

APS

ACT & Psychology Interest Group

September Newsletter, 2014

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Conference News

Australia and New Zealand ACBS conference - Sunshine Coast

The Annual ANZ ACBS Conference is not far away, and will be held at the Lake Kawana Community Centre, 114 Sportsmans Parade, Bokarina, Sunshine Coast, QLD. Registration is open and excitement is building for the annual ACT and RFT conference. This conference features international speakers and plenty of home grown talent as well.

Pre-conference Workshops: October 15-16, 2014.

Conference: October 17-19, 2014

For more information about the conference: <http://www.anzacbsconference.com>



2014 Annual General Meeting Announcement

The APS Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Psychology Interest Group will hold its annual general meeting on Saturday 18th October at 12:45pm-1:30pm at the ANZ ACBS Conference. The ACBS conference is being held at the Lake Kawana Community Centre, 114 Sportsmans Parade, Bokarina, Sunshine Coast, Queensland. The specific room for the AGM will be posted in the conference programme at a later date.

Nominations are open for secretary and general member positions. If you would like to nominate please submit the form [here](#).

APS ACT & Psychology Interest Group Award

The Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Psychology Interest Group invites submissions for the APS ACT Psychology Interest Group Award.

The Award

The APS ACT Psychology Interest Group Award is designed to promote contributions to research, therapy and/or social applicability of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Relational Frame Theory (RFT). The award encourages the conduct of scientific research relevant to practice issues and the dissemination of research findings to the community of practitioners of ACT and RFT.

Eligibility

Candidates must be a member of the APS and currently enrolled in an APAC accredited Honours, Master of Psychology, Professional Doctorate or a PhD program either at the time of application or in the year preceding the date of their nomination.

Nomination Process

Candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by the Head of Department of an Australian tertiary institution. All nominations should be prepared in collaboration with the supervisor/s of the thesis. Nominations should be submitted to the Chair of the National Committee of the APS ACT Interest Group and include:

- the name and address of the nominee;
- a summary of the project of no more than 500 words outlining objectives, methods and findings ;
- a letter of recommendation from the principal supervisor, of no more than one A4 page, outlining why the thesis should be considered 'excellent'.
- the contact details for two referees, who have a substantial back ground, knowledge, or practice in ACT or RFT.
- the nominee's consent and indication of their availability to present their findings at the APS national conference, as a condition of Award conferral.

Value of the Award

Successful candidates for the APS ACT Psychology Interest Group Award will:

- have their name published in InPsych;
- be invited to prepare their thesis as a presentation for consideration for inclusion in the next APS Annual Conference occurring after their receipt of the Award;
- receive an award of \$250 and a certificate; and
- be offered one standard registration at no cost to attend the next APS Annual Conference Program occurring after their receipt of the Award, and one night's accommodation to the value determined by the APS ACT Interest Group's National Committee. If the candidate is unable to attend the APS Annual Conference the candidate can be offered one standard registration to an alternative APS Conference in the same year.
- be offered one year's APS membership at no cost provided that the successful candidate makes an application for membership within twelve (12) months of receiving notice of their Award.

The runner-up for the APS ACT Psychology Interest Group Award will:

- receive a certificate.

Closing date

Nominations close on 31st October, 2014 and are to be emailed to Emma emma@theactcentre.com.au

Previous winners

2013:

Winner - Felicity Brown: "Supporting parents after paediatric acquired brain injury: Evaluation of SteppingStones Triple P combined with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy".

Runner-up - Kathryn Martin: "Study investigating the tenets of the ACT relating to cognitive fusion (CF)".

2012:

Winner - Jenny Grant: "Effects of Cognitive Defusion and Cognitive Restructuring on Exam Marks in Exam-Anxious Students."

Upcoming Events

The Interest Group would like to thank all the members who provided valuable feedback in relation to hosting webinars. As a result of this feedback we are planning a series of webinars. The first will be presented by Rachel Collis who has extensive experience with ACT and coaching. We have more exciting speakers planned for next year!

Providing funds to State ACT Peer Groups

One of the initiatives that the APS ACT and Psychology IG has run within the last 12 months was to allocate some of our funds to individual state peer groups to use with their members. The committee was keen to encourage peer groups to spend the funds on activities to assist them in their peer group development and individual learning in ACT or RFT. Five peer groups accepted the allocation of \$250, and the use of the money varied, including purchasing resources, running seminars and social events.

Below is feedback from two of the state peer groups who used the funds:

Feedback from Wollongong ACT peer group who pooled their money with three other local groups to purchase the ACT in Action DVD series.

Jenni Dall: "It has been excellent to have access to a resource that would have been prohibitively expensive for an individual (because we pooled across 3 groups), but has been usable on a local level. Great local group resource! More follow-through learning than short trainings, plus more group-building/community-development potential. And its been great to have money to spend on local level - regional people have always to travel, so its nice to have some local resource."

