notice any changes in your thoughts or how your body feels. Slowly open your eyes and transition gently back to your daily activities.

Mindful Eating Exercises

This exercise aims to enhance present-moment awareness, improve sensory experiences, and promote a healthier relationship with food by encouraging a focus on the eating experience itself.

Instructions:

- Choose a meal or snack to eat mindfully. Serve yourself a smaller portion than usual to help maintain focus.
- Look at your food and notice the colors, shapes, and arrangement on your plate. Smell the food and try to identify all the different aromas.
- Take a small bite of your food. Chew slowly, trying to identify all the flavors and textures. Notice the sounds of chewing and the movements of your mouth and tongue.
- After a few bites, pause to notice any sensations in your stomach. Reflect on how your body feels: Are you still hungry, satisfied, or full?
- Consider the mental and emotional effects of eating this way. Think about how this experience differed from your usual eating habits.
- Identify one meal per day to eat mindfully.
- Set reminders if necessary to practice mindful eating regularly.

Mindful Walking

This exercise helps enhance awareness of physical sensations, surroundings, and the rhythmic patterns of walking, promoting a calm and centered state of mind.

Instructions:

- Choose a quiet location where you can walk without too much interruption — a park, quiet street, or even a hallway.
- Decide on the duration of your walk, which can be as short as five minutes or as long as you like.
- Start walking at a slower pace than usual to facilitate greater awareness. Breathe naturally and let your arms swing freely by your sides.
- Focus on the feel of your feet making contact with the ground. Notice the lift of your heel, the roll of your foot from heel to toe. Become aware of other physical sensations, such as the wind on your skin or the temperature of the air.
- Listen to the sounds around you, whether it's birds chirping, leaves rustling, or distant traffic. Observe the environment — notice the colors, movements, and patterns in your surroundings.
- At the end of your walk, spend a few minutes standing or sitting quietly.
- Reflect on how your body feels and the state of your mind. Consider any changes in your mood or stress level.

Mindful Listening

Mindful listening involves fully concentrating on the sounds or words being heard, without allowing distractions to disrupt the focus. It also means listening without forming judgments or immediate reactions. This practice helps improve concentration, reduce reactivity, and foster deeper connections in interpersonal relationships.

Exercise 1:

- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to center yourself.
- Focus on the various sounds around you, one at a time. Listen to each sound as if you are hearing it for the first time.
- Pay attention to the characteristics of each sound, such as pitch, volume, and duration.

Exercise 2:

- Engage in a conversation with a friend, family member, or colleague.
- Listen intently to what the other person is saying without thinking about how you will respond.
- Notice the tone, pace, and emotion in the speaker's voice.

After completing the listening exercises, spend a few moments reflecting on the experience.

Mindful Observation

This exercise helps individuals practice being fully aware and present in the moment, observing their surroundings without judgment or attachment.

Instructions:

- Select a natural object from your immediate environment to focus on. This could be a plant, a cloud, an insect, or a household object.

- Spend a few minutes simply observing the object. Notice the colors, shapes, textures, and any movements.

- **See:** Notice the details of the object that you might usually overlook—patterns, highlights, shadows.

- **Touch:** If possible, touch the object. Feel its temperature, texture, and weight. Note how your skin perceives these sensations.

- **Hear:** Focus on any sounds coming from the object or produced by interacting with the object.

- **Smell:** If appropriate, gently smell the object. Does it have any scent, or does it affect the air around it?

- Pay attention to any thoughts, emotions, or memories that arise while observing the object. Note them in a non-judgmental way and then bring your focus back to observing.

Write down what you observed, thought, and felt during the exercise.

Single-Tasking

This exercise is intended to combat the often counterproductive effects of multitasking and to promote a mindful approach to daily activities.

1. Reflect on your typical day and identify when and where you multitask. Write down these instances and note any feelings or outcomes associated with multitasking.

Example: Checking emails while attending virtual meetings.

- Outcome: Often miss important details in both the emails and the meeting discussions.

2. Determine what steps you will take to ensure you can focus on this task without interruptions. Consider the environment, time of day, and tools needed to facilitate focused work.

Example: Close all unrelated browser tabs, turn off email notifications.

3. Engage in the task following your planned strategy. If distractions arise or you catch yourself slipping into multitasking, gently bring your focus back to the task at hand.

