

## ACT Now Training Video Transcripts

### 4. A thought de-fusion exercise

Time	Speaker	Text
0:05	HP	Ok, Mary, so one of the things that you said that has been really difficult recently has been some of these very intense thoughts that you have about what you think about the scarring and your worries about what other people might think about it as well. And what was really clear when we use the ACT Map was that those thoughts could really pull you away from doing the things that you care about. It's almost like those thoughts hook you, they grab you. [0:36] So what I was going to suggest we could do now is introduce a technique called thought de-fusion. It is another mindfulness skill. So you may remember the two pillars of the mindfulness skills and the values-based action skills. We are going to carry on really strengthening your mindfulness pillar. [1:01] So that when difficult thoughts show up, you have got a technique that you can use wherever you are to 'un-hook' from some of those thoughts. Is that OK?
1:10	Mary	Yeah.
	HP	It might be easier to get a sense of it if we just do it first. And then we can explore that together, and how you might use it over the next weeks. So I'm going to give you this piece of paper and pen. About half way down, can you just draw a thick line. And on that line, I wonder if you could have a think about- I know there are a lot of difficult thoughts you have- but is there one that is most present for you at the moment? Or one that you would like to work on? What I would say is you do not have to pick the most difficult one. We are just going to practice this technique today, so maybe choose a thought that is about a five out of ten in terms of how 'hot' or how intense it is. And we can always work up to the more difficult or distressing thoughts later.
2:14	Mary	OK. Do you want me to tell you?
	HP	You can do, or you just write it down. What I would say is can be useful, sometimes the most powerful thoughts are the ones that have the word "I" in them. Like "I am not going to be able to manage this".
2:49	Mary	I think my scar looks disgusting.
	HP	I'm going to invite you now to really take that thought up close. If you can, bring that piece of paper right up close in front of you. And really read those words, that thought, as if that was just how things are, as if it's just the truth. And let me know what is showing up, what you are noticing as you do that.
3:30	Mary	I can feel my anxiety increasing.
	HP	OK. Anything else? If you can stay connected with it. I know there's an urge to pull away.
3:43	Mary	It is making me feeling anxious here (in my stomach). I feel tense. I can feel the rate of my breathing increase.
3:56	HP	So not only are all of these strong feelings around when you read that, but also, if we imagined right in front of you over here were the things that you care about like your dancing, your granddaughter, your husband, what is it like? Can you connect with them right now, if they were in front of you?
4:16	Mary	Well I can't see them. Because this paper is in front. Because this thought is in front.
	HP	Ok, so not only are these thoughts here and these feelings are showing up, but they are also getting in the way of the things that really matter to you. And

		what do you feel like to doing with that piece of paper with that thought written on it?
4:40	Mary	I want to do that. Away.
	HP	So let's do that for a moment. Really really try and push it away. Of course you want to push it away. What is that like? What are you noticing?
4:55	Mary	I don't think I can do this for very long because my arms will start to ache.
	HP	OK. So it is tiring.
5:04	Mary	Yes.
	HP	And if you can as you are doing that, if you can stay like that for a moment or two longer unless it feels too uncomfortable, how connected do you feel to the things that are important to you in front of you?
5:16	Mary	I still can't see them.
	HP	OK. What I am going to invite you to do now is to take a moment just to let it rest on your lap, because I know that was tiring. [5:36] And before we explore that together I am going to invite you to write these words above what you have written there: "I am noticing the thought that..." You might also want to draw a speech bubble on what you have written on the line. [6:06] And so now this time have a look at that again, Mary, but this time all the way from the top including the extra words.
6:14	Mary	"I am noticing the thought that "I think my scar looks disgusting".
	HP	Is there anything different there?
	Mary	I don't think it feels as strong as when I was saying those words before. It does not feel as powerful.
6:43	HP	OK. That is interesting. So those words are still there, and it sounds like it does not feel quite as strong. And I can see right now you are even relaxing your arms, so you are letting the thought on the paper sit there. This stuff hasn't gone away.
	Mary	The thought is still there.
	HP	Yes. But what is it like now if you were to imagine the things that matter to you are in front of you?
7:07	Mary	If they were there then I would see them.
	HP	OK. So what we are seeing here with this exercise that we call thought defusion, is that sometimes just by reminding ourselves that these are thoughts, it helps us to have a bit of healthy psychological distance. Seeing thoughts as thoughts, not necessarily facts. But what I also see is that you put much more energy and effort into fighting them. [07:44] Like when you were doing that, even though it was just an exercise, it was exhausting. So this is what I am going to invite you to do when these thoughts show up, which they likely will do- they have been around for a while. It is to see if you can create that distance like you did today
8:07	Mary	Just by saying "I am noticing..."
	HP	By saying it in your mind, or writing it down if you are somewhere where you can write it down.
8:19	Mary	OK.
	HP	And alongside that, like we did as well, is reminding yourself "What is important? What matters to me?" You remember that "Towards move" on the ACT Map. So that these thoughts might be here. But perhaps the things we really want to guide what we do are the things that we really care about. Even if these difficult thoughts and feelings are showing up. How does that sound?
8:49	Mary	I will practice that.

