

ACT Training and Networking Event
May 29th – 31st, 2020
Duke University, Erwin Square, Mill Building, Bay A
2024 West Main Street, Durham NC 27705

What is ACT? Life can be painful, and it is completely natural to try to escape that pain. However, when life becomes about getting rid of unwanted thoughts and feelings, it can be less vital and less meaningful. ACT is a contemporary cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) that helps individuals let go of the struggle with difficult thoughts and feelings, so that they can author and pursue personal values. There are over 300 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) testing the efficacy of ACT for an array of clinical problems. ACT is identified as an evidence-based treatment by Division 12 of the American Psychological Association (APA) and is on the empirically supported treatments list of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA).

This weekend workshop event provides 3 days of in-depth training in ACT, with opportunities for both the novice and advanced ACT practitioner. Participants have the option of attending some or all of the events, and can earn up to 18 continuing education credits (CEs) through sponsorship with the North Carolina Psychological Association (NCPA). All events are facilitated by Peer-Reviewed ACT Trainers in the Carolinas and the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

On May 29th, participants have the option of an in-depth introduction to ACT facilitated by Dr. Jennifer Plumb-Vilardaga and Dr. Ashley Moskovich, or for those who already versed in the ACT model, a workshop on how Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) can enhance ACT interventions and clinical practice facilitated by Dr. Miranda Morris and FAP Trainer, Holly Yates, LPC.

On May 30th and 31st, we take a deep dive into ACT clinical skills with an experiential skills training workshop led by Dr. Rhonda Merwin.

Social networking events in the evening on May 29th and May 30th are open to everyone (irrespective of what workshops they attend) and provide an opportunity to connect with other local clinicians and researchers, learn about ACT Carolinas, MACACBS or World Con or talk to an ACT trainer about the peer-review process.

Workshops will take place at Duke University's Erwin Square, Mill building, Bay A, 2024 West Main Street, Durham NC 27705, and run from 8:30am – 4:30pm and offer 6 CEs per day (with breaks). The Mill Building is conveniently located across from 9th Street in Durham which offers food, drink and local shopping. It is a short walk to Duke's beautiful West Campus and Chapel, Duke Gardens and the Nasher Museum of Art. The Bull City Connector and the Duke University buses offer free rides to campus and downtown, which has been revitalized (only 5-10 minutes away by bus or car).

Detailed descriptions of the workshops and presenters can be found below.

Register online at: <https://www.macacbs.org/event-3736468>

Introduction to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
with Jennifer Plumb-Villardaga, PhD and Ashley A. Moskovich, PhD

May 29, 2020, 8:30am-4:30pm

Workshop Description

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy provides both a behaviorally-based understanding of human suffering and model of therapeutic intervention for alleviating human suffering through increasing psychological flexibility. Living with psychological flexibility means making room for discomfort (in the form of emotions, body sensations, urges, memories, and thoughts) as part of living a value-guided and deeply meaningful life. Because ACT is based on a scientifically-grounded model of understanding human experiences (not just experiences for those with psychological ‘problems’) with particular attention to how human suffering comes from language itself, ACT is relevant for therapists and clients alike. As such, ACT concepts are taught through personally-relevant experiential learning as well as therapeutic knowledge and skills training.

This introductory workshop provides a broad overview of ACT including the current state of the science as an empirically supported treatment, the components of the psychological flexibility model, and important concepts from contextual behavioral science that will help promote flexible clinical practice and greater self-awareness on the part of both therapist and client. Workshop exercises will focus on assessing, conceptualizing and applying interventions to common clinical problems from an ACT framework. Participants will learn through interactive experiential exercises examining how these processes arise for us as humans and therapists, and practice interventions through role plays. Participants will come away from the training poised to utilize and develop exercises, metaphors, and techniques for use with clients in their daily work environments.

Workshop Objectives

At the end of the workshop, the learner will be able to:

1. Describe the six component processes of the ACT model
2. Conceptualize cases using ACT theory
3. Conduct psychological assessment from an ACT perspective
4. Use ACT strategies to intervene on common clinical problems
5. Tailor ACT interventions to address common clinical challenges
6. Use at least one tool aimed at tracking progress using ACT interventions
7. Describe considerations for supervising trainees in ACT methods

Using FAP to Enhance Your ACT Practice
with Miranda Morris, PhD and Holly Yates, LPC

May 29, 2020, 8:30am-4:30pm

Workshop Description

We all know that the therapeutic relationship is of paramount importance, but we don’t all know how to use it in order to help our clients make real change in their lives. Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) offers a way to utilize the therapist-client relationship as the main agent for change and healing in therapy. It is a straightforward model that can be readily integrated into most therapeutic approaches.

