

*Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Pr*ACT*ical Takeaways for Stroke Survivors Returning to Work*

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Disclaimer: The funders take no responsibility for the views presented

Disclosure Statement

There are **no** conflicts of interest to declare

The WAterS2 project I will briefly overview is funded by

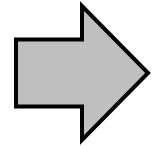
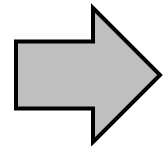
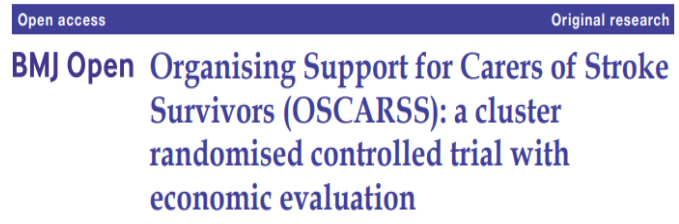
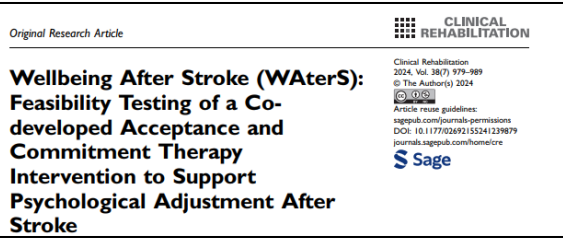




Who am I?

Applied researcher working in stroke > 15 years

Aim to improve long-term support and psychological wellbeing





Wellbeing After Stroke - 2 (WATERs-2)

Upskilling a workforce to deliver inclusive, accessible psychological support after stroke



<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/waters2/>

Findings from earlier research (WAteRS1)

**Wellbeing After Stroke
(WAteRS)**

Report on research study findings

February 2023

Written with the help of stroke [survivors](#)




YouTube





<https://www.youtube.com/@watersstudy>

Original Research Article

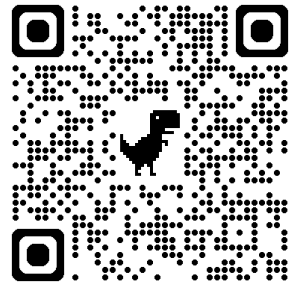
**Wellbeing After Stroke (WAteRS):
Feasibility Testing of a Co-
developed Acceptance and
Commitment Therapy
Intervention to Support
Psychological Adjustment After
Stroke**

 **CLINICAL
REHABILITATION**

Clinical Rehabilitation
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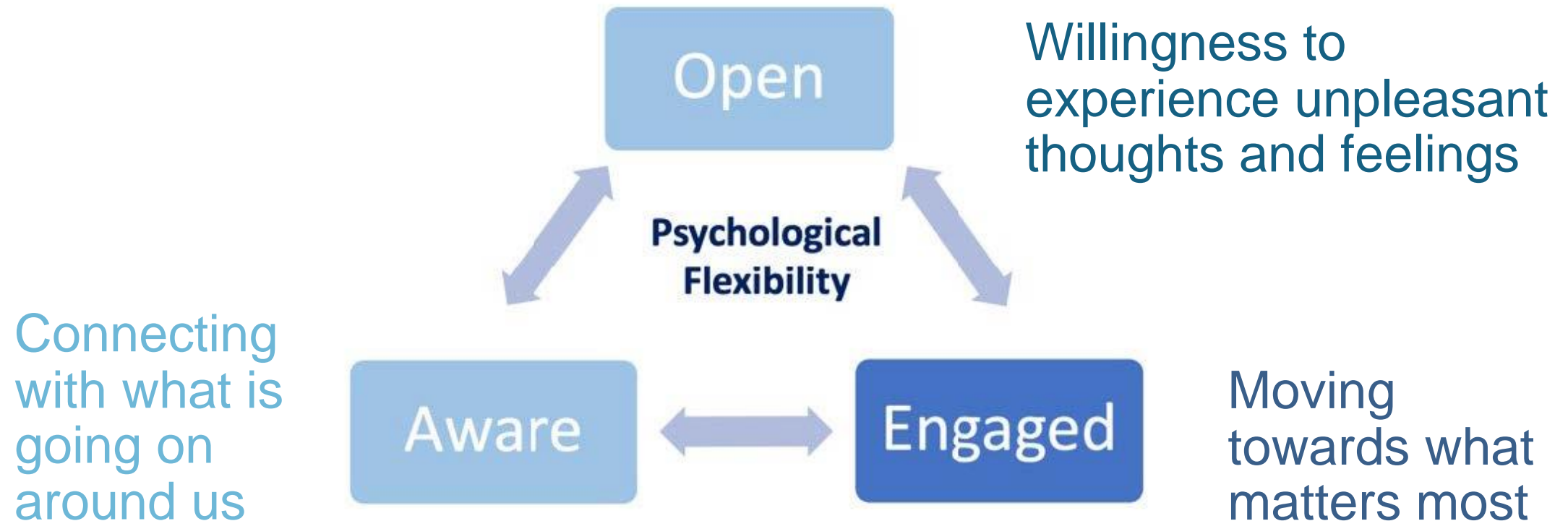
DOI: [10.1177/02692155241239879](https://doi.org/10.1177/02692155241239879)



