

Get ACTIVE! A Pilot Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Workshop

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Project Summary:

Having a sedentary lifestyle and not engaging in regular physical activity are significant public health concerns in the US. Research indicates that physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle are independently associated with coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, colon cancer, and premature mortality. In addition to physical health consequences, physically inactive and sedentary workers face increased occupational stress, as well as lower and decreased overall wellbeing. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has shown promise in interventions designed to help individuals lose weight, engage in health behavior change, decrease anxiety and depression, and improve other physical and mental health issues. Using ACT to address these health concerns is a new and promising area of study.

This proposed project seeks to develop a brief ACT workshop to help increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviors for physically inactive, sedentary workers. The workshop is designed to create new ways to mindfully observe and interact with cognitive processes, and move towards values-based goals. It is hypothesized that an ACT-based approach to physical activity will be superior to a credible education only condition designed to teach the benefits of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary lifestyle. Workers who are sedentary and not engaging in regular physical activity will be randomized into either an ACT or an educational one-day workshop. Participants will complete baseline questionnaires as well as collect pedometer (i.e., regular and aerobic steps, distance) and physical activity (i.e. minutes, intensity, type) data one week prior to the workshop. In addition, participants will collect pedometer and physical activity data for three months following the workshop and will complete three month follow-up questionnaires. It is hypothesized that the ACT workshop will significantly increase physical activity, decrease sedentary behaviors, increase overall wellbeing, and decrease occupational stress, relative to the education only workshop.

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