

HOPE THERAPY & COUNSELLING SERVICES

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

ACT

*Stop fighting your thoughts.
Start living by your values.*

A distinctive, evidence-based approach that changes not what you think, but your relationship with your thoughts — available online across the UK and face-to-face across England.

EVIDENCE-BASED

THIRD-WAVE CBT

ONLINE & IN-PERSON

FREE 15-MIN CONSULTATION

ABOUT ACT

A different kind of relationship with your mind

"Most approaches try to reduce difficult thoughts. ACT asks something different: what if the struggle against them is itself the problem?"

Many people have tried hard to think their way out of anxiety, low mood, or the sense that something isn't working — and found that understanding the pattern hasn't been enough to change it. If that feels familiar, ACT may offer something genuinely different.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy takes a different starting point. Rather than trying to reduce or challenge difficult thoughts, it aims to change your **relationship** with them. The insight at ACT's core is this: it is not the presence of difficult thoughts that causes suffering — it is the struggle against them. When we stop fighting and instead learn to observe our thoughts for what they are — mental events, not facts — their power to dictate our behaviour diminishes significantly.

This is paired with a strong emphasis on **values and committed action**. ACT asks: what actually matters to you? What kind of person do you want to be, and what kind of life do you want to live? When those answers become clearer, and you are less entangled in the war with your own mind, it becomes possible to move towards that life — even in the presence of anxiety, uncertainty, or discomfort.

ACT and the evidence base

ACT was developed in the 1980s and is one of the most extensively researched psychological therapies in use today. It is sometimes described as a "third-wave" CBT approach — building on the cognitive-behavioural tradition while incorporating mindfulness and a values-based orientation. It has a strong evidence base for anxiety, depression, chronic pain, OCD, perfectionism, and a wide range of other presentations.

Professional registration: Our ACT therapists are qualified and registered practitioners — individually registered with the BACP, NCPS, and/or BABCP as appropriate to their training and specialism. Hope Therapy & Counselling Services holds NCPS Organisational Membership, which covers our counselling and psychotherapy services. Sessions are confidential; there are limited exceptions your therapist will explain clearly at the outset.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Is ACT a good fit — or would a different approach suit you better?

ACT works particularly well when avoidance, struggle with thoughts, or a disconnection from what matters are central features of your experience. It tends to suit people who feel stuck despite understanding their difficulties intellectually.

ACT MAY BE A GOOD FIT IF...

- You feel stuck despite understanding your patterns intellectually
- Anxiety or difficult thoughts are limiting what you do
- You want to build a different relationship with your mind
- Avoidance has become a central part of the problem
- You have lost sight of what actually matters to you
- CBT hasn't fully worked for you in the past
- You live with chronic pain or a long-term health condition

ANOTHER APPROACH MAY SUIT BETTER IF...

- You want to challenge and restructure specific thought patterns (CBT may be more suitable)
- You are processing a specific trauma or traumatic memory (EMDR may be more appropriate)
- You are primarily looking to explore and understand past experiences (counselling may be the better fit)
- You are in significant acute crisis — please speak to your GP first

We will not recommend a service unless we genuinely think it fits your situation. If unsure, the free consultation is the right place to explore this.

THE SIX CORE PROCESSES

How ACT works — the six processes

ACT works through six interconnected processes that together build **psychological flexibility** — the ability to respond to life's challenges in ways guided by values rather than avoidance.

01

Cognitive Defusion

Learning to observe thoughts as thoughts rather than facts. Creating distance from the content of your mind rather than being fused with it.

02

Acceptance

Allowing difficult thoughts, feelings, and memories to exist without fighting them — not because they are welcome, but because the struggle is itself the source of suffering.

03

Present Moment Awareness

Bringing deliberate, non-judgemental attention to what is actually happening now — closely connected to mindfulness practice.

04

Self as Context

The "observing self" — the part of you that notices thoughts and

05

Values

Clarifying what genuinely matters to you — how you want to live, who you want to be. Values are not goals;

06

Committed Action

Taking values-guided action — including when it is difficult or accompanied by uncomfortable

feelings but is not defined by them.
You are not your anxiety.

they are ongoing directions that give
life meaning.

feelings. Moving forward while the
anxiety is present.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

How ACT relates to CBT

Both are evidence-based and share cognitive-behavioural foundations. The key difference lies in what they target — and that difference can matter significantly depending on your situation.