FAP has its roots in Radical Behaviorism and utilizes simple behavioral principles to help clients notice unhelpful behaviors and learn how to be more effective. At its core, FAP focuses on Clinically Relevant Behaviors (CRBs) - behaviors that show up in session that are present in the client’s daily life. When therapists can identify and work with CRBs, they can help shape clients’ behavior in ways that significantly impact their clients’ quality of life. If you were taught that behaviorism was sterile and heartless, FAP will change your mind! FAP is deeply experiential and relational.

It's all about how we as therapists can work with awareness, courage and love to teach our clients how to cultivate awareness, courage and love in their lives.

At its heart FAP is an interpersonal therapy, thus the most effective way to learn FAP is to do FAP. While this workshop will include didactics (powerpoint, audio examples), the emphasis will be experiential. There will be opportunities to observe and engage in real-plays where FAP can be applied flexibly and functionally. In addition there will be experiential exercises designed to increase our willingness to sit with our own and our clients' struggles in a way that fosters awareness, compassion and willingness.

Workshop Objectives

1. Participants will be able to explain the pragmatic truth criterion of Functional Contextualism
2. Participants will be able to define and identify Clinically Relevant Behaviors (CRB)
3. Participants will be able to describe the 5 Rules of FAP
4. Participants will be able to describe Awareness, Courage and Love in Behavioral terms
5. Participants will practice and be able to explain how to conduct an in-session functional analysis of client behavior
6. Participants will be able to Identify and describe therapist behaviors that hinder or enhance therapy (T1 and T2's)

ACT Intensive: Experiential Skills Training

with Rhonda M. Merwin, PhD

May 30th 9:00am – 4:30pm

May 31st 8:30am – 4:00pm

Workshop Description

From Suffering to Liberation. The basic premise of the ACT model is that problems in living arise from the way in which we interact with our internal experiences (including our thoughts, feelings and body sensations). Rather than observe our internal experiences as they unfold in the present moment, we may be overattached to the content of our mental activity or work to avoid or control unwanted thoughts and feelings. While this is completely normal, it may lead us to behave in ways that are ineffective for our lives or inconsistent with our personal values. ACT liberates humans by decreasing attachment and aversion to internal experiences, freeing them to pursue what is most meaningful. The ability to allow thoughts and feelings to be what they are, while moving in a valued direction, is the goal of ACT and referred to as psychological flexibility. ACT is unique in that life struggles are viewed as a natural extension of our ability for language and the broader social-verbal context in which humans exist. As such, therapeutic processes are just as applicable to the therapist as to the client, and ACT skills may be honed using “self as laboratory.”

As ACT's popularity has increased, many practitioners have become familiar with the core concepts of the model. However, they may feel gaps in their knowledge regarding how to apply the concepts flexibly to different clinical situations or in-the-moment to move the client. In this skill building workshop, participants will gain a deep understanding of ACT case formulation and clinical engagement via didactic and experiential learning methods. The workshop will include self-as-laboratory components, exploring processes from the inside out through group exercises and via “real-plays” (role plays in which participants play themselves). Participants will have the opportunity to observe therapeutic encounters and practice implementing strategies in small groups with skills coaches to hone particular competencies. Individuals may attend one or both workshop days. However, if only 1 day is attended, it must be Day 1 (May 30) to allow for more in-depth exploration on Day 2 (May 31). Workshop participants complete a self-assessment of ACT competencies to guide workshop content and participation.

Workshop Objectives

Participants in this workshop will be able to:

1. Formulate cases and momentary clinical encounters from a functional-contextualistic perspective
2. Create a context for change through creative hopelessness interventions
3. Apply ACT clinical concepts to therapist behavior in and out of session
4. Identify targets for avoidance and fusion

5. Implementing strategies to evoke and shape new responses to internal experiences
6. Discriminate the motivations of behavior (avoidance vs. values)
7. Identify which therapeutic process to engage when, based on elements of the clinical situation
8. Track the impact of ACT interventions in the moment
9. Implement 1 ACT intervention that is out of their comfort zone and develop skills for creative implementation (e.g., in-the-moment development of metaphors matched to the clients experience or situation)
10. Practice at least 1 strategy to evoke values from the “bottom up” and use values to guide and motivate behavior change
11. Identify at least 1 strategy to generalize therapeutic experiences to client’s daily lives
12. Practice taking risks and making mistakes in therapeutic encounters
13. Use values and vulnerability to deepen the therapeutic relationship, and model a new way of relating to internal experience
14. Conceptualize self from an RFT perspective and use self interventions to increase self-attunement and self-compassion

Workshop Facilitators

In alphabetical order



Rhonda Merwin, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University. She is the Director of ACT at Duke, a clinical, research and training program in the Duke School of Medicine, a Peer-Reviewed ACT Trainer and a Licensed Psychologist. Dr. Merwin completed her Ph.D. at the University of Mississippi under the mentorship of Kelly Wilson, co-founder of ACT. She completed her Pre-doctoral Internship and a 2-year NIH sponsored Postdoctoral fellowship at Duke before joining the faculty in 2008. Dr. Merwin has expertise in ACT and ACT-related processes (acceptance, mindfulness), Relational Frame Theory (RFT), and eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa and eating disorders among individuals with type 1 diabetes. She is the lead author on *ACT for Anorexia Nervosa: A Guide for Clinicians* published by Guilford Press. Dr. Merwin

