



ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT THERAPY: AIM PROTOCOL

**ADAPTED FOR ADULTS
WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES**

Presented by

Malcolm Lucassen

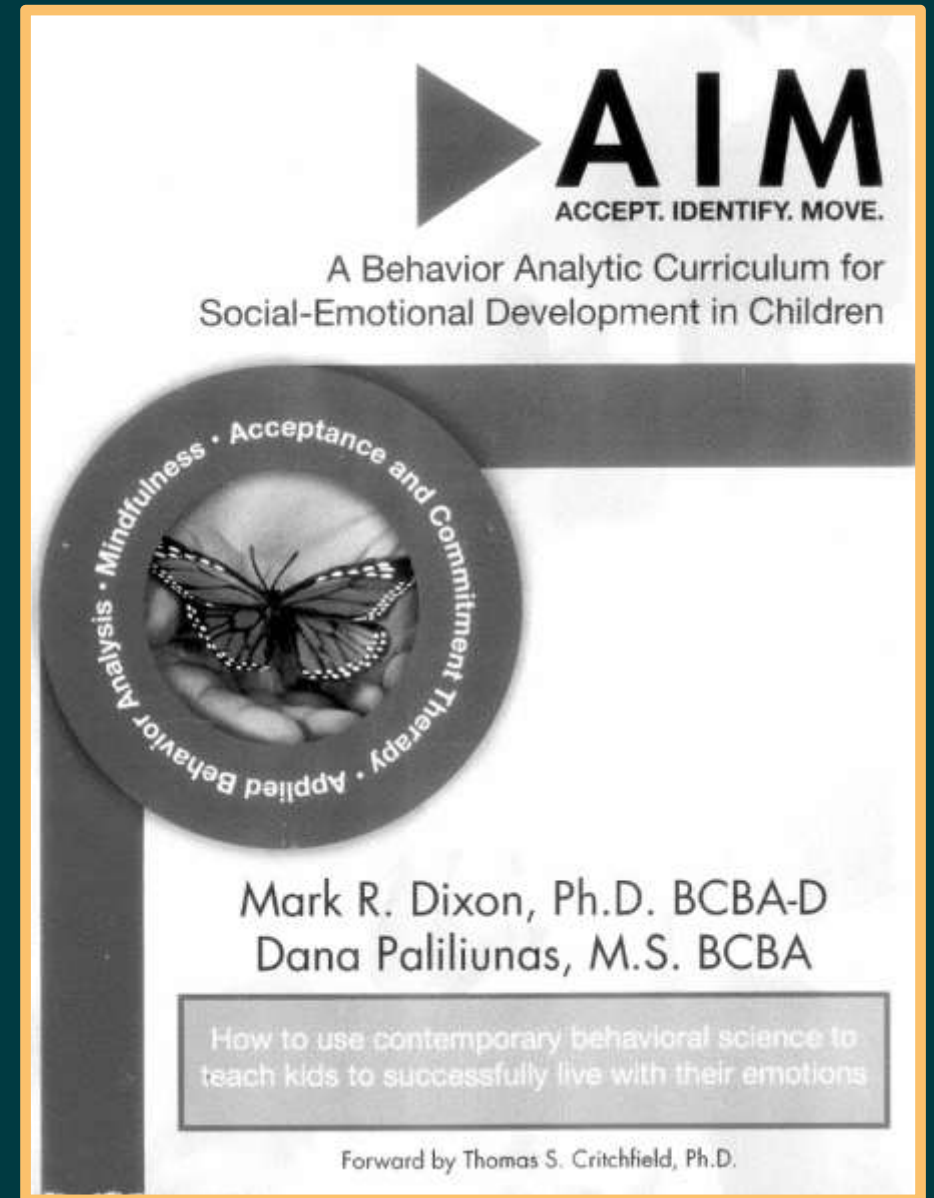
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INTRODUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Objectives

1. Understand AIM foundations
2. Learn how to build and implement AIM Matrix
3. Identify and target behaviors, psychological factors influencing behavior
4. Apply AIM through real examples

WHY MODIFY AIM?



