

Integrative Health Glossary of Terms

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Developed within a coherent theoretical and philosophical framework, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a unique empirically based psychological intervention that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies, together with commitment and behavior change strategies, to increase psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility means contacting the present moment fully as a conscious human being, and based on what the situation affords, changing or persisting in behavior in the service of chosen values.

Based on Relational Frame Theory, ACT illuminates the ways that language entangles clients into futile attempts to wage war against their own inner lives. Through metaphor, paradox, and experiential exercises clients learn how to make healthy contact with thoughts, feelings, memories, and physical sensations that have been feared and avoided. Clients gain the skills to re-contextualize and accept these private events, develop greater clarity about personal values, and commit to needed behavior change. For more information on ACT, visit the [review](#) offered by the Association for Contextual Behavior Sciences.

Acupuncture

The term “acupuncture” describes a family of procedures involving the stimulation of anatomical points on the body using a variety of techniques. The acupuncture technique that has been most often studied scientifically involves penetrating the skin with thin, solid, metallic needles that are manipulated by the hands or by electrical stimulation. For more information on acupuncture, please refer to “[Acupuncture: In Depth](#),” from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, or see the Whole Health clinical tool, “[Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine](#).”

Battlefield Acupuncture

The Battlefield Acupuncture technique is a unique auricular (ear) acupuncture procedure developed in 2001 by then Air Force Colonel Richard Niemtzw, M.D, to train Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, and other providers to treat pain throughout the MHS and VHA. This technique provides a much needed alternative in cases where the initiation or continuation of opioid analgesics is deemed clinically risky, in cases where current medications and other therapies are not working, and cases where the existence of and potential for substance abuse, addiction and tolerance issues make medication therapies impractical. For more information, see “[Battlefield Acupuncture](#)” on the Defense & Veterans Center for Integrative Pain Management.

Biofeedback

Biofeedback uses information from physiological monitoring devices to teach individuals how to consciously regulate physiological functions (e.g. brainwaves, skin temperature, heart rate) and is often used to induce the relaxation response. For more information, see the section on [Biofeedback](#) within the “Relaxation Techniques for Health” on the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health website or the Whole Health clinical tool “[Biofeedback](#).”

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a blend of two therapies: cognitive therapy (CT) and behavioral therapy. CT was developed by psychotherapist Aaron Beck, M.D., in the 1960's. CT focuses on a person's thoughts and beliefs, and how they influence a person's mood and actions, and aims to change a person's thinking to be more adaptive and healthy. Behavioral therapy focuses on a person's actions and aims to change unhealthy behavior patterns.

CBT helps a person focus on his or her current problems and how to solve them. Both patient and therapist need to be actively involved in this process. The therapist helps the patient learn how to identify distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, relate to others in more positive ways, and change behaviors accordingly. For more information on CBT, please refer to the National Institute for Mental Health's website on [Psychotherapies](#).

Chiropractic

Chiropractic is a health care profession that focuses on the relationship between the body's structure—mainly the spine—and its functioning. Although practitioners may use a variety of treatment approaches, they primarily perform adjustments (manipulations) to the spine or other parts of the body with the goal of correcting alignment problems, alleviating pain, improving function, and supporting the body's natural ability to heal itself. For more information on chiropractic, please see "[Chiropractic: In Depth](#)" from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health website.

Guided Imagery

Guided imagery involves a series of relaxation techniques followed by the visualization of detailed images, usually calm and peaceful in nature. If used for treatment, the individual will visualize their body free of the specific problem or condition. Sessions are typically 20 to 30 minutes in length, and may be practiced several times a week. For more information on guided imagery, please see the VA's website on [Visualization](#) or the Whole Health clinical tool on "[Imagery](#)".

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/camterms.htm>

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness characterized by increased responsiveness to suggestion. The hypnotic state is attained by first relaxing the body, then shifting attention toward a narrow range of objects or ideas as suggested by the hypnotist or hypnotherapist. The procedure is used to effect positive changes and to treat numerous health conditions including ulcers, chronic pain, respiratory ailments, stress, and headaches. For more information, please see "[Hypnosis](#)" from the National Institute for Health website or the Whole Health clinical tool "[Clinical Hypnosis](#)."

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/camterms.htm>

Massage

Massage therapy encompasses many different techniques. In general, therapists press, rub, and otherwise manipulate the muscles and other soft tissues of the body. They most often use their hands and fingers, but may use their forearms, elbows, or feet. For more information on massage therapy, see “[Massage Therapy for Health Purposes](#)” from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health or the Whole Health clinical tool, “[Massage Therapy](#).”

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/massage>

Meditation

Meditation refers to a group of techniques, most of which started in Eastern religious or spiritual traditions. In meditation, a person learns to focus his attention and suspend the stream of thoughts that normally occupy the mind. This practice is believed to result in a state of greater physical relaxation, mental calmness, and psychological balance. Practicing meditation can change how a person relates to the flow of emotions and thoughts in the mind. For more information on meditation, please see “[Meditation: In Depth](#)” from the National Institute for Health or the Whole Health clinical tool, “[Meditation](#).”

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/camterms.htm>

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a form of meditation where the focus of attention is on what is being experienced in the present moment, without reacting to or judging that moment. For more information on mindfulness-based stress reduction, visit the National Institute for Health’s website on [MBSR](#) or the Whole Health Educational Overview, “[Mindful Awareness](#)”.

Music Therapy

The clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship in order to improve and maintain physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning, as well as promotes health and optimizes well-being. To learn more about the effectiveness of music therapy, see the overview, “[Musical Training and the Brain](#)” from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

Tai Chi

Tai chi is a mind-body practice that originated in China as a martial art. A person doing tai chi moves his body slowly and gently, while breathing deeply and meditating (tai chi is sometimes called “moving meditation”). Many practitioners believe that tai chi helps the flow throughout the body of a proposed vital energy called “qi.” A person practicing tai chi moves her body in a slow, relaxed, and graceful series of movements. One can practice on one’s own or in a group. The movements make up what are called forms (or routines). For more information tai chi, visit the “[Tai Chi and Qi Gong](#)” website from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/camterms.htm>

Yoga

Yoga combines breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation to calm the nervous system and balance body, mind, and spirit. Usually performed in classes, sessions are conducted once a week or more and roughly last 45 minutes. For more information, please visit the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health's website, "[Yoga: In Depth](#)" or see the Whole Health clinical tool, "[Yoga: Looking Beyond "The Mat".](#)"

Footnote: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/camterms.htm>