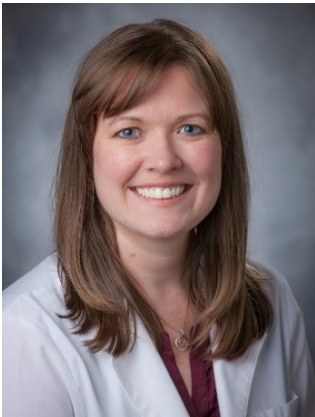
has facilitated over 40 ACT workshops, and presented on ACT nationally and internationally. Her research has been funded by NIH, among other sources and is published in *Diabetes Care*, *Psychosomatic Medicine*, *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *Appetite*, along with other respected journals. Dr. Merwin is teaching/training faculty in the School of Medicine and maintains a clinical practice within Duke Health, treating individuals with anxiety, mood and eating disorders, among other presenting issues.



Miranda Morris, PhD is an ACBS Peer Reviewed ACT Trainer who teaches ACT and other contextual behavioral therapies. She is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Bethesda, MD who uses ACT to treat a broad range of difficulties including anxiety, depression, trauma, relationship problems, and pervasive difficulties often referred to as “personality disorders.” She is the founder of True North Therapy and Training, a group of therapists who provide therapy and training in ACT to professionals and lay people in the region. Miranda helped found the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of ACBS (MAC-ACBS) and served on the MAC-ACBS Board for six years. She currently serves as Member at Large on the ACBS Board.



Ashley Moskovich, PhD is a Medical Instructor in the School of Medicine at Duke University. Dr. Moskovich completed her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Duke University where she gained expertise in ACT under the mentorship of Rhonda Merwin, PhD. Dr. Moskovich currently trains and supervises Duke University clinical psychology graduate students and psychiatry residents in ACT, co-leads an ACT community consultation group in Durham, and has conducted several ACT trainings. She also participates in research that uses contextual behavioral science to understand and treat problematic eating and weight control behaviors and has co-authored several papers and book chapters in this area. Dr. Moskovich has clinical expertise in treating adults and adolescents struggling with eating disorders, depression, anxiety and chronic medical illness.



Jennifer Plumb Vilardaga, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University. She is a Peer-reviewed ACT Trainer in the international community of ACT trainers and received her doctorate at the University of Nevada-Reno under the mentorship of Steven C. Hayes, co-founder of ACT. Prior to coming to Duke, she practiced and supervised trainees at VA Puget Sound Healthcare System – Seattle Division, and served as a clinical training consultant for the National VA Roll Out of ACT for Depression, training VA clinical providers nation-wide learning ACT. She has published widely on ACT and is a co-author of the book *The Art and Science of Valuing in Psychotherapy: Helping Clients Discover, Explore, and Commit to Valued Action Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* for therapists to strengthen their use of personal values work in ACT. Her current work at Duke involves ongoing research on ACT, mindfulness, CBT, cancer-related pain and chronic pain management, and coping with other

medical issues. She has clinical expertise in chronic pain, substance use disorders, PTSD and trauma recovery, anxiety, depression, coping with illness, and adjusting to disability.



Holly Yates, LPC has been in private practice in North Carolina since 2004. Her specialty areas are working with adults both individually and in groups as well as couples addressing depression, anxiety, mood disorders and life stressors through clinical intervention and skills training. Holly's practice centers on third wave therapies most specifically Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). She is a founding facilitator of the online ACT Peer Intervention Network sponsored through ACBS and a Certified FAP Trainer through University of Washington. Holly received supervision from Mavis Tsai, Ph.D., Robert Kohlenberg, PhD. (developers of FAP) and Gareth Holman PhD., in attaining her FAP certification and remains under their mentorship. She is currently under the mentorship and supervision of Matthieu Villatte, PhD. as she moves toward ACT Peer Review Trainer. Holly has presented FAP and ACT workshops at the MAC ACBS Conference in

October 2017 in Washington DC, at ACBS World-Con 2016 in Seattle, WA, ACBS World-Con 2017 in Seville, Spain, ACBS World-Con 2018. Holly presented an Introduction to ACT and FAP (Catch The Third Wave) at North Carolina State University for the clinical staff and community in February 2018, The NCPA in April 2018 and 2019, Rathbone and Associates Professional Trainings in The Greater Washington DC area in June 2018. She co-presented workshops in ACT at ACBS World Con in Montreal July 2018 as well as co-lead the Pre-Con FAP intensive at ACBS World Con 2018. Holly was also a co presenter at World Con 2019 in Dublin, Ireland. Holly trained in DBT and started the DBT program at Triumph LLC. Holly is Co-founder of North Wake Counseling Partners in Raleigh NC.