



ASSESSOR GUIDE

CHCCSL006

Select and use counselling therapies | ACT

Assessment 1 of 2

Short Answer Questions



Assessment Instructions

Task overview

This assessment task is divided into nineteen (19) short answer questions. Read each question carefully before typing your response in the space provided.

Additional resources and supporting documents

To complete this assessment, you will need:

- Learning resources



Assessment Information

Submission

You are entitled to three (3) attempts to complete this assessment satisfactorily. Incomplete assessments will not be marked and will count as one of your three attempts.

All questions must be responded to correctly to be assessed as satisfactory for this assessment.

Answers must be typed into the space provided and submitted electronically via the LMS. Hand-written assessments will not be accepted unless previously arranged with your assessor.

Reasonable adjustment

Students may request a reasonable adjustment for assessment tasks.

Reasonable adjustment usually involves varying:

- the processes for conducting the assessment (e.g., allowing additional time)
- the evidence gathering techniques (e.g., oral rather than written questioning, use of a scribe, modifications to equipment)

However, the evidence collected must allow the student to demonstrate all requirements of the unit.

Refer to the Student Handbook or contact your Trainer for further information.



Please consider the environment before printing this assessment.

Question 1

Briefly outline the main difference between the ACT and other cognitive behavioural approaches traditionally used in counselling.

[Approximate word count: 100 - 115 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the differences between the ACT and earlier cognitive behavioural approaches.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Earlier cognitive behavioural approaches aim to change the form or frequency of people's unwanted thoughts and emotions.
- ACT practitioners do not seek to eliminate or change a client's thoughts or emotions. Instead, they seek to help the client view these thoughts and feelings for what they are – pieces of language and transient psychological events, not external "truths"/to transform the relationship with complex thoughts and emotions.
- Instead of challenging or disputing problematic thoughts and feelings, ACT focuses on enhancing the client's psychological flexibility and viewing these internal processes from a mindful and open perspective.

Question 2

The ACT model suggests that cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance are two processes that are responsible for emotional distress and psychological disorders.

Briefly explain why cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance are considered to be problematic.

[Approximate word count: 80 - 100 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of why cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance are problematic from the perspective of ACT.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- When an individual is fused with their thought processes (i.e., cognitive fusion), these processes excessively influence their behaviour to the point that they are caught up in these and become disconnected from the present moment and their actual values.
- In the long term, experiential avoidance strategies restrict an individual's choices and reinforce problematic thoughts, feelings and sensations.
- Cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance decrease an individual's psychological flexibility, which is required for effective functioning.

Question 3

Six core therapeutic processes within ACT help clients increase their psychological flexibility.

For each of these therapeutic processes, you must briefly outline the goal of the process and why ACT practitioners believe this process is essential to increasing psychological flexibility.

[Approximate word count: 40 - 70 words per section]

a) Cognitive defusion

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the goal of cognitive defusion within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is essential.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The goal of cognitive defusion is learning to detach ourselves from our thought processes and observe them as words, sounds and pictures that will pass.
- Cognitive defusion is essential because if we are not defused, we get caught up in our thoughts/feelings and try to change/control them, which distances us from our current experiences and creates psychological inflexibility.

b) Acceptance

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the goal of acceptance within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is important.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The goal of acceptance is to open oneself up, make room for feelings, sensations, urges, and other private experiences, and allow them to come and go without fighting, resisting, or running from them.
- Acceptance is important because it encourages the individual to develop an ability and willingness to feel uncomfortable without being overwhelmed by it and contributes to present-moment experiencing and cognitive flexibility.

c) Contact with the present moment

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate understanding of the goal of contact with the present moment within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is important.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The goal is to be "psychologically present" and bring full attention to the "here-and-now" experience.
- This is important because it allows an individual to allocate their attention flexibly and connect with their experience in the present moment rather than ruminate on past events or future possibilities.

d) Values

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the goal of values within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is important.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Identifying values (i.e., what is important to the individual) is a central component of ACT because it assists clients in highlighting the things that are important to them and creating a meaningful life.
- Values serve as a 'guide' or 'compass' for developing goals, sustaining motivation, and helping clients commit to ongoing actions that add meaning to life, even during difficult times.

