

Mind Full or Mindful? Flexible Living in a Stressed Out World

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Circle: Introduce Yourself

1. Name, field of study, where you're from
2. Name one thing that's going on inside you right now: physical sensation, feeling, thought, image, memory

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Disclaimer

- o Today's workshop is experiential in nature
- o It may stir up some thoughts and emotions
- o You are invited to participate and share during activities, but you never have to
- o Out of respect for everyone in the room, please agree to confidentiality

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Small Circles: Identify Group Norms

Identify some things that are important for you with regard to how the group behaves today:

- Participation
- Confidentiality
- Patience
- Listening
- Exiting

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Special Thanks

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- Lauren Brown (Nevada PBIS @ UNR)
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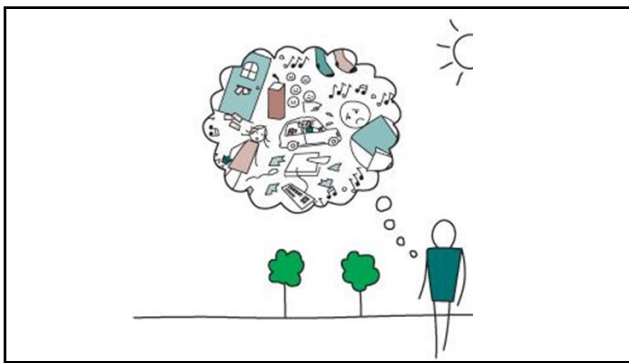
Psychological Flexibility

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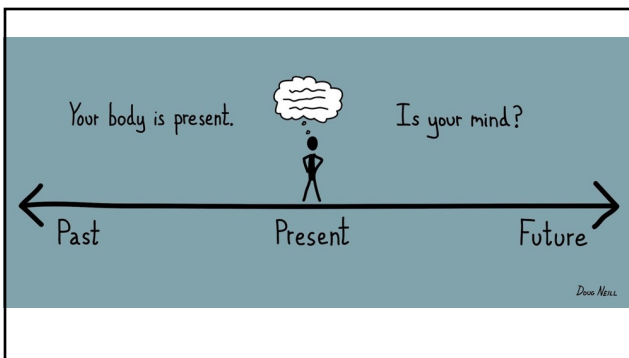
Psychological Flexibility

The ability to be in the present moment with full awareness and openness to experience and to take action guided by values.

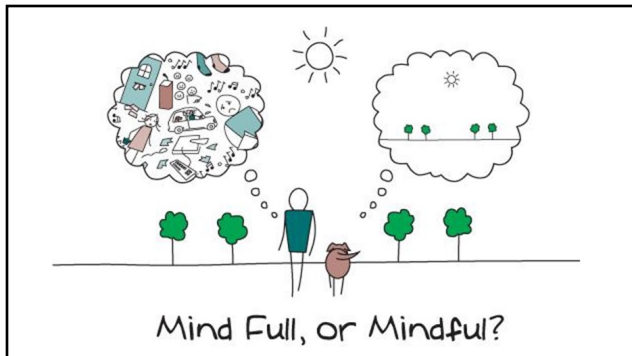
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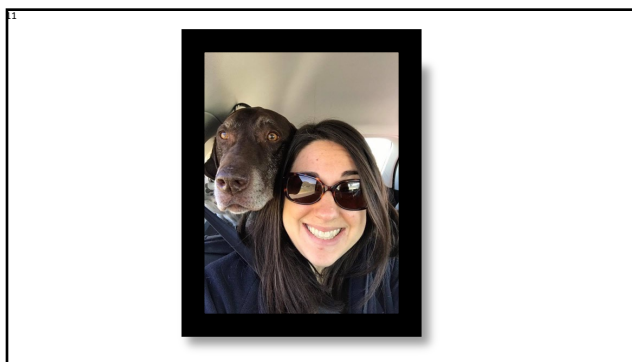
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Mindfulness

Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.

Why is a dog more mindful than a person?

