



Acceptance



Table of Contents

01

Knowledge

What is *acceptance*? What is it not?

02

Development

Why is *acceptance* important? Who benefits most from its practice?

03

Practice

How is *acceptance* practiced in daily life?

04

Conclusions

Summary of *acceptance* and its benefits.

05

Resources

Supplemental information provided at the end.

01 ✧ Knowledge ✧

What is *acceptance*? What is it ***not***?



“Grant me the serenity to *accept* the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

The Serenity Prayer

What is Acceptance?

Definition

In the context of mental health, *acceptance* is the ability to simultaneously...

- Acknowledge that reality (positive or negative) is the way it is
- Neither judge, protest, nor attempt to change this fact

Theories

Radical Acceptance

Fully acknowledging a situation. Not avoiding, ignoring, or worrying that it “shouldn’t be like this.”

Acceptance (ACT)

Fully acknowledging present thoughts, emotions, and experiences without defensiveness.



Acceptance is the Acknowledgement of...

a) External Experiences

Acute: loss of employment, death of a friend, or even being cut off in traffic.

Chronic: financial struggles, long-term illness, or an unhappy relationship.

b) Internal Experiences

Emotions: sadness, boredom, shame, stress, and other difficult emotions.

Thoughts: rumination, self-doubt, and unhelpful patterns of thinking.

Remember...

Our experiences range from minor to life changing, however, *any* change can cause a degree of stress. Moderate stress can be positive in the short-term, but chronic stress should be avoided at all costs. **Learning the skill of *acceptance* is pivotal to reducing stress and achieving positive mental health.**



Acceptance is...

a) NOT Toxic Positivity

Acceptance does not always mean that we like what is happening or support it in any way.

b) NOT Avoidance, Forgetting, or Forgiveness

Acceptance does not always mean that we stop thinking about an event altogether.

c) NOT Personal Attachment or Relevance

A strong connection to an event/feeling is not required to practice acceptance.

d) NOT Passivity or Surrender

Acceptance does not mean giving up. In fact, we can try to improve a situation when it's within our power to do so. However, to move forward/heal, we must accept the present reality.



02 ✨ Development ✨

Why is *acceptance* important? Who benefits most from its practice?



Without Acceptance...



Spiral

We become easily trapped in our negative experiences. This can escalate feelings of shame, anxiety, & anger.



Ignore

We become blind to or neglect other aspects of our life. Without awareness, there is no improvement.



Stagnate

We end up with compounding feelings of resentment and anxiety that prevent us from moving forward.



With Acceptance...



Choose

We are capable of making more mindful and constructive choices-- everyday!



Process

We can survive difficult emotional processes that follow any major life adjustment.



Grow

We grow from our negative experiences and begin to heal, gaining resilience & peace.



Who can Benefit from Acceptance?



People who suffer from Rumination/Overthinking.

Do you spend a significant amount of time thinking about negative or stressful situations in your life—past, present, future?



People experiencing Negative Affect.

Do your emotions tend to be negative? Do you experience more fear, sadness, and shame than excitement, happiness, and confidence?



People with Low Satisfaction/Low Quality of Life.

When there is something negative going on in your life, are you unable to feel gratitude for the positive things that are also present?

03



Practice



How is *acceptance* practiced in daily life?



Before Practicing Acceptance...

Challenge Old Patterns

Before we can begin to practice *acceptance*, we must recognize our current reality *and* challenge our perspective (our thoughts, feelings, habits, and beliefs). Ask yourself...

- Will this incident change my life in any substantial way?
- Why am I affected by this situation in this specific way?
- Are my emotions/thoughts applicable and in line with my present reality? **Is this way of thinking helpful or harmful to me?**



Awareness/Clarity

When we give space and attention to the things that trouble us, our perspective is strengthened.



Respond, Not React

A more reliable perspective gives us the foundation to make better, more intentional choices/responses.



Three Steps to Acceptance:

1

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a skill used to become more aware of our surroundings and view the present moment without judgment—it's often paired with acceptance in therapy.