“If it wasn’t for the WAteRS study, I don’t know where I would be ... mentally or physically”.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Psychological 'Flexibility' → Adjustment




Research on return to work

[Home](#) > [Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation](#) > [Article](#)

Development of a Programme Theory for Early Intervention Vocational Rehabilitation: A Realist Literature Review

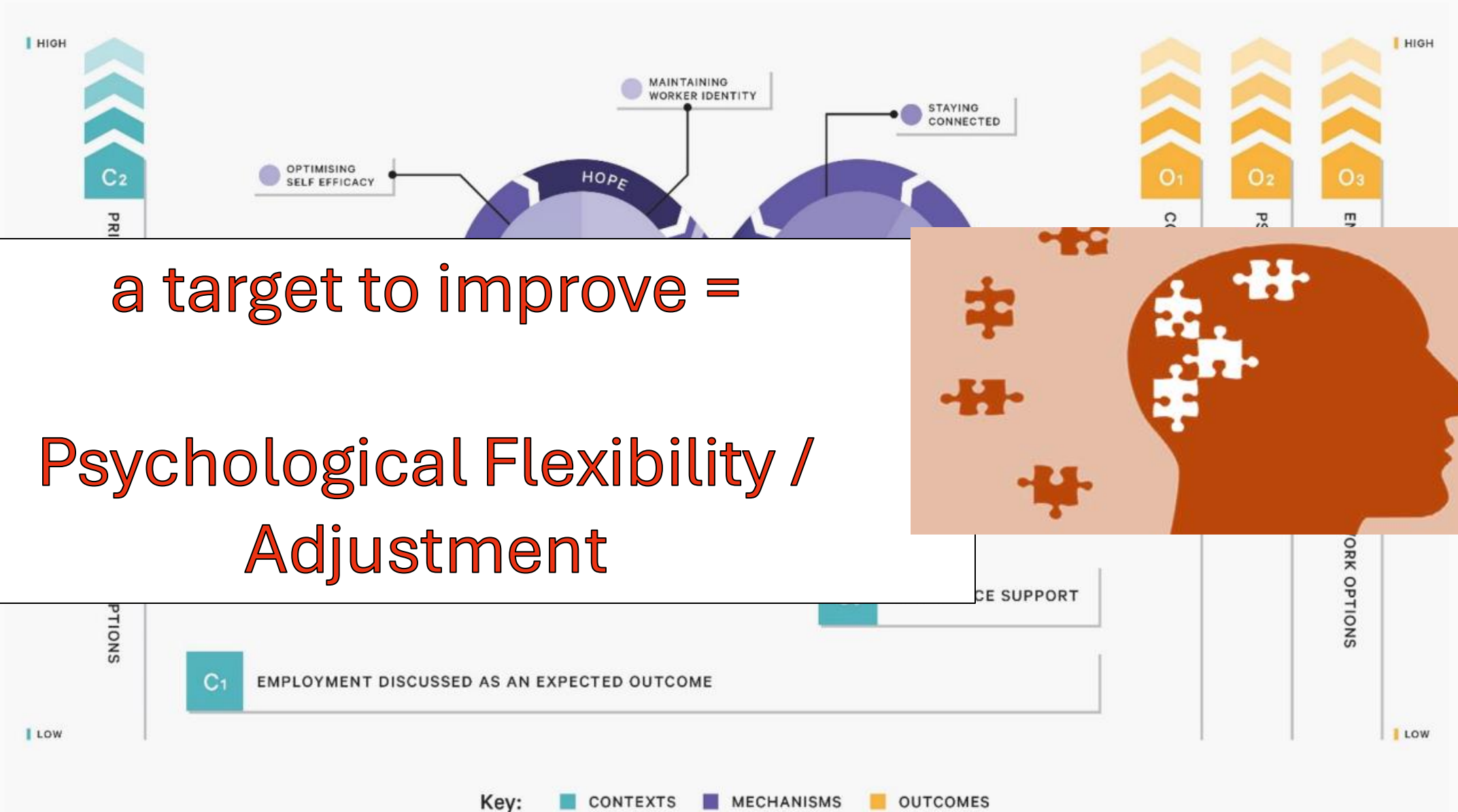
Published: 15 September 2021

Volume 31, pages 730–743, (2021) [Cite this article](#)

[Jennifer A. Dunn](#) , [Jonathan J. Hackney](#), [Rachelle A. Martin](#), [Donna Tietjens](#), [Timothy Young](#), [John A. Bourke](#), [Deborah L. Snell](#), [Joanne L. Nunnerley](#), [Andrew Hall](#) & [Sarah Derrett](#)

Return to work: What's important in rehabilitation and how it might work

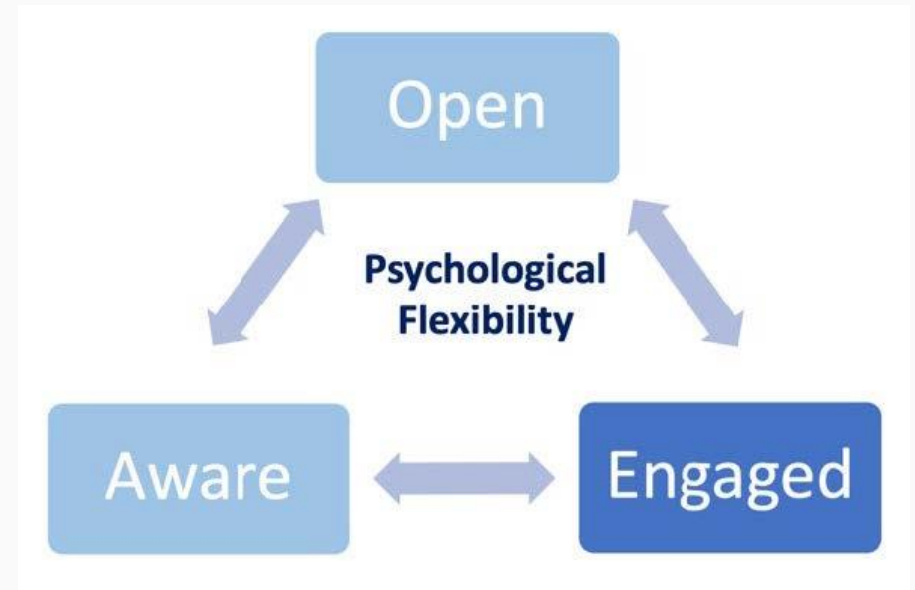
Research on return to work



a target to improve =

Psychological Flexibility /
Adjustment

Practical Takeaways for Stroke Survivors Returning to Work



'Engaged' - Values



Goals



Habits



Values

Values – for work?

Thinking this can help:

“I choose to be _____

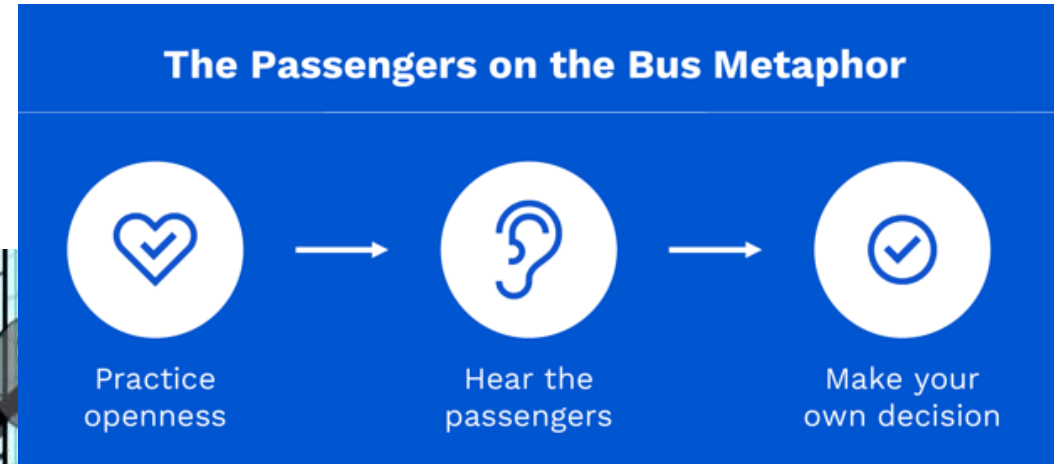
- **Independent**
- **Honest**
- **Reliable**

<https://www.valuescardsort.com/index.html>






'Open' – Cognitive Defusion


You are not your thoughts




‘Open’ – Cognitive Defusion