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Language - The Good

Language is useful:

- Communicate
- Predict and plan
- Solve complex problems
- Develop rules to regulate behavior
- Learn from people and cultures that no longer exist
- Remember cool stuff

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Sweet Moment For Two



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Language - The Bad

Language can create some challenges:

- Create an idealized future
- Form negative opinions about ourselves and others
- Construct hateful and prejudice beliefs
- Recall or relive traumatic events
- Develop rules for acting that are harmful and ineffective
- Language can make it difficult to maintain contact with the present moment

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Difficult Thoughts

We are all faced with difficult thoughts and feelings

What are some that might show up for you?

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Stress

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE



WHAT IT FEELS LIKE



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ACTIVITY: Draw It



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"Mindfulness for Two" Activity

Person #1: Express the answers to the questions above (30 seconds)

- Don't explain them, just express them

Person #2: Appreciate (30 seconds)

- Let go of nodding, smiling, hand patting, agreeing
- Don't try understand, just listen nonjudgmentally

When I tell you to, we will switch roles

"Eyes On" appreciation

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ACTIVITY: List It

Let's make a list of everything we've done to feel better

How workable are these strategies?

- Short-term?
- Long-term?
- In the service of the life you want/your values?

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Workability (Drill this term into your mind)

"Is what you're doing working to make your life rich, full, and meaningful?"

In other words, we want to know if a thought helps you move toward a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life.

To determine this, ask questions like these:

- If you let this thought guide your behavior, will that help you create a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?
- If you hold on to this thought tightly, does it help you to be the person you want to be and do the things you want to do?

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RANDOM TRANSITION SLIDE (...and things that Ashley and Jodie really value)



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Acceptance and Commitment Training

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ACT Research

ACT has been successfully used to treat:

- **anxiety and stress** (Bond & Bunce, 2000; Twohig & Woods, 2007; Zettle, 2003),
- **pain** (Dahl, Wilson, & Nilsson, 2007)
- **substance use** (Gifford, Kohlenberg, Hayes, Antonuccio, Piasecki, Rasmussen-Hall, & Palm, 2006; Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Bissett, Piasecki, Batten, Bird, & Gregg, 2006),
- **depression** (Zettle & Hayes, 1986; Zettle & Raines, 1989),
- **burn out** (Hayes, Bissett, Roget, Padilla, Kohlenberg, Fischer, Masuda, Pistorello, Rye, Berry, & Niccolls, 2006)

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The Ubiquity of Human Suffering

Society tells us a good life is a pain-free life

The perfect state of being is happiness

You can control unhappy feelings, and if you don't, then you haven't tried hard enough, taken the right medication, exercised enough, made enough money, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

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Alternative Assumption: Destructive Normality

Normal language & cognitive processes often are destructive and can amplify or exacerbate normal processes into pathological suffering.

According to Relational Frame Theory (RFT):

Normal Language is the issue

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Why Use Metaphors?

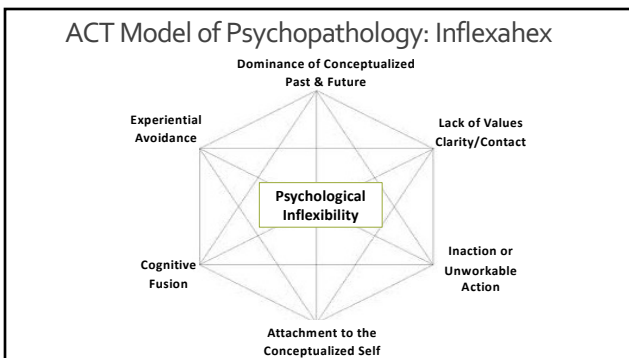
Metaphors let the mind use its ability to take what it knows from one thing and apply it to another thing, which cuts down on learning and processing time.

Metaphors are symbols, like words and thoughts. Because we are working with relating to words and thoughts differently, metaphors are a natural compliment.