2

Emotion Regulation

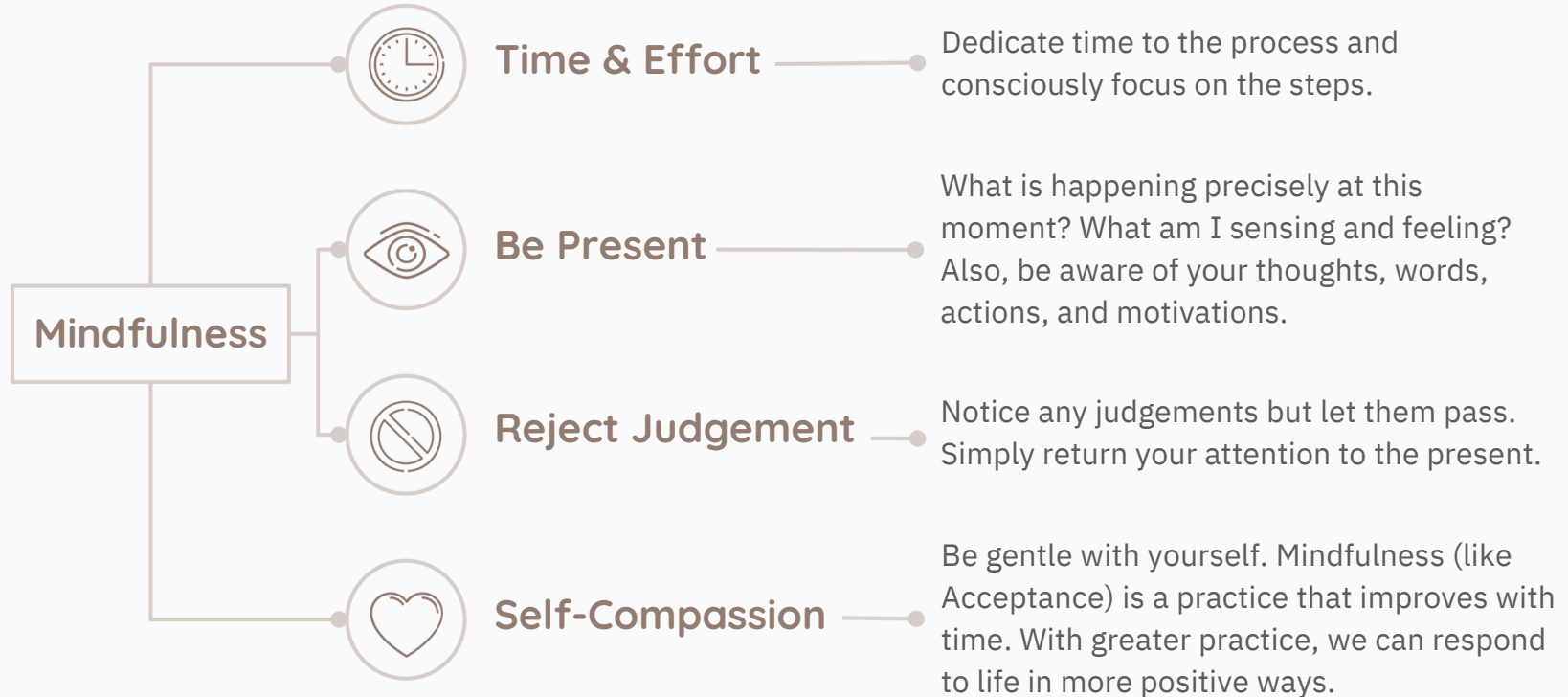
Emotion regulation is a skill used to manage one's emotions and/or thoughtfully respond to emotional situations.

3

“Wise Mind”

Wise Mind (from Dialectical Behavior Therapy) refers to the ideal “middle ground” between rationality and emotions.

1. Mindfulness





2. Emotion Regulation

Emotion Regulation

The ability to willingly accept, understand, and manage emotional discomfort.

- Is this an emotional or physical reaction? Am I lonely, sad, or angry? Am I hungry, tired, or in pain?
- Is there a root cause to my distress? Is my past affecting my present response?
- Are these emotions lasting or temporary? Should I embrace or move past them?
- Is there another way to frame this situation?



Non-Avoidance

When we avoid negative emotions, we put our life on pause. When we resist them, we remain in mental conflict.



Management

To manage emotions in a healthy way, we must recognize and understand them. Depending on the context, we can utilize different mental health tools.

3. Wise Mind

“Wise Mind”

The ability to gain access to both the rational and emotional centers of the brain. After connecting these regions, ask...

- Are there benefits to my distress? If so, what are they?
- Am I in control of this situation? If so, what changes can I make to improve things? If not, what choices can I make to move forward?
- How can I reach *Wise Mind*?



Rational Mind

Thoughts that are considered logical and follow predominantly analytical and empirical patterns of thinking.



Emotional Mind

Thoughts and behaviors that are controlled by a person's emotions, typically matching the energy of those emotions.

What does Wise Mind Look Like?



Rational Mind

Ignores Emotional Input
Acts on Research/Facts
Is Fueled by Past Experiences
Is Task-Focused



Wise Mind

Balances Emotions with Logic
Uses Intuitive Thinking
Practices Mindfulness
Weighs Multiple Perspectives



Emotional Mind

Ignores Logical Input
Acts on Mood/Beliefs
Is Reactive and Impulsive
Is Needs-Focused

04 ✨ Conclusions ✨

What did we learn about *acceptance* today?



Acceptance Is

...awareness of reality as it is—
without protest. Everyone can
benefit from practicing
acceptance!



Acceptance Helps

...people to process difficult
events/feelings and
to experience their emotions in
a more productive manner.



Acceptance Is Not

..."giving up" or forcing
toxic positivity. It's not
simply avoidance,
forgetting, or forgiveness.



Remember To

...challenge perspectives,
practice mindfulness,
regulate emotions,
and seek *Wise Mind*.

05 ✨ Resources ✨

Where can we learn more about *acceptance*?



Practice, Practice, Practice!

Below are a few resources to help you learn about and begin practicing *acceptance*.

Website	<u>Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) Restored Hope Counseling Services</u>
Mobile App	<u>ACT iCoach Mobile App</u>
Podcast	<u>How to Embrace Radical Acceptance Arlin Cuncic The Verywell Mind Podcast</u>
Book	<u>ACT Positive Psychology</u> <u>Radical Acceptance</u> <u>GoodReads</u>
Journal Article	<u>Characteristics and trends in ACT Research Li et al., 2022 PubMed Central</u>
YouTube	<u>The Life-Changing Practice of Radical Acceptance Maria Vazquez TEDxNatick</u>