

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Chronic Pain: A Very Short Experiential Workshop

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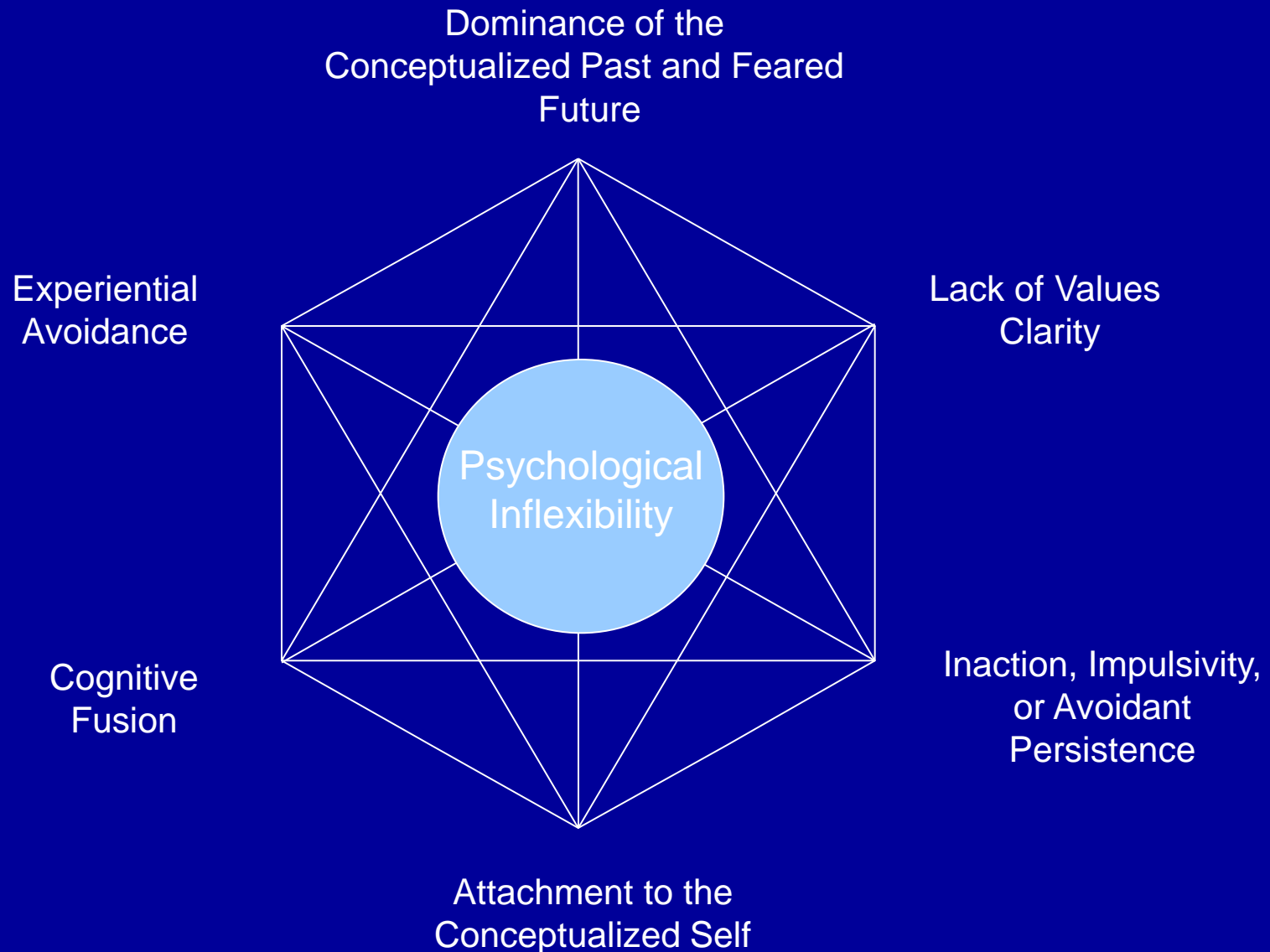
Outline

- o Present ACT theory and principles, including mindfulness.
- o Conduct experiential exercises and demonstrations.

