

Useful approaches for post-Covid career development

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Post-Covid career development

- Post job-loss career growth
- Psychological resources and psychological capital
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Post-Covid career development

- **Post job-loss career growth**
 - There is hope
 - Ideas to facilitate rebuilding
- **Psychological resources and psychological capital**
 - Increasing your chances
- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**
 - Wellbeing
 - Dealing with anxiety



1. Post job loss career growth

A job loss can be really tough

- **Work provides us with a range of benefits, over and above a salary:**
 - A social institution: which fulfils basic psychological needs such as time structure, social contacts, a collective purpose, status and regular activity
 - A source of personal identity and meaning
- **Job loss leads to:**
 - Higher levels of stress, depression and anxiety
 - Higher levels of drinking and recreational drug use
 - Lower levels of self-esteem and physical health
- **The impacts are pervasive and long lasting**
 - Children's grades and mental health
 - Re-employment is not a silver bullet

Jahoda's latent
deprivation model, 1982

Post-traumatic growth

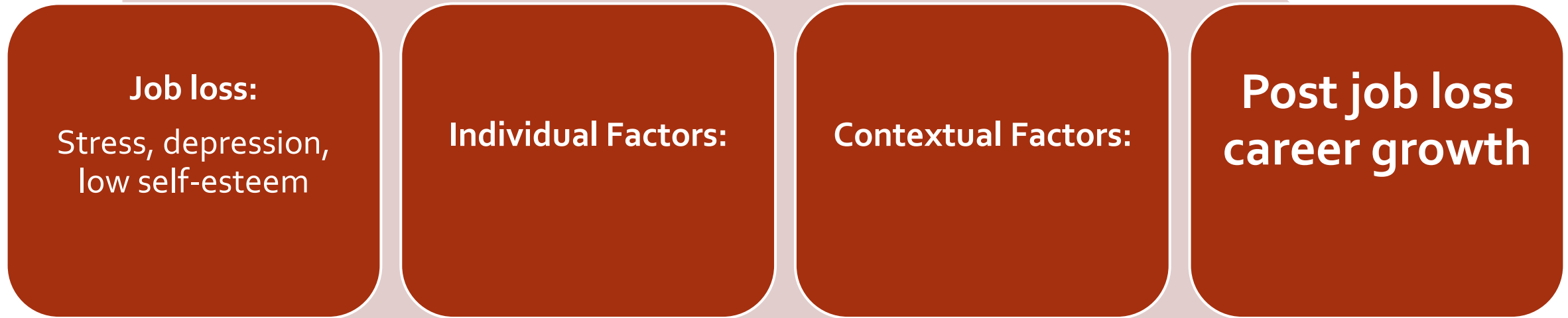
- Terrible events can result in us leading better, more fulfilling lives
- We can learn to appreciate life more, and recognise our own strengths
- We can completely reassess our understanding of the world and our place in it

Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004

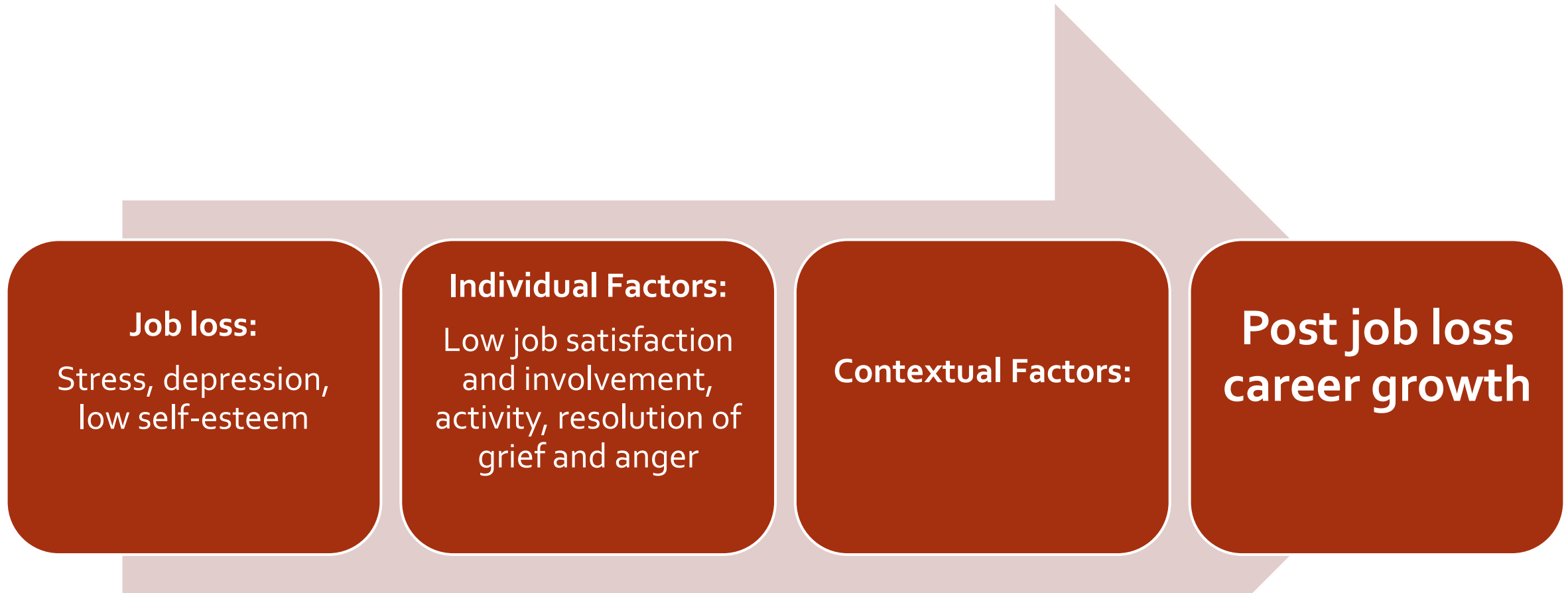
Janoff-Bulman, 1992

Post-job loss career growth

- People often plod along in jobs that are just about ok – sticking with them because they are familiar and safe
 - Redundancy can force people to take risks
- Traumatic life events can allow people to recalibrate what they want from a career
 - Breast cancer survivors



Latack & Dosier, 1986
Eby & Buch, 1995
Walters & Strauss, 2016



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Job loss:

Stress, depression,
low self-esteem

Individual Factors:

Low job satisfaction
and involvement,
activity, resolution of
grief and anger

Contextual Factors:

Understanding why it
happened, length of
unemployment,
financial resources,
social support

**Post job loss
career growth**

Latack & Dosier, 1986
Eby & Buch, 1995
Walters & Strauss, 2016

Post job-loss career growth in practice

- Sharing the theory
- Offering resources
 - Signposting to mental health, financial and social support
- Dialectal thinking
 - Trying to see the event from multiple perspectives
- Deliberate rumination
 - Conscious effort to think about and understand the event and its consequences
- Identity play
 - Possible selves

2. The Career Resources Model

Career Resources

- Human capital resources
 - The skills, experience, education and know-how to do the job
- Social capital resources
 - The people around me who can and want to help
- Career identity resources
 - Who am I and how is my work meaningful to me
- Psychological capital resources
 - HERO: Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism



Hirschi, 2012
Luthans, 2007

Psychological Capital

from Psychological Capital by Fred Luthans, Carolyn M Youssef and Bruce J Avolio

Hope



hope is a motivational state which gives us the energy to focus on our goals and helps us plan how we'll achieve those goals

Efficacy



self-efficacy is the belief we have in our ability to achieve goals and handle specific situations

Resilience



resilience is the ability to bounce back and persevere in the face of obstacles and setbacks