e) Committed action

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the goal of committed action within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is important.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Committed action is the process of taking steps towards one's values, even in the presence of unpleasant thoughts and feelings.
- This is important to create change towards living a meaningful life.

f) Self-as-context

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the goal of self-as-context within the ACT framework and why ACT practitioners believe it is important.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The goal is to be aware of the difference between the 'thinking self' and the 'observing self' so that you realise that you are not your thoughts and feelings; you are the context or arena in which they unfold.
- This is important because it allows an individual to have a greater ability to be mindful in the present moment, as they can separate themselves from the thoughts, beliefs, and memories they have.

Question 4

Many ACT counsellors begin the counselling process by highlighting the costs and ineffectiveness of experiential avoidance. This is often called "Creative Hopelessness" or "Confronting the Agenda".

- a) Briefly outline what the process of 'creative hopelessness' entails.

[Approximate word count: 20-30 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the creative hopelessness process.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Get the client to examine the steps they have taken to control their thoughts/feelings.
- Examine whether it has made things better or worse.
- Open up the possibility of using alternative methods to handle them.

- b) Explain how an ACT practitioner can use the 'Join the DOTS technique' to help highlight the costs and ineffectiveness of experiential avoidance.

[Approximate word count: 200 - 220 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of how ACT practitioners can use the 'Join the DOTS technique' to help highlight the costs and ineffectiveness of experiential avoidance.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The 'Join the DOTS' technique asks clients to discuss the thoughts and feelings that are particularly problematic to them and everything they have done to eliminate, avoid, suppress, escape, or distract themselves from these thoughts/feelings.
- The acronym 'DOTS' is used to prompt the discussion of strategies. DOTS stands for Distraction, Opting Out, Thinking and Substances, Self-harm and other Strategies. Clients are asked about things they have used to distract themselves from the unwanted thoughts and feelings, situations that they opted out of as a result, thoughts that they have dwelled on, how they have tried to think their way out of it, as well as substances, self-harm activities or any other strategies they may have tried.
- Once the client identified their control strategies, the counsellor asked them whether they had worked – e.g., by asking the client, "Did these strategies get rid of your painful thoughts and feelings so that they never come back?" The client is also encouraged to consider what these strategies have cost them regarding health, time, energy, work, leisure, money, etc.
- This technique helps the client understand that their coping strategies are not working and are even damaging.

- c) List three (3) other techniques that ACT counsellors may use to highlight the costs and ineffectiveness of experiential avoidance.

[Approximate word count: 20 - 30 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of at least three other strategies that ACT counsellors can use to highlight the costs and ineffectiveness of experiential avoidance.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any three** of the following points.

- Asking the client to complete the 'Attempted Solutions and their Long-Term Effects' Worksheet.
- Use of the Struggling in Quicksand metaphor.
- Use of Tug of War with a Monster metaphor.
- Use of the thought suppression exercises.

Question 5

ACT counsellors are also interested in helping clients establish psychological acceptance and defusion skills and encourage full contact with difficult psychological content.

One technique that ACT counsellors use to facilitate these processes is encouraging clients to use language such as "I have the thought that ____" rather than saying "I am ____".

- i) Why do ACT counsellors promote this type of language?
- ii) What impact is it expected to have on the client?

[Approximate word count: 40 – 50 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of such language in the ACT.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- i) This type of language helps clients separate thoughts as external pieces of language and things that the brain is creating rather than truths or things that are part of them.
- ii) This process helps distance clients from their thoughts, which helps with defusion.

Question 6

Mindfulness exercises are also widely used in the ACT to establish psychological acceptance and defusion skills and encourage full contact with difficult psychological content.

Consider what you learned about the 'Leaves on the Stream' exercise. What is the purpose of this technique, and what do ACT counsellors hope to achieve by using this technique with a client?

[Approximate word count: 40 – 50 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of mindfulness exercises, such as leaves on a stream.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- To help the client learn how to observe their thoughts with openness and curiosity and allow them to come and go rather than trying to control them.
- It helps the client learn skills to observe their thoughts as no more or less than what they are and let them flow rather than trying to make them disappear.

