

# Exploring Values with Adolescents: Implications of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

## *Ergenlerle Değerleri Çalışmak: Kabul Kararlılık Terapisinin Etkisi*

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescents need both developmental support and a set of compass and value-based competencies to effectively navigate and make sense of the present events and situations they meet, ultimately leading to a purposeful and fulfilling life. It is worth mentioning that there has been a significant increase in the development of psychological help, techniques, and theories in recent years to meet this demand. These theories also incorporate values. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) strongly emphasizes identifying values as a central aspect of the therapeutic process. ACT places significant emphasis on studies focused on clarifying values and enhancing awareness, especially in individuals sensitive to developmental stages, such as adolescents. This study, provided information about the definition of ACT, effectiveness studies, and the definition and function of values in the ACT approach. This study provided information about the definition of ACT, effectiveness studies, and the definition and function of values in the ACT approach. This study aims to explain the importance of values in the ACT approach in working with adolescents and how ACT steps can clarify and increase awareness of values in adolescents by concretizing them with case examples. It also aims to explain the activities and tools that therapists can use when working with values in ACT and what they should pay attention to when working with values. The study discussed that adolescents can be helped to meet their developmental needs and make sense of the effects of positive/adverse events and experiences in their immediate and distant environments through values work. Finally, incorporating ACT with Turkish adolescent clients by including their values in counseling and associating it with primary, secondary, and tertiary studies can carry the studies to be carried out in environments where adolescents are present beyond being only crisis-oriented. Additionally, it has been recommended to conduct quantitative studies on the factors that influence adolescents' value clarification, using scales designed to highlight these values.

**Keywords:** ACT, acceptance and commitment therapy, adolescent, values

### ÖZ

Ergenlerin, gelişimsel ihtiyaçları yanında, karşı karşıya kaldıkları güncel olay ve durumları yorumlayıp, anlamlı ve zengin bir yaşama sahip olmaları için hayatlarına yön verecek pusulalara ve değerler temelli yeterliliklere sahip olmalarına ihtiyaçları vardır. Bu ihtiyacı ele almaya yönelik son yıllarda geliştirilen psikolojik yardım, yaklaşım ve kuramların arttığı ve bu kuramlarda değerlere yer verildiği dikkat çekmektedir. Bu yaklaşımlardan biri olan Kabul ve Kararlılık Terapisinde (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-ACT) değerlerin açıklığa kavuşturulması terapötik çalışmanın merkezinde yer almaktadır. Özellikle ergenler gibi gelişime açık bireylerde değerlere ilişkin belirginleştirme ve farkındalığı artırma çalışmalarına ACT'de daha ayrıntılı yer verildiği görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada ACT'nin tanımını ve etkililik araştırmaları, ACT yaklaşımında değerlerin tanımı ve işlevi hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, ACT yaklaşımında değerleri ergenlerle çalışmanın önemini, ergenlerde değerleri belirginleştirme ve değerlere yönelik farkındalığı artırma sürecinde ACT adımlarının nasıl kullanılabileceğini örnek vakalarla somutlaştırarak açıklamaktır. Ayrıca terapistlerin ACT'de değerleri çalışırken kullanabilecekleri etkinlik ve araçlar ile değerleri çalışırken nelere dikkat etmeleri gerektiğinin de açıklanması amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada ergenlerin gelişimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılama, yakın ve uzak çevrelerindeki olumlu/olumsuz olay ve yaşantıların etkilerini anlamlandırma ergenlere değerlerini çalışma yoluyla yardımcı olunabileceği tartışılmıştır. Son olarak ACT'nin Türk ergen danışanlarla çalışırken onların değerlerini danışmaya dahil ederek temel, ikincil ve üçüncül çalışmalarla ilişkilendirilmesinin, ergenlerin buldukları ortamlarda yapılacak çalışmaları sadece kriz odaklı olmaktan öteye de taşıyabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, ergenlerin değerlerini netleştirmelerine etki eden değişkenlerle ilgili olarak, değerlerin belirginleştirilmesine yardımcı olan ölçekler kullanılarak nicel çalışmalar yapılması önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** ACT, değerler, ergenlik, kabul ve kararlılık terapisi

## Introduction

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The recent developments, changes, and crises experienced in Turkey and globally have affected individuals of all age groups. These situations can be exemplified by problematic internet usage, which has increased with technological advancements and greater accessibility, epidemics (World Health Organization (WHO) 2020), potential wars, economic crises, natural disasters like earthquakes (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) 2023), and finally, the Gaza Genocide (Forensic Architecture 2024), which has stirred global protests and exposed numerous instances contrary to moral values. Although these macro-level global crises indirectly or directly negatively impact all age groups, it is noted that the most affected age group is adolescents (Kessler et al. 2005, Avcı 2010). Similarly, Tanaka et al. (2016) and Kukuoğlu (2018) state that individuals in childhood and adolescence are more affected by significant traumas due to their lower levels of awareness regarding life experiences.