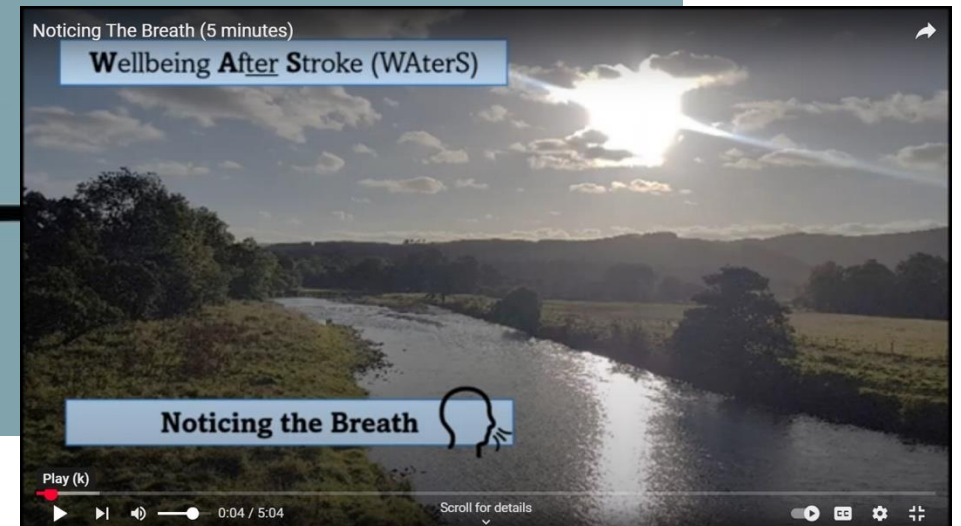
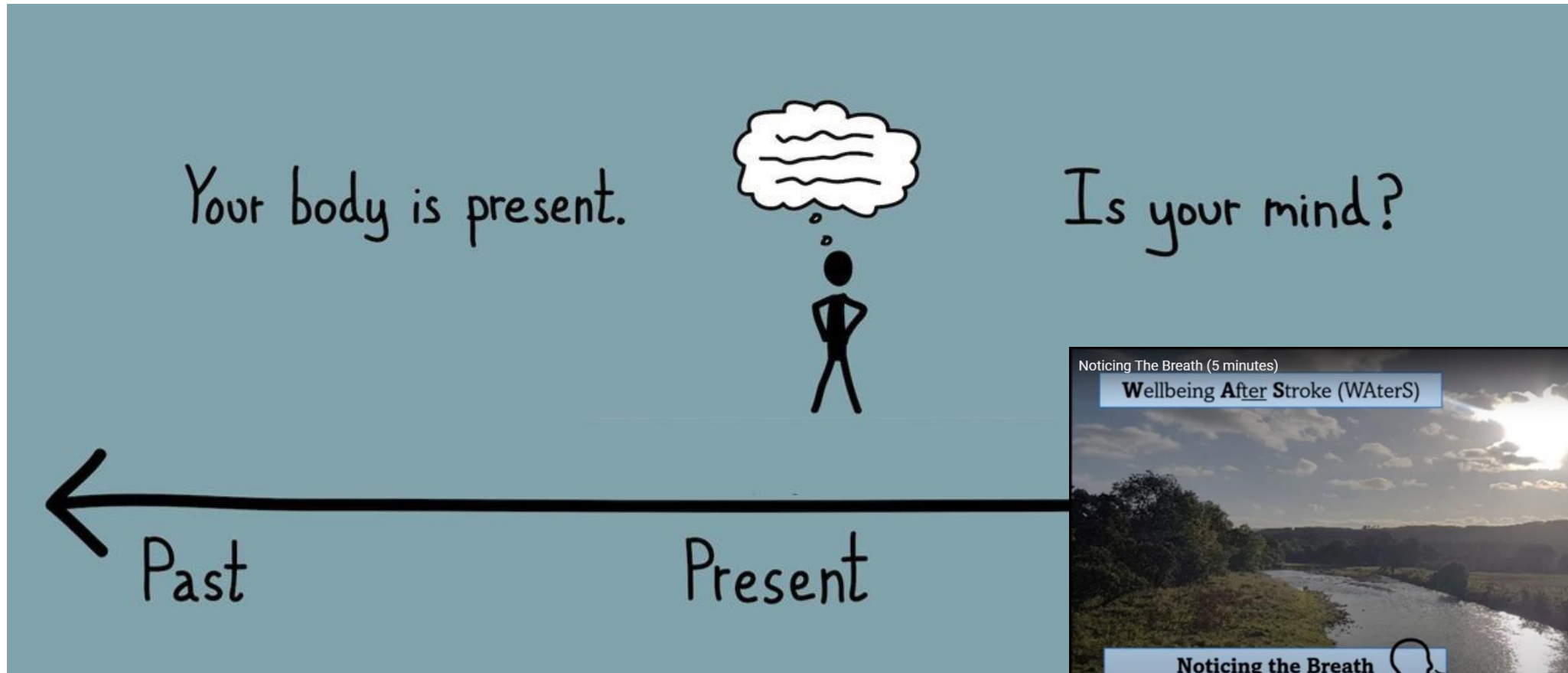
-  *“People won’t believe I’m struggling.”*
-  *“I’ll never be as sharp as I used to be.”*
-  *“If I ask for accommodations, they’ll think I’m lazy.”*

