



The image is of totem poles in Stanley Park. I took this photo recently while attending the Canadian Society of Addictions Medicine Conference in Vancouver. We at Coderix Medical Clinic recognize the struggles of the First Nations Peoples of this land.

You may have noticed that we missed the Summer newsletter. Well, here is the ACT approach to this situation...

I notice and name judgmental thoughts I have about myself, such as "I'm not a dedicated newsletter writer!" I defuse from this thought, which means I recognize it, not trying to make it go away, and instead acknowledging the thought. I accept the experience of being overwhelmed by my list of 'things to do'. I offer myself compassion, and maybe a coffee. I ground myself in the present moment in front of my keyboard, and commit to the action of writing the Autumn newsletter because I value communication and education.

ACT Skill #4

Continuing our series on the six central skills of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, we are going to introduce the notion of Defusion. We also have a pamphlet explaining Defusion, which like all of our pamphlets is available for download here.

What is defusion?

Defusion is a skill to handle difficult thoughts and feelings differently, so that they have less impact over our lives.

Where do difficult thoughts come from?

Difficult thoughts and feelings are part of our mind's attempt to solve problems. However, we don't want to be paralyzed or controlled by them.

Why defusion?

When we get 'all wrapped up' in our difficult thoughts and feelings, many of us do things that don't actually make our lives better. The skill of defusion can give us more flexibility – to choose actions which actually help us in the long run.

When to defuse?

Set aside a little time to practice this each day. A few minutes will be enough. Gradually, try to use it when you are 'swept up' by difficult thoughts and feelings.

[Download a PDF of our Defusion Handout](#)

Defusion Exercise

This "3-Step" Defusion Exercise is a classic, and one of my favourites. If it's not the right fit for you, ask someone at Coderix to show you others – there are lots of different ones with the same principle. Or look them up on Youtube – they are there too!

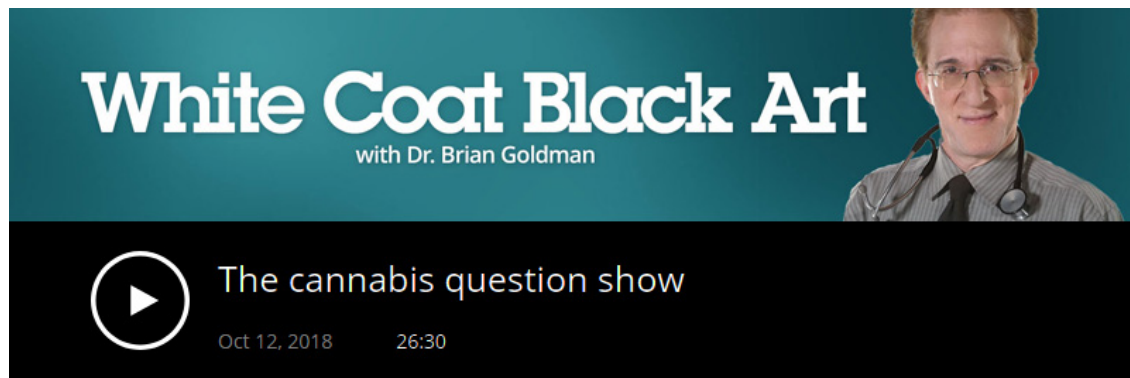
Spend a minute with each step in the defusion exercise. In the spaces below, write a strong emotion that you have been having. See if the experience 'sits' anywhere in your body. Notice whether this changes throughout the exercise.

1) I am feeling _____.

2) I am having the thought that I am feeling _____.

3) I notice that I am having the thought that I am feeling _____.

Resources



Recreational marijuana is now legal in Canada... just in case you hadn't heard. From an ACT perspective, if you are a person who uses marijuana, the question is the same as it would be for many decisions in life:

- Are you using marijuana moderately, flexibly, while staying in touch with your five senses and your values? Are you using in a way that does not take away from other important activities in your life? This is probably workable.
- Are you using marijuana excessively, rigidly, in order to escape difficult emotions and thoughts? Are you using in a way that impacts other important activities in your life? In the long run, this will probably not work well.

My pet peeve has been that too much coverage of marijuana has been devoted to 'who will make money off this', and too little has been devoted to 'what is the science that people need to know?' Here is a great episode of the CBC show – 'White Coat, Black Art', which connects listeners to science.

More Resources

Clinic Update

Dr. Jesleen Rana is completing her maternity leave, but has decided for the moment to reduce her medical work in order to have more time with her family. As part of this re-balancing she has decided to take a break from addictions medicine, and will not be returning to her previous role in the Women's-Focused Clinic. We are sad that we will not have Dr. Rana back at Coderix for now, but we are happy for her and her family. We wish her the very best.

Dr. Lyndsay O'Brecht will be taking on the Women's-Focused Clinic on an ongoing basis. Dr. O'Brecht has been delivering wonderful care while covering that clinic during Dr. Rana's maternity leave. We are pleased and grateful that she has agreed to continue her great work there.

Dr. Kate Lazier will begin an eight month sabbatical in January 2019. When Dr. Lazier returns, she will take on Tuesday afternoon and evening on an ongoing basis. We wish her the best, and hope that she is able to find refreshment and renewal during her sabbatical.

Dr. Vivien Parker will take on Fridays on an ongoing basis starting in January 2019. Dr. Parker has been enjoying her work with us, and we very much appreciate her contribution to our group and to our patients.

Your turn

If you are reading this newsletter, we would love to see your reflections in this section in the future. We imagine a photo or a drawing with accompanying text, but tell us if there is something else you would like to share, and it will be considered.

Submission guidelines – send us an email or talk to the staff if you would like to share something:

- Images should be accompanied by a brief text (not more than 100 words).
- The accompanying text should include a reflective element, for instance 'What I reflect upon is...', or 'What this makes me think about is...'.
'
- Images or text should not include subjects that could foreseeably be expected to be triggering or offensive. We will exercise editorial judgment around this, and thank you for your understanding.
- Posts can include your name, or be anonymous, as you prefer.

Yours,

Dr. Vincent Lam

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