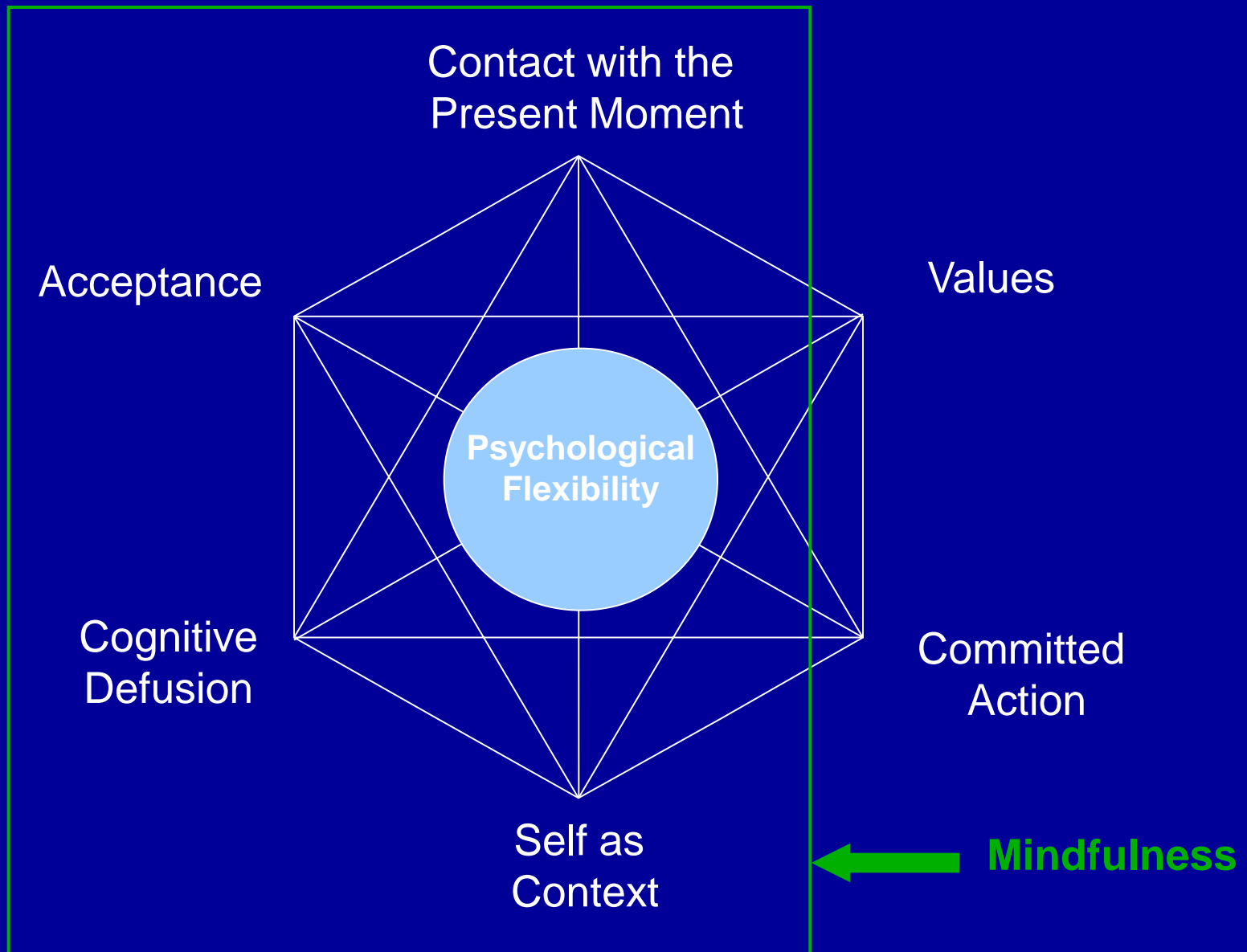
ACT

- A form of cognitive behavioral therapy with the following features:
 - Focuses on behavior change
 - Includes a primary process called psychological flexibility
 - Works both inside and outside literal language
 - Relies heavily on experiential exercises and metaphorical or paradoxical uses of language
 - Emphasizes individual analysis and relationship
 - Is emotionally intensive
 - Includes a particular therapeutic stance
 - Follows a philosophy called functional contextualism
 - Has a direct association with a program of basic behavioral science into what is called “Relational Frame Theory”

