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serving with uncompromising care, relentless
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while helping our residents help themselves in
their recovery

DBT and ACT: Blending Two Treatment Models for a Comprehensive Approach Towards Eating Disorders

Gregory Holich, MS, LPC

DBT Program Coordinator

Timberline Knolls Residential Treatment Center

Lemont, IL

Presentation Outline

- Progression of Behavior Therapy
- Function of Eating Disorder Behaviors
- DBT Overview
- ACT Overview
- Blending the models for a Comprehensive Approach

Progression of Behavior Therapy

- **First Wave**
 - Watson & Pavlov
 - Classical Conditioning
 - Working to replace harmful behaviors with new, effective behaviors
- **Second Wave**
 - CBT
 - Changing problem behaviors by changing the thoughts that influence them
- **Third Wave**
 - ACT, DBT, Mindfulness-Based
 - acceptance, mindfulness, values

Function of Eating Disorder Behaviors

- **Experiential Avoidance**
 - Problem-solving (inner world vs. outer world)
- **Identified behaviors have become client's solution**
 - Restricting
 - Binging
 - Overeating
 - Rigid food choices
 - Purging
 - Calorie-counting
 - Over-exercising
 - Body-checking
 - Obsessive thinking

DBT Overview

- Overall goal: To create a life worth living.
- Originally developed to treat individuals with suicidal and parasuicidal behaviors.
- Effective treatment for those presenting with multiple problems.
- Teaching individuals new solutions to problems.

Dialectics

- Acceptance & Change
- Moving from Either/Or to Both/And
- Moving from black *OR* white thinking to black *AND* white thinking
- Wise Mind

DBT Framework

- Four components
 - Skills training
 - Individual therapy
 - Telephone consultation
 - Consultation group

DBT Skills

Acceptance Skills

- Mindfulness
 - Learning ways of becoming an observer of thoughts, emotions, and urges.
 - Controlling attention
- Distress Tolerance
 - Crisis Survival Skills
 - Getting through the moment without making matters worse.

Change Skills

- Emotion Regulation
 - Changing relationship with emotions
 - Reducing vulnerability to emotions
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
 - Asking, setting limits, and communicating feelings while respecting the relationship and self.

Acceptance Skills

- Mindfulness
- Distress Tolerance

Acceptance: Mindfulness

- Practicing being in control of attention
- Experiencing the present moment instead of avoiding or pushing it away
- Creating space from thoughts and emotions

“Just because a thought shows up doesn’t mean you have to pay attention to it.”

Acceptance: Distress Tolerance

- The application of mindfulness concepts in distressing situations
- Getting to a place to begin participating back in life
- Not about eliminating or getting rid of distress
- Getting through the moment without making matters worse
- Automatic, over-learned behaviors must be replaced with meaningful, healthy, effective behaviors

