

No better time to ACT
than NOW

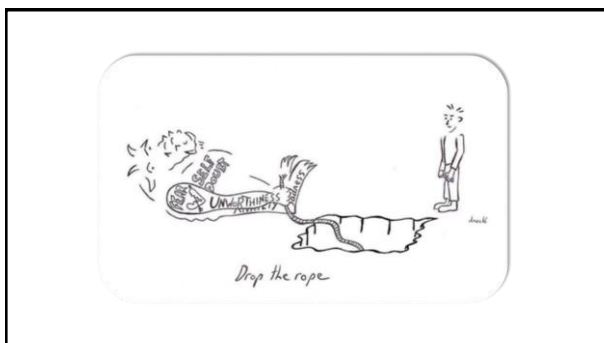
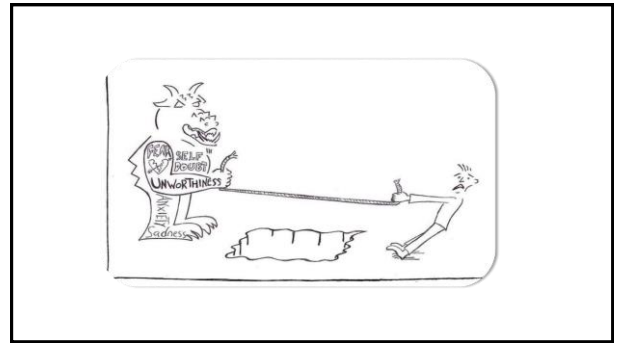
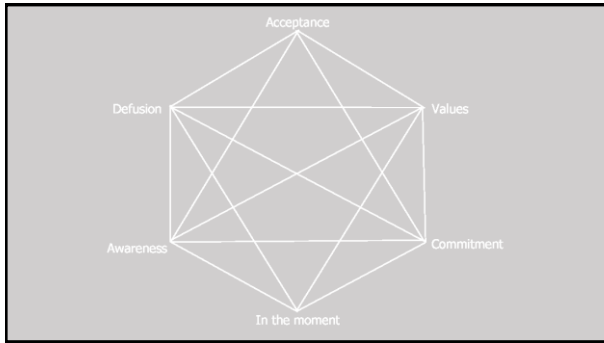
The Plan

- ✓ Briefly introduce Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- ✓ Introduce the DNA-V model of ACT for adolescents
- ✓ DNA-V model in action

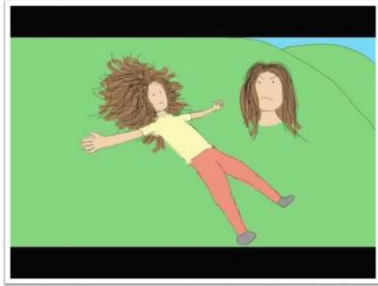
Acceptance and Commitment
Therapy

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- ✓ Third wave behavioral therapy
- ✓ Aims to increase psychological flexibility through created experience
- ✓ Emphasizes observing thoughts and feelings as they are, without attempting to change or control them & work toward value-consistent goals



DNA-V



DNA-V

Aims to help students develop psychological flexibility – the ability to do what they care about, even if they have difficult thoughts and feelings

DNA-V

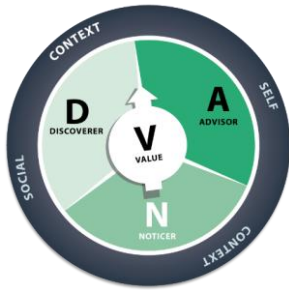
- ✓ Integration of ACT principles & Positive Psychology
- ✓ Grounded in developmental research - Seeks to describe conditions that foster growth

Social and Emotional Learning

Evidence suggests SEL improves academic performance

Meta-analysis of 213 American school based SEL programs showed:

- Improved academic performance
- 11-percentile gain in achievement
- More prosocial behaviors
- Decreased conduct problems and emotional distress
- Increased attitude toward self and others (Durlak et al., 2011)



DNA-V Three Classes of Behaviors

DISCOVERER

BEHAVIORS THAT
ARE RELATED TO:

- ✓ Exploring
- ✓ Testing the world

NOTICER

PROCESS THAT ALLOWS US
TO:

- ✓ Tune into our body
- ✓ Be aware of our actions
- ✓ Tune into the external world
- ✓ Way to step out of advisor

ADVISOR

HOW WE USE OUR
INNER VOICE OR
SELF-TALK TO:

- ✓ Make sense of the past
- ✓ Form beliefs
- ✓ Evaluate ourselves
- ✓ Predict the future

Advisor

Advisor



Advisor

- ✓ Protects us from danger
 - ✓ Promotes fast and efficient functioning
 - ✓ Provides helpful rules
- Leads to rigid rule following
 - Hooks onto unhelpful ideas
 - Becomes decontextualized
 - Can distort information

ADVISOR Reality Vs Perception



Normalize



Caveman Voice

CAVEMAN MIND: Avoid physical threats like bears and wolves; this keeps you safe!

MODERN MIND: treats painful thoughts & feelings same way as bears and wolves; tells you to avoid them!

