ACT Made Simple: The Extra Bits

A collection of tips, tools, techniques, scripts, discussions, worksheets, eBooks, audio MP3s and YouTube videos, to support and extend the 2nd Edition of ACT Made Simple

By Dr. Russ Harris
How To Use This E-book

In the 2nd edition of ACT Made Simple, you’ll find an “extra bits” textbox near the end of most chapters. You can download all the materials mentioned in those boxes – plus quite a few extra ones I’ve thrown in for good measure – from the links in this document.

Please feel free to share all these resources with colleagues, students, trainees and clients.

On the last page of this document you’ll find information about online training in ACT and online resources you can use with your clients to “supercharge” your sessions.

Free Study Group On Facebook

The ACT Made Simple Facebook group includes thousands of practitioners from around the world. It’s open to any therapist, coach, counsellor, doctor, nurse, physio, dietitian, OT, youth worker, BCBA or any other type of health professional who wishes to discuss, share resources, ask questions, explore ideas, or help and support others to learn more about the practical application of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy. And more than that, it’s a space where we can deepen our passion for ACT, and apply it to ourselves, so we can grow not just as practitioners but as human beings.

You can find us here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/941642582695315/

How To Join The Free Study Group

First, the good news: There will be a permanent record of this study group, always available, in the ACT Made Simple Facebook group. (Yes, it will be available for the rest of time, until the heat death of the universe.) You will be able to access this material at any time from the ‘Announcements’ section on the FB group. You can also use the Facebook search function. Simply go to the search bar and enter the hashtag for the chapter you want – e.g. enter #ACTMadeSimpleChapter1 or #ACTMadeSimpleChapter2 etc.

If you are reading this after November 2019, the study group will have finished and you can access it as above. If you are reading this before those dates ...

The study group started in June 2019 and will run weekly for approximately 4 months – ending some time in November 2019. It’s not “live” like a webinar. We read chapters and then discuss them on FB. So if you want to join us, there’s nothing you need to sign up for; all you need do is join ACT Made Simple on FB and once you’re in, keep an eye out for each weekly announcement about what we’re doing in the study group that week.
Chapter 1: The Human Challenge
Discussion: The Matrix & The Choice Point - Similarities & Differences
Worksheet/Diagram: The Choice Point
Diagrams: The Hexaflex & Triflex
YouTube Animation: The Choice Point: A Map For Life
YouTube Animation: How The Mind Evolved
YouTube Animation: The 3 Happiness Myths

Chapter 2: Getting Hooked
Worksheet: Six Core Pathological Processes in ACT (to “unpack” any issue or diagnosis)
Worksheet: ACT Case Formulation

Chapter 3: “Mindfulness” and Other Dodgy Words
YouTube Animation: 5 Mindfulness Myths

Chapter 6: What’s the Problem?
Worksheet: Dissecting The Problem
Worksheet: The Bull’s Eye
Worksheet: ACT Case Formulation
Tips: Establishing Behavioral Goals In Tricky Cases.
Tips: When Other People Are The Problem
Tools: How To Set An Agenda
Tools: How To Structure A Session

Chapter 7: Where Do I Start?
Worksheet: Vitality Vs. Suffering Diary
Worksheet: Problems & Values

Chapter 8: Creative What?!?
Worksheet: Vitality Vs. Suffering Diary
Worksheet: Join the DOTS

Chapter 9: Drop the Struggle
Worksheet: The Daily Struggle
Tips: Normalize Clients’ Struggles With Their Emotions
Tips: Tricky Reactions To “Pushing Away Paper”
YouTube Animation: The Struggle Switch Metaphor
YouTube Animation: The Polygraph Metaphor
Chapter 10: Dropping Anchor

Audio MP3 - dropping anchor: 40 seconds
Audio MP3 - dropping anchor: 2 minutes
Audio MP3 - dropping anchor: 7 minutes
Audio MP3 - dropping anchor: 11 minutes
Tips: When to “sit” with feelings
Tips: How to drop anchor in bed
Tips: Being flexible with dropping anchor
Tips: If the client says dropping anchor is “not working” or “I don’t get it”
Tips: Working with dissociation
Tips: Distraction versus flexible attention
Script: Dropping anchor with flashbacks
Resources: The ACT Companion smartphone app & contacting the present moment

Chapter 11: Notice That Thought

Tips: Tricky reactions to the Hands as Thoughts exercise
Tips: How to “Make the link” when you see fusion in session
Tips: Shatter the illusion that our thoughts control

Chapter 12: Deeper into Defusion

Tips: How to tell when your clients are defusing
Technique: Titchener’s Repetition

Chapter 13: The Defusion Smorgasbord

Diagram: Summary of Common Defusion Techniques
Tips: Defusion From Images
Tips: Additional defusion methods
Tips: Fusion & experiential avoidance in everyday language
Worksheet: The Getting Hooked Worksheet
Resources: How to use the ACT Companion app for defusion.
YouTube Video: Thanking Your Mind
YouTube Animation: The Sushi Train

Chapter 15: Leaves, Streams, Clouds, and Sky

Audio MP3: “Hearing Your Thoughts”

Chapter 16: “Technique Overload” and Other Perils

Tool: Create your own ACT tool kit

Chapter 17: Being Present

Scripts: Mindful breathing, mindful drinking, mindful eating, mindful body scan
Audio MP3: Notice Your Hand
Worksheet/Handout: Engaging, Savoring, and Focusing In Daily Life
Discussion: The Mindful Therapist
Tips: Clients with low mood who ruminate and worry
Resources: The ACT Companion smartphone app & contacting the present moment
Chapter 18: Hold Yourself Kindly

Scripts: Additional self-compassion exercises
eBook: Tricky client reactions and other barriers to self-compassion
Script & Tips: Inner-child imagery
Discussion: The ACT take on “forgiveness”
Resources: Using the ACT Companion app for acceptance and self-compassion

Chapter 19: Know What Matters

Techniques: Additional values exercises
Worksheet: Checklist of 40 Common Values
Worksheet: Common Values in 4 domains
Worksheet: The Life Compass
Discussion: What If The Client Has Destructive values?
Discussion: Values vs desires, wants, needs, feeling, virtues, morals, and ethics
Discussion: More examples of goals versus values
Tips: “Stepping stone” answers to questions about values
Tips: How to bring in values in later sessions
YouTube animation: Values versus goals
Resources: Using the ACT Companion app for values & committed action

Chapter 20: What If Nothing Matters?