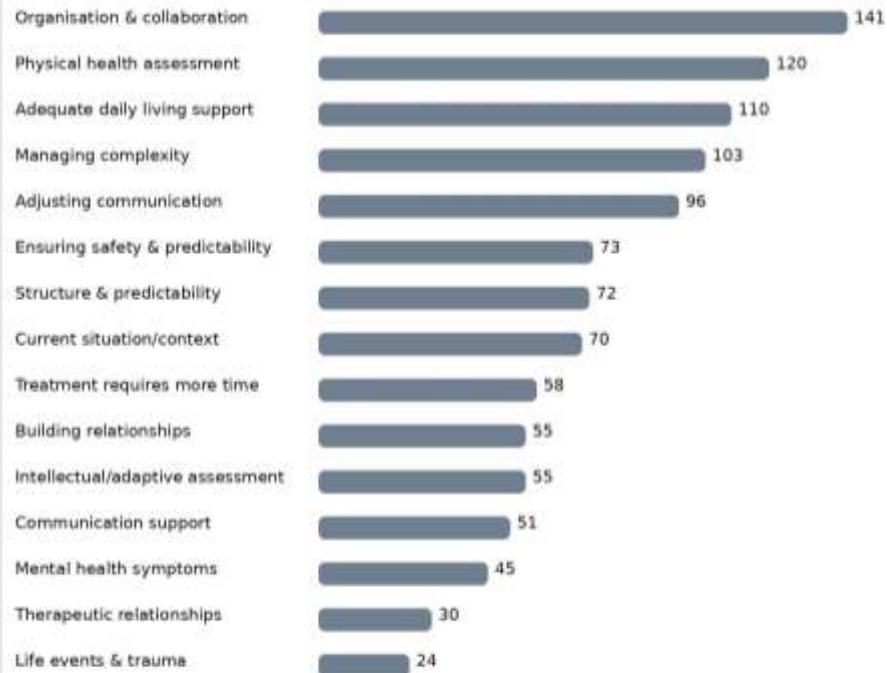
THE PROBLEM:

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Mental Health Services for Adults With Intellectual Disabilities

Key adaptation needs identified from 1,103 participant responses

Most Frequently Identified Needs



Study Snapshot

- 46 participants
- 33 professionals
- 13 family members
- 1,103 responses analyzed
- 3 core themes identified

1. Broader Assessment

History, abilities, communication, physical health, trauma, symptoms and context.

2. Adapted Treatment

More time, collaboration, structure, communication adaptations and therapeutic relationships.

3. Day-to-Day Needs

Safety, predictability, stable relationships and adequate daily living support.

- ❖ Disability vs Mental health
- ❖ Diagnostic overshadowing
- ❖ Ableism
- ❖ Lack of education and knowledge about intellectual disabilities and developmental delays
- ❖ Services are disconnected, specialized, and rarely integrate

WHAT IS AIM?

- ❖ Integrated hybrid approach
- ❖ Targets multiple problem areas
- ❖ Decreases challenging behavior
- ❖ Teaches and rewards positive behavior through psychological flexibility
- ❖ Relates behavior to consequences in real time