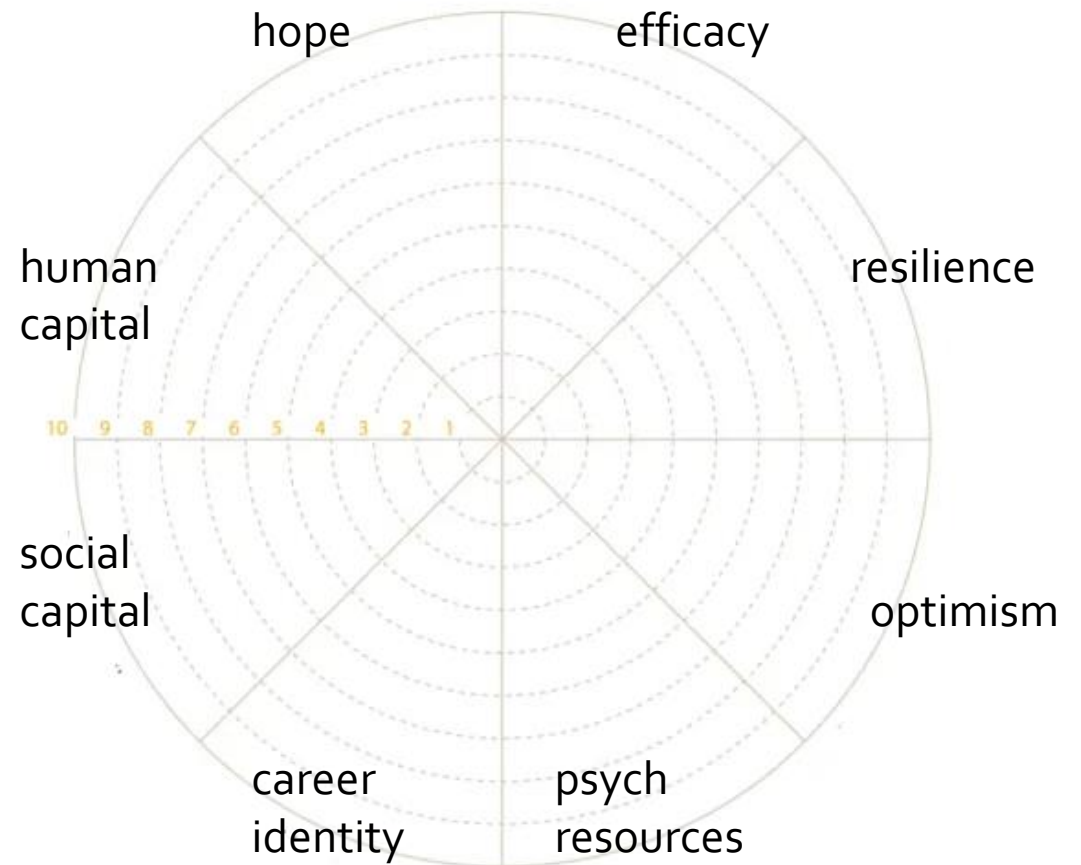
Optimism



optimism is the general expectation that good things will happen and the belief we will succeed in the future

Career Resources in practice

- Label each piece of the pie with one of the resources
- Ask your client to give themselves a score for each resource
- Discuss which they feel would be most useful to work on
- Offer some suggestions for each
- <https://positivepsychology.com/psychological-capital-psycap/>



Example exercise for building resilience

- **Step 1:**
 - identify a recent set- back (work, school or personal)
 - Write down all of your immediate reactions to this set-back
- **Step 2:**
 - What was the impact of the set-back?
 - What aspects are in their control?
 - What options are open to them now?



Example exercise for building optimism

- **Best possible future self**

- Visualise yourself in ten years time, living the best possible life, and being the best possible version of yourself.
- Spend ten minutes writing about it – think about what it would be like and how you would feel



Acceptance And Commitment Therapy (ACT)

ACT can help with...

Identity – working out who you want to be

Values – working out what matters

Motivation – unsticking the stuckness

Anxiety – limiting the impact of negative thoughts

Negative thoughts and feelings

- What kinds of negative and unhelpful thoughts or feelings do you most often see in your clients?
- What behaviour does this lead to?



Do any of these sound familiar?

Unhelpful thoughts

I'm not good enough

People like me don't do jobs like that

I'll never succeed

I've never managed it in the past, why would I do it in the future?

