

The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire for Substance Abuse

Do you sometimes drink to forget painful memories or emotions? Do you keep making promises to quit using drugs, but struggle with cravings and urges to use them?

Presented here is a measure of psychological flexibility for thoughts and feelings about substance use: The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire for Substance Abuse (AAQ-SA; Luoma, Drake, Kohlenberg, & Hayes, 2011).

Based on the same core concepts from the original AAQ (Hayes et al., 2004), the AAQ-SA is intended to help you track how the skills you've been learning in *A Liberated Mind* are impacting your psychological flexibility when it comes to your history with drugs and alcohol. If you're someone that has struggled to reduce or stop using drugs or alcohol before, you know how sticky and persistent cravings can be. You know that thoughts and feelings about your substance use can be sometimes difficult to accept. You know that talking about your drug or alcohol habit can be a painful experience.

As you learn to apply your new ACT skills to your life, you may find that working with thoughts, feelings, urges, and/or cravings related to substances to be especially challenging. Remember that your goal is not to score a "perfect" 0, but to do the best you can. Remember to seek ongoing professional help for addiction related problems if it begins to severely impact your life.

My Flexibility Scores

Question	Never True - Always True						
I can do things that are important to me even when I'm feeling urges to use substances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My urges and cravings to use get in the way of my success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I have urges to use substances, then I am a substance abuser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to achieve my sobriety goals, even if I am uncertain that I can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I work towards things I value, even though at times I feel cravings to use substances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am not very aware of what occurs around me when I am thinking of using substances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can set a course in my life and stick to it, even if I have doubts about my sobriety.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Memories of my substance abuse history make it difficult for me to live a life that I would value.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I get bored working toward my recovery, I can still take the steps necessary to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I feel uncertain about my recovery, I can still make a choice and take action.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I promised to do something, I'll do it, even if later I don't feel like it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Having some worries about substance use will not prevent me from living a fulfilling life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would rather achieve my goals than avoid thoughts and feelings about substances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

My Flexibility Scores

Urges and cravings cause problems in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm afraid of my positive feelings about a substance I've abused.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I think of substance use my mind is often on "automatic pilot", not fully involved in what I am doing in the moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I worry about not being able to control my urges and cravings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feeling sad or anxious makes me want to use substance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To score the AAQ-SA, you will add up your scores on each item. For the following items, you should "reverse score" them, so a 7 becomes a 1, a 6 becomes a 2, etc., before adding them to your total: 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. The higher your total score, the less psychological flexibility you currently have with regard to substance use. The lower your score, the more psychological flexibility you are demonstrating.

References

- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., Wilson, K. G., Bissett, R. T., Pistorello, J., Toarmino, D., Polusny, M., A., Dykstra, T. A., Batten, S. V., Bergan, J., Stewart, S. H., Zvolensky, M. J., Eifert, G. H., Bond, F. W., Forsyth J. P., Karekla, M., & McCurry, S. M. (2004). Measuring experiential avoidance: A preliminary test of a working model. *The Psychological Record*, 54, 553-578.
- Luoma, J. Drake, C.E., Kohlenberg, B.S., & Hayes, S.C. (2011). Substance abuse and psychological flexibility: The development of a new measure. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 19(1), 3-13.