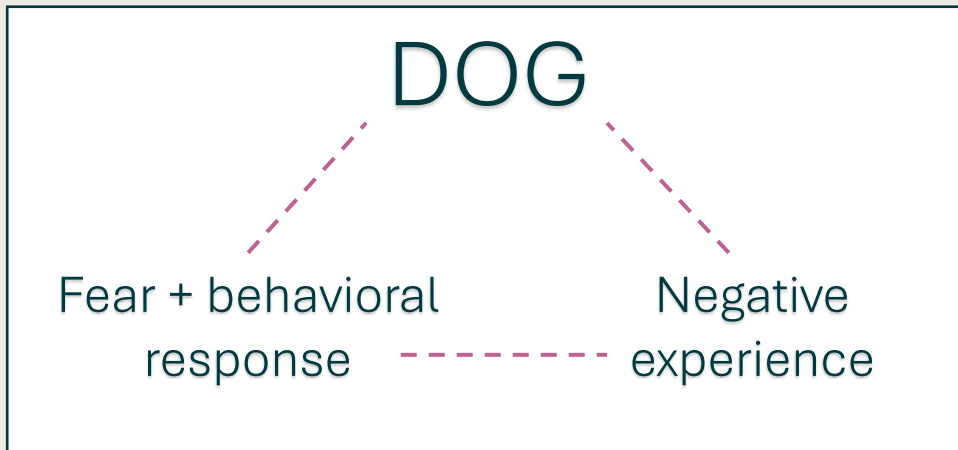
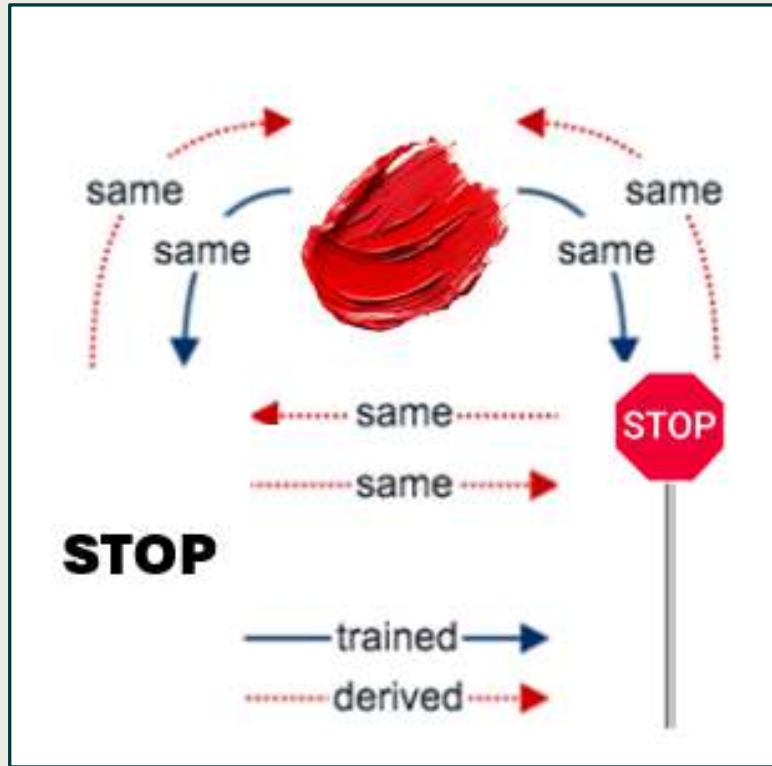
WHY USE AIM?

- ❖ No formal education or training required
- ❖ Compatible with existing practices
- ❖ Evidence based
- ❖ Adaptable to all needs and functionality
- ❖ Collaborative approach includes the client
- ❖ Behavior reduction improves safety for clients and care staff

FOUNDATIONS OF AIM

RELATIONAL FRAME THEORY

- ❖ Developed by Steven Hayes PhD.
- ❖ Explains how humans relate to the world
- ❖ *Derived Relations – inferred connections*
- ❖ *Trained relations – taught connections*



RELATIONAL FRAME THEORY (RFT) IN CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Developmental Disabilities Literature Review (1986-2014)

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

58 Articles Reviewed

35 Typically Developing Samples

23 Developmental Disabilities Samples

1986-2014 Research Period

RESEARCH DISTRIBUTION

35 Typical Samples

23 Atypical Samples

MAJOR FINDINGS

- **Growing Evidence**
Empirical support for RFT increased steadily between 1986 and 2014.
- **Core Relational Frames**
Coordination, opposition, comparison, hierarchy, and perspective-taking were most studied.
- **Autism Applications**
Studies demonstrated successful teaching of language, social, and cognitive skills.
- **Educational Impact**
RFT interventions improved reasoning, communication, and cognitive flexibility.
- **Future Research**
Expand training for complex relational skills in developmental disability populations.

Source: Ruiz & Montoya - RFT in Children and Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities

(PDF) A Review of Empirical Relational Frame Theory Articles in Children and Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities
Deictic Relational Responding and Perspective-Taking in Autistic Individuals: A Scoping Review - PMC

BUILDING THE MATRIX

1. Identify Target Behavior

Aggression towards dogs

2. Learn the Context

How do we do this?