Adolescents, can be influenced not only by macro-levels but also by micro-level current affairs within their immediate surroundings. For example, it is known that young individuals who are faced with the responsibility of planning their futures due to their age may experience intense anxiety, particularly related to exams. In Turkey, the LGS (High School Entrance System) and YKS (Higher Education Institutions Examination), considered significant exams affecting students' futures, are taken during adolescence. Adolescents may experience increased anxiety during exams due to both the inherent stress of the exam process and the influence of their teachers and families, which can exacerbate exam-related anxiety (Güler & Çakır 2013). The reliance on exam results as the sole measure of student success can lead to feelings of hopelessness and a decline in confidence among adolescents who are unable to achieve their desired outcomes (Hoferichter et al. 2014, Thomas et al. 2017).

Regardless of the macro and micro crises affecting adolescents, they are currently in a period of cognitive, social, physiological and psychological changes (Makas and Düşünceli 2021). Furthermore, adolescents are faced with developmental tasks such as formulating a moral framework based on a set of values that will guide their actions (Gander and Gardiner 2007), devising long-term goals, and acquiring roles that will equip them for adulthood (Erikson 1959, Schmid et al. 2011). Considering the developmental tasks of adolescence and the fact that adolescents begin to shape their lives according to their own preferences and will in this period, they need to acquire specific skills such as determining principles and values related to their lives, being aware that difficulties and pain are a part of life, and acting values-oriented despite all challenging experiences (Kırca and Ekşi 2020). Moreover, adolescents can be exposed to many influences that lack values, such as materialism, digital use and negative peers, unless they shape their future (Hayes and Ciarrochi 2015). The significance attributed to the values that adolescents require to comprehend their developmental demands and the influence of events and experiences in their immediate and distant surroundings has heightened with the advent of third-generation therapies (Masuda and Spencer 2022).

Third wave cognitive behavioral therapies are post-modern theories that focus on individuals understanding the function of events and changing their behaviors rather than changing the phenomenon or event (Aydın and Aydın 2017). Kul and Türk (2020) state that these therapies emphasize the importance of the present moment and acceptance. Among third-wave therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes 2004), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al. 2002), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993), and Metacognitive Therapy (Wells 1995). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has gained prominence in recent years with both its theoretical framework and intervention studies (Hayes 2016). ACT, states that instead of getting stuck in painful events or searching for faults within themselves, individuals can view pain as a facilitating factor for living a meaningful life (Dursun and Akkaya 2022). Additionally, at the core of ACT, there is an emphasis on clarifying values and living a life guided by those values (Hayes et al. 2012). In ACT, where values are central to therapy, the main role of the therapist is to help clients move forward more consciously and mindfully in line with their values (Luoma et al. 2007). However, therapists need to ensure that they are helping clients develop their own process of valuing, rather than simply teaching them specific values or virtues. Given their age range, it is understood that they are actively seeking to understand and define their own identity and values in relation to themselves and the world around them. During this crucial stage of decision-making in life, it is deemed significant to prioritize the influence of values in guiding these decisions (Stattin and Kerr 2001).

Literature reviews related to the exploration of values in ACT can be found when examining the existing research. When examining the international literature, Rahal and Gon (2020) investigated empirical interventions that utilize values conceptualized by ACT in their research and found that value-based interventions produced the expected impact on outcome variables. Barrett et al. (2019) aim to introduce value-

based psychometric tools in their study and examine measurement instruments that reliably and validly assess the concept of values defined by ACT. Similarly, Reilly et al. (2019) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of quantitative questionnaires measuring values within the framework of ACT in their literature review. Landy et al. (2015) aimed to examine clinical trials assessing ACT's effectiveness treating anxiety disorders. Blake Berryhill and Lechtenberg (2015) aimed to describe an intervention that helps adolescents define and clarify their values, providing examples of activities designed to facilitate value clarification. When examining the studies conducted in Türkiye, studies on ACT. In their literature review, Dursun and Akkaya (2022) examined graduate theses investigating the effects of ACT-based group interventions. Kul and Türk (2020) aimed to address and introduce ACT in broad terms in their literature review. Although there are some literature reviews, there is a lack of comprehensive studies in both domestic and international literature on how to work with values in the ACT approach, the process of clarifying values and increasing awareness of values in adolescents, how to apply the steps of ACT in this context, and the tools that therapists can use when working with values in ACT, as well as case examples. Therefore, this study is considered unique. Additionally, while working with adolescents, addressing ACT's approach to values alongside the needs of adolescents, especially in school counseling practices, can help support today's adolescents in thinking more long-term and process-oriented within a shorter-term, goal-focused environment. This approach may also respond to the needs of psychological counselors when working with adolescents on values. In this context, it can be stated that the study is functional and necessary. Considering these aspects, it is believed that the current study will fill a gap in the existing literature.

## **ACT and Effectiveness Research**

In ACT, the aim is for individuals to focus on their own values, accept negative feelings and thoughts as they are, live in the present moment, and ultimately achieve psychological flexibility (Strosahl 2009). In ACT, the goal is to achieve psychological flexibility through six core processes in the counseling process, which include "acceptance," "focusing on the present," "self as context," "defusion," "value-based actions," and "values" (Harris 2016). Acceptance involves allowing emotions to come and go, being aware of their intensity, and not trying to change or fight them (İzginan 2021); focusing on the present refers to being open to sensations and fully engaging with whatever is being experienced (Harris 2016); self as context is the ability to recognize actions, thoughts, or experiences that individuals engage in without being aware of themselves (Swain et al. 2015); defusion is the individual's momentary distancing from the current situation and separating themselves from intrusive thoughts (Dursun and Akkaya 2022); values are the most meaningful and significant aspects of individuals' lives (Berkout 2021); and finally, committed action is defined as behaviors that are consistent with a person's values, while inaction refers to the absence of such behaviors (Hayes et al. 2012).

