

A presence check for session

Are you delivering an intervention, or are you embodying it?

In ACT, the relationship itself is where psychological flexibility gets practiced, not just discussed. The moment a therapist notices an urge to control, reassure, avoid, persuade, or rescue is not a lapse to correct. It is the intervention point.

Five urges to notice in session

The urge	Staying present instead
Control	Let the client lead into what's arising, even if it's messy.
Reassure	Stay with the discomfort alongside the client, rather than smoothing it over.
Avoid	Turn toward the difficult material instead of steering away from it.
Persuade	Hold your perspective loosely; offer it without pushing the client toward it.
Rescue	Trust the client's capacity to sit with what's hard, without stepping in to fix it.

The self-check

1. Notice the urge, as it arises.
2. Name it silently, without acting on it yet.
3. Ask: can I stay present with what's here instead of resolving it?
4. Choose, deliberately, whether to act on the urge or stay with the discomfort.