

Defusion, part 1

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Purposes of the Workshop

- How defusion fits in the ACT model/functional contextualism/mindfulness
- What is fusion/defusion?
- How do you do it?
- Comparison to other approaches
- Next time...application.

Defining Defusion?

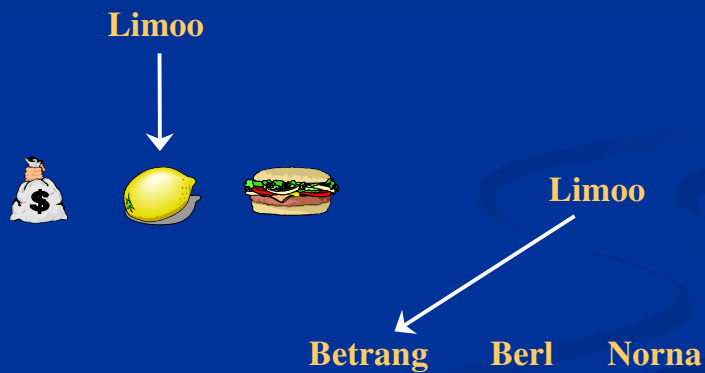
- From a functional contextual viewpoint we aren't looking for Truth with a capital "T"
- Definitions are just ways of speaking and are only true to the extent they are useful
- These definitions are just a way of pointing at a behavior (defusion is an action) that may be useful in certain contexts.

Meaning is Found in Function

- In functional contextualism, what is true is what helps one accomplish one's goals
- Different types of speaking may be appropriate for different goals.
- You'll hear two types of speaking :
 - 1) Scientific – usually more literal, about "truth" as we generally think of it (e.g., correspondence).
 - 2) Clinical – speaking to make a difference, this is defusion in action, not literally true (give example)

Relational Frame Theory

Stimulus Equivalence: An Example of the Core Verbal Process



If you test this, what happens?

Show



Pick?

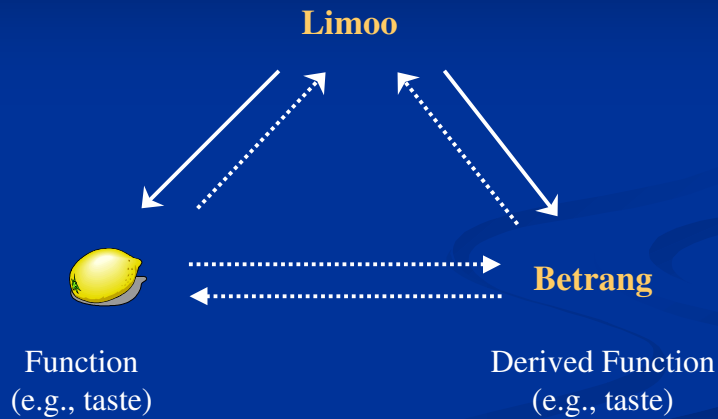
Limoo

Berl

Norna

All 3 equally

The Derived Effects



2 types of relational contexts

- C_{rel} – a cue that specifies the type of relation between the stimuli
 - aspects of the context which can be modified to determine which relations will be derived.
- C_{func} – selects which stimulus functions will be transformed. Any stimulus has many potential functions that could be transformed.
 - Aspects of the context which can be modified to determine which functions are transformed.

Definition of fusion

- Hayes et al (2004): "Cognitive fusion refers to the human tendency to interact with events on the basis of their verbally ascribed functions rather than their direct functions, while being oblivious to the ongoing relational framing that establishes these functions".

Cognitive Fusion

- Humans tend to live in a world excessively structured by literal language
- Verbal constructions of life can even become a veritable substitute for life itself
- People cannot distinguish a verbally-based and evaluated world from the world as directly experienced through the senses.
- The two become fused into one world.

- Example: Read the following to yourself while simultaneously being aware of how your feet feel

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotion, spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never tasted victory or defeat.