Question 7

Briefly outline the core components of the 'Continuous You' exercise and how they can help clients develop their sense of self-in-context.

[Approximate word count: 60 – 80 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the core components of the 'Continuous You' exercise and how it can help the client develop their sense of self in context.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The 'Continuous You' exercise requires counsellors to instruct clients to notice things [i.e., their breath, thoughts, feelings, physical body, roles, etc.]. The counsellor then instructs the client to note that they are noticing these things and that if they are noticing them, they cannot be them. The counsellor reminds the client that things change, but the 'you' who notices these things does not change – this is the 'observing self'.

- This process helps to distance clients from their thoughts/feelings (if they notice them, they can't be them), allowing defusion and increasing psychological flexibility through the self-as-context process.

Question 8

Briefly outline the core components of the 'Mindfully Eating a Raisin' exercise and how this can be used to promote contact with present-moment awareness.

[Approximate word count: 120 - 130 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the core components of the 'Mindfully Eating a Raisin' exercise and how this can be used to promote contact with present-moment awareness.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Asking the client to focus on the experience of eating a raisin without letting other thoughts and feelings intrude. Whenever their attention has wandered, they are to briefly notice what distracted them and then return to the raisin. The client is instructed to fully experience the feelings and sensations of eating the raisin – concentrating on its colour, texture, smell, feel in the mouth, the sensation of slowly biting into it, the taste and texture, etc.
- This process helps clients understand that they generally take things for granted and fail to experience/appreciate them fully and that life is so much more exciting and fulfilling when we pay attention.

Question 9

Briefly outline two [2] techniques that ACT counsellors can use to increase a client's awareness of their values.

[Approximate word count: 80 - 100 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of two ACT techniques that could help clients clarify their values.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any two** of the following points.

- Using 'The Bull's Eye' worksheet to help the client identify what is important to them in aspects of work/education, relationships, personal growth/health and leisure, and evaluate whether they are living their lives consistently with their values.
- Using the 'Life Compass' worksheet to help the client identify what is important in their life in multiple domains, including parenting, personal growth, leisure, spirituality, health, work, community and environment, family relationships, intimate relationships, and social relationships; and to identify which domain might have been neglected in their life.
- Using the 'Imagine your Eightieth Birthday' technique, which requires the client to imagine their eightieth birthday and what they hope to hear from the people at the birthday party – leads them to identify what matters to the client and what sort of person they want to be.

Question 10

What is a HARD worksheet, and how can it help clients create committed action?

[Approximate word count: 150 - 170 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the HARD worksheet and how it can help clients create committed action.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The HARD worksheet is a document that clients can fill out and respond to questions focusing on what makes it 'hard' for them to commit or take action. Mainly, it helps the client to clarify four aspects:
Hooked [the thoughts that they get hooked by],
Avoiding discomfort [the difficult thoughts, feelings, sensations, emotions, memories and urges that are holding them back from stepping out of their comfort zone];
Remoteness from values [values that are being ignored, neglected, or forgotten when the client opts out of doing important things] and
Doubtful goals [assessing whether goals are realistic and matched to the client's resources].
- It helps clients in the process of committed action, assisting clients to gain clarification on their internal barriers to change and considering how they can be overcome. Essentially, it can be used to help clients commit and follow through on their committed actions.

Question 11

a) Briefly outline the client's role in the ACT counselling process.

[Approximate word count: 40 - 50 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of a client's role in ACT.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Clients must be actively engaging in the process.
- Clients must engage with the mindfulness and experiential exercises that are used.
- Clients must reflect upon their thought processes.
- Clients must be present, open up and do what matters.

b) Briefly outline the counsellor's role in the ACT counselling process.

[Approximate word count: 80 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of a counsellor's role in ACT.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

In the ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) counselling process, the counsellor's role is to guide clients through the therapeutic journey:

- Facilitating mindfulness and experiential exercises.
- Encouraging clients to recognise the costs of experiential avoidance and recognise strategies they have previously tried, evaluating their effectiveness.
- Counsellors work to develop psychological flexibility in their clients.
- Creating a safe space for clients to be present and open up.
- Assisting clients in identifying their values and committing to actions aligned with those values.