4. After completing the task, reflect on the experience and outcome.

5. Cognitive Defusion

Thought Labeling

This technique helps you recognize your thoughts for what they are—just thoughts, not facts. By labeling your thoughts, you can observe them more objectively and reduce their influence over your emotions and behaviors.

1. Begin by focusing on your breath to settle your mind. As thoughts arise, identify and label each one according to its nature. Use simple labels like "thinking," "worrying," "planning," "remembering," "imagining," or "judging." If you're not sure what label to use, simply label it "thinking."

Example: When you notice a thought about a work task, label it "planning." If you start critiquing how you're performing the exercise, label it "judging."

2. After the timer goes off, spend a minute or two reflecting on the experience. Consider how it felt to label your thoughts. Did it change your relationship with them?

3. Plan regular daily sessions for thought labeling practice. Identify situations in your day when you can apply thought labeling outside of formal practice to help manage stress or anxiety.

Saying Thoughts Aloud

This technique involves distancing oneself from the content of one's thoughts to see them as mere words rather than truths that must dictate feelings and behaviors.

1. Reflect on recent situations where you felt upset, anxious, or stressed. Identify the specific thoughts that were running through your mind during those times.

Example: "I'm not good enough to handle my job responsibilities."

2. Say the selected thought aloud clearly and slowly. Repeat the thought continuously for a set period, such as two to three minutes. As you repeat the thought, try to observe any changes in how the thought feels or how you react to it.

Example: The phrase began to lose meaning and sounded more like just a string of words than a factual statement.

3. Reflect on the overall experience and its effectiveness. Determine if this is a technique you would find useful to incorporate regularly into your coping strategies.

Silly Voices

This method helps individuals manage distressing or negative thoughts by repeating them in a silly or exaggerated voice.

1. Reflect on recent situations where you experienced negative or self-critical thoughts. Write down a few of these thoughts that were particularly distressing or persistent.

Example: "I always mess things up."

2. Think of a silly character from a movie, cartoon, or your imagination. Choose a voice that feels distinctly different from how you normally speak — it could be high-pitched, slow, like a popular cartoon character, or anything that feels absurd.

Example: A high-pitched, fast-paced cartoon voice.

3. Say the negative thought out loud in the silly voice you've chosen. Repeat it several times, each time trying to enhance the silliness of the voice. Notice how the thought feels as you do this. Does it seem as serious or believable as it did before?

Playing with Word Speed and Volume

This technique helps to reduce the impact and seriousness of these thoughts by altering the speed and volume at which these thoughts are internally voiced.

1. Reflect on your recent experiences and identify a few distressing or repetitive thoughts that significantly impact you. Write these thoughts down.

2. Choose one of the thoughts and repeat it in your mind at your normal speed. Then, speed it up significantly, like fast-forwarding a video, and notice any changes in how the thought feels.

3. Next, slow down the thought dramatically, as if it's being said in slow motion, and notice any changes in how the thought feels.

4. Return to the normal pace of the thought, then imagine saying it very loudly in your head, as if someone is shouting. Afterward, repeat the thought as if it's being whispered very softly, and notice any changes in how the thought feels.

Thanking Your Mind

This exercise involves thanking the mind for its thoughts, which helps to recognize the mind's protective or analytical role without necessarily agreeing with or acting upon the thoughts it generates.

1. Reflect on the types of thoughts that often recur in your mind, especially those that cause stress or emotional disturbance. Write down a few of these thoughts for use in this exercise.

2. Consider why the mind might produce such thoughts. Often, the mind is trying to protect, warn, or prepare us based on past experiences or learned behaviors. Write a brief explanation next to each thought about why the mind might be presenting this message.

3. For each thought listed, verbally thank your mind for trying to help, even if its method is not particularly useful. Say something like, "Thank you, mind, for trying to protect me from making mistakes."

4. After thanking your mind for each thought, reflect on any changes in how you feel about these thoughts.

Visualizing Thoughts

This exercise aids in mentally placing thoughts into a visualization where they can move away, you can observe them without judgment or attachment.

1. Choose an image that resonates with you for visualizing your thoughts. Common images include leaves floating down a stream, clouds moving across the sky, or cars passing on a road.