Recent studies have been to determine the effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in the mental health field and have increased in the literature across different populations. When examining studies conducted on adult samples, it has been found that ACT reduces symptoms of depression (Kyllönen et al. 2018), occupational burnout (Hayes et al. 2004), and suicidal thoughts (Ducasse et al. 2018). Furthermore, research has shown that ACT is successful in treating various conditions including anxiety (Fathi et al. 2017, Kelson et al. 2019), emotional eating (Frayn et al. 2020), addiction (Hayes et al. 2004, A-Tjak et al. 2015), major depressive disorder (López and Arco 2002), chronic pain (Wicksell et al. 2009, Graham et al. 2016), and severe mental illnesses like schizophrenia (Bach and Hayes 2002). The literature includes studies indicating that ACT has been successfully applied in the adult population and among children and adolescents.

When examining studies conducted with children and adolescents, it has been concluded that ACT effectively reduces anxiety and depression (Fang and Ding 2020, Ma et al. 2023), depressive symptoms or high stress indicators (Livheim et al. 2015), and significantly decreases symptoms in adolescents with trichotillomania (Fine et al. 2012) and those struggling with anorexia (Heffner et al. 2002). In their study, Soriano et al. (2009) found that ACT enhanced positive behaviors, such as decision-making and accountability, among teenagers who displayed antisocial tendencies. When examining the impact on the school environment, it is noteworthy that studies have discovered that ACT effectively alleviates anxiety in young individuals suffering from chronic pain and improves their attendance at school (Gauntlett Gilbert et al. 2013).

When examining the effectiveness of ACT-based psychoeducation programs, it has been found that these programs reduce aggressive behaviors (Komala et al. 2018), chronic pain (Roslyakova et al.), depressive symptoms (Pots et al. 2016), avoidance behaviors (Takahashi et al. 2020), social media addiction (Kaya 2023), levels of peer bullying among adolescents (Yalnız 2019), fear of negative evaluation (Uğur 2018), and social appearance anxiety in adolescents (Usta 2017). Additionally, it has been concluded that psychoeducation

programs increase values-based actions and psychological flexibility (Ly et al. 2012), coping skills (Kaya Akdemir 2018), as well as mindfulness, self-esteem, and psychological flexibility (Kaya 2023).

With the advancement of research on the effectiveness of ACT, some researchers have conducted studies to define how ACT provides therapeutic change and what factors affect this change. Villatte et al. (2016) conducted a study using ACT OPEN, which aims to work with ACT's acceptance and cognitive dissociation steps, and ACT ENGAGED, which aims to work with ACT's value and value-oriented action steps, in the treatment of psychosis patients. The study concluded that the ACT ENGAGED module showed more significant improvements in the areas of quality of life and value-based action. In addition, although there are studies that ACT is effective in reducing some symptoms or on different factors, it is accepted that valuable life is the primary treatment outcome of ACT (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005, Wilson et al. 2010). Similarly, Reilly et al. (2019) state that treatment practices such as acceptance, defusion, values clarification and taking action, which are the fundamental processes of ACT, are carried out in line with values. Creswell et al. (2005) also concluded that clarifying personal values reduces physiological and psychological stress responses. Given the importance of values in ACT studies and research, this review will focus in more detail on values as a core component of psychological resilience.

### **Definition and Role of Values in ACT**

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Although the search for meaning in clients' lives and determining their behaviors according to this meaning is included in other therapeutic approaches, values are at the center of therapy in ACT (Dahl et al. 2009, Stoddard and Afari 2014, Boulton et al. 2018, Reilly et al. 2019). Therapy aims to attain a fulfilling and purposeful existence, that aligns with one's ideals (Wilson et al. 2010, Reilly et al. 2019, Harris 2022). According to Trindade et al. (2015), values that are prioritized and given importance in one's life are considered as an internal motivation system for leading a well-rounded life in ACT. Clients have the option to display values that act as a framework for their actions, based on their current personal preferences (Blake Berryhill and Lechtenberg 2015, Westrup and Wright 2017, Dixon and Paliliunas 2020). ACT's approach to values is not to teach clients fundamental moral values and virtues, but to help them discover their values and set goals that are compatible with their values, which will guide them in making choices in their lives after the therapy is over (Louma et al. 2007). Upon examining the value definitions in ACT, it is evident that values play a crucial role in therapy. They serve as a guide in deciding individuals' conduct and give an intrinsic motivation.

ACT places significant emphasis clients' benefits from engaging with their values. O'Brien et al. (2008) assert that engaging with values assists clients in discerning their priorities, establishing a feeling of significance and direction, establishing both immediate and long-term objectives, confronting challenging thoughts and emotions, and recognizing the rewarding aspects of their behaviors aligned with their values. It is well acknowledged that the process of clarifying values is beneficial in assisting individuals in determining their priorities and the type of person they aspire to become in life (Westrup and Wright, 2017). Individuals who align their principles with their life goals will provide a powerful source of motivation.