Area	ACT	CBT
Primary focus	Changing your relationship with thoughts; psychological flexibility	Identifying and challenging unhelpful thought patterns
Approach to thoughts	Observe thoughts without being caught up in them — defusion	Test whether thoughts are accurate; replace with more balanced ones
Role of acceptance	Central — accepting what cannot be controlled reduces suffering	Less central; focus is on changing thoughts and behaviours
Values work	Core component — clarifying what matters guides all action	Present in some forms, but not a defining feature
Mindfulness	Integral to the approach throughout	Incorporated in third-wave CBT variants (e.g. MBCT)
Typical sessions	8-12 sessions; practical and experiential	6-20 sessions; structured and goal-oriented
Fees from	£65 per 50-minute session	£65 per 50-minute session

Many therapists draw on both approaches. Your therapist will discuss which best fits your situation — or how the two might be usefully combined.

WHAT ACT CAN HELP WITH

Areas ACT can offer a space to explore

- Anxiety**
 Addressing anxiety not by eliminating it but by reducing its power to constrain your life — moving forward in the presence of anxious thoughts.
- Depression**
 Particularly useful where behavioural withdrawal and loss of meaning are central. Reconnecting with what matters and supporting values-guided action when motivation is low.
- OCD**
 Helping you observe obsessional thoughts without engaging in compulsive responses, and building tolerance for uncertainty as part of a valued life.
- Perfectionism**
 Creating a different relationship with the inner critic and a values-based alternative to conditional self-worth.
- Chronic pain & illness**
- Feeling stuck**

One of the strongest evidence bases of any psychological approach — building psychological flexibility in relation to pain without denying it.

For people who understand their difficulties intellectually but find that knowledge alone hasn't produced change.

If yours isn't listed, the free consultation is the right place to explore whether ACT could help.

THE PROCESS

What happens in ACT sessions?

ACT is practical and experiential — sessions involve learning skills and practices you can apply between appointments. There is no fixed agenda other than yours, and the pace is always led by you.

1 Your first session

The opening session is primarily about understanding you — your current situation, what has brought you to therapy now, and what you would find most useful. You will not be expected to arrive with clarity about your goals; arriving at that clarity is part of the work. Confidentiality and its limited exceptions are discussed at the outset.

2 Ongoing sessions

From the second session, you and your therapist work on whatever feels most live and relevant. You will develop skills in defusion, acceptance, and values-guided action — with specific practices to try between sessions. The tools you build belong to you and remain useful long after therapy ends.

3 How long does ACT take?

ACT is typically delivered over eight to twelve sessions, though this varies with the presenting issue and individual circumstances. Your therapist will give a realistic indication during your initial sessions and will review progress with you as you go. You are free to end or pause at any point.

Personalised to you

No fixed programme or checklist. Your therapist adapts each session to where you are and what is most useful at that point.

Practical and skills-based

ACT is experiential — you develop tools you can use between sessions. The skills you build are yours to keep.

Confidential

Sessions are confidential. There are limited exceptions — for example, where there is a serious risk of harm — and your therapist explains these clearly at the start.

Flexible format

50-minute sessions, typically weekly. Online via secure video platform, UK-wide. Face-to-face available in selected locations across England.

Your welfare first

We will always tell you honestly if a different approach would serve you better — and refer you elsewhere if appropriate.

Honest about outcomes

We do not promise specific results. ACT can offer a space to build a different relationship with your experience — at your own pace.

Transparent fees

From £65 per session. All fees confirmed before you commit — no hidden costs. Reduced rates may be available; ask during your consultation.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

Client experiences

“

I'd spent years trying to think my way out of the anxiety. ACT gave me a completely different approach — not fighting the thoughts but watching them pass. That shift was the thing that actually worked.

ACT CLIENT — ANXIETY

“

The idea that I didn't need to eliminate the fear before I could act on what mattered was new to me. It sounds simple when you say it, but experiencing it in practice genuinely changed things.

ACT CLIENT — PERFECTIONISM & AVOIDANCE

“

Values clarification was the part I wasn't expecting to find so useful. I'd been so caught up in managing symptoms that I'd completely lost sight of what I actually wanted. Getting that back was everything.