The ACT model of Psychopathology



ACT Treatment Processes



ACT Therapeutic Processes

Contact with the Present Moment

Acceptance

Values

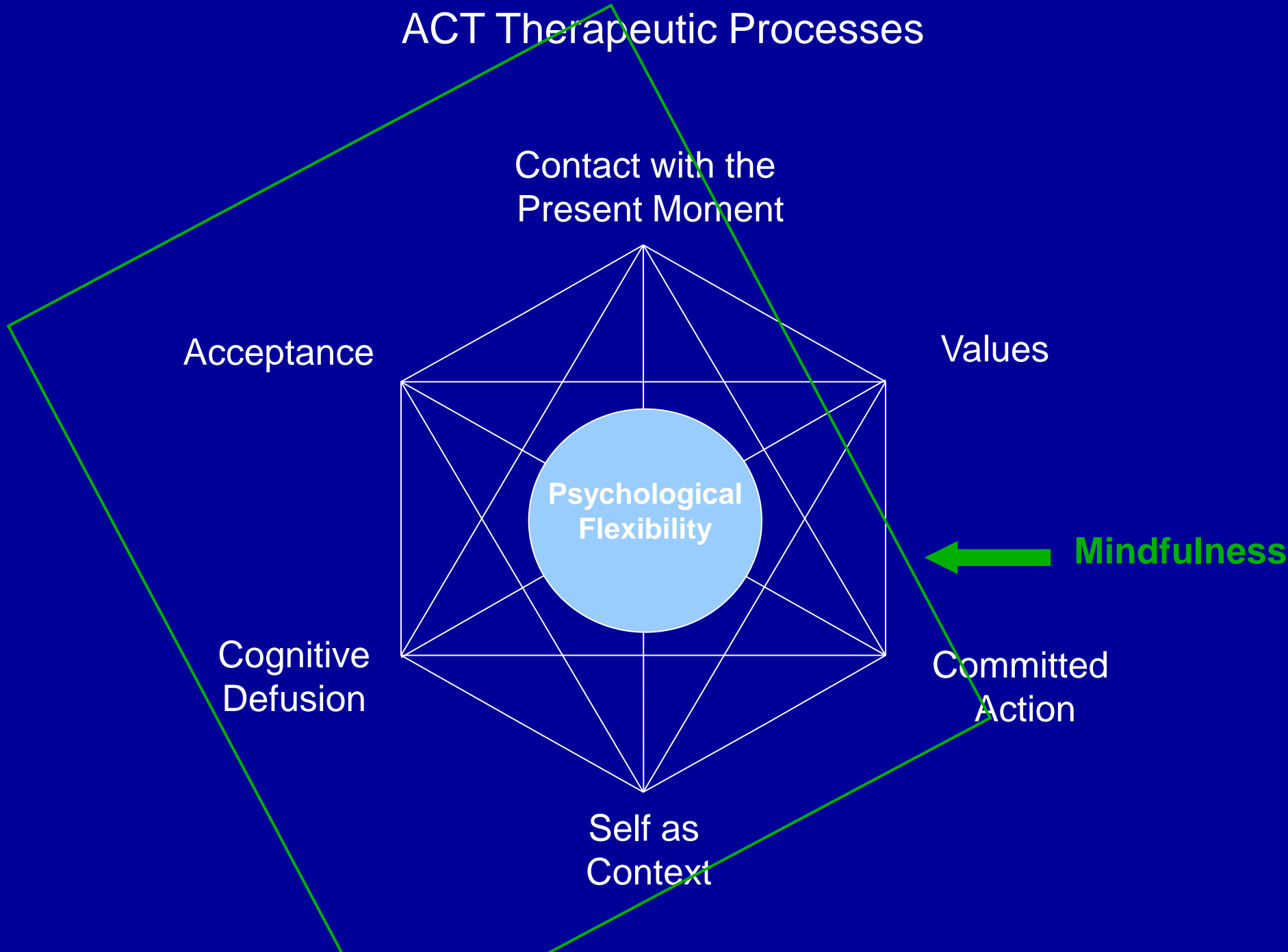
Psychological Flexibility

Mindfulness

Cognitive Defusion

Committed Action

Self as Context



“Psychological Inflexibility”

A process based in interactions of language and cognition with direct experiences that produces an inability to persist in, or change, a behavior pattern in the service of long term goals or values.

From: Hayes et al. *Behav Res Ther* 2006; 44: 1-25.