Feedback from Central Cost ACT peer group who pooled their money with three other local groups to purchase the ACT in Action DVD series.

Jennifer Grant: "The ACT in Action DVD series was helpful and enjoyable. Approximately 12 group members have participated in watching the video stream. The \$250 doesn't go far, but the opportunity to collaborate with other neighbouring groups gives us better purchasing power. Your work on the APSACT SIG is much appreciated - thankyou."

ACT Supervision

In 2013, at the request of members, the committee compiled a list of people who are available for ACT supervision. Not all people listed are psychologists nor AHPRA approved supervisors, hence we cannot publish the list here. If you would like a copy of the list please contact Jenny Melrose on info@jemeco.com.au

Meeting at the APS National Conference

During this year's APS National Conference, the APS ACT & Psychology Interest Group will hold an informal meeting on **Thursday 2 October 2014 from 1:15–1:45pm** in The Atrium at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, 1 Davey Street, Hobart.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to network with other members, find out about upcoming webinars, APS prizes, and peer supervision groups, and express interest in presenters and topics that are most relevant to you.

Email Hayley Anthony at hayley.anthony@monash.edu with any queries

Resources and Networking

E-Resources

There are numerous ways to learn, contribute, and network with others interested in ACT, and more broadly, Contextual Behavioural Science.

APS ACT and Psychology Interest Group page

www.groups.psychology.org.au/actp/

Australia and New Zealand Chapter of the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science

www.anzact.com

Association for Contextual Behavioral Science

www.contextualscience.org

By joining the ACBS, you have access to a range of ACT relevant resources such as journal articles, as well as access to listservs for ACT (international and Australia), RFT, and the many interest groups within ACBS.

Have you checked out our Resources?

You can access the committee's minutes, past newsletters and the excellent paper the previous committee published in *Clinical Psychologist*. For more information login to our APS page:

<http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/actp/resources/aav>

How to start and run a peer supervision group

Julian McNally

The Who

Who are you going to invite? Who do you see as the natural constituency for this group? This will depend on the purpose (see ‘The Why’). You may have a focus on a specific clinical population, or you may have a group comprised simply of people in the same geographical area who can get to the meeting each week.

The other important person-focused issue though is whether to have a ‘closed’ or ‘open’ group. Open groups let new members come in at any time and attend for as little as one session or as many as they like. Closed groups run a bit more like a club, where the same people commit to attending regularly with only occasional intakes of new people. The main advantage of open groups is that there is continual ‘fresh blood’ as new people join, so it is less likely that the discussion will feel ‘stale’. The main advantages of the closed group are that levels of trust and safety are higher and this may lead to a greater sense of continuity in participants’ learning.

Marketing Your Group

Once you’ve decided to set up the group and chosen what kind of group you’re running, you need to get the word out about it. Here are some good places to start:

1. Let your professional peers and colleagues, even the non-ACT ones, know about your group. They might attend out of curiosity at least.
2. Email the ACT listserves for Australia/New Zealand and “ACT for Professionals” at http://contextualscience.org/emailing_lists. You need to publicise to both of these as some Australians are not on the ANZ list.
3. Add your group to the listing on Russ Harris’ web site: http://www.actmindfully.com.au/act_interest_groups.
4. Ask ACT trainers visiting your area to mention your group or perhaps let you address the attendees at their workshops. Most ACT trainers, especially ACBS peer-reviewed ones know the benefit of participating in PSGs and will be supportive.
5. There is also a listing at the ANZ ACBS Chapter web site: <http://anzact.com/act-interest-group/new-zealand/> (yes, that url includes Australian groups). You can get your group listed by emailing admin@anzact.com

The Why

Decide your group’s purpose and focus:

- learning techniques
- ‘troubleshooting’ applications
- debriefing from clinical work
- learning to develop ACT interventions
- applying ACT to specific clinical populations (e.g. eating disorders)
- or in specific practice contexts (e.g. residential substance abuse)
- overall ACT practitioner development

The Where: Have Your Premises Serve Your Purposes

The ideal ACT PSG venue has the following qualities. Think of these as ways of ‘lowering resistance’ to attendance. Since many people will be attending in unpaid time, possibly at the end of a hard day’s work, we want to make it as easy as possible for them to arrive and as enjoyable as possible to stay.

- Located near public transport, cheap or free parking and cafes, restaurants or bars for after-group discussions.
- Easy to find. In a well-marked or prominent building or if you don’t have access to such a building, at least provide a map and directions. Note that if you’re posting details of your group here (ACBS web site) you can easily provide links to GoogleMaps or Mapquest maps. Go to their websites and enter the address and they will provide you with a map you can paste into documents, but also with links you can paste into your PSG description.