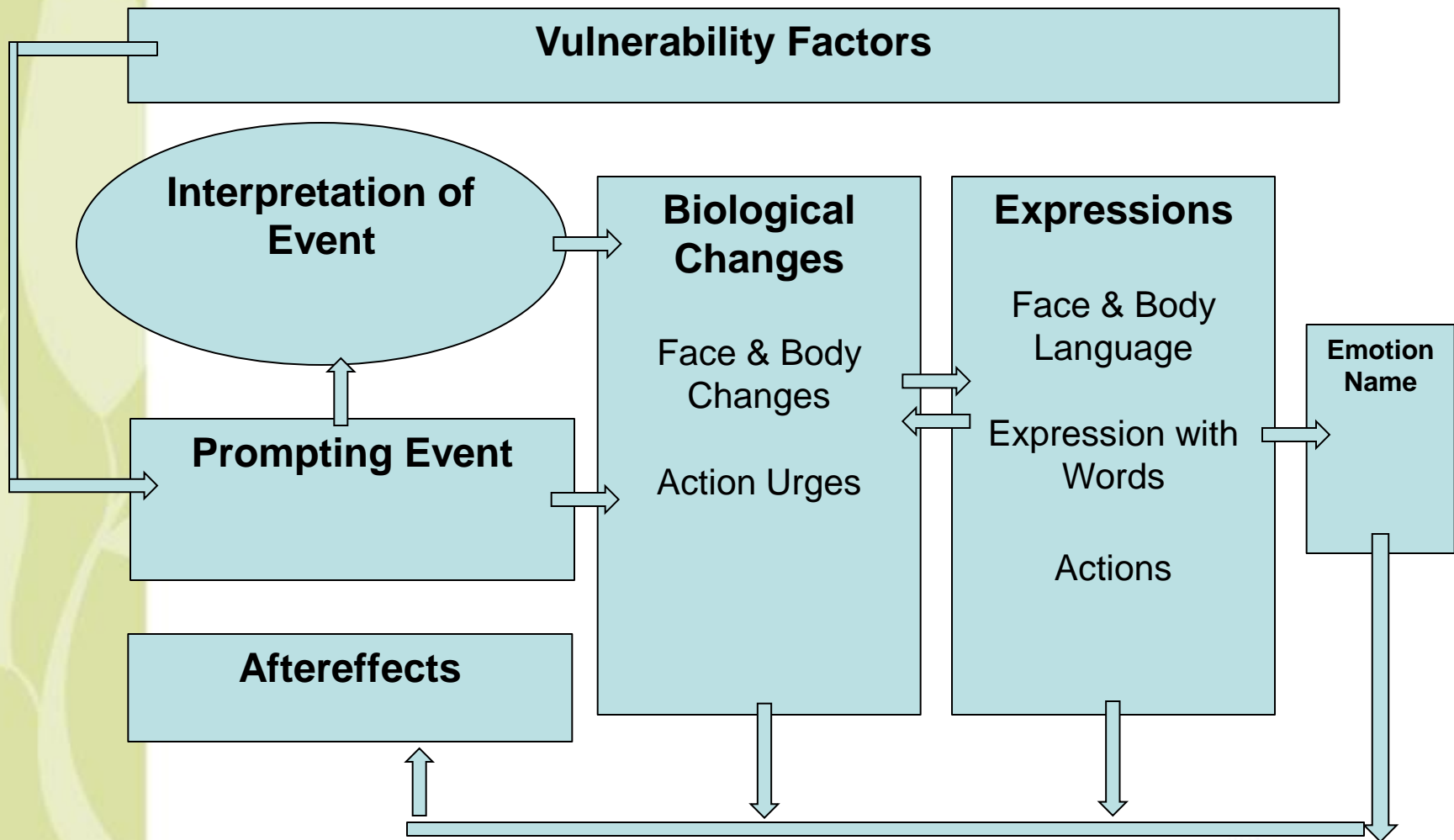
Change Skills

- Emotion Regulation
- Interpersonal Effectiveness

Change: Emotion Regulation

- Increasing emotional awareness
- Decreasing emotional vulnerability
- Developing new relationships with emotions
- Never about getting rid of emotions





Change: Interpersonal Effectiveness

- A life worth living will involve other people
- Spending time with other people means you may get hurt
- Advocating needs, setting limits, and communicating feelings to strengthen relationship with others and self
- Identifying wants vs. needs

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

- Creating a meaningful life while accepting the pain that goes with it
- Increase psychological flexibility
- Mind = Language
- Normal is abnormal

Language

Must learn to USE language instead of being CONSUMED by it.