<u>Client:</u>		<u>Date:</u>		<u>Time:</u>		<u>Setting:</u>	
<u>Antecedent</u>	<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Consequence</u>	<u>Duration</u>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Presented task <input type="checkbox"/> Asked to wait <input type="checkbox"/> End activity <input type="checkbox"/> Denied activity <input type="checkbox"/> Item denied <input type="checkbox"/> Transition <input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical aggression <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verbal Aggression <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Injury <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elopement <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Redirect <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Prompt <input type="checkbox"/> Ignored <input type="checkbox"/> Continue task <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal reprimand <input type="checkbox"/> Removed from activity/location <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <1min <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5min <input type="checkbox"/> 5-15min <input type="checkbox"/> 15-30min <input type="checkbox"/> .5-1hr <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2hr <input type="checkbox"/> 2+ hr <input type="checkbox"/> Other				
<u>Other:</u> saw a dog on a walk	<u>Other:</u>	<u>Other:</u>	<u>Other:</u>				
<u>Setting event or Considerations:</u>							
John slept good, took meds & was in a good mood. Wanted to go for a walk. Went on walk with favorite staff. Saw a dog on the walk. John started crying and yelling. John made threats towards the dog & the dog owner. Postured and gestured at the owner while hitting himself. Eloped to a nearby yard and threw rocks at the dog. Redirected to go home. John was back to normal after returning home.							

FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

