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.

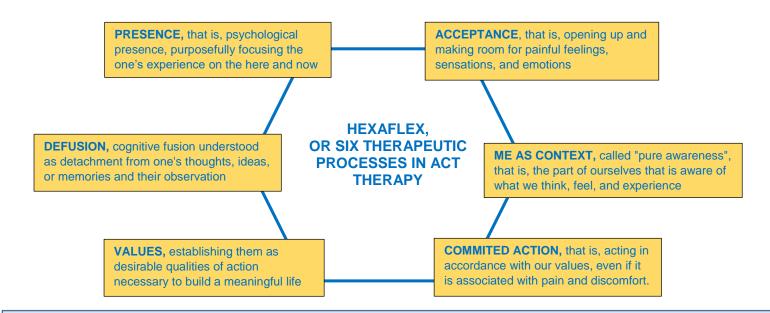
THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

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
- allow setting the direction of action and following it consistently (Hayes, Ciarrochi
- 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



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.

- 1. Baer R. A., 2005, Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications.
- 2. Baer R.A., 2003, Mindfulness Training as a Clinical Intervention: A Conceptual and Empirical Review, "Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, s. 125-143
- 3. Boyle M.P., 2015, Relationships between psychosocial factors and quality of life for adults who stutter, "American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology", Vol.24, s.1-12.
 4. Chambers R., Lo B.C., Allen N.B., 2008, The impact of intensive mindfulness training on attentional
- control, cognitive style, and affect, Cognitive Therapy and Research, Vol. 32, s. 303-322. 5. Guitar B., 2006, Stuttering. An Integrated Approach to its Nature and Treatment, Williams & Willkins,
- Hayes L, Ciarrochi J, 2015, The thriving adolescent: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Positive Psychology to Help Young People Manage Emotions, Achieve Goals and Build Positive Relationships Context Press, Oakland, CA.
- 7. Harris R., 2009, Act made simple: An Easy-To-Read Primer on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, MD and New Harbinger Publications
- Huppert F. A., Johnson D. M., 2010, A Controlled Trial of Mindfulness Training in Schools: The Importance of Practice for an Impact on Well-Being, "The Journal of Positive Psychology", Vol. 5, s. 264-274.
- Packman A., 2012, Theory and therapy in stuttering: a complex relationship, "Journal of fluency
- disorders", Vol. 37(4), s. 225-233
 de Veer S., Brouwers A., Evers W., Tomic W., 2009, A Pilot Study of the Psychological Impact of the Mindfulness-Based Stress-Reduction Program On People Who Stutter, "European
- Psychotherapy", Vol. 9 Szerszeńska A., 2019, Akceptacja w jąkaniu. Zastosowanie ACT i uważności w terapii logopedycznej, "Forum Logopedy", Vol.31, s. 35-40
- Yaruss J.S., Quesal R. W., 2002, Academic and clinical education in fluency disorders: an update, "Journal of Fluency Disorders", Vol. 27, s. 43-63.
- Yaruss J.S., Quesal R.W., 2010, OASES: Overall assessment of the speaker's experience of stuttering, Pearson Assessments, Bloomington MN.