Tips: A 5-step plan for values conflicts
Tips: Difficult dilemmas & tough decisions
Discussion: Desire For Power & More About Destructive values
Clinical example: Using the choice point with fusion and avoidance during values work

Chapter 21: Do What It Takes

Tips: Excessive focus on desired outcomes
Tips: Fusion that arises while goal setting
Worksheets: Scheduling & monitoring & pleasant activities
Worksheet: SMART Goal-Setting
Handout: The challenge formula with explanatory text
Resources: Using the ACT Companion app for values & committed action

Chapter 22: Fifty Shades of Acceptance

Tips: Enhance the acceptance elements in mindfulness; wade through the swamp
Worksheet: Struggling vs. Opening Up
Diagram: Summary of common acceptance techniques
Tools: Additional metaphors for acceptance
Techniques: Emotion surfing and urge surfing
Discussion: How childhood programming set us up to struggle with our feelings
Tips: How to tackle the belief that our thoughts and emotions control our actions
Tips: Titrating acceptance so clients aren’t overwhelmed.
Chapter 23: Emotions as Allies

Tips: How to help clients figure out when it’s useful—or not—to focus on their emotions

eBook: How to work with dissociation

YouTube animation: The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems

YouTube animation: Three main parts of the brain

YouTube animation: The limbic brain and its role in trauma

YouTube animation: The three meanings of ‘freeze’

Chapter 24: What’s Stopping You?

Worksheet: HARD Barriers

Tips: Functional Analysis Made Simple

Chapter 25: The Noticing Self

Correction: on the bottom of page 291, there is an error. I wrote this:

To add further to terminology confusion, many textbooks refer to the experience of fusion with your self-concept with terms such as “self-as-story” or “self-as-content.”

The error is that the terms “self-as-story” and “self-as-content” do not necessarily imply fusion. I should have written this:

To add further to terminology confusion, many textbooks refer to a sense of self that arises when you identify with your self-concept and regard it as “who you are”. This sense of self is often called “self-as-story” or “self-as-content.” We can fuse with or defuse from this sense of self.

Script: Chessboard metaphor

YouTube animation: Chessboard metaphor (Internal Struggles)

Discussion: Therapy versus mysticism & “Is this the soul?”

Tips: What to do if clients can’t access a noticing self.

Chapter 26: Flexible Exposure

Tool: Measuring Response Flexibility in Exposure

Tools: Materials on exposure: motivation tips, exposure hierarchy worksheet, exposure record

Resources: To learn more about how to do formal, explicit exposure in ACT, I recommend the textbook “ACT for Anxiety Disorders” by Eifert & Forsyth, and/or either of my online courses on “ACT for Depression & Anxiety Disorders” or “ACT for Trauma”, both available at: www.ImLearningACT.com

Chapter 27: Cognitive Flexibility

Discussion: Defusion Vs Disputation

Discussion: The Role of Self-talk in ACT

Discussion: Positive thinking and cognitive restructuring
Chapter 28: Shame, Anger, and Other “Problem” Emotions

Script: Urge surfing & Emotion Surfing
eBook: Working with anger
Script: Inner-child imagery exercise
eBook: Working with Dissociation
eBook: Working with Body Posture

Chapter 29: Flexible Relationships

Worksheets: Worksheets for ACT with common relationship issues

Chapter 31: A Quick Guide to Getting Unstuck

Tips: An ACT Practitioner’s Guide To Getting Unstuck From Just About Anything

Online Training in ACT

Reading a textbook is a good start … and online training can take you so much further. I offer a range of beginners and advanced level interactive online courses – which include specialized courses in depression anxiety disorders, trauma, adolescents, and brief intervention. For more details, see: www.ImLearningACT.com

How To “Supercharge” Your Sessions

The Happiness Trap Online Program is a great way to “supercharge” your sessions and help your clients make progress faster. This entertaining yet extremely practical self-development course in ACT can truly boost your therapy, coaching or counselling sessions. Comprised of engaging videos, audio MP3s, written materials, and playful animations, the program is designed to keep people interested, motivated, and actively participating.

To get a quick overview of the program content, take a look at these delightful visual summaries of each week: Visual Summaries

ACT practitioners can use the Happiness Trap Online Program as a powerful adjunct to (not a replacement for) clinical work or coaching. If this appeals, you can join (free of charge) our ACT Practitioners’ Community, which will give you a unique discount code, that enables your clients to access the program at low cost, plus support materials to help you use the course (in part or whole) with clients.

You can either use the whole program, or selectively use just the most relevant parts of it, for psychoeducation, homework assignment, experiential work, skills development, overcoming resistance, motivation, inspiration … and more. It’s especially useful to reinforce what you did in today’s session or prepare in advance for the next one.

To find out more, go to: TheHappinessTrap.com/8-week-program-act-practitioner