‘Open’ – Cognitive Defusion

 ***“I notice I’m having the thought that I’m not capable anymore. But my skills and experience still matter.”***

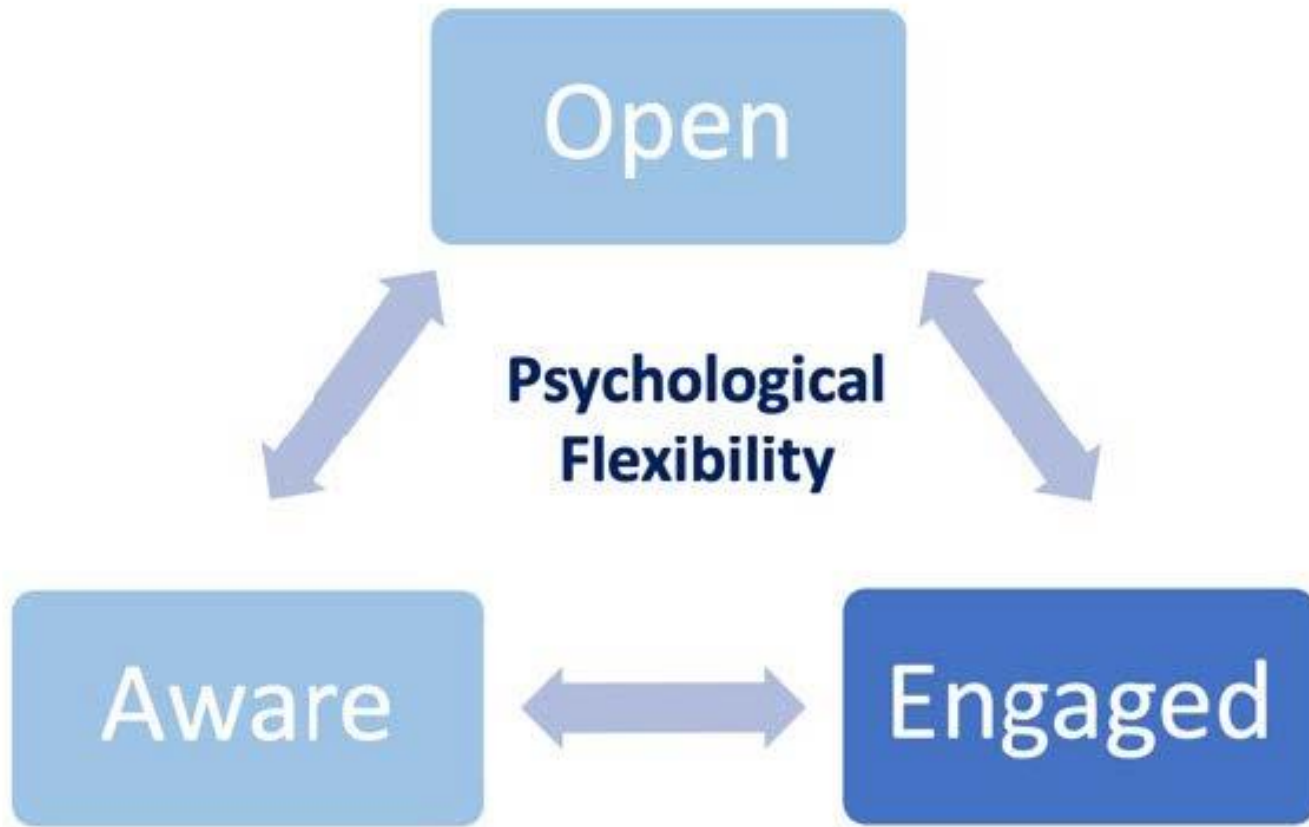
 ***“I’m noticing anxiety about asking for accommodations, but I deserve to work in a way that supports me.”***

