



The Melbourne Clinic

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

A mindfulness based program which assists
you to create the life you want to live





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What is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy?

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is about getting connected to what really matters to you in life, who you want to be and how you want to be. Through mindfulness (being in the here-and-now with awareness) you will learn how to experience your unhelpful thoughts and uncomfortable emotions safely. When we are present and aware in the here-and-now we are able to be more in control of our behaviour and where we put our attention so that we can take ongoing action to create the life we want to live.

Who can benefit from attending Acceptance and Commitment Therapy?

It has been suggested that ACT is more like a lifestyle than a therapy and that most people would benefit from understanding the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

The Melbourne Clinic's Acceptance and Commitment Therapy program is suitable for people experiencing a range of long and short term psychological and emotional difficulties, including Depression, Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders and Addictive Behaviours. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is also suitable for people who have been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, and is often included in the treatment pathway for individuals awaiting the Trauma and DBT programs.

What change can you expect from attending Acceptance and Commitment Therapy?

Participants of the ACT Program repeatedly report:

- Greater awareness of what really matters in life
- A greater range of emotional experience
- Decreased fear of unpleasant emotions
- Increased interpersonal connection and improved relationships
- Emotions, painful memories and other unhelpful thoughts interfering less with ability to take action in daily life.

What makes Acceptance and Commitment Therapy different to other Mindfulness Based Programs offered at The Melbourne Clinic?

What makes ACT truly unique and life changing is the strong focus on identifying values and skill building to enable participants to create the life they want to live.



Structure of the Program

ACT Orientation

After your Day Program assessment, you will be invited to attend the 2.5 hour ACT orientation session, which takes place four times per year. At the session you will be introduced to the underpinning ideas of ACT and given an opportunity to ask any questions so that you can make an informed decision regarding your attendance in the program. At the end of this session you will be invited to let us know which day and time you would like to attend ACT.

ACT Foundations Program

The ACT Foundations Program is a dynamic psycho-education program in which you will explore your values and learn all of the principles of the ACT model. At the end of this weekly 10 session program you can expect to have a clear understanding of all of the components of ACT and will have experienced using them in your life. You will have begun taking action toward the life you want to live and have learned techniques to assist you to experience your emotions safely and unhook from unhelpful thoughts.

ACT for Life

ACT for Life is a weekly 12 month group program for those who have completed ACT Foundations and would like the support of a 12 month program to embody their understanding of ACT. This program is specifically designed to help participants establish a regular mindfulness practice and to support them with committed action to create a meaningful life. Because the program is available to participants for up to 12 months, it allows the groups to develop a significant level of connection and enables deeper experiential work to take place.

The Principles of ACT

Mindfulness

The first step to becoming more mindful is simply increasing our awareness of the outside world by connecting to our senses. When we are connected to our senses we are able to be present in our bodies and in our environment instead of being caught up in our minds.

Over time the practice of consistently bringing ourselves back to our senses and into the here and now allows us to develop objective awareness of the thoughts that pass through our minds and the sensations, emotions and urges that show up in our bodies.

With this awareness we can have greater control over our behaviour.

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn



Values

Simply put, values can be seen as:

- What really matters to us as individuals?
- Who do we want to be in life and how do we want to be in our relationships?
- What do we want to spend our time and energy on?

Once we are aware of these personal values, we can use them as a compass to guide us through our lives.

Committed Action

Committed action is the ongoing choices we make and actions we take toward the life we value.

I believe it's never too early or too late to start asking the questions:

“What is it that really absorbs me?” and “What am I uniquely suited to being able to contribute to both my life and the lives of others?” and then to have the courage, patience, and persistence to act on the answers as if your life depends on it. Because, in a very real sense, it does.”

- Author Andy Griffiths in *I Believe* (Random House)

Acceptance

Acceptance in ACT is about being willing to experience emotions in the here and now in our bodies. The skills of acceptance rest on a foundation of mindfulness or awareness training which allows us to be curious and open and experience emotions safely.

De-fusion or 'unhooking' from thoughts

Through mindfulness training we learn to notice and relate to our thoughts differently.

All too often we find ourselves caught up in a train of thought, oblivious to the fact that we are thinking and disconnected from the world around us. When we become aware that we are thinking we can make a choice to step off the train of thought and back into the here and now. De-fusion reduces the impact that unhelpful thoughts have on how we feel and act.



Intake

A referral from an accredited psychiatrist of The Melbourne Clinic to the trauma and ACT Program is required. Upon receipt of the referral, an assessment will be set up with Day Program staff at The Melbourne Clinic to explore pathways for treatment.







The Melbourne Clinic

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