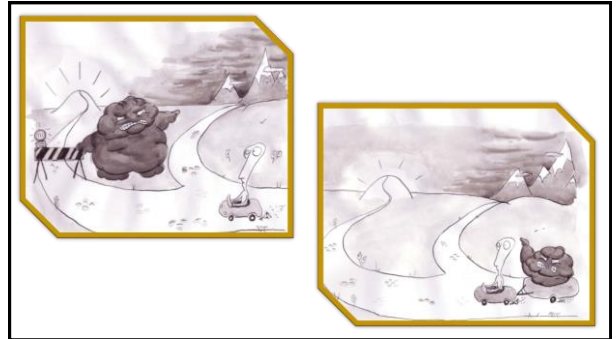
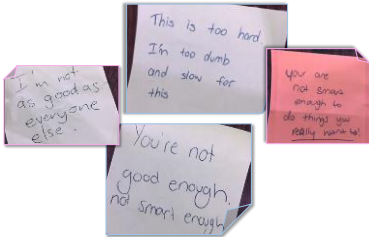
CAVEMAN MIND: "Watch out! There might be a bear in that cave. You could get eaten."

MODERN MIND: Worrying, catastrophizing, predicting the worst, avoiding anything that scares you.

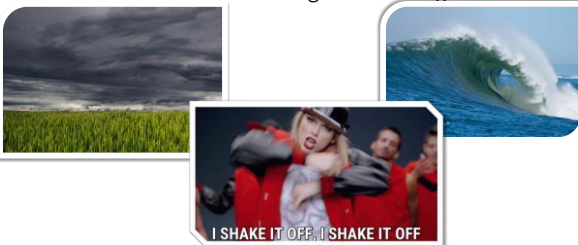
CAVEMAN MIND: If you are alone, you soon die. The wolves will eat you for breakfast!

MODERN MIND: Comparing yourself to others, fear of negative evaluation, fear of judgment, fear of rejection.

Advisor - Normalize



Advisor – Unhooking From Thoughts







Advisor

| DNA PROCESS | HIGH SKILL | LOW SKILL | CASEL SKILL | CHARACTER STRENGTH |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| ADVISOR | WORKABLE BELIEFS GUIDE ACTION | UNWORKABLE BELIEFS GUIDE ACTION | SELF-MANAGEMENT | AUTHENTIC HOPE SELF-ESTEEM EFFECTIVE PROBLEM ORIENTATION |

Noticer

Noticer

-  Ability to pause, instead of reacting, and notice what is going on inside ourselves, others, and with those around us
-  Helps us appreciate and choose how to respond
-  Appreciation of the present moment
-  Improves sensitivity to information from the environment and the body

When we are not in the moment, we miss opportunities to discover what works



Normalize

- ✓ Feelings are okay to have
- ✓ All feelings are normal
- ✓ Feeling pass, often quickly

A – N – D

- ✓ Aware of breath and physical sensations
- ✓ Name sensations
- ✓ Describe inner sensations

Allow

- ✓ Allow Feelings
- ✓ Allow without immediate reaction
- ✓ Decide how to respond

New Rules for Feelings

- ✓ All feelings are normal
- ✓ All feelings are okay
- ✓ Feelings just are
- ✓ Emotions come and go like waves



Activity

- ✓ Everyone stand up.
- ✓ Notice your feet on the floor, the pattern in the carpet, and your breath.
- ✓ This is noticing and we can all do it.
- ✓ We are born to notice but we lose the skill as we get older.
- ✓ We have to retrain ourselves!

Noticer



Building Noticer Practice Into Each Day



NOTICER

| DNA PROCESS | HIGH SKILL | LOW SKILL | CASEL SKILL | CHARACTER STRENGTH |
|-------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| NOTICER | MINDFUL OF SELF, OTHERS, & LIFE MAKE SPACE FOR DIFFICULT INNER EXPERIENCE LET EXPERIENCES COME AND GO | MINDLESS UNAWARE REACTIVE TO INNER EXPERIENCE VALUE INCONSISTENT | SELF-AWARENESS SELF-MANAGEMENT | MINDFULNESS INNER BALANCE NON-REACTIVITY |

NOTICER

| Skilled | Unskilled | Unskilled Behavior |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Notice and label sensations and feelings ✓ Allow feelings and sensations to come and go ✓ Flexibly direct attention to both the inside and outside world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unable to notice and label sensations and/or emotions ✓ Afraid of physical sensations or emotions ✓ Reacts to internal sensations without pausing or awareness ✓ Turns attention away from emotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mistakes psychological distress for medical condition ✓ Disconnects from/hates their body ✓ Describes emotions in undifferentiated terms ✓ Overreacts or reacts impulsively when upset |

Discoverer

Discoverer

- ✓ Learns by doing
- ✓ Trial and error
- ✓ Helps build new behavioral repertoires



Adaptive Risk Taking:

- ✓ Stating opinion
- ✓ Standing up for beliefs
- ✓ Using own mind & not giving in to peer pressure
- ✓ Toward valued direction

Maladaptive Risk Taking

Discoverer

- ✓ Track workability of **old** behaviors
- ✓ Discover values
- ✓ Build strengths
- ✓ Track workability of **new** behaviors

Freeing the Self from Rigid Rules

Workability

- How has the "old" behavior been working for you?
- How did the new behavior go?
- Did it expand my life and possibilities?
- Did it help me to do more of what I care about?