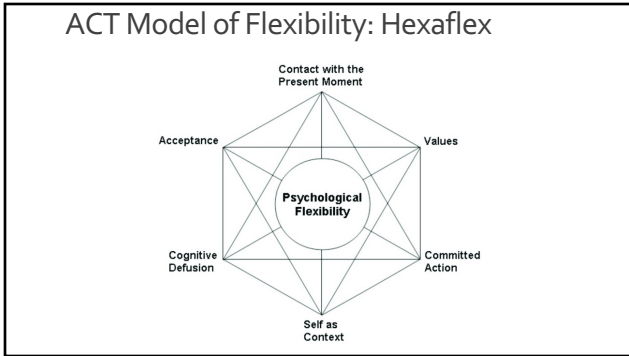
Messages are inherently softer, more subtle, and more individualistic (also fun and memorable!) than strict rules of performance.

Metaphors make abstract concepts concrete by providing a rich verbal context that evokes thoughts, feelings, and behaviors similar to those evoked by the actual situation.

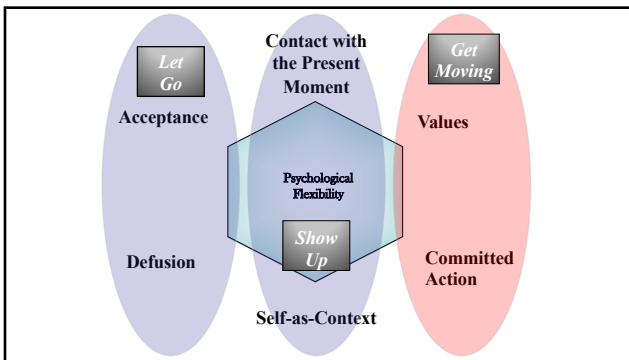
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Experiential Avoidance vs Acceptance

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Experiential Avoidance

The mind is a problem solving device
• If there is a problem we want to fix it



Problem = Something Unwanted

Solution = Avoid or Get Rid of IT

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Experiential Avoidance

Using "problem-solving mind" on internal world CAN MAKE THINGS WORSE

Trying to get rid of, suppress, avoid, or escape from unwanted "private experiences."

Problem: I feel terrible

Solution: This makes me feel better



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Metaphor:
Hungry Tiger

Experiential
Avoidance

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Acceptance

WHAT IT IS NOT

- Tolerating
- Putting up with
- Resignation
- Defeat
- A "less than" alternative
- Passive

WHAT IT IS

- An act
- A behavior
- A move
- Openness, without defense
- Dropping judgment
- Making room for painful feelings, sensations, or emotions

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Willingness

Being willing to experience whatever shows up (privately) as you take steps forward



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Acceptance

Metaphor: Ball in a pool

WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
When escape and avoidance of experiences interfere with important actions; when there is a focus on getting rid of pain and discomfort.

WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focus on learning from pain and moving on


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Processing Time

What is your personal takeaway from experiential avoidance vs. acceptance?



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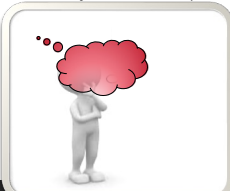


Fusion Vs Diffusion

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Fusion

Cognitive fusion is when people are guided by the literal content of their thoughts rather than by their direct experience with the world



I used to think that the brain was the most wonderful organ in my body. Then I realized who was telling me this. ...Emo Phillips

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Fusion Exercise

Metaphor:
Milk

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Defusion

- Letting thoughts come and go rather than holding onto them
- Simply noticing thoughts and acting in the service of what matters to us
- Allowing thoughts to have less influence over our behavior
- De-literalizing language

HARRIS, 2009

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Defusion is not about *true* or *false*


But rather . . .

- workable or unworkable
- in the service of dealing with things effectively, doing what you care about, having a rich, full, and meaningful life


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Defusion

Looking AT thoughts rather than FROM thoughts



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Metaphor:
Milk, Milk, Milk

WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
When private events are functioning as barriers; the focus is on "my thoughts/feelings are a problem to be solved"


WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focus on learning what works

Defusion

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Processing Time

What did you notice about that last activity in relation to what you learned about fusion and de-fusion?



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Inflexible Attention vs Present Moment

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Rumination/Fixation (Past or Future)

I used to have so much more autonomy...

We have to be a 5 star school in 3 years!



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Metaphor:
Walk the hallway

Notice each time your attention is repeatedly drawn to certain thoughts, memories or feelings.

