



# **ACT Values Map (ND-Adapted)**

**A low-demand meaning and motivation tool**

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## **Important note**

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

## Clinical purpose

To help ND clients:

- access values **without pressure to act**
- reconnect to meaning during low motivation or burnout
- reduce shame linked to “not following through”
- orient behaviour gently over time
- distinguish values from expectations and rules

This map supports **choice and agency**, not compliance.

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## When to use

- Low motivation, avoidance, or “stuckness”
  - Burnout or recovery phases
  - RSD-related disengagement
  - Values work that previously felt overwhelming
  - ACT-informed work where pacing matters
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## When *not* to use

- During acute dysregulation or shutdown
  - When the client is seeking concrete problem-solving
  - If values language is currently triggering (return later)
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## Key ND adaptations (important)

Traditional ACT values work often assumes:

- stable capacity
- consistent access to motivation
- linear follow-through

This adaptation:

- treats motivation as **state-dependent**
  - removes pressure to “live your values”
  - allows values to be **quiet, partial, or paused**
  - emphasises **direction over action**
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## Practitioner stance

- Keep this exploratory, not evaluative
  - Avoid turning values into goals
  - Normalise fluctuating access
  - Track nervous-system response to the exercise
  - Stop if shame or urgency rises
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## Opening framing (client-facing)

This isn't about what you *should* do or who you *should* be.  
It's about noticing what matters to you... even if you can't act on it right now.  
You don't need to commit to anything.

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## PART 1. Values as *Directions*, Not Demands

### Prompt (client-facing):

When things are going *okay enough*, what feels meaningful or important to you... even in small ways?

Invite the client to respond in **words, phrases, or examples**.

### Examples (offer only if needed):

- caring
- honesty
- creativity
- stability
- curiosity
- fairness
- rest
- connection
- autonomy
- learning
- integrity
- gentleness

### Client notes:

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## PART 2. What *Isn't* a Value (ND clarification)

Help the client gently separate values from pressure.

### Explain briefly:

Values are **not**:

- productivity
- perfection
- constant effort
- other people's expectations
- survival behaviours learned under stress

### Reflective prompt:

Are any of the things you've named actually expectations or rules you've been living under?

### Client notes (optional):

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## PART 3. Body-Based Recognition

*(Low-demand access point)*

Instead of "thinking harder," ask:

When you imagine acting *even a little* in line with this value, what happens in your body?

Invite noticing:

- softening
- warmth
- relief
- steadiness
- emotion
- resistance
- nothing / unsure

All responses are valid data.

### Client notes:

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## PART 4. Values Under Low Capacity

*(This is the ND-critical step)*

### Prompt:

When your capacity is low, how might this value still exist... without action?

Examples to normalise:

- valuing connection by resting
- valuing honesty by saying "I can't today"
- valuing care by reducing demands
- valuing learning by pausing

### Client notes:

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## PART 5. Micro-Orientation (Optional)

Only if the client has capacity.

### Prompt:

Is there a *tiny*, low-pressure way this value might show up... without effort or expectation?

Key rules:

- no time pressure
- no outcome requirement
- no obligation to follow through

Examples:

- noticing something kind
- choosing not to push
- letting something be unfinished
- writing one sentence
- doing nothing *on purpose*

### Client notes (or leave blank):

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## PART 6. What Pulls You Away (Without Blame)

### Prompt:

What tends to pull you away from what matters... especially when you're overloaded?

### Normalise:

- fatigue
- sensory overwhelm
- fear of failure
- past shame
- pressure to perform
- urgency

This is **context**, not character.

### Client notes:

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### Integration prompts (choose one)

- "What feels gentler after mapping this?"
- "What surprised you?"
- "What feels less heavy now?"
- "What do you want to remember from this?"

Avoid asking for commitments.

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### Practitioner debrief notes

After the exercise, reflect:

- Did values language increase or decrease safety?
  - Where did shame or relief show up?
  - Was capacity sufficient?
  - Is this a return-to tool rather than a driver?
  - What pacing adjustments are needed next time?
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### Scope & safety reminders

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- Values work can trigger shame in ND clients with histories of failure or demand
  - Orientation is more ethical than activation
  - “No action” can be a valid ACT-consistent outcome
  - Values may shift during burnout and recovery
  - Avoid tying values to performance reviews or goals
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## Clinical framing summary

For ND clients, values are not fuel.  
They are **compass points**.

This ACT Values Map supports:

- meaning without pressure
- motivation without coercion
- agency without collapse

Sometimes the most values-aligned action  
is allowing capacity to come back first.