Harris (2022), states that the effort to avoid unpleasant emotions prevents doing things that are valued. He also adds that creating a meaningful life is impossible if one is not ready to experience some uncomfortable emotions. He emphasizes that action should be taken despite negative emotions. For example, a young person who has played chess for many years and achieved many successes may develop a fear of failure as a result of losing in the last two tournaments and say that he does not want to participate in tournaments again. However, instead of being a prisoner of this uncomfortable feeling, he may overcome this fear when he plays repeatedly and continues with the chess playing activity he truly values. In the framework of the explanations, it can be said that a valued life opens the door to a meaningful life in one's phenomenology, rather than avoiding difficulties.

### **Issues for ACT Therapists to Consider when Working with Values**

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ACT therapists highlight the efficacy of external reinforcements up to a certain degree. They assist clients in developing self-awareness and consciously connecting with the present moment. Additionally, they facilitate behavioral changes based on clarified values and ensure the sustainability of these changes (Louma et al. 2007, Lundgren et al. 2008). Therapists practicing ACT should be mindful of specific scenarios in which they need to focus on values.

When working with values, ACT therapists should first and foremost be aware of their own personal values and be oriented towards the goals and values set by their clients, not be guided by their own values (Pearson et al. 2010). In the first stage, the ACT therapist who gains awareness of his/her own values can first explain the ACT therapy's view of values, taking into account that clients may have assumptions about values and that these

assumptions may be an obstacle when working with values, and then begin to clarify what values are and what they are not (Stoddard and Afari 2014). In terms of clarifying values, the therapist should remember that clients may have never been supported in recognizing and clarifying their values before, and that it may be difficult for clients to imagine a life with values (Pearson et al. 2010). It is essential to acknowledge that therapists should be aware that imposing a value on the client does not guarantee success in the therapeutic process, as clients are anticipated to hold diverse values (Berkout 2021). Another concern is for therapists to ascertain whether the values articulated by clients are intrinsic to their own beliefs or shaped by external influences, given that values are greatly influenced by the cultural environment in which individuals live (Pearson et al. 2010). For instance, the client's family may have advised their daughter to exercise prudence and approach things with a lighthearted attitude. The client may articulate this message, reiterated regularly by the family over a prolonged period, as if it were her own individualized principle. At this point, it is crucial for the therapist to identify the origin of the client's present values. Stoddard and Afari (2014) assert that values are subjective and that what holds significance for an individual may not hold the same importance for others in their social circle, such as their spouse, family, or colleagues. To establish such a differentiation, he asserts that the question "Would I still engage in this activity if no one witnessed or had knowledge of it?" will be instrumental. Therapists should be aware that values may arise during discussions about their clients' painful experiences, and they should develop a connection with these values even amid of the clients' anguish (Hayes and Ciarrochi 2015).

These situations that the therapist should pay attention to when working with values in ACT can be considered valid for all age groups. However, the present study provides a comprehensive overview of how to work with adolescents on values and what the therapist should be aware of when working with them.

### **Engaging in Adolescent Values Exploration in ACT**

O'Brien et al. (2008) suggest a strong correlation between awareness and youth. Consistent with this perspective, Ciarrochi et al. (2011) determined in their longitudinal research that the presence of awareness and acceptance has a beneficial impact on the growth and maturation of adolescents. Similarly, according to Goodman (2016), young people are considered beginners in their life journey compared to adults. They exhibit greater openness and enthusiasm towards learning, new ideas, and experiences. Consequently, therapists can more readily access the mind of a beginner. Although they are open to new experiences, Murrell et al. (2004) state that a large proportion of children and adolescents spend time in experiential avoidance to reduce and control pain. For example, children and adolescents may not want to go to school when they are exposed to peer bullying, or they may develop an addiction to digital gaming to avoid hearing their parents' violent arguments. Although this may prevent them from being bullied or hearing their parents' arguments in the short term, it may prevent them from engaging in meaningful and value-oriented behaviors. In short, adolescents need a branch to hold on to in the face of difficulties. Based on ACT's definition of values, the adolescent will choose the branch to hold on to by holding on to branches with solid roots within themselves, rather than waiting for someone else to extend them. Similarly, Samuel et al. (2023) argue that a focus on clarifying personal values provides a natural strength for adolescents who face intense pressure to succeed.

Although ACT's practices of acceptance, awareness, and value clarification are appropriate for working with young people (O'Brien et al. 2008), sometimes understanding abstract concepts may require experiential exercises and metaphors (Murrell et al. 2004). Wilson and Murrell (2004) state that therapists can explore adolescents' values with the question "In a world where you could choose your life to be about something, what would you choose?". In order to help them find the answer to this question, they use writing exercises, and visual materials and repeatedly emphasize the question to help them discover what is important to them. How to study values in adolescents in ACT will be explained in two sub-headings: Teaching the process of helping adolescents recognize their values using ACT steps and the characteristics of values in ACT.

