Acceptance and commitment therapy: an overview

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Abstract

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is described as a third wave cognitive-behavioural therapy that is based in Relational Frame Theory (RFT).

ACT is a psychotherapeutic approach that emphasizes the learning of acceptance and mindfulness skills as means to intervene in the psychological processes that underlie psychopathology, such as cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance. The aim of this communication is to provide an overview of ACT, covering briefly its theoretical foundations (Functional Contextualism and Relational Frame Theory), and to explain the psychological flexibility model that underlies ACT in its conceptualization of human suffering and psychopathology. The core therapeutic processes of ACT (mindfulness, acceptance, cognitive defusion, self-as-context, values and committed action) will be described, and given the experiential nature of many of the ACT interventions, these will be illustrated through experiential exercises and metaphors.