

The Relationship of Experiential Avoidance and Value Importance with Related Behavioral Choices

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The goal of acceptance and commitment therapy is to enhance psychological flexibility or the ability to make behavioral adjustments to live a life congruent with personal values. One barrier to psychological flexibility is experiential avoidance (EA) or the unwillingness to remain in contact with unwanted thoughts, emotions, memories, bodily sensations, and the contexts in which they occur. This project examines at both macro and microlevels of analyses how EA and the importance of values in life domains contribute to related behavioral choices. For the microanalysis, the Value-Congruent Behavior Scale (VCBS) was developed to assess scenario-specific, value-consistent actions. While the interaction between levels of EA and the importance of values predicted value-consistent behavior at a macrolevel of analysis, similar findings were obscured by social desirability at a microlevel. The implications of the findings for further study of the contributions of EA and values to related behavior and clinical practice are discussed.