

Promoting Repertoires of Psychological Flexibility: ACT in Behavior Analytic Practice

Improving psychological flexibility is the primary aim of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy/Training. In this interactive workshop, Drs. Siri Ming and Evelyn Gould take the stance that psychological flexibility is a critical socially valid outcome and guiding principle for all that we do as behavior analysts. Much of our work involves teaching others to behave more flexibly within their context, and establishing the prerequisite skills that lay the foundations for psychological flexibility later; psychological inflexibility plays a role in many of the common difficulties we encounter.

Psychological flexibility involves interacting with (or “languageing about”) our experiences in flexible, context-sensitive ways that help us connect with meaning and purpose (i.e., powerful sources of reinforcement), even when faced with adversity. This is a complex composite repertoire, requiring advanced repertoires of relational framing and rule governance. However, it is a repertoire that is learned, and can be taught, in terms of component skills building over time. We can work to expand child repertoires from infancy all the way through to adulthood, and when working with families, design practices that are contextually sensitive to the development of both parent and child across the lifespan. Working with staff and supervisees also requires sensitivity to psychological flexibility repertoires in the context of supervisory and mentoring relationships over time. Moreover, improving our own psychological flexibility skills increases our effectiveness in supporting others, as well as supporting our own well-being and resilience (inside and outside of work)..

Viewing ACT as a framework for promoting psychological flexibility, rather than as a set of techniques or procedures, allows for an individualized, culturally responsive, functional approach to intervention. In this workshop we will also examine common ACT models and tools in terms of basic behavior analytic principles and explore how and when behavior analysts might incorporate them functionally and ethically into their work with clients. Viewing behavior analytic intervention through the lens of psychological flexibility gives a clear focal point for building a meaningful, values-directed, compassionate and responsive practice, centered on social validity.

This course provides **10 CEUs**.

What You'll Do

As a workshop through our Constellations community, *Understanding Psychological Flexibility* has been created to serve three functions, with activities carefully designed for you to:

Learn: Every week, Siri and Evelyn present educational and informational content to you through a variety of short video presentations and readings to teach you the conceptual core of that week's topic. Every lesson has an asynchronous discussion thread to allow you to ask questions, request clarification, or ask for additional resources. Extra bonus content in the form of curated articles, podcasts, blogs or videos, gives you the opportunity to take a deeper dive into the technical aspects of each topic as your time and interest dictate. You'll have unlimited access to all materials to return to as needed after the workshop.

Apply: Practical and experiential exercises will have you immediately putting the concepts to work for you in your own professional and personal practice.

Connect: The workshop is designed to create community, and to foster connections that spark new ideas and forge new relationships. Siri and Evelyn facilitate asynchronous discussions, as well as live bi-weekly meetings that will bring you together with the group to share with, learn from, and be accountable to one another. You will also have access to a trial membership in our larger community of practice, where you can carry the momentum from the workshop forward.

What to Expect

The workshop is divided into four modules, each of which will take two weeks to complete. In every module, you'll see five sequential lessons to complete that consist of short videos, readings, and asynchronous discussion activities; you should anticipate spending about 15-20 minutes per lesson on these instructional activities (i.e., about an hour and a half per module). Each module also has a variety of application activities and experiential exercises that you should expect to spend more time on—with yourself, your clients or in your organization.

Every other week we will have a live group meeting to discuss your questions and experiences with the material in the module, as well as dive a bit further into the concepts and research relevant to the module, particularly as they relate to applying RFT and ACT as behavior analysts. We will also have a brief introduction meeting on

the first day of the course, just for everyone to put faces to names and get oriented to the platform. We strongly encourage you to join us for every meeting, but we understand that sometimes life throws curve balls, and if you can't make a session, no worries—they will be recorded and shared inside the course. You will need to attend (or watch) the sessions for CEU codes and complete a CEU quiz in order to receive CEUs at the end of the course.

Please see the main workshop page for meeting dates and times.