2. Imagine yourself sitting beside a stream watching leaves float by on the water's surface. Each time a thought arises, imagine placing that thought on a leaf and watch it float away downstream. Continue to do this with each new thought as it arises, simply observing without engaging with the content of the thought.

3. If your mind wanders or you find yourself getting involved with the thoughts rather than just observing them, gently bring your attention back to the image of the stream and the leaves. Use your breath as an anchor to return to whenever you need to refocus.

4. After about 10 minutes, or when you feel ready, gently open your eyes and come back to the present moment.- Reflect on how the exercise felt and whether visualizing thoughts in this way helped you to feel more detached from them.

The Courtroom Exercise

This exercise encourages a more objective evaluation of thoughts, helping to differentiate helpful thoughts from those that are unhelpful or distorted.

1. Identify a thought that has been causing you stress or discomfort.

2. Imagine a courtroom scenario where this thought is being challenged. Assign roles such as the defense attorney (defending the thought), the prosecutor (arguing against the thought), and the judge (you, making the final judgment).

3. List evidence that supports the thought (defense) and evidence that contradicts the thought (prosecution). Be as objective and factual as possible, gathering real-life examples and experiences.

Evidence for	Evidence against

4. Consider the strength and relevance of the evidence on both sides. Decide whether the thought is justified or if it should be dismissed.

Writing Thoughts Down and Destroying the Paper

This exercise helps individuals symbolically let go of their negative thoughts by physically writing them down and then destroying the paper. This act serves as a powerful metaphor for releasing psychological attachments and can provide tangible relief from distressing mental content.

1. Reflect on the thoughts that have been causing you stress or discomfort. Write each thought down on a separate piece of paper. Be honest and detailed in your writing.

2. Read each thought you've written aloud or silently to yourself. Notice any feelings or reactions each thought brings up, but try not to judge or engage with these feelings.

3. Choose a method to destroy the paper. If you're using a shredder, feed the paper into the shredder one at a time. If using scissors, cut the paper into small pieces. If burning, ensure it's done safely and legally. As you destroy each piece of paper, visualize letting go of the thought it represents.

4. Consider how it feels to have physically disposed of these thoughts. Do you feel lighter, relieved, or different in any way?

6. “The Observing Self”

Mirror Exercise

This exercise encourages individuals to practice observing themselves as if they were another person, helping to cultivate a separation between the self that observes and the thoughts, feelings, and physical reflections seen in the mirror.

Instructions:

- Find a mirror in a quiet place where you can be uninterrupted. Stand or sit comfortably in front of the mirror, looking at your reflection.
- Look at your reflection in the mirror. Notice the details of your face, your expression, and overall appearance. Try to see yourself as if you were looking at another person. Describe your observations silently to yourself.
- As you observe your reflection, pay attention to any thoughts or feelings that come up. Label these thoughts and feelings as if they were objects floating by, e.g., "There's a thought about looking tired," or "That's a feeling of sadness about my appearance."
- Shift your focus from what is being observed (your physical reflection, thoughts, and feelings) to the act of observing itself. Consider who or what is doing the observing. Try to connect with the part of you that remains constant and unchanged, regardless of the changing thoughts, feelings, or reflections.
- Reflect on how this exercise might affect your view of yourself and your interactions with others.

The Bus Metaphor

The "Bus Metaphor" teaches that you are the bus driver of your own life, and while you can hear the passengers (your thoughts and feelings), you are not obligated to drive them where they want to go. Instead, you decide the direction based on your values and goals.

1. Imagine you are driving a bus. Visualize what your bus looks like. Identify what your passengers (thoughts and feelings) are saying.

- Example: Anxiety Passenger: "You need to worry about the meeting because you're not prepared!"

2. Choose your own route based on your values, not where the passengers want you to go. Write down the route you choose and why it aligns with your values.

- Example: Chosen Route: Focus on preparing for the meeting first.

3. Plan how to manage passengers that try to take control of the wheel.

- Example: Strategy: "Acknowledge the passengers' concerns but remind them that I am in control and will make stops based on what is most important and beneficial for all."

Leaves on a Stream

This exercise encourages clients to observe their thoughts as if they are leaves floating down a stream, promoting a detached and mindful perspective.