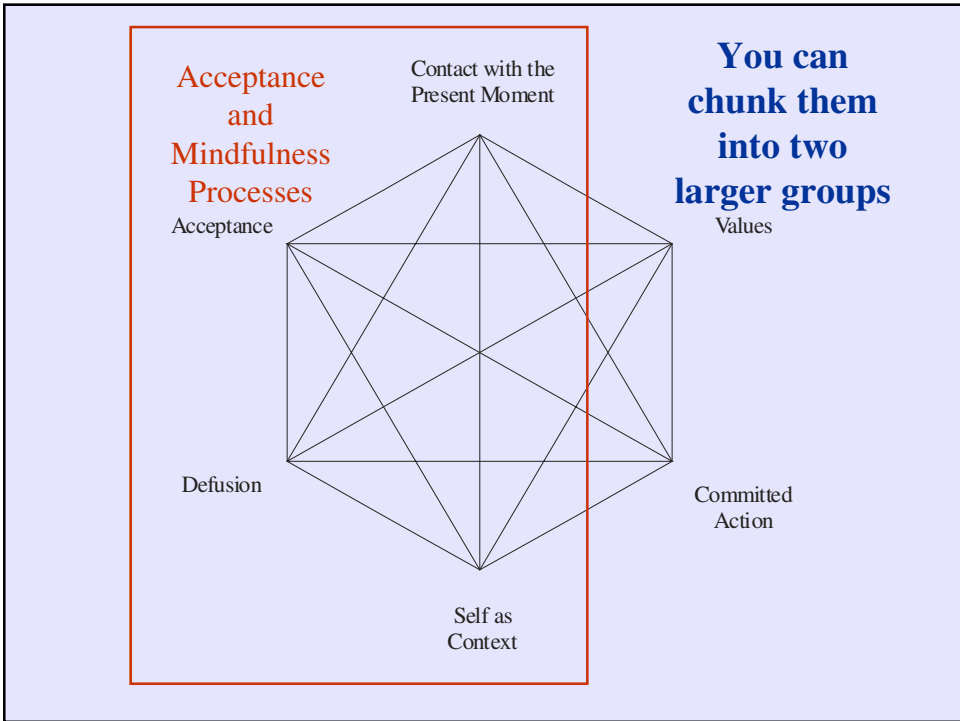
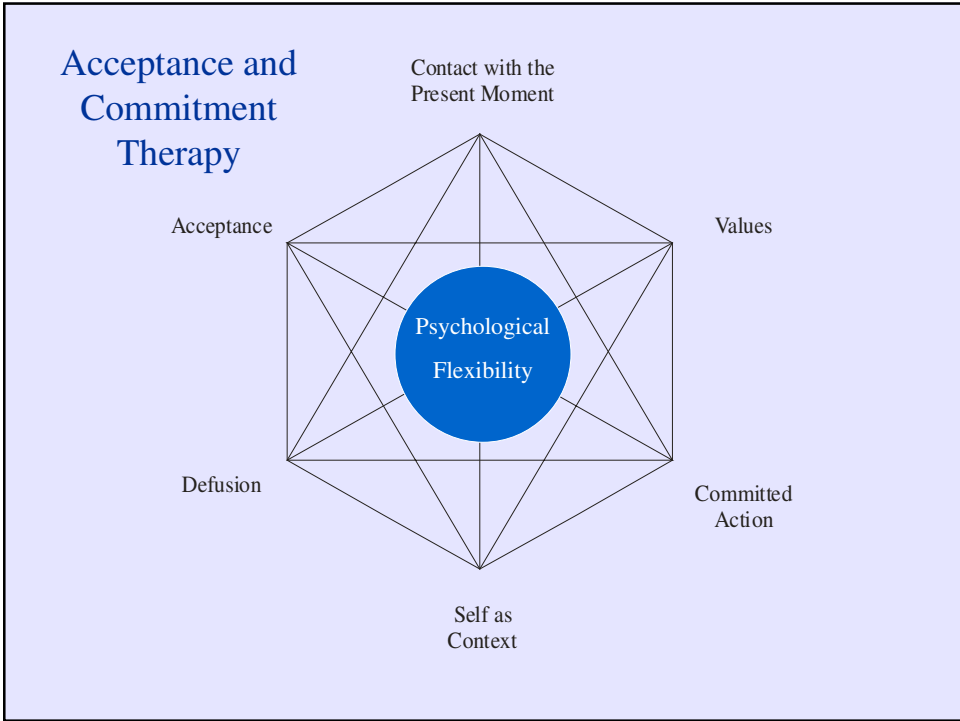
-Theodore Roosevelt