- The room. Large enough that fifteen people can talk among themselves comfortably, but small enough that three people won't 'rattle around'. Minimal room equipment is a whiteboard or blackboard, but even this can be foregone if your group doesn't 'do' diagrams (Hexaflex etc.) or if you do them on large sheets of paper that everyone can see. Other handy things to have can be overhead or slide projectors and other such teaching paraphernalia and of course, the usual ACT 'props': Fingercuffs, rope for Tug Of War With A Monster, etc.

The How

There are books written on how to run PSGs (a good one is Brigid Proctor's *Group Supervision: A Guide To Creative Practice*) and it might be a good idea to consult one before starting your group. Caution: the following reflects my opinion on our experience in Melbourne. It's not the official ACT PSG system, rather just a way to set up and run a group.

A little history about our group first. The Melbourne ACT peer supervision group has run since Russ Harris first contacted interested practitioners in October 2004. Initially it was set up as an 'interest group'. The problem we encountered with this label and purpose was that once you've shown you're interested then what? People attending in these early days tended to have one of the following two responses. Either they learnt a little information about ACT at these meetings and because they put it in the 'that's interesting, I might explore that more one day' category stopped attending the meetings. Or they were enthused to start learning skills and applications of the approach immediately but became frustrated that there was no progression in knowledge and skill.

At one of our meetings Russ repeated Kirk Strosahl's observation that workshops produce zealots, supervised practice produces practitioners. This prompted Russ to suggest that the group 'morph' into a peer supervision group which he led through 2005 and part of 2006. At this time I was able to secure a venue at RMIT University which gave us a home and consequently I started convening the group in June 2006.

At the end of this document is the format for supervision that we have used at the group since at least late 2006. From the feedback our members have given, this format has worked well, although for a small group (five or fewer members) two supervisors is probably overkill. We instituted this though at a time when our numbers were around 8-10 people regularly.

Rotating the supervisor and presenter roles through the group on a published roster maintains an egalitarian spirit and ensures everyone accesses similar learning experiences.

If you plan to use this format, then for the first few meetings it may be advisable to formally chair the meeting. This helps ensure people stay focused and adhere to the functions of their roles.

Tips and Challenges

- How do I keep the number attending high?

This is the biggest challenge especially early on. Short answer: time in the game. The longer you run the group the more chance of word getting around. Don't give up when numbers drop to two or three people. It helps if you have someone locally who is running ACT workshops as Russ did, but if you don't have that, then ask visiting ACT trainers to publicise your group at their workshops. Also see the "Marketing Your Group" section of this article above. It goes without saying I hope that you would set up a page for your group here on the ACBS site: http://contextualscience.org/act_peer_consultation_groups

- Too many people are attending! What do I do now?

First tell me how you did it! Seriously the simplest answer, apart from get a bigger room is to split the group and run two groups. You may need to train someone to take over your role as leader for the other group.

- People keep giving non-ACT suggestions. How do I keep this an ACT supervision group and not something else?

It's natural for people to go to what they know when they don't have an answer for the problem that the supervisee is presenting. Model and encourage a 'non-expert' stance frequently, for example by offering yourself as the first supervisee. Ask how the suggestion fits the ACT model. Suggest that we all sit with the not-knowing for a while (this may actually be something the supervisee needs to do anyway!)

- Keep the case presentation section to under 20 minutes. Allow 30-50 minutes for case discussion. It should be easier to stick to these limits if you keep the discussion focused on answering questions such as those in the format below.
- Choose a standardised case formulation protocol. Russ Harris provides a couple – brief and briefer – in his workshops and you can access these through his site, www.actmindfully.com.au. The 'gold standard' protocol, also the most comprehensive, is the one Jason Luoma developed, available here at www.contextualscience.org.

ACT Peer Supervision Group Guidelines – Melbourne ACT Supervision Group

- One supervisee presenting the case, two supervisors providing guidance/supervision. The remainder of the group is to observe the supervision process and provide feedback to the supervisors. This is just a guideline though. You may want to have one supervisor lead the discussion, or have a 'free for all' where any contributions are welcome.
- Supervisee needs to have a specific question(s) to ask the supervisors. Examples of good questions might be:
 - “Is there an ACT process I've overlooked?”
 - “What would you do?”
 - “What does it sound to you that the client needs from me or from the treatment process?”
 - “What more do I need to find out from/about the client?”
- Supervisors should aim to focus on core ACT therapeutic competencies.
- Format is:
 1. Supervisee presents the case.
 2. Supervisee asks first supervisor for their guidance – relevant to the question the supervisee has about the case. Supervisor can ask questions about the client to clarify issues such as history, strengths, previous treatments, family background, etc. Supervision interventions can include demonstrations, role-plays, exercises for the whole group or the supervisee as well as questioning and explanation.
 3. Repeat for second supervisor
 4. Rest of group provide feedback to the supervisors on what they think the supervisors might have done differently, any ACT components missed or competencies not followed up on. NOT an opportunity to 're-interview' the supervisee about the case. (This means supervisees need to get good at case presentation)
 5. The group should start the following session by following up with the supervisee to find out what ideas were tried or what was different in the subsequent session(s) with that client.