ACT CLIENT — DEPRESSION & LOSS OF DIRECTION

“

I'd tried CBT before and it helped with some things. ACT felt different — less about challenging what I was thinking and more about finding a different way to hold it. Genuinely useful.

ACT CLIENT — OCD

Client experiences are individual. Results vary between people.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently asked questions

Does "acceptance" mean giving up or putting up with things?

No. Acceptance in ACT does not mean resignation. It means allowing difficult thoughts and feelings to exist without fighting them — which paradoxically reduces their power and frees up energy for meaningful action. ACT always pairs acceptance with committed values-guided action.

How is ACT different from CBT?

CBT focuses primarily on identifying and changing unhelpful thought patterns. ACT works on how you relate to your thoughts rather than changing their content. ACT doesn't assume negative thoughts are necessarily inaccurate — it aims to reduce their power to dictate your behaviour.

Is ACT available online?

Yes — all our therapists offer ACT sessions via secure video platform, UK-wide. Online ACT is just as effective as in-person work. Face-to-face sessions are available across England; ask during your consultation.

Is ACT right for me, or would counselling or CBT be more helpful?

That depends on what you're bringing. If you've understood your patterns intellectually but knowledge hasn't produced change, ACT is often worth exploring. If you're working through significant past experiences, counselling may be a better fit. We will not recommend a service unless we genuinely think it fits your situation — the free consultation is the right place to explore this honestly.

Is ACT confidential?

Yes. Sessions are confidential, conducted in line with professional ethical standards. There are limited circumstances where this may need to change — for example, where there is a risk of serious harm — and your therapist will explain these clearly before you begin.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

What happens when you get in touch

Starting something new can feel uncertain. Here is what the process actually looks like — no surprises, no pressure.

1 Book your free 15-minute consultation

A brief, relaxed conversation with a member of our team. You tell us what's going on and what you're hoping to explore. We answer your questions and work out together whether ACT — or a different approach — is most likely to be useful. No obligation, no commitment. Many people tell us the call itself gave them clarity, even before they decided whether to proceed.

2 We match you with a therapist

Based on what you share — what you want to explore, your availability, and any preferences — we match you with the most suitable therapist from our team of 90+ qualified practitioners across England. If the first match doesn't feel right, we'll find someone who does at no extra cost.

3 Begin your sessions

Sessions are typically weekly, 50 minutes each, online or face-to-face. Your therapist works at your pace. Progress is reviewed as you go, and you decide how long the work continues.

When you feel ready, we're here.

A free, no-obligation 15-minute conversation — a chance to ask questions and explore whether ACT can help, with no commitment to proceed.

Book: calendly.com/hopetherapy/15-minute-consultation?month=2026-04 · **Call:** 07379 538411 · **Email:** contact@hopefulminds.co.uk

Please note: Our service is not a crisis or emergency service. If you are experiencing significant mental health difficulties, please speak to your GP in the first instance.

If you or someone you know is in immediate distress or danger:

999 — Emergency services · **Samaritans: 116 123** — Free, 24/7 · **SHOUT: text 85258** — Crisis text, 24/7

A different relationship with your mind is possible.

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services offers ACT, counselling, CBT, EMDR, hypnotherapy, mindfulness, coaching, and more — online across the UK and face-to-face across England. Our team of 90+ qualified practitioners is here to find the right match for you.

TELEPHONE

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EMAIL

contact@hopefulminds.co.uk

WEBSITE

www.hopefulminds.co.uk

FREE CONSULTATION

calendly.com/hopetherapy/15-minute-consultation?month=2026-04

ALSO FROM US

The Talk Room Podcast — honest conversations about mental health, relationships, and everyday wellbeing from the Hope Therapy team. Search **The Talk Room** on Spotify and YouTube, or find it at hopefulminds.co.uk.

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services holds NCPS Organisational Membership, which covers counselling and psychotherapy services. ACT is delivered by qualified practitioners individually registered with the BACP, NCPS, and/or BABCP as appropriate to their training and specialism. All practitioners hold appropriate professional insurance. Sessions are confidential, subject to the limited exceptions explained by your therapist at the outset of your work together. Results vary between individuals; we do not guarantee specific outcomes.