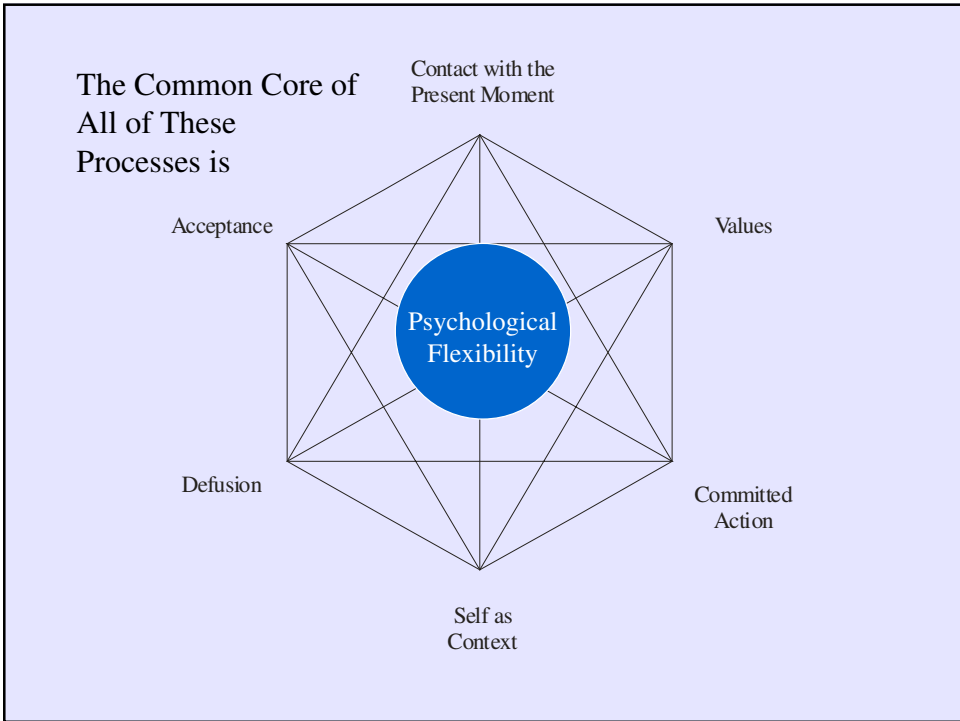
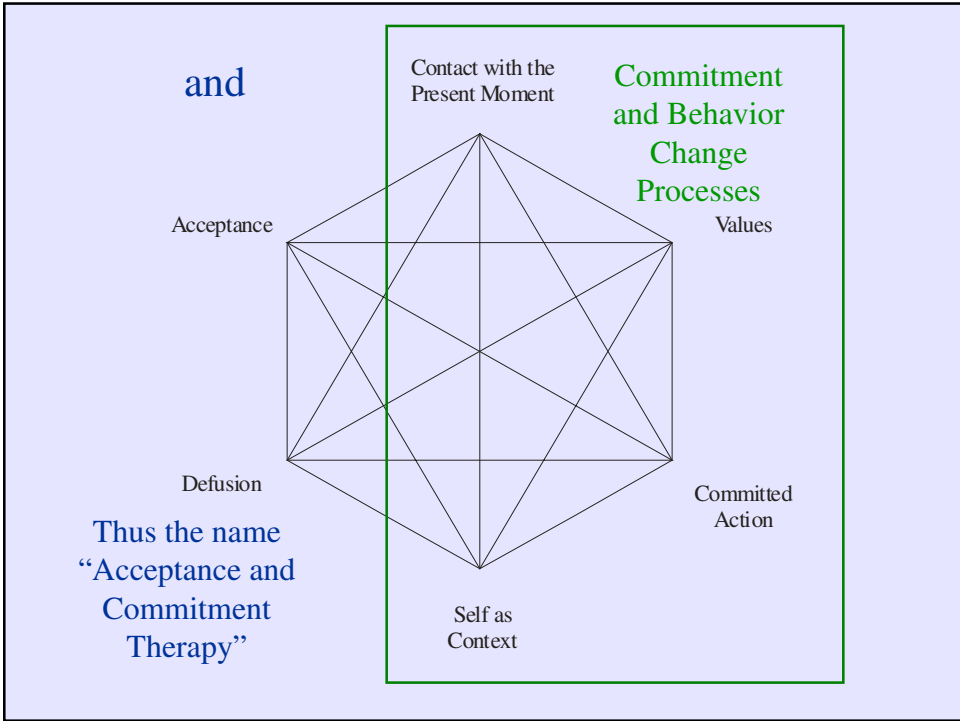
Reason Giving