Past/Future Attention Exercise

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Mindfulness

"Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally"

Kabat-Zinn, 1994



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Living Flexibly in the Here and Now

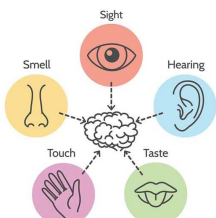
Past is gone forever and the future is not here yet

In this perspective, time is not a thing- just a measure of change

"There is only now"

Human experiences consists of stories or memories of the past and construction of the future. The memories, stories, and constructions are PRESENT—the past and future can never be.

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Present Moment Awareness

Metaphor: Senses


WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
When scattered, unaware, or moving inflexibly into the past or future

WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focusing on useful noticing

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Processing Time

Where has your attention been today?
Have you noticed when it wandered?




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BREAK TIME

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Self-as-Content vs
Self-as-Context

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Self-as-Content (a.k.a. Conceptualized Self)

The *conceptualized self* is the verbal content that we use to define and describe ourselves
Conceptualized Self can lead to "self as description"



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The Observing Self

a stable and continuous part of you that observes everything you experience

sleepy Why did I come to this school? Headache's back
Headache from last night
Too much coffee! Headache's back antsy
7 AM 10 AM Maybe I have some ibuprofen in my bag
Only 16 more pages OMG! I forgot to call that
parent It will probably be fine
Caffeine, please! Anxious anticipation
Am I good enough?
I hate grading!

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The Observing Self

a stable and continuous part of you that observes everything you experience

Not enough time to eat lunch again Still sleepy
Head still hurts, but better
When is this day over? More caffeine!
Can't wait to go home 1 PM 4 PM May be I should have
studied business
Satisfied with a job well done Am I still
depressed?
Too much work to do! My coffee is cold!
Is that kid ever absent? Why don't they get the assignment
I forgot to send that
paper home!

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The Observing Self

"The me who's watching me"

Here's *me* and here's *my thoughts and feelings*

A stance which views the self as the "container" of all internal experiences

A you that's "big enough" to hold whatever you experience

A self which is different from those experiences

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Activity: Brief Observing

WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
When the focus is on my story and comparisons to others; defending, hiding

WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focus on awareness and greater perspective taking

Self-as- Context

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Processing Time

The observing self is not the real self but merely a perspective one can take on thoughts and feelings that provides freedom to choose. Discuss.



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Disruption of Values vs Recognition of Values



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Disruption of Values

Some decide what they "should" value instead of exploring what they actually do value.

Others may struggle with identifying values because they've never before been asked.



Avoidance and fusion tend to become so important and focused on that they take over the energy required to attend to the guiding values that can give a person's behaviors and life meaning.

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Disruption of Values

- What's the point?
- Nothing matters.
- I don't know where I'm going.
- I don't know what to do.
- What should I do with my life?
- Everything seems meaningless...I feel disillusioned.
- Ever since (my divorce, my illness, I started using drugs, etc.), my life has been going nowhere.

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Values in ACT are Freely Chosen

- The way we want to interact with the world, other people, and ourselves
- What we want to stand for in life
- How we want to behave
- What sort of person we want to be



Not about what you *should* do, *must* do, or *have to* do.
But rather what you *choose* for yourself.



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Disruption of Values Exercise

Metaphor: Flip the Coin (Card)

WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
Yearning for meaning and self-direction

WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focus on chosen qualities of action; greater meaning and purpose by choice

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Processing Time

Share out with your partner one of two things that you value and one or two things that might disrupt those values.



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Inaction vs Committed Action

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Fork in the road...where will it take you?

Barriers in the form of practical problems that you will face;
Experiences you have been trying to avoid or thoughts you have been fused with;
If you come to a fork in the road, commitment occurs in the very moment a person takes a step in one of two directions.

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Committed Action

Committed action is a step-by-step process of acting to create a whole life, a life of integrity, true to one's deepest wishes and longings.
Commitment involves both persistence and change - whichever is called for in living one's values.
Committed action is inherently responsible - based on the view that there is always an **ability to respond** in any situation.

