

Steps Two and Three: The Bridge to Action Exercises

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Exercises

Awareness: Five Senses Check-In

Pause and notice: 1 thing you see...1 thing you hear...1 physical sensation...one emotion...one thought . Share one of those things with the group without explaining or judging it.

Acceptance: Making Room

Identify a mildly uncomfortable feeling. For 60 seconds, breathe slowly and silently say, "I can make room for this feeling without fighting it or acting on it." Share what the experience was like with the group without judging it.

Cognitive Defusion: "I'm Having the Thought that..."

Each member chooses a difficult thought and repeats it using this format: "I'm having the thought that..."
Discuss how the wording changes the thought's impact.

Self as Context: The Observer

Members complete the sentence "I notice (name a thought, feeling, sensation, or memory) and I am the person noticing this."
Discuss what it's like to observe the thought, feeling, etc. without defining themselves by it."

Values

"What Do I Want to Stand For?"

Members Choose One Life Area (recovery, family, friends, work, health) and write three words that describe the person they want to be in that area.

Committed Value-Based Action: One Small Step

Each member selects one value they have and completes the sentence.
"Within the next 24 hours, I will (action) because I value (name of value).
Action should be specific, realistic, and within the member's control.
Share the action with the group.

Exercises Adapted from these sources

- Awareness—“Five Senses Check-In”: Adapted from present-moment awareness practices described by Harris (2019) and Hayes et al. (2012).
- Acceptance—“Making Room”: Adapted from Harris’s acceptance and “making room” practices (Harris, 2019).
- Cognitive defusion—“I’m Having the Thought That...”: Adapted from Hayes and Smith (2005) and Harris (2019).
- Self-as-context—“The Observer”: Adapted from observing-self and self-as-context exercises described by Hayes et al. (2012).
- Values—“What Do I Want to Stand For?": Adapted from values-clarification exercises described by Harris (2019) and Hayes et al. (2012).
- Committed value-based action—“One Small Step”: Adapted from values-based goal setting and committed-action practices described by Harris (2019) and Hayes et al. (2012).