

# ACT For Life: The Development and User Engagements of Mobile Application for Prevention and Management of Psychological Distress

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 has challenged the ways of modern healthcare delivery.

- Remote methods of delivering evidence-based mental healthcare are more important now.<sup>1</sup>
- Digital mental health interventions are able to reduce cost, transcend physical limits, and increase flexibility and autonomy of users.<sup>2</sup>
- Rates of mental disorders are expected to increase post-pandemic.<sup>3</sup>
- Novel methods to introduce preventative and management of mental health issues are needed to reduce the strain on Malaysia's already overburdened mental healthcare system.<sup>4</sup>

## Method

ACT For Life mobile application was developed based on the similar program previously conducted on cloud-based instant messaging (*i-ACT for Life<sub>IM</sub>*).

Comprises five weekly modules corresponding to an ACT core process (refer Table 1).

Designed in micro-contents format (infographics, 7 interactive exercises/quizzes, 11 audio exercises, and 7 psychoeducation videos).

Originally developed based on WHO *Doing What Matters in Times of Stress: An Illustrated Guide*.

*i-ACT for Life<sub>IM</sub>* has been tested its effectiveness through RCT.<sup>5</sup>

The major improvements from the *i-ACT for Life<sub>IM</sub>* are translation into the Malay language and in mobile application.

ACT For Life also drops the integrated Islamic spiritual strategies from the original program for multireligious people in Malaysia.

Measure used is Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 items (DASS-21), before and after the completion of program.