Instructions:

- Visualize a gently flowing stream in your mind. Picture the details—the water's flow, the banks, surrounding trees, the sound of water.
- Imagine leaves floating on the surface of the stream, drifting slowly with the current.
- As you continue to visualize the stream, bring your attention to your thoughts. Each time a thought arises, imagine placing it on a leaf.
- Watch as the leaf with the thought floats away downstream. Allow the stream to carry it out of your sight, and then bring your attention back to the next thought and leaf.
- If you find yourself getting caught up in the thoughts or if the same thought comes back, gently place it back on another leaf and let it float away again.
- Continue this process for 5-10 minutes, always returning to the image of the stream and the floating leaves.

After completing the exercise, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to reflect. How did it feel to see your thoughts as separate from yourself? Were some thoughts more difficult to place on leaves than others?

Observer on the Hill Exercise

This exercise helps individuals gain a detached perspective on their thoughts and feelings. By visualizing themselves as an observer on a hilltop, individuals can learn to watch their experiences without getting overwhelmed by them.

Instructions:

- Imagine yourself sitting on a serene hilltop. Visualize the landscape around you, the sky above, and the space around the hill. Feel the ground beneath you and the air around you. Notice the calmness of this high place.
- Visualize your thoughts, feelings, and experiences as events happening in the landscape below the hill.
- See these events as separate from where you are on the hill. You can observe them, but they do not affect your calm, serene spot on the hill.
- Whenever you find yourself getting drawn into the scenes below, gently remind yourself to return to being the observer on the hill. Reaffirm your position on the hill and your role as an observer, not a participant, of the events below.
- After spending some time as the observer, slowly bring your awareness back to the room.

Reflect on how it felt to observe thoughts and feelings from a distance.

Theater Screen Exercise

This technique helps individuals gain a detached perspective on their thoughts and feelings by visualizing them as images on a theater screen.

Instructions:

- Imagine yourself walking into a large, dark movie theater. Picture yourself choosing a seat in the middle of the theater and sitting down, facing a large blank screen in front of you.
- Think about any recent thoughts or feelings that have been troubling you.
- Visualize these thoughts and feelings as images or scenes playing out on the theater screen. Watch them unfold from your seat in the audience.
- As you watch the scenes unfold, remind yourself that you are just an observer in the audience. You are not participating in the scenes; you are merely watching them.
- Notice any emotional reactions you have while watching and remind yourself that you are safe in your seat, separate from the events on the screen.
- Allow the screen to go blank once you feel ready to end the session.
- Reflect on the experience of observing your thoughts and feelings from a distance. Consider how this perspective might help you in daily life.
- Slowly open your eyes and stretch gently, bringing the calmness and detachment from the exercise back into the room with you.

Using Third Person Self-Talk

This a technique encourages individuals to speak about themselves in the third person as a way to create psychological distance from their immediate experiences.

1. Think about recent situations where you experienced strong emotions or stress. Write down a brief description of one or two of these situations.

Example: "I got really angry when I was stuck in traffic yesterday."

2. Rewrite the descriptions of the chosen situations using third person self-talk. Use your own name or third person pronouns.

Example: "John got really angry when he was stuck in traffic yesterday."

3. Reflect on how changing the perspective affects your feelings about the situation.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless a separately assessed disorder applies
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless another coded condition is established
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Use Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ACT material to support assessment or intervention planning, not to assign a diagnosis. Evaluate duration, severity, clinically significant distress or impairment, developmental and cultural context, medical/substance causes, exclusions, and relevant differentials.

Document-specific corrections

- Keep Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ACT explicitly non-diagnostic; its exercises organize experience and goals but do not establish a mental disorder or causal explanation.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2, 4, 27, 39, 43, 67]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Revise exposure content on pages [39] to require consent, an objectively safe graded hierarchy, condition-specific response guidance, progress review, and stop/reassessment criteria; never equate flooding with effective exposure.
- Revise trauma/protocol material on pages [3, 31]: distinguish stabilization and reflection from trauma processing, state training/scope requirements, and add dissociation, acute-risk, and destabilization safeguards.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2, 4, 27, 39, 43, 67] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- For Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ACT, exposure must be voluntary, graded, condition-specific, and conducted only in objectively safe and lawful situations. Do not prescribe flooding; screen medical limitations, trauma cues, dissociation, intoxication, and whether avoidance reflects real danger rather than phobic fear.

Crisis and current resources

- For Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ACT, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services. · Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

2026 Clinical Alignment

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