

# 2026 Combined Pain Care Skills & Substance Use Disorder Training

## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Techniques to Treat Chronic Pain

**Presented by:** LCDR John Mallory  
**Offered:** 12 August 2026 0830-1130 AM ET  
**Location:** ZoomGov

**Description:** Pain is a complex sensory, emotional, and cognitive experience that communicates “something is wrong” such as an injury or infection. Overtime, this process can persist despite sufficient resolution of the initial medical condition, and pain signals can progress from a symptom to a distinct condition that interferes with functioning and quality of life. There are already multiple pharmacological, surgical, and mechanical interventions used to treat patients diagnosed with pain-related conditions. This workshop intends to introduce Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) techniques as a behavioral treatment modality which can augment or substitute traditional pain treatment.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define “chronic pain” and differentiate from acute pain
2. Describe the relationship between psychological factors and chronic pain
3. Provide an overview of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and philosophical foundation within radical behaviorism
4. Understand the 6 Core Processes of ACT
5. Understand how ACT and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) are distinct and complementary
6. Learn specific ACT interventions to treat Chronic Pain

**12 August 2026; 0830-1130 AM ET**

- 0830-0900 Introduction and overview of Chronic Pain
- I. Understand theories of Pain
  - II. Differentiate Acute Pain from Chronic Pain
  - III. Explore relationship between Psychological factors and pain
- 0900-1015 Introduction to Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- I. Behaviorism and Radical behaviorism
  - II. The 6 Core Processes of ACT
    - a. Defusion
    - b. Acceptance
    - c. Flexible Attention to the Present Moment
    - d. Self-As-Context
    - e. Values
    - f. Committed Action
  - III. Mindfulness as a tool, not a theoretical orientation
  - IV. Psychological Flexibility, Control, and the “Hexaflex”
  - V. Similarities and differences between ACT and CBT
- 1015-1030 ----- BREAK -----
- 1030-1120 Implementation of ACT techniques for chronic pain
- I. Utilizing ACT Core Processes with Pain
    - a. Reframing the clinical goal
    - b. Control Agenda and Creative Hopelessness
  - II. Specific Interventions
    - a. Intake Information
    - b. Values Questionnaires
    - c. Relaxation Strategies
    - d. Meditations
    - e. Phone Apps
  - III. Integrating ACT and CBT Techniques
    - a. Pacing (time or pain)
    - b. Behavioral Activation (schedule and accountability buddy)
  - IV. Individual vs Group Settings
- 1120-1130 Final thoughts, Q&A, and wrap-up