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Committed Action

- Specific and measurable in some way
- Practical and within your abilities
- Encourage “public” commitment
- Linked to values and on target
- “Pivot from avoidance and redirect the yearning to be competent” (Hayes, 2019)

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Committed Action

ACTIVITY:
Eye Contact

WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS?
Perfectionism and avoidance of failure; yearning for competence; procrastination; workaholism

WHAT'S THE POINT?
Focus on building larger habits of values based action

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Processing Time

When we are stressed, anxious, or burned out... can you be that person you want to be?

Can this be done effectively if we don't also empathize with our experience and recognize our needs?

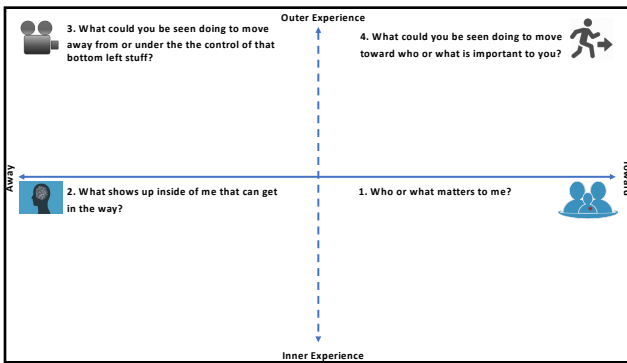
How will this apply to you?



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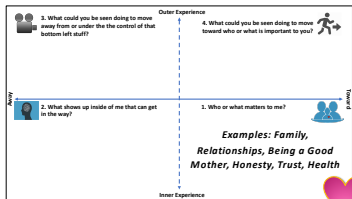
ACT MATRIX: A CLINICAL TOOL

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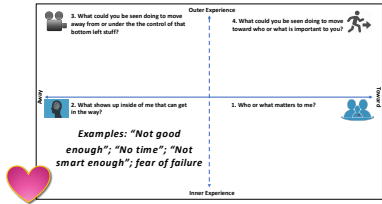
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Quadrant 1: Who or what matters to me?



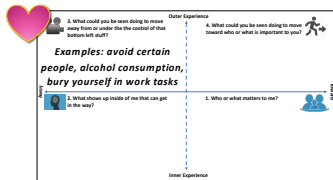
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Quadrant 2: What shows up inside of me that can get in the way?



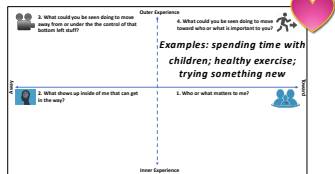
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Quadrant 3: What could you be seen doing to move away from or under the the control of that bottom left stuff?



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Quadrant 4: What could you be seen doing to move toward who or what is important to you?



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Addressing the "Stuck Loop"

1. What could you be seen doing to move away from or under the the control of that bottom?

2. What shows up inside?

3. What matters to me?

4. What could you be seen doing to move toward who or what is important to you?

Outer Experience

Inner Experience

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Wrap up

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Six Pivots from Pain to Purpose (Hayes, 2019)

1. See our thoughts with enough distance so we choose what we do next regardless of our mind's chatter
2. Notice the story we have constructed about ourselves and gain perspective of who we are
3. Allow ourselves to feel even when thoughts are painful or create a sense of vulnerability
4. Direct attention in an intentional way rather than by mere habit; Noticing what is present here and now inside and outside of us
5. Choose qualities of being and doing that we want to evolve toward
6. Create habits that support those choices

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ACT in PBS

Individuals	Family/Team Members	Schools/Organizations
Help people recognize challenging thoughts and engage in adaptive behaviors	Empower caregivers to provide care even in the fear of challenging moments	Team building Professional stress
Person centered planning	Diffuse from maladaptive stories they have created about their loved one	Improving group functioning
Get out of maladaptive behavior patterns	Accept their loved one for who they are	Conflict resolution
Perspective taking & noticing toward/away	Overcome personal stress	Help teams be more effective and values driven
	Perspective taking & noticing toward/away	Interventions across tiers
		Perspective taking & noticing toward/away

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Circle: Pivots and Committed Actions

1. A meaningful takeaway from today's workshop.
2. Name one committed action.

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Thank You

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Resources

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