Human Achievement

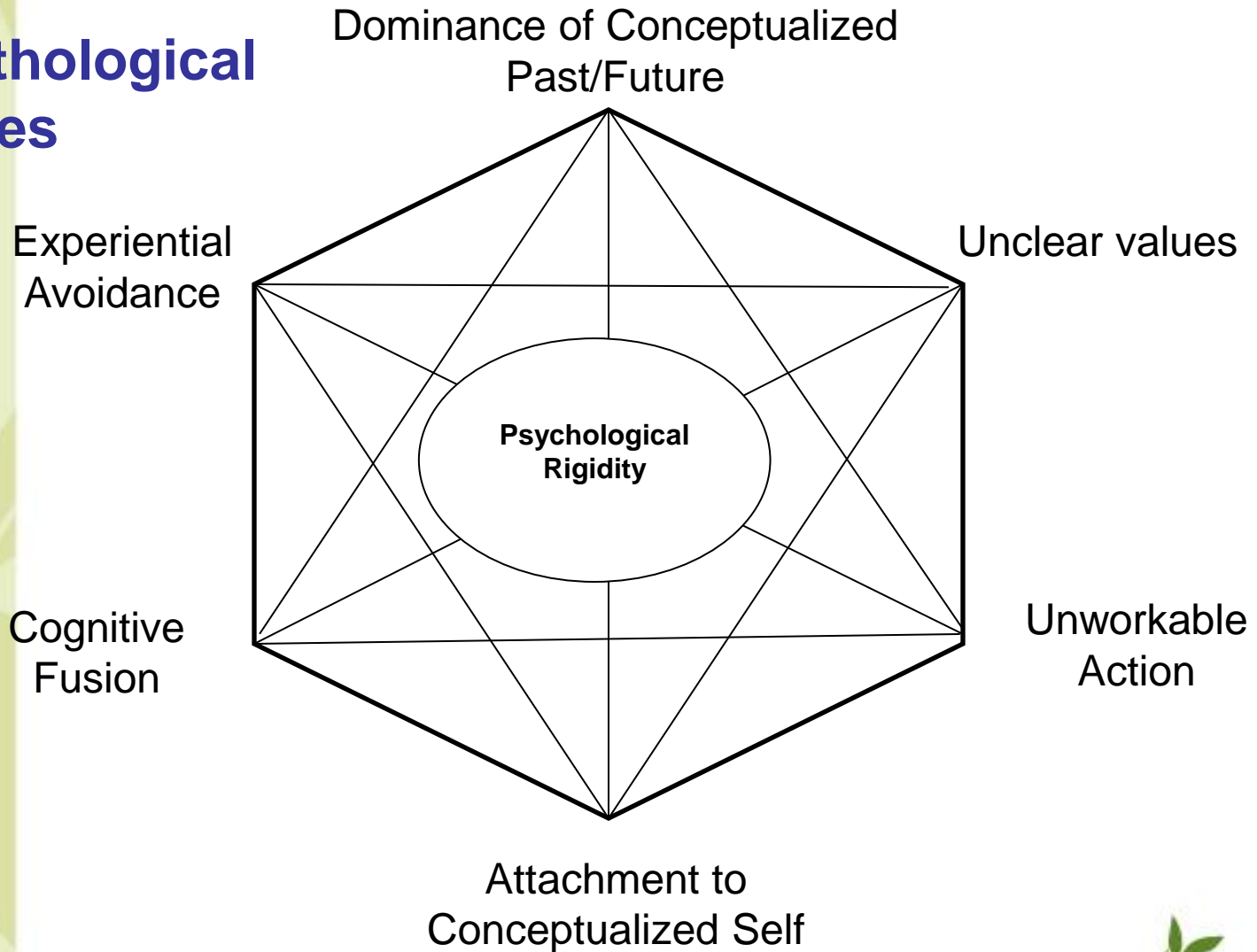
- Constructive & problem-solving
- Creativity, planning, learning
- Connect to others
- Evaluate & categorize
- Learn from the past, plan for the future

Human Misery

- Dwell on past
- Self-criticism
- Judgments
- Lies
- Prejudice
- Hatred

ACT

Core Pathological Processes



Dominance of Conceptualized Past/Future

- Dwell in painful memories
- Fantasies about the future
- With limited self-awareness of the present, difficult to make changes

Unclear Values

- Behavior driven more by cognitive fusion, not by values
- Unhealthy, harmful values

Unworkable Action

- Action that increases struggles
- Inaction
- Motivated by experiential avoidance

Attachment to Conceptualized Self

- “I am my story”
- A way of describing self
- Even positive thoughts can be harmful
 - “I am a healthy person.”