Determine the Function

BUILDING THE MATRIX

<u>Client:</u>		<u>Date:</u>		<u>Time:</u>		<u>Setting:</u>	
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FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

Sensory

Escape

Attention

Tangibles

AUTOMATIC CONTROL

BUILDING THE MATRIX: FINDING REPLACEMENTS

*Replacement behaviors must
have the same function*

<u>Replacement Behaviors</u>		
<u>FX</u>	<u>Target Behavior</u>	<u>Replacement Behavior</u>
<u>X</u>	AGGRESSION TOWARDS DOGS	
<u>X</u>	YELLING AT OTHERS	
<u>X</u>	SELF HARM	

BUILDING THE MATRIX

- ❖ Trains derived relations
- ❖ Response cost disincentivizes challenging behavior
- ❖ Point system motivates positive behavior

<u>Preference Assessment: Reinforcement Value</u>		
<u>FX</u>	<u>Reinforcers</u>	<u>Reinforcer Value</u>
<u>X</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
<u>X</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
<u>X</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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<u>X</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

**IDENTIFY
REINFORCERS**

ASSIGN VALUES & DETERMINE COSTS

BUILDING THE MATRIX

Point Menu		
<u>Low Cost T1</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>Medium Cost T1</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>High Cost T1</u> <u>000 Points</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 		
<u>Low Cost T2</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>Medium Cost T2</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>High Cost T2</u> <u>000 Points</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 		
<u>Low Cost T3</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>Medium Cost T3</u> <u>000 Points</u>	<u>High Cost T4</u> <u>000 Points</u>
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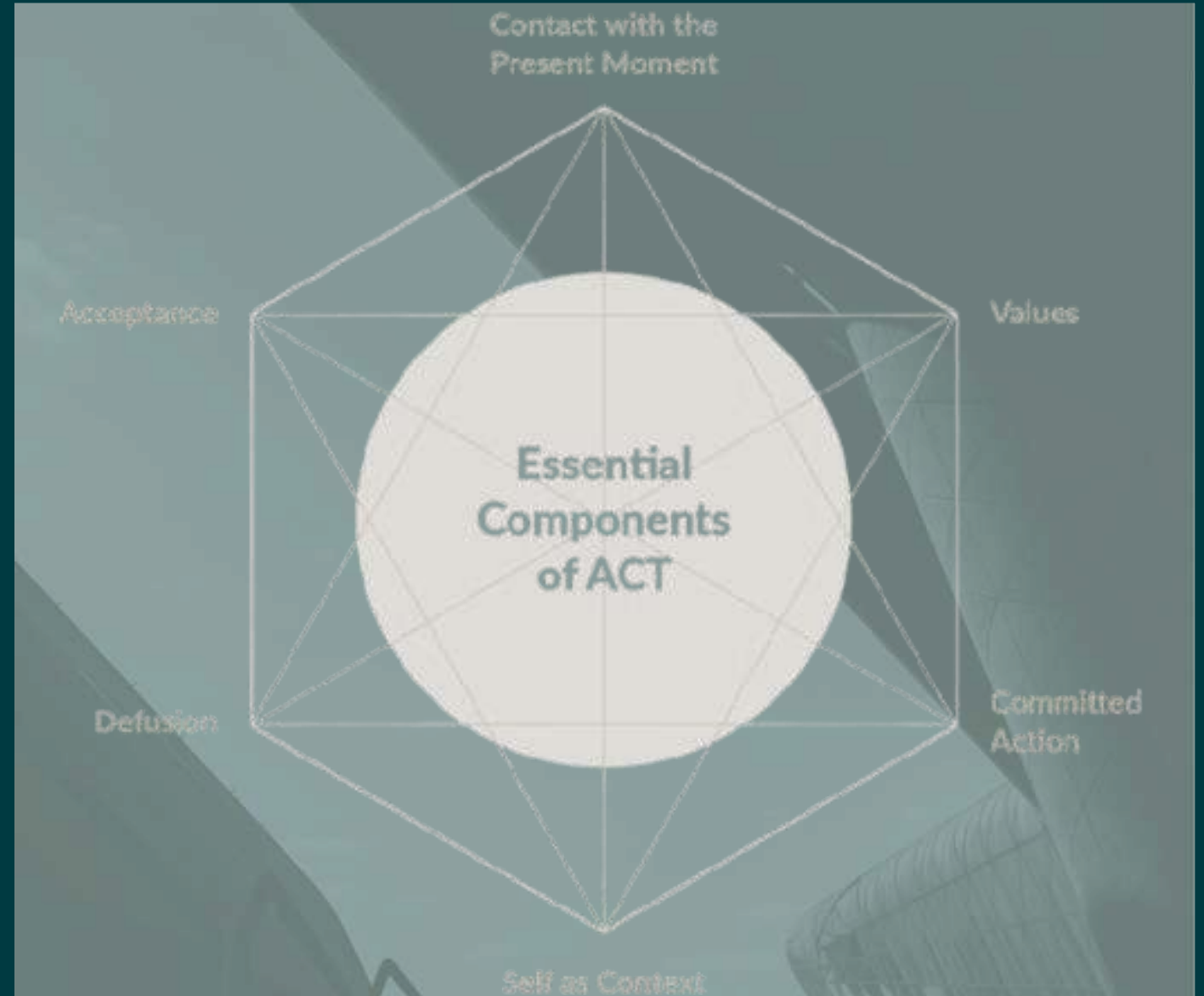
Earning Points		
<u>Target Behavior</u>	<u>Replacement Behavior</u>	<u>Value</u>