Case Formulation Questions

1. What thoughts or feelings are fused and unworkable? (Fusion)
2. What values is the client removed from? (Remoteness from values)
3. What experiences such as emotions, thoughts, reminders, contexts and behaviours is the client avoiding or having difficulty accepting (Experiential avoidance or unwillingness)
4. What is the client's story about self? (Self as Content)
5. What is the quality of the client's presence? How do they absent themselves from life, engagement or connection? (Contact with the present moment)
6. What does the client fail to start or fail to finish? Where does the client fail to or lose focus, or fail to engage in committed action? (Committed Action)

National Committee Members

Emma Hanieh

Dr Emma Hanieh is the current convenor of the APS ACT Interest Group. For the last three years, Emma has worked as a Director and Clinical Psychologist for The ACT Centre in Adelaide. She is also a Senior Clinical Lecturer with the University of Adelaide where she works with students in the area of Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Emma has extensive experience working clinically with ACT, particularly in the area of parenting, and mothers and babies. More recently Emma has spent two years running a mothers and babies centre in a remote Aboriginal community in South Australia. Emma has presented on ACT at conferences nationally and internationally, and runs regular workshops for professionals using ACT in their practice. She looks forward to bringing psychologists with an interest in ACT together through the APS ACT Interest Group.

Jenny Melrose

Jenny Melrose is a psychologist, trainer and clinical supervisor based on the Sunshine Coast. She developed an interest in ACT in 2005 when a colleague shared a paper with her on mindfulness. From 2007 she attended training with John Forsyth, Russ Harris and Kelly Wilson and became a self-confessed ACT junkie devouring books, training and ANZACT conferences from then on. She has a small private practice, provides clinical supervision and training and teaches for the Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP).

Carrie Hayward

Carrie Hayward is a Psychologist and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy practitioner who has her own private practice in Melbourne. She has attended a number of conferences and workshops in ACT, including both ANZACT and World ACBS conferences. Carrie's background is in health psychology and she has a special interest in using ACT with eating disorders/weight management. She is currently developing and delivering workshops on mindfulness and ACT for making health behavioural changes and for living with chronic pain.

Julian McNally

Julian McNally completed his Counselling Psychology Masters at Monash University in 1995. Since then he has worked as a psychologist in private practice and in prison, educational and community settings. After graduation he completed training in solution-oriented hypnosis and solution-oriented counselling. While attempting to inform these approaches with learnings from Taoist and Buddhist philosophies he stumbled across some 'stuff that worked', then found in 2003 that these techniques were already developed and formulated in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (otherwise known as 'ACT'). Since then ACT has formed the basis of Julian's practice. From 2006 he coordinated the Melbourne ACT Peer Supervision Group and supervises other ACT practitioners individually. His other professional interests include evolutionary psychology, especially pertaining to parenting and family formation, counselling adult adoptees and telephone and internet-supported supervision for isolated practitioners.

Sandra Norman

Sandra is a Consultant Psychologist in private practice, working with children, adolescents and adults. In addition she is currently involved in the corporate environment in coaching, EAP, learning & development, assessment and training. She is a member of the ACBS and has been involved in the ACT community for over 5 years, having attended workshops, conferences and supervision with some of the founders.

Hayley Anthony

Hayley Anthony is a Melbourne based Psychologist and Teaching Associate at Monash University. Hayley has been part of the ACT community for the last two years and has attended several workshops in addition to the world conference. Hayley is particularly interested in using ACT with children, adolescents and parents and has been exploring ways to adapt ACT to the school setting. Hayley also leads a research project exploring the direct and indirect effects of mindful parenting on parent satisfaction and sense of competence, child behaviour problems, and the child-parent relationship.

Liz Yan

Liz Yan is the acting website co-ordinator. She is a clinical psychologist located in Geelong, Victoria and currently works in community rehabilitation services. Liz completed a Doctor of Clinical Psychology at Massey University, New Zealand where she was first introduced to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. She has since been passionate about applying ACT principles in her clinical practice.

Heather Lyall

Heather is a Clinical Psychologist located on the Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne. Heather has attended many ACT workshops and all ANZACT/ACBS conferences in Australia since 2007. Heather has worked in child and adolescent mental health and in a specialist pain clinic, and most recently in private practice.