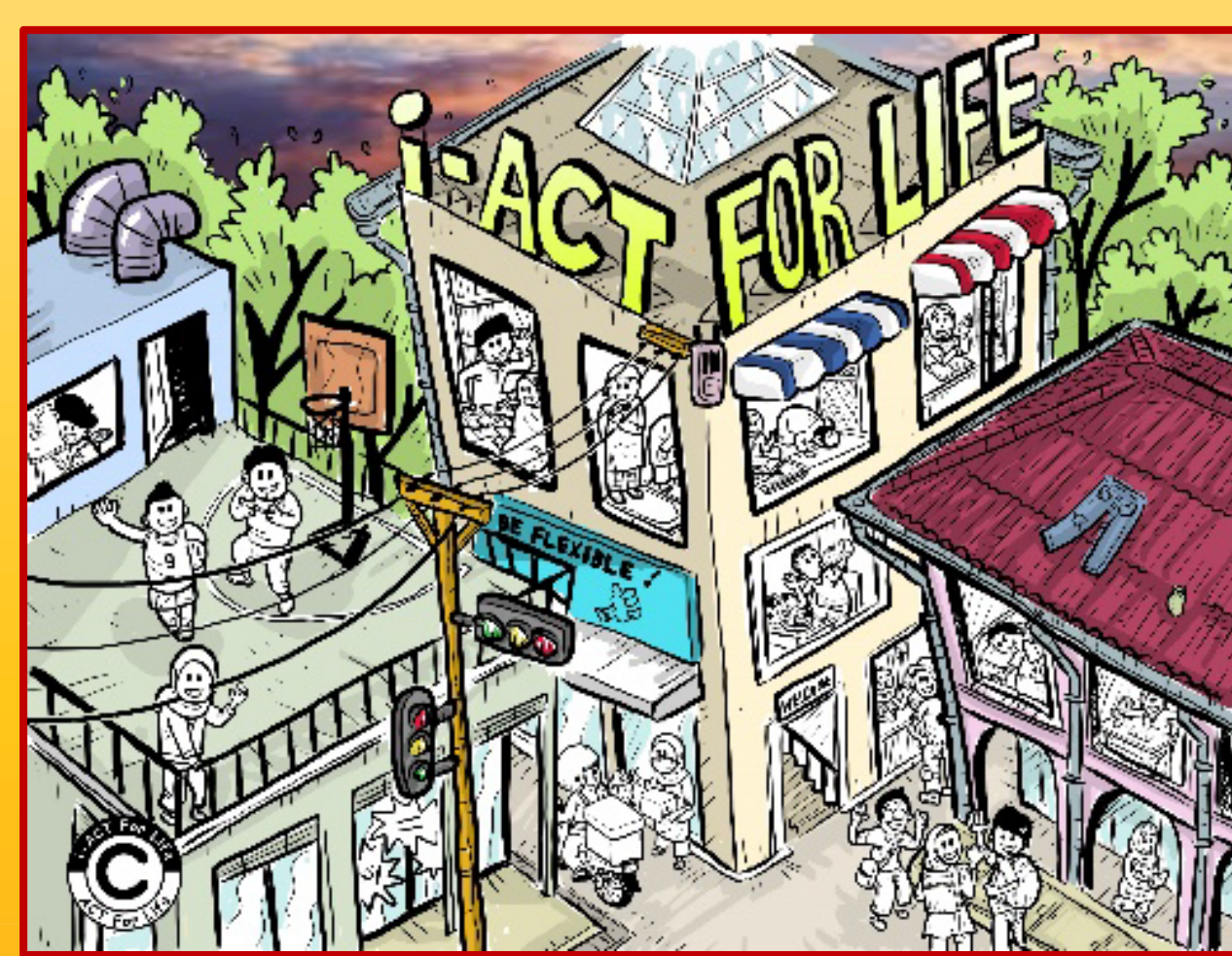
## Objective

The development and user engagements of ACT for Life.



*i-ACT for Life*

A mobile application of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for prevention and management of psychological distress for Malaysian.



ACT for Life is integrated as part of Selangor Mental Sihat (SEHAT).

A comprehensive mental health application involving mental health awareness, literacy, screening, early intervention, and subsidized psychiatric intervention sponsored and managed by one of the state governments in Malaysia.



## Results

Live in SEHAT  
October 2022  
World Mental Health Day



### Number of Users



May 2023

SEHAT = 94,523  
ACT for Life = 3,023 (3.20%)  
Completers *n*=8 (0.26%) (refer Table 1)

### Number of Weeks to Complete

Ranges 5 - 14 weeks  
Mean = 7.5 weeks

Majority complete 5 weeks (*n*=5, 62.5%)



## User Engagements

Table 1. Total number of user engagements

Week (Approximate)	Module	User Engagements	Total (%)
Week 1	Opening	990	32.75
	Grounding	628	20.77
Week 2	Unhooking	54	1.79
Week 3	Acting on Values	18	0.60
Week 4	Being Kind	13	0.43
Week 5	Making Room	10	0.33
	Closing	8	0.26

## Conclusions

ACT for Life mobile application is accessible for the users.

Further study on :

- Suitability of users for the program
- Sustainability of user engagements
- Minimal number of completers
- Effectiveness of ACT for Life

Improvements on :

- Increase promotion of the program
- Continuous reminders to the users
- Therapist-assisted initiative
- Using ACT for Life as an adjunct intervention

## Pre and Post DASS-21 Scores

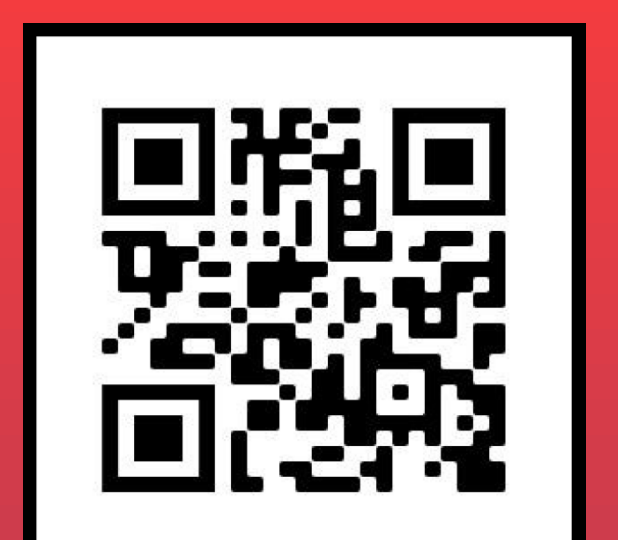
3 out of 8 users (i.e., completers) completed both the pre- and post-DASS-21

Table 2. DASS-21 scores for the completers of ACT for Life

DASS-21	Pre-score (N=8)	Pre-score (n=3)	Post-score (n=3)
Depression	14.5 (moderate)	15.33 (moderate)	16 (moderate)
Anxiety	10.75 (moderate)	11.33 (moderate)	14 (moderate)
Stress	15 (mild)	16 (mild)	16 (mild)

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Experiencing ACT for Life by downloading SELANGKAH Apps



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