Module 1: Psychological Flexibility, ACT and Social Validity

- The importance of psychological flexibility as a repertoire
- Psychological flexibility and socially valid goals
- Psychological flexibility and socially valid procedures
- Psychological flexibility and socially valid outcomes
- Psychological flexibility in the context of interlocking contingencies

***Live meeting:** Viewing ACT as the promotion of psychological flexibility within cooperative contexts for change, grounded in functional analysis*

Module 2: Foundations for psychological flexibility

- Doing something different—Behavioral variability
- Noticing—Increasing complexity and flexibility of stimulus control
- Deriving—Establishing new relations and relational flexibility
- Promoting curiosity—Broadening repertoires in the face of adversity
- The social dance—Conceptualizing psychological flexibility in the context of interlocking contingencies

***Live meeting:** Meeting clients where they are at: Viewing ACT developmentally*

Module 3: Self-ing and Psychological Flexibility

- Foundations for self-ing
- Perspective taking
- Hierarchical framing
- Promoting healthy self-ing
- Me and You—Conceptualizing psychological flexibility in the context of interlocking contingencies

***Live meeting:** Meeting clients where they are at: Including ourselves in functional analyses*

Module 4: Rules, values, and psychological flexibility

- Rules—Pliance, tracking, augmenting
- Valuing and transformation of function
- Psychological flexibility and the dimensions of relational framing
- Problems of psychological inflexibility *and models for intervention*
- Psychological flexibility and interlocking contingencies: Promoting flexibility for ourselves and others, throughout the lifespan

Live meeting: *Meeting ourselves and our clients where we are at: “ACTing” throughout the lifespan*

Here are our learning objectives:

Experiential Objectives:

1. Discuss how adopting psychological flexibility as a guiding principle and primary outcome of behavior analytic services supports social validity.
2. Develop goals related to psychological flexibility that focus on measurable objective behavior change.
3. Describe and conceptualize psychological flexibility repertoires within the context of interlocking contingencies (parent child over time, practitioner-client, supervisor-supervisee, etc.)
4. Describe how psychological flexibility and generative behavior is related to enriching environments, expanding repertoires, expanding sources of reinforcement, and increasing choice-making opportunities and skills.
5. Identify at least one way that psychological flexibility (or inflexibility) impacts you personally as a behavior analyst, and identify strategies for increasing your own psychological flexibility
6. Identify the ways in which your own practice supports or hinders flexibility (in yourself and others).

Technical/Educational objectives:

7. Define psychological flexibility from a behavior analytic perspective.
8. Describe ACT as the promotion of psychological flexibility within cooperative contexts for change, grounded in functional analysis.
9. Describe how observing and stimulus orienting is a critical foundational skill for psychological flexibility and executive functioning.
10. Define component repertoires of
 - behavioral variability,
 - perspective taking (including empathy, compassion)

- selfing
 - hierarchical framing, and
 - curiosity and
 - valuing
11. Describe/define rule-governed behavior from an RFT perspective.
 12. Describe the relationship between rule-governed behavior and psychological flexibility.
 13. Describe how component repertoires are learned over time and contribute to the composite repertoire of psychological flexibility.

You're a Part of Something Bigger

By joining this workshop, you also have access to the Constellations Community of Practice, our overarching community group and network, made up of experienced practitioners who are working on applications and research.

Workshop Cost

All of the workshops and coaching groups in Constellations have three price point options, reflecting our commitment to making our work accessible to a diverse, global membership. Paying at the top price point helps to support our lower price point options and fund our scholarships. Sign up at www.weareconstellations.com

Consider paying less (global accessibility/full time student) if you:

- live in a country with a lower per capita income (e.g., Region C or D in the [ABAI membership categories](#), Tier 3 in the [ACBS registration categories](#))
- are supporting children or have other dependents
- have significant debt or medical expenses not covered by insurance
- receive public assistance, are unemployed, or are a full-time student

Consider paying more (sponsorship) if you:

- live in a country with a higher per capita income (e.g., Region A in the [ABAI membership categories](#), Tier 1 in the [ACBS registration categories](#))
- own the home you live in, have investments, retirement accounts, or inherited money
- travel recreationally
- have access to family money and resources in times of need
- work part-time by choice

- have a relatively high degree of earning power due to level of education (or gender and racial privilege, class background, etc.). Even if you are not currently exercising your earning power, we ask you to recognize this as a choice.

The price points for the *Psychological Flexibility* workshop are:

- **Standard: \$325**
- **Sponsorship \$425**
- **Global accessibility/full time students: \$225**

We also have low-cost pay-what-you-can scholarships available. Priority will be given to those who primarily serve underserved, disadvantaged and minority populations, clinicians who are members of minority groups themselves, and to early career practitioners or students in developing countries. Please email constellationsoffice@gmail.com to apply.