'Aware' – mindful noticing / slowing down



<https://www.youtube.com/@watersstudy>

How could these ACT 'tools' (and others) help?



**Advocate for
adjustments**

Research on return to work

PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The RETurn to work After stroke (RETAKE) trial: Findings from a mixed-methods process evaluation of the Early Stroke Specialist Vocational Rehabilitation (ESSVR) intervention

David James Clarke¹, Katie Powers², Diane Trusson², Kristelle Craven², Julie Phillips², Jain Holmes², Christopher McKeivitt³, Audrey Bowen⁴, Caroline Leigh Watkins⁵, Amanda J. Farrin⁶, Alexandra Wright-Hughes⁶, Tracey Sach⁷, Rachel Chambers³, Kate Radford^{2*}

International Journal of Stroke

Return to work after young stroke: A systematic review

[Jodi D. Edwards](#), [Arunima Kapoor](#), [...], and [Richard H. Swartz](#) ✉ (+1) [View all authors](#)

[Volume 13, Issue 3](#) | <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747493017743059>

 PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Return to Work after a Stroke in Working Age Persons; A Six-Year Follow Up

Emma Westerlind*, **Hanna C. Persson**, **Katharina S. Sunnerhagen**

Department of Clinical Neuroscience and Rehabilitation, Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

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HOLD
ON TO
HOPE

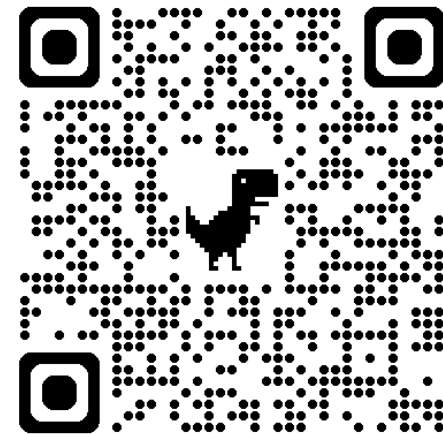
Find out more about ACT

Russ Harris YouTube channel short videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-sMFszAaa7C9poytIAmBvA/videos>



contextualscience.org/act



Questions? More about WATERs



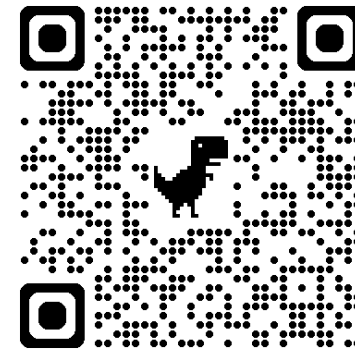
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