Acceptance



Defusion



Experiment: Get Off Your “Buts”

- o “But” means except for the fact.
- o This word is often placed between a goal or desirable action and a “reason” in the form of a feeling or thought.
- o The word “but” says that the reason makes the action or goal impossible.
- o **Change your “buts” to “and” and see what happens.**

Contact with the Present Moment

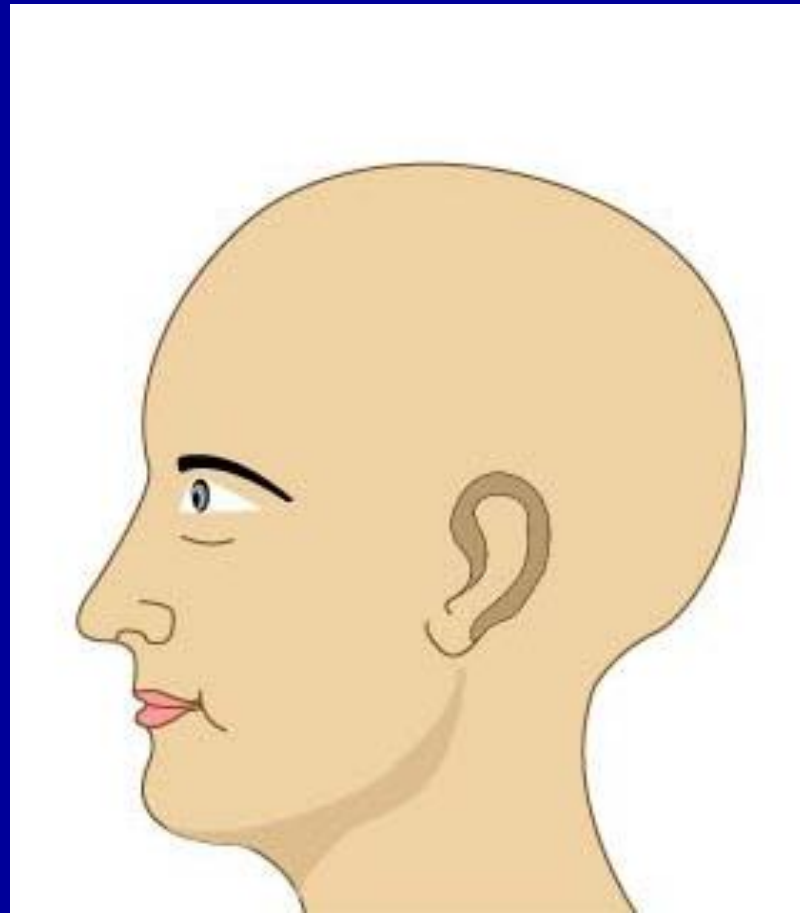


Notice Five Things

1. Pause.
2. Look around and notice five objects you can see.
3. Listen carefully and notice five sounds you can hear.
4. Notice five things you can feel in and around your body.

From: Harris, R. (2008). *The Happiness Trap*. Boston: Trumpeter Books.

Self-as-Context



Brief Self-as-Observer Exercise

- o Close your eyes or set your gaze on a specific point in front of you.
- o Notice feelings in your body.
- o Notice thoughts in the mind.
- o Notice sounds around you.
- o Notice that you are noticing feelings, thoughts, and sounds.
- o Notice a distinction between the thinking mind and the observing mind.

Values-Based Action



Imagine You're 80 Years Old

- Imagine you are 80 years old and looking back at your life as it is today. Complete the following sentences:
 - I spent too much time worrying about...
 - I spent too little time doing things such as...
 - If I could go back in time, what I would do differently from this day onward is...

Patterns of Committed Action



Goals

- 1) Close your eyes
- 2) Identify a goal.
- 3) Visualize yourself achieving it.
- 4) What happens?

Goals

- 1) Close your eyes
- 2) Identify a goal.
- 3) Visualize yourself achieving it.
- 4) Identify an action you could take toward this goal.
- 5) Make a plan to take this action.
- 6) What happens?

ACT Therapeutic Stance

- o Equal, vulnerable, compassionate, genuine, and respectful of client's inherent ability to make change.
- o Willing to self-disclose when in the interest of the client.
- o Fits methods to the needs of the client and situation.

- o Tailors methods and exercises to client.
- o Models acceptance of challenging content, including the client's difficult feelings, without needing to fix it.
- o Uses exercises, paradox, metaphor and de-emphasizes literal sense.

- o Brings emphasis back to client's experience not his or her opinions.
- o Does not argue, lecture, coerce, or attempt to convince.
- o Recognizes process of flexibility in the moment and supports them within the therapeutic relationship.

Based on Luoma et al. Learning ACT, 2007.

Summary