### **Teaching the Process of Helping Adolescents Recognize Their Values Using ACT Steps**

The process of valuing, as taught utilizing ACT techniques, has four parts (Dahl et al. 2009). The phases are outlined as follows:

1. Clarifying the values,
2. Analyzing the role of the clarified value,
3. Establishing goals that align with the clarified value,
4. Ultimately assessing the goal and sustaining goal-oriented behaviors.

The four processes outlined by Dahl et al. are elucidated below, using examples from clients studied in Turkish culture (Table 1), to illustrate the importance of helping.

<b>Table 1. Stages of the valuation process</b>				
<b>Stages of the valuation process</b>	<b>The initial stage: "Clarification of values"</b>	<b>The second stage: "Analyzing the role of the clarified value"</b>	<b>The third stage: "Establishing goals that align with the clarified value"</b>	<b>The four stage: "Assessing the goal and sustaining goal-oriented behaviors"</b>
Case Example 1:	Assisting elderly family members and parents	When the client provides assistance, he/she receives unrestricted digital gaming privileges for the duration of the weekend	The client's objective is to assist his/her father in transporting firewood during the weekend / The client's objective is to assist his or her granddad in planting saplings.	The client elects to assist his/her father in transporting firewood, on the assumption that he/she will receive the digital game directly from his/her father
Case Example 2:	Assisting Elderly Family Members and Parents	Assisting the family elders and parents allows them to experience less fatigue, have opportunities for rest, and ensures client satisfaction	The client's objective is to organize the house and sanitize the kitchen before her mother's return from work, in order to provide her with an opportunity to relax / The client's objective is to assist her granny with grocery shopping	The client has made the decision to organize and clean the house in order to provide a peaceful and relaxing environment for her mother, who works long hours and often comes home exhausted

The two scenarios presented in Table 1 demonstrate the potential for elucidating shared values. However, while considering the role of values, it becomes apparent that the function of common values varies. Upon evaluating the function of the clarified value in the initial scenario, the client asserts that by assisting his family with tasks, he/she acquires the privilege to engage in unrestricted digital gaming during the weekend. In this scenario, it can be argued that the client's assistance is motivated by the desire to earn the privilege to engage in recreational activities, rather than being an altruistic gesture. In the second scenario, during the goal review process, the client is anticipated to select the goal that aligns best with their personal values from the goals they have established in line with the principle of assisting others. Once the second client expresses their want to assist their mother with household chores, the therapist's role would involve aiding the client in translating this objective into actionable steps and recognizing its alignment with their values.

Establishing clear values can provide challenges, particularly when working with adolescent clients. To optimize this process, utilizing Harris's (2022) compilation of sample questions, which aim to elucidate values, can be illuminating. Table 2 provides a list of sample categories and corresponding questions.

Upon analyzing the question categories, doing value clarification studies with adolescents would also enhance the establishing therapeutic relationship through the interest, hobbies, and entertainment categories. The second step, known as the category of self-discovery, is believed to aid in identifying one's true self, particularly in adolescents who often receive guidance from adults. When examining the role change category working with adolescents, it becomes apparent that adolescents have internal and external conflicts with adults and friends. During the interviews conducted by the first author in school settings, it was observed that students expressed particularly severe criticism towards their parents. In this scenario, individuals might be open to discussing their plans and actions upon realizing their transition into a position of authority. Although teenagers may experience problems with their environment, it is noted that they often internalize these conflicts with great intensity. Adolescents may engage in self-criticism using phrases such as "I am unintelligent, inept, unsuccessful, I am incapable of achieving anything, I am devoid of worth, etc." The questions in the category of self-evaluation at these periods are believed to aid in identifying one's core values by uncovering instances when they are most prominent. The indicated questions may help clarifying values, and, examples of exercises, activities, and assessment methodologies that can be widely employed to concretize and clarify values are presented below.

<b>Table 2. Question categories and questions that are useful in the clarification of values.</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Questions that Help in the Clarification of Values</b>
Interest, Hobbies, and Entertainment Being yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities do you engage in for enjoyment or leisure?</li> <li>• What are your preferences?</li> <li>• What are your preferences in terms of movies, music, comics, and games?</li> <li>• What activities do you enjoy engaging in during holidays?</li> </ul> <p>As you go on the journey of exploring your values,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What aspects do you come to like about this process?</li> <li>• What are your preferred surroundings while engaging in this activity?</li> </ul> <p>questions can be asked.</p>
Being yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When do you experience a sense of self? With whom are you in the company of? What is your current activity?</li> <li>• What attributes do you exhibit when you are being authentic?</li> <li>• In a self-recorded video, what visual and auditory elements would be present?</li> <li>• What do you desire to have in your presence when you are in your true state?</li> <li>• How do you behave towards others whom you hold dear when you are being authentic?</li> <li>• With whom is it most effortless to be authentic? What is the process behind that occurrence? What actions does that individual do to facilitate your ability to express your true self more effortlessly?</li> <li>• What emotions do you experience when you are being authentic?</li> </ul>
Role reversal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe an individual whose behavior provoked a strong sense of anger within you. What were the verbal and non-verbal actions of the individual? What was your emotional response to that?</li> <li>• Assuming a role reversal scenario, if you were to occupy the position of your parent, teacher, or friend, what specific changes would you make in terms of your words and actions compared to their approach? If you were in their position, what changes would you do compared to your current actions?</li> </ul>
Category of self-judgement	<p>If the client is excessively criticizing their own character, actions, and behavior;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One must ask whether self-flagellation is an effective method for behavioral change. After all, if criticizing oneself were truly effective, one would have achieved perfection by now.</li> <li>• Is it possible for us to choose an alternative route?</li> <li>• Let us temporarily set aside the act of evaluating ourselves and proceed with an examination.</li> <li>• If you were not exhibiting such behavior, engaging in these actions, or treating yourself and others in this manner... what would you choose to be, do, and how would you choose to treat yourself and others instead?</li> <li>• Have you ever experienced a period in your life where you genuinely embodied the qualities and characteristics that you aspired to possess? If the answer is positive, kindly include details including the specific time, location, individuals involved, and activities undertaken.</li> </ul>