- ❖ Replacements and reinforcements for every function
- ❖ Immediate cost response to behavior
- ❖ Point matrix teaches
 - ❖ Prioritization
 - ❖ Delayed gratification

CLOSING THE GAP

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

*BEHAVIOR IMPROVES,
BUT SUFFERING
REMAINS IF BEHAVIOR
MODIFICATION IS THE
ONLY APPROACH*



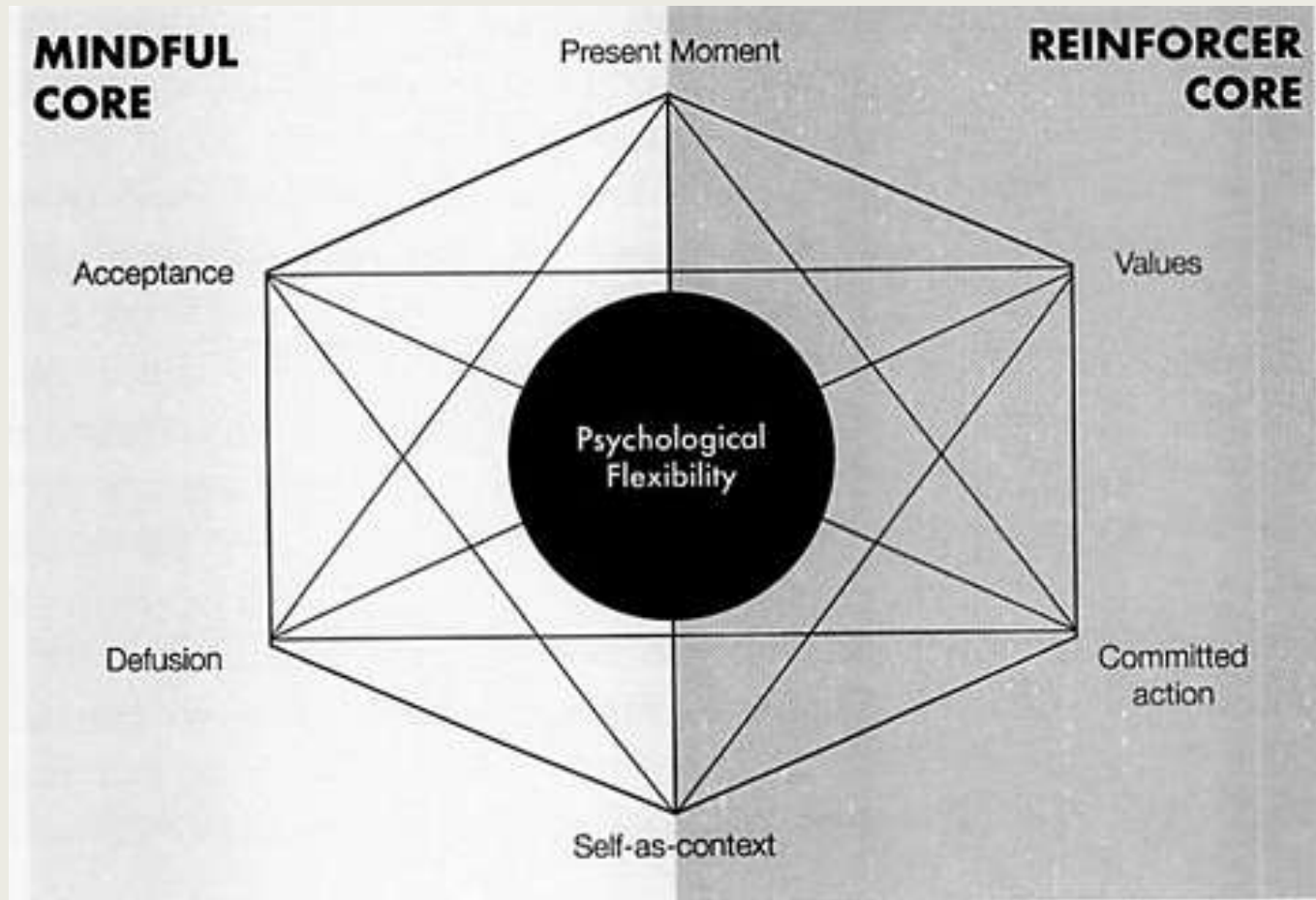


WHAT OTHER CONTEXTS ARE INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR?

ACT teaches *psychological flexibility* to correct *psychological inflexibility*

The pain you are suffering cannot compare to the joy that's coming – Romans 8:18

SIX CORES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY



MINDFUL CORE

PRESENT MOMENT

Stuck in the past or future

ACCEPTANCE

Experiential avoidance

DEFUSION

Cognitive fusion

REINFORCER CORE

SELF AS CONTEXT

Attached to past mistakes

COMMITTED ACTION

Impulsive behaviors

VALUES

Lack of identity & purpose

Extra Points: Mindfulness Incentives

Core Practiced	Response	Cost
Present Moment		
Values		
Committed Action		
Self as Context		
Defusion		
Acceptance		

Present Moment

I like that you're in the moment right now

Values

Remember what you're working towards

Committed Action

I love how you came back to X after getting frustrated

Self as Context

I like that you're being the real you right now

Defusion

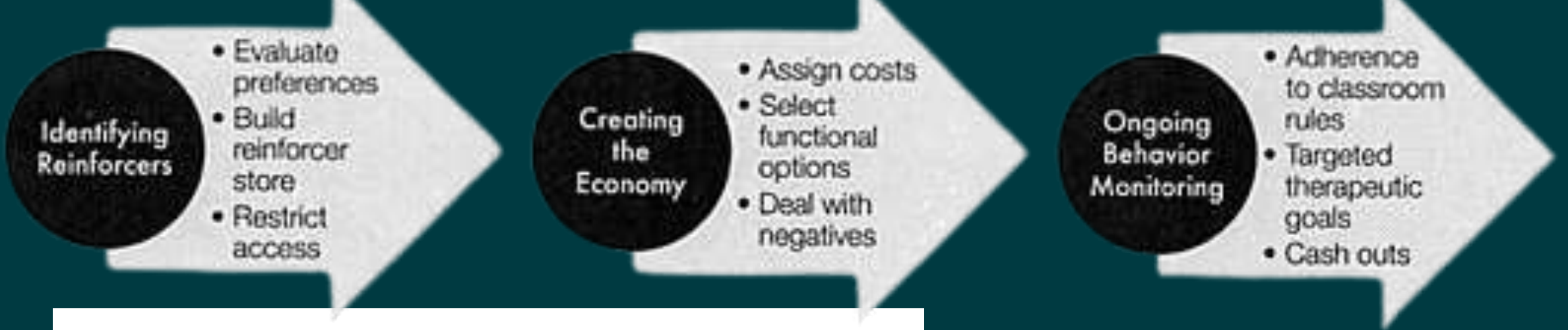
Great job not responding to those comments

