

(teaching mindfulness and decentering), getting in contact with the present moment, learning to distinguish self-as-content from an observing self, values clarification, and building patterns of committed action. Competencies for each skill are described; for example from the Self as Context chapter (p. 121), “Competency 3 – The therapist utilizes behavioural tasks to help the client notice the workings of the mind and the experience of emotion while also contacting a self who chooses and behaves with these experiences, rather than for the experiences”.

There is also a chapter on case formulation, describing an idiographic, functional analytic method to understanding client problems in terms of core ACT and behavioural processes. This chapter’s philosophy will be familiar to CBT therapists who work using an individualized, case formulation approach, and of interest in understanding a contemporary behavioural approach to thinking and emotion.

The accompanying DVD (included with the workbook and 2 hours in length) complements and extends the discrimination training. The DVD comprises short role-played vignettes of the core ACT processes (modelled by the three authors, working with a variety of client problems), with examples of consistent and inconsistent therapist responses. For each vignette, the watcher is encouraged to rate how ACT-consistent the responses are, and then receives a brief rationale for the answer. The DVD is very helpful in seeing ACT in action, as the mindful and compassionate stance described in the book becomes apparent, and the vignettes clarify some of the potentially confusing concepts.

*Learning ACT* is a very approachable and well-structured guide to a therapy that is tricky to learn just from reading. The experiential stance of ACT encourages learning through action rather than providing a formula or cookbook, and this guide suitably reflects this, encouraging the reader to engage in constructive exercises and reflection. This is a very useful workbook to anyone who is serious about learning to use ACT competently. It will be of value as a reference in a number of contexts: for the individual therapist wanting to develop skills and knowledge, as a key text on training courses, and for discussion material within study groups or peer supervision.

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## Reference

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### **The Worry Trap: How to Free Yourself from Worry and Anxiety using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**

Chad Lejune

Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 2007. pp. 208. £11.99 (pb). ISBN: 978-157224480-1.

doi:10.1017/S1352465808004682

*Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson, 1999) stands at the forefront of the “third wave” (mindfulness-based) CBTs. The increasing influence of this approach is evident in the range of books that have appeared over the past few years, including

practical guides to ACT (Hayes and Strosahl, 2004; Luoma, Hayes and Walser, 2007), self-help books (e.g. Hayes and Smith, 2005; Robinson and Strosahl, 2008), ACT for anxiety (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005), depression (Zettle, 2007), and trauma (Walser and Westrup, 2007). *The Worry Trap* is a useful addition to these volumes; this brief book is an ACT-based self-help guide designed to help people make room for worry and anxiety so that they can build more meaningful and fulfilling lives.

The book begins with an overview of the nature and function of worry and anxiety, along with a brief summary of prominent intervention approaches (e.g. cognitive therapy, exposure, relaxation training, and ACT). Chapter 2 imparts some of the key features of the ACT model of anxiety (and psychopathology more generally), which views internal control attempts as part of the problem rather than the solution. The author does a good job of communicating ACT's focus on altering psychological *context* (i.e. how one relates to internal states) rather than on modifying or reducing difficult psychological content.

The material in the book is organized around a five-step model (LLAMP), which clearly maps onto ACT's core processes/skills:

- L**abel worry thoughts
- L**et go of control
- A**ccept and observe thoughts and feelings
- M**indfulness of the present moment
- P**roceed in the right direction

This straightforward organization helps the reader understand the functions of, and the relations between, the various techniques that are introduced. Chapters 3 through to 8 contain a range of ACT metaphors and experiential exercises, and provide examples that will be highly relevant to clients experiencing worry and anxiety. The penultimate chapter seeks to draw together the various skills, and shows how they can be woven into daily living, always guided by the client's deeply held values and goals. The final chapter outlines some other basic skills that can help worriers engage in effective action, including action planning, time management, problem solving, and assertiveness.

This book is likely to be a useful resource for ACT therapists and clients alike. Its strength lies in the use of the simple LLAMP framework, and Lejeune's skill in communicating acceptance-based concepts and strategies. To take one example, he clearly highlights the distinction between "inside willingness" (mindfulness/acceptance) and "outside willingness" (commitment to action). In this way, he is able to illustrate the two broad skill sets that lie at the heart of ACT interventions. The author also includes an impressive array of mindfulness exercises (Chapter 7), which will be useful to any therapist who is using mindfulness with his or her clients.

Throughout the book, Lejeune is meticulous in ensuring that the reader does not use ACT exercises in an attempt to control anxiety or worry. For example, relaxation is introduced not as a method for reducing undesirable affect, but to serve as a reminder to let go of control and to adopt a non-judgemental posture towards one's private events. In sum, the author appears to have thought a great deal about how to translate ACT principles and procedures into a form that can be understood (and, more importantly, experienced) by anxious clients.

The book's shortcomings are fairly minor. The book might have benefited from including visual representations (e.g. cartoons) of key ACT metaphors (such as Passengers on the Bus); although these can be found elsewhere in the ACT literature (see Hayes and Smith, 2005). It

would have been useful to have included a CD containing some of the mindfulness/meditative exercises, rather than rely on clients memorizing the scripts or making their own recordings. However, I still feel that the exercises are presented in a way that will help clients quickly get the gist of mindfulness practice.

There is a growing body of evidence that supports the use of ACT for a range of problems, including worry and anxiety, depression, pain, eating disorders, work-related stress, psychosis, and even epilepsy (see Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda and Lillis, 2006 for a review). In my view, *The Worry Trap*, along with other recently published ACT self-help guides, will help to communicate ACT principles to an even wider audience.

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