According to Hayes and Ciarrochi (2015), the "chat, appreciate" value exercise is suggested as a way to define values with young individuals. The activity comprises a set of 32 discussion cards, each with questions designed to elucidate one's values. Utilizing question cards, such as "What do you believe to be the genuine purpose of life?" How would you utilize your wealth if you were rich? In order to determine how the young client would like to be remembered, a random selection of 10-12 cards is placed on the table. Through conversation and discussion, the values associated with each card are explored. It is important to note that if the client is not forthcoming or if it would be advantageous for the therapist to be more forthcoming, there is no negative consequence in the therapist responding to the conversation cards.

An additional activity for elucidating values is the activity known as "Grouping the value cards" (Hayes and Ciarrochi 2015). This activity encompasses ideals that will provide guidance to young individuals across four distinct areas: "self-care", "interpersonal connections", "personal growth", and "finding purpose in challenging situations". The therapist helps the client convert the card selected by the youth into a behavior that aligns with their own values. The adolescent is instructed to categorize the cards as either of low importance, moderate importance, or high importance, based on their own interpretation and assessment of the messages written on

the cards. The young individual is requested to select five cards from the deck labeled "very important at present." During the process, the rationale behind selecting those five values is deliberated.

Another alternative is to collaborate with clients by utilizing the Bull's-Eye Values Survey, as proposed by Lundgren et al. in 2012. Within this framework, a work/education domain that embodies the values held by clients in relation to the advancement of their educational and professional objectives. Furthermore, there is a recreational area that dictates the specific pursuits and pastimes one engages in during their leisure time. Another domain is the realm of relationships, which encompasses the degree of intimacy in social bonds with family, friends, and society. The personal development/health area encompasses various factors that can impact spiritual life, including religion, personal spirituality expressions, exercise, nutrition, and substance/alcohol/smoking use. Clients are asked to assess their alignment with their values in these four areas by marking their position on a visual Bull's-Eye scale (Reilly et al. 2019). After completing the marking process, clients are anticipated to assess the extent to which they align their lives with their own beliefs.

The Valued Living Questionnaire (Wilson et al. 2010) utilizes assessment techniques to evaluate clients' values in ten specific areas: physical self-care, spirituality, citizenship, education, recreation, work, friendship, marriage or couple relationships, parenting, and family (excluding couple relationships and parenting). Individuals are requested to utilize a 10-point scale to evaluate the significance of each domain and the degree to which they have consistently adhered to these domains in the previous week. This process aids in actively cultivating individuals' awareness of the role of values in their lives (Reilly et al. 2019).

Adolescents who are seeking to plan their future and navigate a new path in their lives are said to require compasses. Considering that these compasses are represented as ACT values, employing strategies that assist in clarifying values during the initial phase will help teenagers map their path, ultimately clarifying their values. According to Hayes and Ciarrochi (2015), teenagers struggle to discuss topics concerning values. They tend to either provide responses that they think adults will approve of or remain indifferent and not answer at all. The strategies employed mitigate these two scenarios and facilitate adolescents in recognizing, clarifying, and elucidating their own values. From the therapist's standpoint, it may be argued that understanding the following traits is crucial for therapists to effectively employ techniques and address values in therapy, hence enhancing the therapeutic process.

### **Characteristics of Values in ACT**

The Hayes and Ciarrochi (2015) model proposes a framework that defines the skills of DNA-V (Discover-Noticer-Advisor-Values) in terms of values. The aim is to help young individuals discover their own routes and promptly connect with their values, rather than leading a purposeless and unfulfilling existence. This model clarifies values by highlighting their attributes of transformative impact, selectability, action-oriented quality, non-reliance on outcomes or objectives, construction through interactions with language and the external environment, as well as their inherent traits of adaptability, dynamism, and intrinsic reinforcement. Within the scope of the related model (Hayes and Ciarrochi 2015), these characteristics of values are explained below with examples from adolescent clients based on the authors' counseling examples.

Values have been chosen. Values are explained through inquiries such as "What is beneficial in your life?" or "What do I prioritize?" When posed to an adolescent client from Turkish culture, inquiries of this nature may elicit responses such as "My life lacks any meaningful purpose," "My family's concerns outweigh my own," or "All I desire is solitude in my room with my phone, is that too unreasonable?" Adolescents frequently experience perplexity when it comes to determining the relative importance of different values.