Question 12

ACT is a widely used counselling approach that is effective for many clients and client issues. However, it may not be suitable for every client.

- a) Briefly outline two [2] client or client characteristics for whom the ACT approach would not be suitable.

[Approximate word count: 40-60 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of two situations where ACT would not be a suitable counselling approach for the client.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any two** of the following points.

- ACT would not be suitable for clients with deficits in language abilities/cognitive functioning, such as people with severe autism, acquired brain injuries, or other disabilities.
- ACT would not be suitable for a client who wishes to engage in long-term discussion about their past and their problems – these clients would be more suited to another kind of counselling.
- ACT would not suit clients unwilling to/prefer not to engage in an ACT process.

- b) Briefly outline two [2] benefits of the ACT approach for suitable clients.

[Approximate word count: 40 - 60 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of two [2] benefits of the ACT approach for suitable clients.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any two** of the following points.

- Enhanced Psychological Flexibility: Suitable clients can develop greater emotional regulation, adaptability, and resilience through ACT, improving mental well-being.
- Increased Value-Based Living: ACT helps clients clarify their values and commit to actions aligned with them, leading to a more purposeful and meaningful life.
- Reduced Avoidance Behaviors: Suitable clients can learn to confront and cope with difficult emotions and situations rather than avoid them, leading to personal growth and reduced avoidance-related suffering.
- Improved Interpersonal Relationships: ACT can enhance clients' ability to communicate effectively, empathise with others, and navigate interpersonal conflicts, contributing to healthier relationships and social well-being.

Question 13

Many ACT counsellors start the counselling process by developing a case conceptualisation based on the client's level of psychological inflexibility.

Identify six (6) types of information that an ACT counsellor may obtain for case conceptualisation.

[Approximate word count: 20 - 30 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of at least six types of information used to develop case conceptualisation from an ACT perspective.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any six** of the following points.

- Relevant history
- The client's presenting complaints
- Client's values
- Current life context
- Psychological rigidity and flexibility
- Motivational factors
- Resources that clients have

Question 14

Helping clients to set goals that are a 'live person's goal' rather than a 'dead person's goal' is an important part of the ACT process.

What is the difference between these two types of goals, and how do ACT counsellors encourage their clients to set a live person's goals?

[Approximate word count: 50-60 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of the difference between a 'live person's goal' and a 'dead person's goal' and how ACT counsellors encourage clients to set a live person's goals.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- A live person's goal is an active goal for the client.
- A dead person's goal is a goal that a dead person could perform better (i.e., to stop doing something).
- ACT counsellors encourage clients to set live goals by asking them to consider what they would do differently instead of what they would stop doing.

Question 15

While there is no specific way or order for using ACT with clients, Harris (2019) suggests two paths for ACT counsellors to undertake with new clients.

Briefly outline these two (2) paths.

[Approximate word count: 90 - 100 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of two possible paths that ACT counsellors may undertake while working with new clients.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- The **first** path is to consider what valued direction the client wants to move in, which generally flows onto a values clarification exercise, followed by goal setting and committed action.
- The **second** path involves targeting the issues getting in the client's way and helping clients build skills to manage them. For instance, a counsellor may target inflexible attention by contacting the present moment, target fusion with defusion, target experiential avoidance with acceptance, and target self-criticism, self-hatred, and self-neglect with self-compassion.

Question 16

Like all counsellors, ACT counsellors are required to keep records of their sessions.

List three (3) pieces of information that ACT counsellors, in particular, would want to record in their session notes.

[Approximate word count: 15-20 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of at least three pieces of information that an ACT counsellor would want to document in session notes.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any three** of the following points.

- What was discussed with the client
- The client's level of psychological inflexibility
- The client's valued direction
- Therapeutic processes and techniques used in the session

Question 17

Like other approaches, ACT counsellors should also monitor their work with clients and evaluate client progress.

In the space provided, list three (3) ways that an ACT counsellor could monitor a client's progress.

[Approximate word count: 40 - 50 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of at least three ways an ACT counsellor could monitor their client's progress.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Ask the client whether they think they have made any progress.
- Use written forms to collect client feedback on progress.
- Complete a Flexibility Rating Sheet with the client after every session and compare the client's scores to see if any progress has been made.