It's too hard

My parents don't want me to

Resulting behaviour

Stop trying

Don't apply for a job

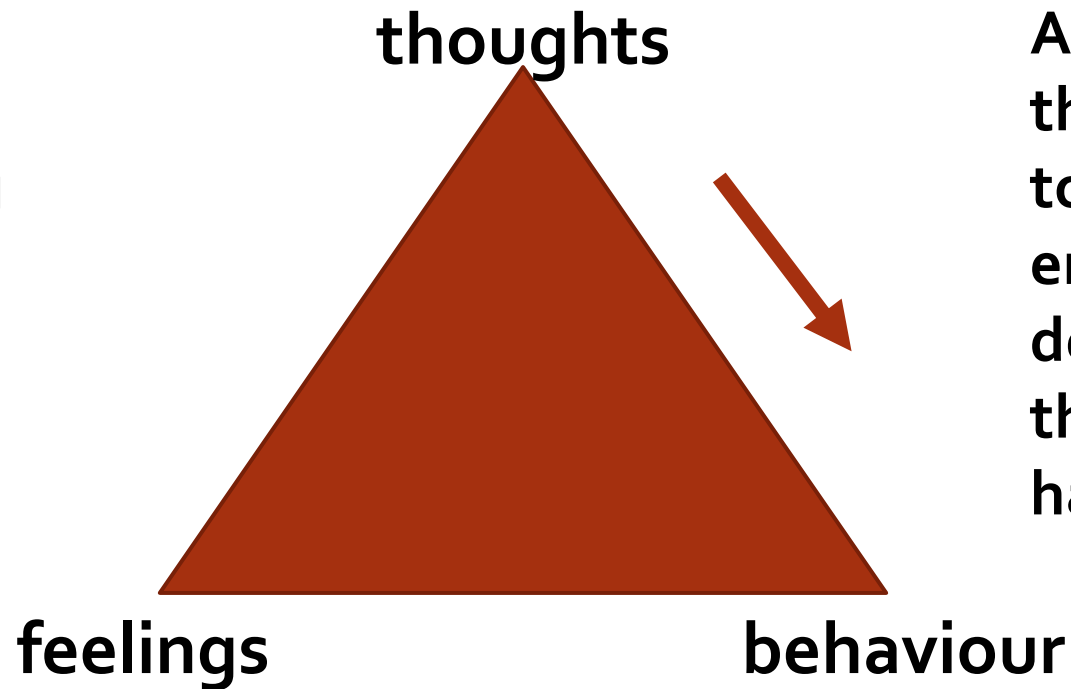
Don't follow through

Perform badly

Do nothing

Cognitive Behavioural approaches

CBT encourages us to change the thoughts – replacing negative ones with positive ones



ACT acknowledges that sometimes this is too hard, so encourages us to decrease the impact the negative thoughts have

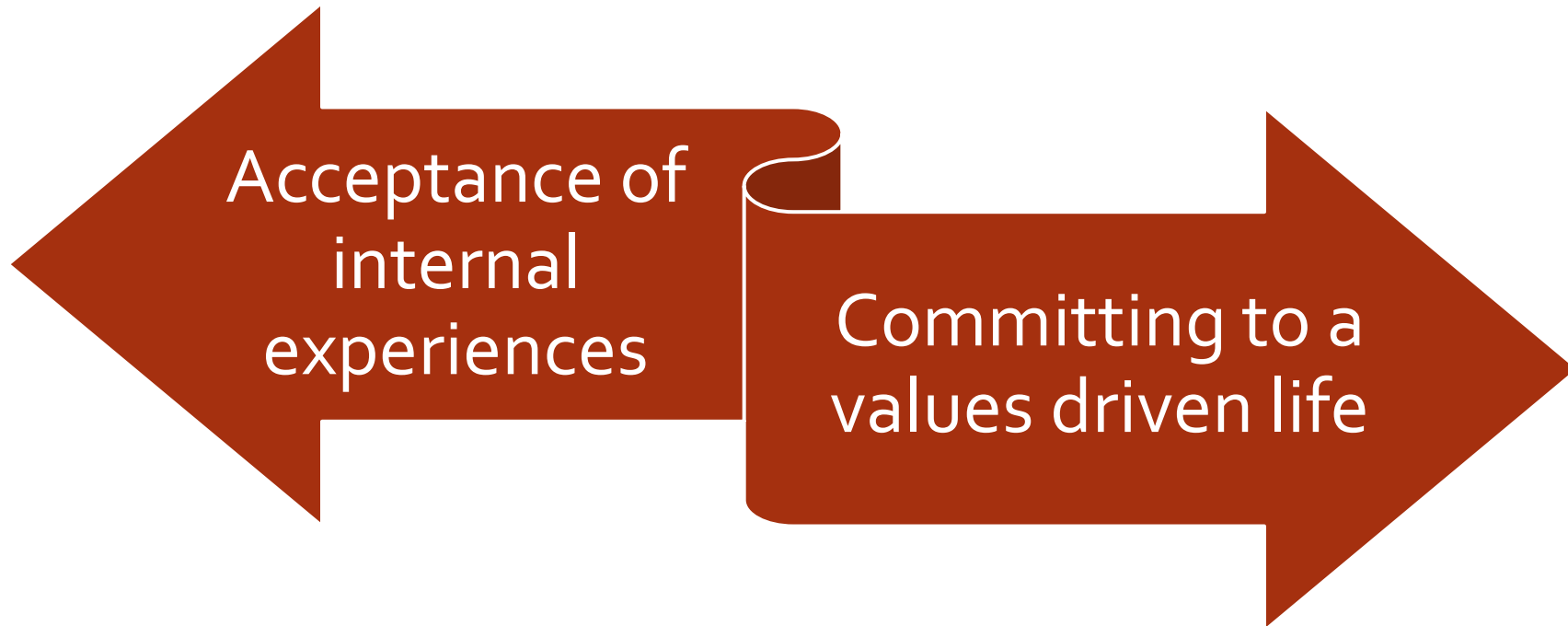
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Unhelpful thoughts or feelings can stop us from living the life we want to live