Value refers to the inherent worth or importance of an action. In this paradigm, values are metaphorically compared to a compass direction. Due to the Earth's spherical shape, it is impossible to physically reach the west no matter how far we go in that direction. Similarly, while we can align our actions with our values, it is impossible to attain them fully. Furthermore, should we lose our way while traveling westward, we can readjust our course and resume heading in the same direction. Similarly, if we occasionally deviate from our moral principles, we possess the capacity to realign ourselves with those values once more. Using this concept as an example, an adolescent may prioritize activities such as reading books and playing volleyball with his buddies. The adolescent's decision to abstain from reading books and playing volleyball throughout the year of exam preparation does not indicate a complete abandonment of his ideals. Once the period of intense exams is concluded, the adolescent can resume his activities of studying and engaging in volleyball.

Value is not a final result. This paradigm emphasizes that values are intrinsically linked to the individual and not dependent on external expectations. For instance, expressing "I value my friends" can be seen as a value, yet



expressing "I desire to receive care from my friends" cannot be considered a value. According to the statement, receiving care from friends is impossible, and it is solely the individual's duty to behave in a manner that warrants care

Value is not an objective. The authors (Luoma et al. 2007, Lundgren et al. 2009) have extensively highlighted this particular aspect of the model, which states that objectives are distinct from values in that they are more specific and attainable. Goals are attainable objectives that may be crossed off one's agenda once accomplished, whereas values are enduring principles that cannot be permanently attained. For instance, the predicament of successfully completing the university entrance exam that adolescents encounter can be characterized as an objective rather than a value. Passing the university exam can be seen as an attainable outcome for individuals who value learning and achievement. However, the drive to accomplish and learn is better seen as an ongoing process.

Values are shaped and organized through the use of language and interactions with the surrounding environment. When working on values with adolescents, the client should be supported to discover their values through their own experiences, taking into account that the answer received when adolescents are asked what is important to them may not be the "right" answer, and that adolescents may not know what is meaningful to them not three years but even three months later. For example, a student who is in the process of choosing a high school may be influenced by his/her close friend and may express that he/she wants to live freely in a high school away from his/her family and that freedom is an essential value for him/her. When working with this client, without accepting that the need to be free is the absolute truth, the adolescent's experiences and expectations from life can be asked repeatedly to help them discover their own value language.

Values are articulated in a flexible manner. The relevant model also emphasizes that it is futile for young individuals to articulate values that they do not act upon. Therefore the therapist should motivate the client to act upon their values or assist them in identifying other values they may act upon. For instance, if a client expresses affection for pets but avoids interacting with cats or dogs, they can be assisted in engaging with animals or exploring other values that align with their preferences.

Values are subject to change or variation. According to this paradigm, it asserts that the manner in which values are articulated can undergo transformation as individuals progress and acquire knowledge via their experiences. For instance, an adolescent seeking counseling may prioritize engaging in artistic activities during middle school, but may shift their preference towards sports during high school. While the specific areas that the student values may vary, it is evident that the shared aspect in their preferences, the importance of "being active," remains consistent.

Values possess an inherent quality of providing reinforcement. Values are not behaviors carried out due to societal influence, but activities undertaken because they hold personal significance and significance to the individual. During the counseling process with adolescents, there was an example of an adolescent who was repeatedly told by his family to smile at people he/she met. At first, he/she followed this instruction as a rule. However, he eventually recognized that smiling improved his relationships with others and made him feel better than before. As a result, "liking to smile" became a personal value for him, rather than something he learned from his family.

When assessing the value of the above characteristics in the context of ACT, it is crucial for the therapist to possess a thorough understanding of the developmental traits specific to adolescent. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that adolescents' interests may fluctuate, exhibit goal-oriented behavior, hold divergent and extreme views compared to the therapist, and struggle with articulating values as actionable behaviors.

According to Hayes and Ciarrochi (2015), therapists should deeply understand the attributes of values while dealing with adolescents. They should also reframe the notion of success and how it is defined for adolescents, placing greater emphasis on living a life aligned with one's values rather than solely focusing on outcomes. ACT aims to foster a purposeful and value-driven life, rather than promoting a competitive atmosphere solely focused on attaining specific success-oriented objectives. By prioritizing their values and establishing meaningful goals aligning with them, adolescents are provided with a sense of purpose and motivation to engage in learning (Roşeanu 2023, Samuel et al. 2023). When asked about successful people, teens often mention famous football players, singers, artists, or YouTubers. Similarly, when asked to define their own success, they tend to mention achievements such as obtaining high scores in standardized exams, receiving recognition, passing their classes, or pursuing careers as football players, actors, or YouTubers. All answers prioritize outcomes over the process. When analyzing the lives of adolescents in this environment, it is evident that they exhibit goal-oriented behavior. During classroom guidance activities at schools, when questioned about their career interests, it is

frequently observed that individuals tend to prioritize professions that offer substantial financial rewards, wealth accumulation, and opportunities for acquiring power. Nevertheless, living a purposeful life guided by values rather than objectives not only brings about a feeling of happiness and energy, but also allows for the realization that life may be fulfilling and significant even in the face of adversity (Harris 2022). Given the presence of various stressors and anxiety-inducing variables in the lives of teenagers, it is hypothesized that adolescents would require values that provide significance and guidance to their lives. Values play a vital role in ACT therapy, serving as a guiding force for clients' lives.