Cognitive Fusion

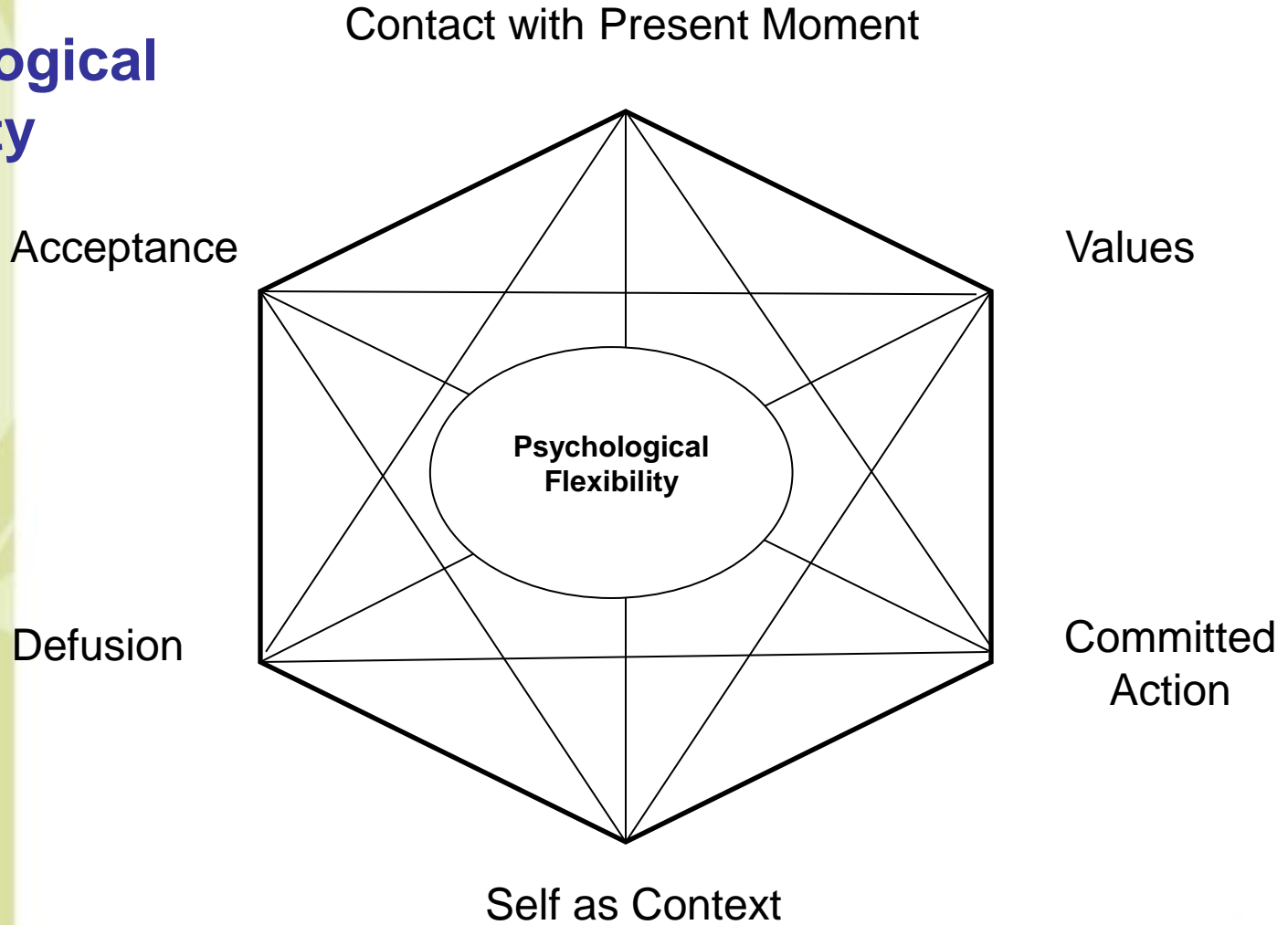
- Worrying, ruminating
- Treating thoughts as fact
- Fusing with memories infiltrating the present moment

Experiential Avoidance

- Attempting to get rid of or avoiding painful thoughts, emotions, or memories
- Opposite of acceptance
- Reinforcing due to short-term relief

ACT

**Psychological
Flexibility**



Contact with Present Moment

- Paying attention to the here and now
- Connecting with the internal and external world

Values

- Provide direction and influence choice
- Desirable action and characteristics

Committed Action

- Stresses importance of effectiveness
- Actions must reflect values

Self as Context

- Thinking self vs. Observing self
- Always “me” in the face of thoughts, environment, and body changes