ACT suggests that we can learn to **accept** the negative thoughts and feelings and **commit** to living the life we want to



ACT



ACT assumptions

'Negative' thoughts, emotions, sensations are not inherently toxic: it depends on how we respond to them

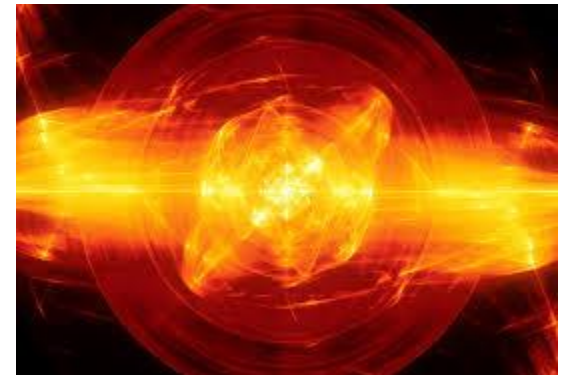
Two **psychological contexts** that can create toxicity:

- Cognitive fusion
- Experiential avoidance

Cognitive fusion

A 'pouring together' of the person and his or her thoughts

- Thoughts become reality
- Behaviour becomes identity



Experiential avoidance

Attempts to change, avoid, or remove undesirable thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations

- We want to avoid feeling bad
- We avoid situations or behaviour that might make us feel bad



Psychological Flexibility

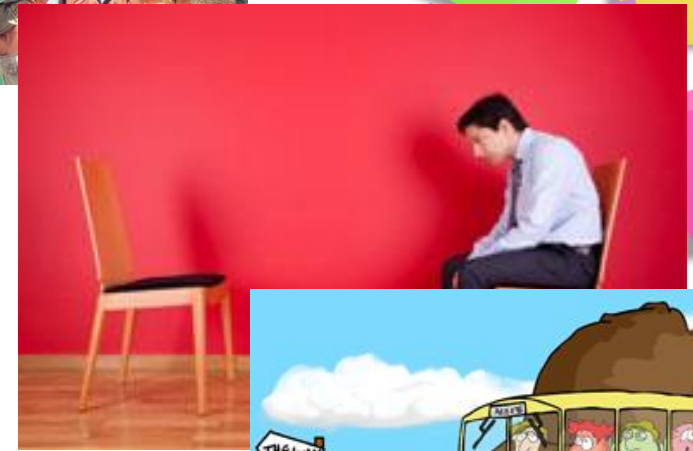


- An increased willingness to experience undesirable thoughts and feelings
- *In the service of* deliberately and actively pursuing personally valued action ('or moving towards what matters')



Some ACT-friendly tools

1. Images of your future
2. Thinking about your thoughts
3. Seeing yourself through someone else's eyes
4. Metaphors
5. The retirement party



- Post job-loss career growth
- Career resources
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

- Any thoughts, comments or questions?

Further Reading

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Post job-loss career growth

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Psychological Resources

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ACT

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