## Conclusion

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Considering the development of adolescents, it becomes evident that they are persons who possess a future-oriented mindset, driven by the desire to pursue a purposeful existence. Families, schools, and the environment shape individuals' aspirations, such as pursuing education, starting a family life, securing employment, and finding their position in society. During adolescence, individuals undergo significant development in various aspects of their lives, including their professional, career, social, physical, and cognitive development. It is believed that during this period, people need guidance from their values to choose what is important to them and to maintain high levels of motivation.

During the course of development, adolescents may experience a range of events and situations at both small-scale (micro) and large-scale (macro) levels. Some examples of these challenges include managing developmental challenges, making informed judgments about the future, forming intimate connections with others, and achieving success in high-stakes tests. Over the past few years, global catastrophes such as epidemics, disasters, conflicts, and economic challenges have become matters of direct or indirect concern for individuals. The need for individuals to comprehend the role of values in their lives, to recognize the consequences of these circumstances, arrange their lives based on these events, or make future decisions considering these events, appears to be fulfilled through the value-oriented assistance provided by ACT. This therapy approach that has emerged in recent years.

ACT, a relatively new approach in psychology, is known for its emphasis on values and effectiveness in providing psychological help to adolescents. Compared to other third wave approaches, ACT has been found to primarily impact mental disorders in adult and young age groups, according to research studies. Upon analyzing more recent psychoeducational studies, it is observed that they also have a constructive impact on positive and forward-thinking behaviors in younger age cohorts. Values, the fundamental elements of psychological flexibility, are considered to be a sign of mental health. They are seen as meaningful sources that influence all aspects of life and are included in the ACT approach. The therapist incorporates values into the counseling process by clarifying them in the client's life, facilitating their awareness, and respecting cultural nuances. Values are crucial in reinforcing healthy behaviors, guiding decision-making, and pursuing a purposeful existence by actualizing one's own identity. When working with adolescents on values, it is suitable for ACT to assist them in recognizing, embracing, and clarifying their values. Adolescents can derive more significant advantages from this methodical and organized approach, which includes a variety of activities and simulations, in contrast to other age groups.

Considering Turkish teenage clients' value tendencies and the implementation process of the ACT approach when working with adolescents, it becomes evident that this approach is culturally adaptive. While professional counseling emphasizes values, it is important to stress that it also includes an educational process that helps adolescents maintain and apply these values in their own lives. Additionally, question lists, evaluation tools, and activities are available to aid adolescents in their research on various aspects of life, thereby providing help in this endeavor. Furthermore, it is recognized that the therapist's role in adapting to these value attributes is particularly emphasized when addressing values in ACT. These attributes include the ability to make choices, being focused on taking action, being a continuous process rather than a final outcome, being subjective and adaptable, and having a dynamic nature. The therapist addresses each value characteristic, adapting to Turkish culture to meet the specific needs of adolescent clients. These needs include academic tasks and exam preparation, prioritizing art and sports, fostering peer and parental relationships, enhancing communication skills, and planning leisure activities. Studying the values of adolescents is believed to be beneficial in meeting their developmental needs and understanding the impact of positive and bad events and experiences in their immediate and distant surroundings, as highlighted in the introduction.

The literature emphasizes the significance of understanding the developmental characteristics of this stage while working with adolescents, with a focus on values. Given the potential conflicts that teenagers may encounter internally and externally, it is believed that understanding and addressing the value traits throughout the value

clarification process may necessitate heightened sensitivity. Within this framework, it is believed that school counselors who work with adolescents in educational settings can offer advice to their young clients by utilizing value definition exercises in the initial phase and by assisting in the development of a behavior checklist that align with their values in the subsequent period. Furthermore, when dealing with adolescents, there is typically a strong emphasis on prioritizing the outcome as the objective and seeing the action as the underlying worth. Hence, it is crucial to reiterate to adolescents that they bear the responsibility for the process while working with them, and to underscore that those who exert their utmost effort in the process can achieve success, even if the outcome does not align with their desires. In a system where the achievement standards for teenagers are mostly based on exam results, it is believed to be crucial to prioritize instilling awareness of values and emphasizing success in the overall process with adolescents. Therefore, within a goal-oriented exam system, students will be able to prepare for the future in a process-oriented manner by implementing ACT's value study strategy. In addition, considering that ACT can be useful in clinical examples such as paranoid beliefs and anxiety in a value-based manner (Bloy et al. 2011), it may be helpful to include the needs of adolescents within the scope of mental disorders. Linking initiatives in this direction with primary, secondary and tertiary prevention plans may also carry out studies in environments where adolescents are present beyond being crisis-oriented. In future research, it is recommended to conduct quantitative studies on the variables that influence adolescents' values by using scales such as the 'Valuing Questionnaire,' adapted into Turkish by Aydın and Aydın (2017), which contribute to clarifying values.

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