Acceptance

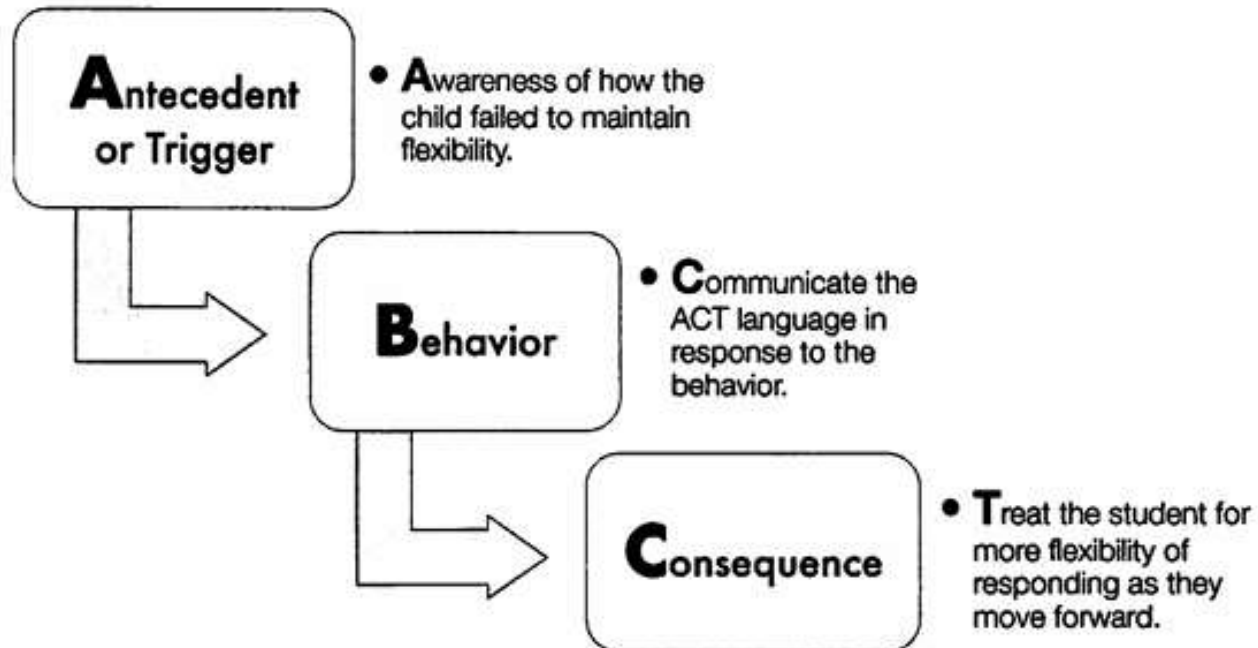
I appreciate you've accepted its time to move on

LANGUAGE THAT PROMOTES FLEXIBILITY

*If only there was a protocol
that could incentivize
changing negative speech
patterns...*



The Flow of the Behavioral Event



**THERE IS!
AND ITS AIM**

If only there was a protocol that could incentivize changing negative speech patterns...

Awareness

- Not present in current moment
- Fused to thoughts
- Choosing non-values
- Losing commitment
- Wrong self
- Difficulty with acceptance

Communicate

Reactive ACT

- Let's get back in the present
- It's ok that did not work out. We need to accept it.
- Is this the real you that is here right now?
- Did this get you closer to your values?

Proactive ACT

- Can you tell me what your values are today?
- Stop, pause, and come back to the present.
- Let's commit to doing better from this point forward
- I like the real you I see right now

Treat

- Acknowledge current environment
- Stepping back from current verbalizations
- Reminding of prior stated values
- Encouraging commitment
- Refocus to self-as-context
- Acceptance of the entire event (good/bad)



Q&A

Now you know what AIM is, how it works and how to implement it.

Let's do some together

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