- We don't just give reasons, we view reasons as causes for behavior.
- The reason is taken as a cause for not making progress, perhaps even in a highly valued domain of living.
- We are taught that we must have explanations for our behaviors and furthermore that these explanations must be coherent. Particular in the realm of behavior that doesn't work, we *really* are expected to have a good explanations.

Definition of defusion (Luoma, Hayes, Walser, 2007)

- Defusion is the process of creating non-literal contexts in which language can be seen as an active, ongoing, relational process that is historical in nature and present in the current moment.
- ... language can be observed in the moment as language – one can watch what the mind says rather than be a slave to it. A word is viewed as a word, not as what it seems to mean.





The target of ACT

Psychological Flexibility:

The process of contacting the present moment fully as a conscious human being and persisting or changing behavior in the service of chosen values

- When psychological flexibility is present, life experiences (i.e., “contingencies”) tend to lead to effective behavior and a life filled with value, meaning, and vitality.

Defusion Techniques

- Teach the limits of language (e.g., choking, learning a skill)
- Use strategies to increase the distance between thought and thinker, feeling and feeler.
 - Objectify language (e.g., physicalizing exercises)
 - Discriminate looking at thoughts rather than from thoughts.

Defusion Techniques

- Use various exercises, metaphors and behavioral tasks to reveal the "hidden" properties of language (e.g., milk, milk, milk; what are the numbers?)
- Undermine larger sets of verbal relations (e.g., reasons as causes discussion, focus on functional utility of story-telling, autobiographical rewrite)

Techniques

- Integrate into ongoing flow of session:
 - Metaphor reminding
 - Teach relevant discriminations (identifying “mindy” conversations)
 - Verbal conventions
 - Reflect clients thoughts as thoughts
 - Therapist disclosing own thoughts in a defused way
 - Respond to verbalizations in terms of workability

Focus on content of thinking – CT approach (borrowed from Sona Dimidjian)

“I was depressed all day yesterday because I was thinking about how my sister really doesn’t love me.”

- * What is the evidence that this thought is accurate?
- * What would it mean if it were true?
- * Can you think of another way to interpret what your sister said?
- * Why must everyone love you?

A Focus on the Context and Consequences of Thinking (from behavioral activation)

“I was depressed all day yesterday because I was thinking about how my sister really doesn’t love me.”

- * When did you start thinking that?
- * How long did it last?
- * What were you doing while you were thinking that?
How engaged were you with the activity, context, etc.?
- * What were consequences of thinking about that?
What might be the function?

Defusion Responses

"I was depressed all day yesterday because I was thinking about how my sister really doesn't love me."

- * When you think that thought, "my sister doesn't love me," how far away is it? Is it up here (holds hand up close to face) or out here (holds hand far away from face)?"
- * So you spent the whole day caught up in your thoughts? (C: yeah) And here your mind is again, talking. Can you notice your mind right now? What's it saying?
- * Let me ask you something. Would it have been possible to have that thought, "my sister doesn't love me," as a thought, and then do something you value? Must that thought get in the way of your living your life?
- * So, when you had that thought yesterday, "my sister doesn't love me," what did your mind say to do with that? (client answers) And, in your experience, how did following what you mind have to say work out? Did you find your life opening up, your suffering decreasing?

DBT responses?

- Anyone?
- How would these be different/similar?