# ACT Hexaflex

## ACT: Six Skills for Psychological Flexibility

**The ACT hexaflex is a map of six skills that together build psychological flexibility.** Psychologist Steven Hayes and his colleagues developed acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and the hexaflex is the six-sided diagram they use to show its core processes. Psychological flexibility means you can stay in the present moment with whatever thoughts and feelings show up, and still act on what matters to you. This sheet walks you through each skill so you can see where you are strong and where you tend to get stuck.

## 1 The six processes

ACT trainer Russ Harris groups the six into three pairs: two that help you open up, two that help you be present, and two that help you do what matters.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Acceptance**<br>Open up | Making room for painful feelings, urges, and sensations instead of fighting or avoiding them. When you are stuck here, you spend a lot of energy trying not to feel. |
| **Defusion**<br>Open up | Stepping back from your thoughts and seeing them as words and pictures passing through your mind. When you are stuck here, thoughts feel like facts or orders you have to obey. |
| **Present moment**<br>Be present | Paying attention to what is happening here and now, with openness and curiosity. When you are stuck here, your mind spends most of its time in the past or the future. |
| **Self-as-context**<br>Be present | Noticing that there is a part of you that observes your thoughts and feelings and is bigger than any of them. When you are stuck here, you hold on tightly to a fixed story about who you are. |
| **Values**<br>Do what matters | Knowing what you want to stand for and how you want to treat yourself, other people, and the world. When you are stuck here, you lose sight of what matters to you. |
| **Committed action**<br>Do what matters | Taking steps, big or small, that are guided by your values, even when they feel uncomfortable. When you are stuck here, you avoid, give up, or act on impulse. |

***Why does this work?*** *Trying to avoid painful thoughts and feelings can make them louder, and your life can shrink as you steer around anything that might set them off. The six processes work together to help you make room for what you feel inside and put your energy into what you care about. Research on ACT has found that it helps with anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and a range of other problems.*

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*

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## 2 Where are you now?

Think about the past two weeks. For each skill, write a score from 0 (almost never) to 10 (almost always) and a moment from your week that shows it. Everyone has some low scores, and there are no right answers. These scores are for your own reflection, not a test.

**Acceptance: I can make room for hard feelings without fighting them.**

*Example: 4 out of 10. I skipped the party so I would not have to feel awkward.*

**Defusion: I can notice a thought without having to believe it or obey it.**

**Present moment: I can bring my attention back to what is happening now.**

**Self-as-context: I can notice my thoughts and feelings as the one who watches them.**

**Values: I know what matters to me in the main areas of my life.**

**Committed action: I take steps toward what matters, even when it is uncomfortable.**

## 3 Choose one to grow

**The skill I would most like to grow, and why:**

**One small step I could take this week:**

*Example: When "I'll mess this up" shows up, I'll say "I'm having the thought that I'll mess this up" and keep going.*

*The hexaflex is easiest to learn with an ACT therapist, who can match exercises to the places where you feel most stuck.*

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