Marker note: ACT aims to increase psychological flexibility instead of symptom reduction; hence, measuring symptoms is not an appropriate way of determining client progress.

Question 18

As a counsellor, you have an ethical responsibility to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills in applying counselling techniques and approaches.

- a) Identify three (3) credible sources that you may use to access information on counselling therapies and trends.

[Approximate word count: 10 - 20 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate an understanding of at least three credible sources of information.

The student's response needs to include a reference to the following points.

- Textbooks
- Research articles/journals
- Professional bodies and websites

- b) Outline three (3) things that you would consider in determining whether a particular source of information is credible.

[Approximate word count: 10 - 20 words]

Assessor instructions: The student's response should include an understanding of at least three factors to consider in determining whether a source of information is credible.

Student responses need to include a reference to **any three** of the following points.

- Who are the authors?
- What was the writing and publishing process?
- When was it written?
- Is there a comprehensive reference list of authoritative sources?
- Is it a primary or secondary source?
- What is the author trying to achieve?
- Are the claims supported or contradicted by other authoritative sources?
- Is it appropriately referenced?
- Are there signs of bias in work?
- Is there enough evidence?

Students may also refer to the acronym CRAAP:

- **Currency:** When was it published? Has it been updated or revised?
- **Relevance:** How relevant is it to your needs? Whom is it intended for?
- **Authority:** Who is the author? Are they qualified on this topic?

- Accuracy: Is there evidence to support it? Has it been peer-reviewed?
- Purpose: What is the purpose of the information? Is it objective and impartial?

Question 19

You have learned about four counselling approaches:

- Person-centred therapy
- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Solution-focused therapy
- Acceptance commitment therapy.

Select two [2] of the approaches listed in the dot points, and for each approach, find one article or another academic/professional source that provides relevant information and could help you expand your knowledge of emerging trends in the use of the selected therapies.

Provide information identifying the **source** in the relevant column, and briefly summarise what you have learned from the articles.

Assessor instructions: The student's response should demonstrate the ability to maintain and enhance knowledge of emerging trends in counselling therapies by providing two sources of information and relevant learning summaries for the two selected approaches listed in the dot points.

Markers will need to utilise professional judgment to determine if the student's response is competent.

Approach 1	Details
Title:	Embracing Your Demons: An Overview of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
Year published:	2011
Author/s:	Russell Harris
Web source/Link:	https://www.psychotherapy.net/article/Acceptance-and-Commitment-Therapy-ACT
Summary:	<p>[Approximate word count: 80 - 95 words]</p> <p>Assessor instructions: Wording may differ, but student responses must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.</p> <p>Markers will need to utilise professional judgment to determine if the student's response is competent.</p> <p>"The experience of doing therapy becomes vastly different with ACT. It is no</p>

	longer about getting rid of bad feelings or overcoming old trauma. Instead, it is about creating a rich, full and meaningful life. This is confirmed by the findings of Strosahl, Hayes, Bergan and Romano, who showed that ACT increases therapist effectiveness, and Hayes et al. (2004), who showed that it reduces burnout. If I had to summarise ACT on a T-shirt, it would read: "Embrace your demons, and follow your heart."
Approach 2	Details
Title:	The efficacy of Cognitive behaviour therapy: A review of meta-analyses
Year published:	2012 – a little old but still valid content
Author/s:	Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, Fang
Web source/Link:	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3584580/
Summary:	<p>[Approximate word count: 80 - 95 words]</p> <p>Assessor instructions: Wording may differ, but student responses must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.</p> <p>Markers will need to utilise professional judgment to determine if the student's response is competent.</p> <p>"This review examined 269 meta-analyses to evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for various psychological issues. The strongest evidence supports CBT's efficacy in treating anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, bulimia, anger control problems, and general stress. CBT generally outperformed other treatments in terms of response rates. However, further research is required, especially regarding randomised-controlled studies and specific subgroups like ethnic minorities and low-income individuals."</p>

Assessment checklist:

Students must have completed all questions within this assessment before submitting. This includes:

1	Nineteen (19) short answer questions are to be completed in the spaces provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 **Congratulations, you have reached the end of this assessment!**

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