

SIG Psychology and Neuropsychology  
Inbetween Meeting  
in Hamburg  
22th of June 2018

We met for a 1-day workshop with the subject “Acceptance and Commitment Therapy”.

Participants:

Jana Pöttgen (SIG Chair)	Germany
Steffi Lau	Germany
Gesa Pust	Germany
Bock, Hans	Germany
Behrens, Anja	Germany
Schütze, Thorsten	Germany
Weineck, Gabi	Germany
Ambra Giovannetti	Italy
Laurentiu Lazar	Romania
Jannie Engelbrecht	Denmark
Anita Rose (SIG-Co-Chair)	UK
Mette Harpsoe Engel	Denmark
Wim van de Vis	Netherlands
Cristina Bungardean	Romania
Mieke d’Hooge	Belgium
Michelle Pirard	Belgium

Prof. Kenneth Pakenham was the main seminar presenter.



Kenneth Pakenham (PhD) is a Professor of clinical and health psychology in the School of Psychology at The University of Queensland, Australia. The “living fully with illness” theme integrates his early research in stress/coping theory, his mid-career shift to incorporate the rise of positive psychology, and his current and future focus on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Through peer reviewed publications, conference and keynote presentations, and three teaching awards, he has become a leader in integrating training in therapist and self-care competencies into clinical psychology curricula using an ACT framework.

Ambra M. Giovannetti was also involved in the workshop presentations.



Ambra is a psychologist, psychotherapist at the Foundation IRCCS Neurological Institute C. Besta in Milan and a PhD student at the University of Queensland. As part of her PhD, she is coordinating the READY It MS project, a multi-phased study to apply READY for MS in Italy and further test its efficacy. READY for MS is a group intervention based on ACT.

## Agenda (9.30 am – 18.00 pm)

- **Introduction to ACT:**
  - History, the Psychological Flexibility Framework and Associated Research (1 hour) (Kenneth Pakenham)
- **Application of ACT and Mindfulness to Building Resilience in People with MS:**
  - Australian and Italian Stories – The Ready to MS – Project (45 minutes) (Ambra Giovannetti)
- **Introduction to the Six Core ACT Therapeutic Processes:**
  - Including experiential exercises demonstrating each process (3.50 hours) (Kenneth Pakenham)
- **A Demonstration Role-play (45 minutes)**
  - (Kenneth Pakenham & Jannie Engelbrecht)



Prof. Pakenham mainly held the workshop and started with an overview: “Third Wave Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - Acceptance & Commitment Therapy”.

Introduction to ACT:

- History
- Psychological Flexibility Framework
- Associated Research:

**ACT & Mindfulness for Building Resilience in People with MS:**

- Australian and Italian Stories

Mrs. Giovannetti presented the READY It MS project that she is running in Italy (the study follows a phased approach, as suggested by the Medical Research Council (MRC) framework for developing and evaluating complex interventions), to inform RIMS colleagues (all involved in the psychological/neuropsychological rehabilitation in MS) about European research on ACT and MS.

First results are available and show positive effects on resilience parameters.

READY (Resilience for Every Day) for MS = ACT based resiliency training targets key protective resilience factors:

- Positive emotions / acceptance
- Cognitive flexibility
- Coping strategies
- Meaning
- Social support

She also presented the CompACT for MS project, which is supported by the RIMS Grant. The aim of this multinational (Italy, Germany, Spain) project is the translation and validation of the CompACT. The CompACT is a questionnaire to assess ACT-related processes.

Both projects created quite an interest within the group. Colleagues from other countries and centers, expressed their interest in joining the projects and possibilities of collaboration were discussed.

After the introduction Prof. Pakenham presented the ACT core components:

- Defusion
- Acceptance
- Contact with the present moment
- The Observing Self
- Values
- Committed action

He introduced many practical examples for a better and comprehensive understanding of how to use ACT components for psychological rehabilitation.

At the end of the day he run a role play with Jannie Engelbrecht pretending to be one of her MS patient.



End of the workshop

Social Dinner at the evening – Discussion:



Ready for MS project and the CompACT for MS project (RIMS-Grant-project with Spain, Italy, Germany)

- All participants (from Belgium, UK, Denmark, Netherlands, Romania) showed serious interests to participate in the validation of the CompACT
- All RIMS-members are interested in the READY for MS project
  - More structured moments for sharing knowledge on ACT and exchanging experiences on its application with people with MS are needed, particularly to let other MS or rehabilitation Centres in Europe to acquire the necessary expertise and apply ACT evidence based intervention, such as “READY for MS”, into the rehabilitation centers.

**All participants reported high level of satisfaction with the workshop and asked for more exchange, knowledge and practical networking related to psychological topics and especially related to ACT.**

