Acceptance and Commitment Therapy - a practical tool for a speech pathologist

author: Anna Szerszeńska (Independent practitioner; Warsaw)

anna@szerszenska.com
ABSTRACT

Stuttering can interfere not only with the fluency of speech, but more importantly it affects the psychological well-being of the person experiencing it (According to the World Health Organization (WHO): "Health is a state of complete, physical, mental and social wellbeing, and individuals or groups must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living."). As a result, it can lead to a reduction in self-esteem, as well as making choices incompatible with dreams and aspirations. (Yaruss, Quesal 2010, Boyle 2015).

Therapists need tools (proven effective both in clinical practice and in research) that will allow them to work with the client on:

✔ emotions,
✔ attitude towards stuttering,
and consequently:
✔ help to reduce the fear of speaking,
✔ change the attitude towards experienced disfluencies,
✔ increase communicative and social competences.

THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

ACT therapy (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) is a form of behavioral therapy based on learning effective skills that:

✔ allow coping with painful thoughts and feelings so that they have less impact on us,
✔ allow setting the direction of action and following it consistently (Hayes, Ciarrochi 2015)
✔ help to fully engage in your own life in line with the values we profess / we believe in.

CREATORS OF THE ACT APPROACH

Steven. C Hayes, Kelly G. Wilson K. Strosahl
**PRESENCE**, that is, psychological presence, purposefully focusing the one’s experience on the here and now

**ACCEPTANCE**, that is, opening up and making room for painful feelings, sensations, and emotions

**ME AS CONTEXT**, called “pure awareness”. that is, the part of ourselves that is aware of what we think, feel, and experience

**DEFUSION**, cognitive fusion understood as detachment from one’s thoughts, ideas, or memories and their observation

**VALUES**, establishing them as desirable qualities of action necessary to build a meaningful life

**COMMITED ACTION**, that is, acting in accordance with our values, even if it is associated with pain and discomfort.

**HEXAFLEX** OR SIX THERAPEUTIC PROCESSES IN ACT THERAPY
SUMMARY

The ACT program can be an effective adjunct to speech therapy, as it:

✔ helps you accept what is and what is not out of control,
✔ allows you to change the relationship with painful symptoms
✔ enables you to understand what is physically going on with your body (Chambers, Allen 2008)
✔ strengthens your psychological presence
✔ helps to you reduce the level of inner anxiety
✔ prepares you for the constructive overcoming of difficulties
✔ shapes your psychological flexibility

The ACT approach, consists of *practicing and experiencing*, mainly in everyday life, not only during therapeutic sessions. It allows achieving satisfactory results enhancing the effects of therapy. According to the authors, it is worth making such an effort to lead a *full and rich life* in line with the professed values.
REFERENCES

1. Baer R. A., 2005, Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician’s guide to evidence base and applications,
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