Discover possibilities – you are more than the advisor

*Spotting Your Strengths*

How do strengths help you engage in valued activities?

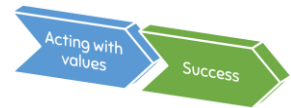
What would you like to do with your strengths?

Sneaky Cards



Promote Growth Mindset

- ✓ Praise Effort
- ✓ Praise Strategy
- ✓ Praise Choices
- ✓ Give Corrective Feedback



Discoverer

| DNA PROCESS | HIGH SKILL | LOW SKILL | CASEL SKILL | CHARACTER STRENGTH |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| DISCOVERER | EXPANDING, LEARNING, CREATING | IMPULSIVE EXPLORATION | SELF-AWARENESS | CURIOSITY |
| | NEW BEHAVIOR THAT PROMOTES VALUE AND VITALITY | SHORT-TERM REINFORCEMENT | SOCIAL AWARENESS | LOVE OF LEARNING |
| | SPOTTING & DEVELOPING NEW STRENGTHS | FAILURE TO TRY NEW BEHAVIOR | SELF-MANAGEMENT | CREATIVITY |
| | | | | WORKABILITY FOCUS |

Values & Vitality

What we care about

V stands for value or vitality

It's what we care about, or what's in our hearts



Values

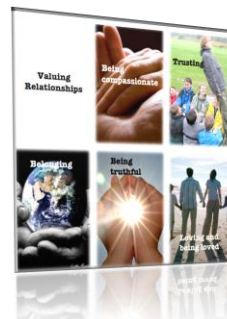


VALUES Prompts

If the people who matter most to you were here in my office, and I asked them what they liked or loved about you, what would you hope they would tell me?

Of all the qualities you just identified, which ones would still be important to you if no one actually noticed them?

If we had people who matter at your graduation party, and they were giving speeches about you, what would you hope they would say about you?



Values Conversation Cards
Set 1 – Simplistic



Values conversation cards
Set 2 – Adolescents

• <http://thrivingadolescent.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/values-cards-Hayes-set-2-questions.pdf>

Values Card Sort

• Step 1: Have student sort the cards into 3 piles:

- One pile that “doesn’t matter much right now”
- One pile that “matters some right now”
- One pile that “matters most right now”

VALUES CARD SORT

- Step 2: Ask the student to spread out the “matters most” pile and select JUST 3 or 4 cards that are most important to them
- Step 3: Ask why they chose those particular cards

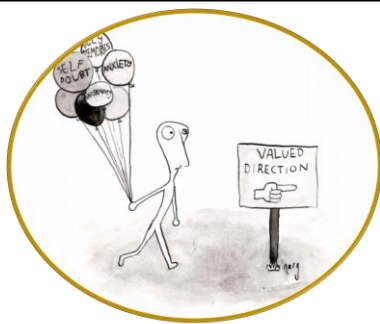
Values Card Sort

- Step 4: Notice what emotions arise as they talk about their values
- Step 5: Talk about what discoveries they have made about these values

Set Goals for Discovery

- ✓ Connect with others
- ✓ Give to others/positive influence
- ✓ Embrace the moment
- ✓ Care for yourself
- ✓ Challenge yourself
- ✓ Be active

DNA IN ACTION



DNA-V Walk of Life

If we feel stuck, move within
the DNA

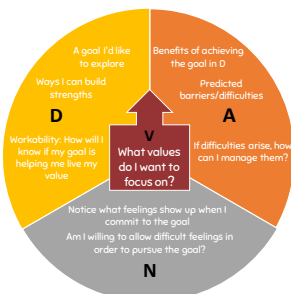
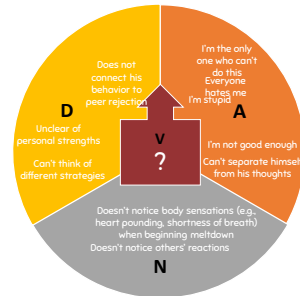
Have student *literally* walk
the DNA-V Walk of Life

For example...
ALEX

Eligibility: OHI (ADHD) (12 y.o.)

- ✓ Has meltdowns requiring room clears when he feels like work is too difficult.
- ✓ Rejected by his peers (no friends)

• **Behavior Goal:** In 36 instructional weeks, when given independent work, using psychological services, Alex will demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior (speak respectfully to others, ask calmly for help when needed) with 80% mastery.



Valued Action

- B** = Breathe deeply and slow down
- O** = Observe your thoughts and feelings. Observe what is around you
- L** = Listen to your values in this moment. What sort of person do you want to be?
- D** = Decide on how you want to act in this moment. What would it look like if you were acting out your values?



WILLINGNESS

- ✓ Are you willing to experience difficult feelings in order to act in ways that help build friendships and love?
- ✓ Are you willing to feel frustration and anger and *still* act respectfully?
- ✓ Are you willing to assert your needs – without hurting others?

thanks!

