

## Informed Consent

- The name “acceptance and commitment therapy” reflects a key message: accept what is out of your personal control, and commit to action that improves your life
- It’s a very active form of therapy/coaching. It’s not just talking about your problems and feelings. Our aim here is to work together as a team, to help you be the sort of person you want to be and build the sort of life you want to live.
- Part of this approach involves learning skills to handle difficult thoughts and feelings more effectively, so they have less impact and influence over you. When we introduce these skills, I’ll ask you to practice them between sessions. You don’t have to do that, of course; but it’s like learning to play a guitar or drive a car: the more practice you do, the better you get.
- ACT also involves clarifying your values: finding out what matters to you, what you want to stand for in life, what strengths and qualities you want to develop, how you want to treat yourself and others.
- It also involves taking action to solve your problems, and do things that make life better.
- I want you to leave here after each session with an action plan: something practical to take away and use to actively improve your life.

### ***Consider adding:***

- At times, therapy may seem like a roller-coaster ride; but I’ll be there in the roller coaster car with you.
- I will ask you at times to try new things that may pull you out of your comfort zone – like learning new skills to handle difficult thoughts and feelings - but you never have to do them. You are always free to say no to anything I suggest.

## “Press Pause”

*(This isn’t essential, but I highly recommend you run through this on your first session, because it will give you a very powerful way to interrupt problematic behaviour and reinforce workable behaviour as it arises in session.)*

- Can I have permission to “press pause” from time to time - so if I see you doing something that looks like it might be really helpful or useful, in terms of dealing with your problems and improving your life, I can just slow the session down and get you to really notice what you are doing?
- For example, I may ask you to pause or slow down, take a couple of breaths, notice what you’re thinking or feeling or saying or doing. That way, you’ll be able to see more clearly what you’re doing, and we can look at ways you can use it outside of this room. Is that okay?
- And can I also “press pause” if I see you doing something that looks like it may be contributing to your problems or making it worse – so we can address it?
- And of course, this goes both ways – you can also “press pause” on me, any time you like.

## Teamwork

- The idea here is that you and I are a team, working together, to help you build a better life.

*If there is any sign of conflict or tension or opposition, we can then check with the client: Can I just check we are still a team here? We are working together, as a team, with the same aim: to help you build a better life? I’m asking because it doesn’t feel to me like we are. Can we have a look at what’s getting in the way of us working together more effectively?*