Defusion

- Observing thoughts vs. Being thoughts
- Noticing without attachment

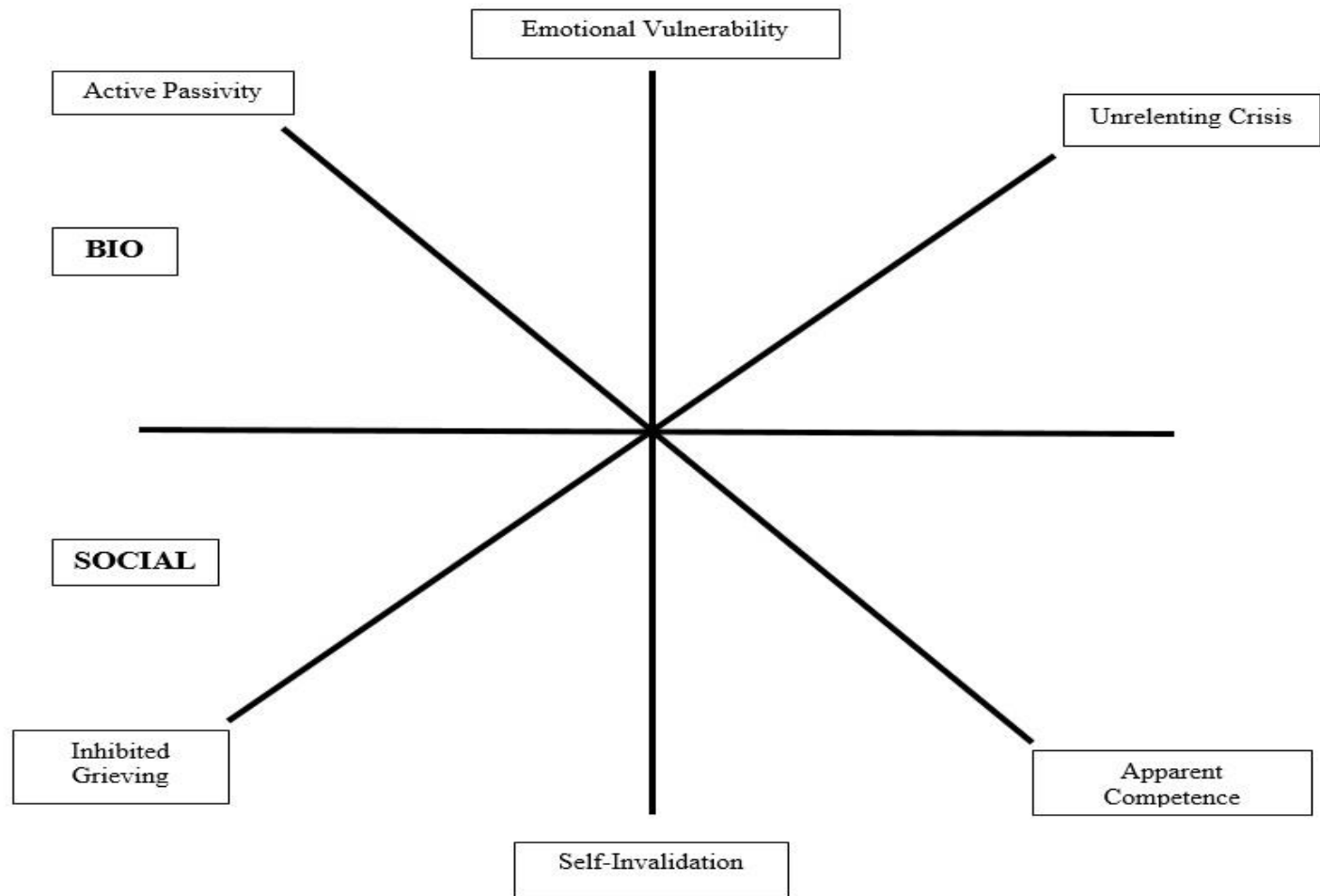
Acceptance

- Acknowledgment of reality
- Allowing self to experience emotions, thoughts, and urges.

Why Blend ACT and DBT?

- DBT manualized skill sets support using the ACT processes
- Use DBT skills Observe, Describe, and Participate to defuse from thoughts, contextualized self, and live in the present moment
- Utilize DBT skills and values to drive behavior over avoidance

Dialectical Dilemmas



Active Passivity

- Stress increases as problems go unsolved
- Individual may begin to communicate their needs using ineffective methods

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Committed Action

Values

Apparent Competence

- The emotional experience of these individuals is often misread
- Distress becomes hidden behind incongruent, non-verbal expression

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Contact with the Present Moment

Self-as-Context

Emotion Vulnerability

- Bio-social model
(biological vulnerability & environmental invalidation)
- Increase in emotional suffering

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Acceptance

Defusion

Self-Invalidation

- The individual judges emotional states
“Its stupid for me to feel this way”
- The individual denies emotional states
“I am not feeling this way”

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Acceptance

Defusion

Self-as-Context

Inhibited Grieving

- The individual inhibits emotional pain through escape and avoidance
- The individual does not fully experience the emotional process

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Committed Action

Values

Contact with the Present Moment

Unrelenting Crisis

- The individual creates and becomes controlled by ongoing aversive events
- The attempt to decrease emotional distress inadvertently increases problems and dysregulation

ACT Psychological Flexibility

Committed Action

Values

Blending ACT and DBT

- Mindfulness
 - Acceptance and defusion from thoughts through practice and application
 - Re-contextualizing thoughts
- Distress Tolerance
 - Emphasis on acceptance of emotion and changing behavior
- Emotion Regulation
 - Identifying emotions with a non-judgmental stance
 - Clarifying values and taking action to move toward a meaningful life
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
 - Organizing communication through values and skills

Citations and References

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Thank you!
greg.holich@timberlineknolls.com





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