



# ACBS MYS

ASSOCIATION FOR  
CONTEXTUAL BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE  
MALAYSIA CHAPTER

## **Advance ACT Workshop 2023 Reflection by Meta Melanie Education Fund Sponsorship Recipient**

I was nervous when I saw the poster of Advance ACT by Farah. The feeling of excitement to join the class after attending the ACT Introductory in UMS in December 2022 was quite recent. Somehow I knew that, after attending the 2 days course in UMS, I am more affirmed that I resonate well with the approach. Prior to this, I have not attended any formal lectures on ACT, all knowledge that I had picked up and read about ACT was here and there from peer counselors who attended the same course and from an online class. When I reflected, it was way back in September 2021, when I had a discussion with a close peer counselor who attend an Introductory course in KL, we were discussing and debating on this approach and how was it different from CBT. My friend has decided not to pursue it, I on the other hand, had moved on and decided to adopt it and use it to integrate with other approaches in my session with my client.

Working in a church–spiritual setting, ACT jives well with the elements of the psychospiritual formation programme. I use and structure my group counseling session accordingly to ACT where the whole programme focuses on character building and using ACT (especially acceptance and values), I hope to elevate psychological flexibility in the youth at risk that I'm working with. In our centre, great emphasis is given to the concept of self and activities like meditation- mindfulness, and expressive art as means of expression.

Hence, the feeling of gratefulness towards ACBS Malaysian Chapter that enable me to attend the course and how excited and looking forward to attending Farah's class – the feeling of wanting to know more.

I have really enjoyed the training and learn a lot. It was not so much of a theory class although some ACT terms were being mentioned, the application and practical was the interesting part of the training. During the first class, I was still looking for the formula or entry point to start ACT Hexaflex (I would normally in a rigid way start with values), especially when Farah showed the slides with examples of questions to ask, I notice myself quickly writing the questions.

After a while and especially during the live demo conducted by Farah herself, I notice that, entry points to ACT Hexaflex are various and that it's so flexible.

I also enjoyed the breakout room sessions, both of my teammates were nice and I felt supported and safe practicing the being thought in the session. The breakout room approach allowed me to practice and I guess this also help me to retain more information.

I use to think about "contact with the present moment" was more physical to my client. In the training, I learned that it was beyond that. Keeping and pacing myself at the "present moment" like silence and staying at the "down-heart level" (my terms) as compared to head level was a challenge. I am always quick to summarize or paraphrase. When I reflected, I am also doing the same in my practice. Could it be I want the session to end fast? Or I'm quick to make summaries for my clients?

Before attending the training, my standard approach of using ACT on the client would be from the identification of value, and at times will get frustrated when client values are not apparent after the session. After attending the training, I notice myself more flexible, and I find that the defusion technique can be a powerful and empowering tool to move my client forward. (It works well for me too!)

Attending the course had help me understand ACT better and I do adopt and practice ACT for myself.

As for my practice, I am more confident to structure my group work class and in planning to work on a revised module plan for our centre.