

The ACT Behavioral Skills Framework: How Does it Compare to Other Behavioral Models?

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It is important to have a framework for defining personality/behavior skills that can be used to communicate these skills, facilitate research, assess skill levels, and provide interventions that improve education and work outcomes. With this in mind, ACT researchers developed the Behavioral Skills Framework¹ as part of the Holistic Framework² of educational and workplace readiness.

Structure

The Behavioral Skills Framework was modeled on the organizing structure of the HEXACO model of personality³ because of its apparent improvements on the Big Five model of personality.⁴ Using a hierarchical structure, each broad domain is divided into components and each component is divided into subcomponents, which are then further divided into Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs; see Figure 1).

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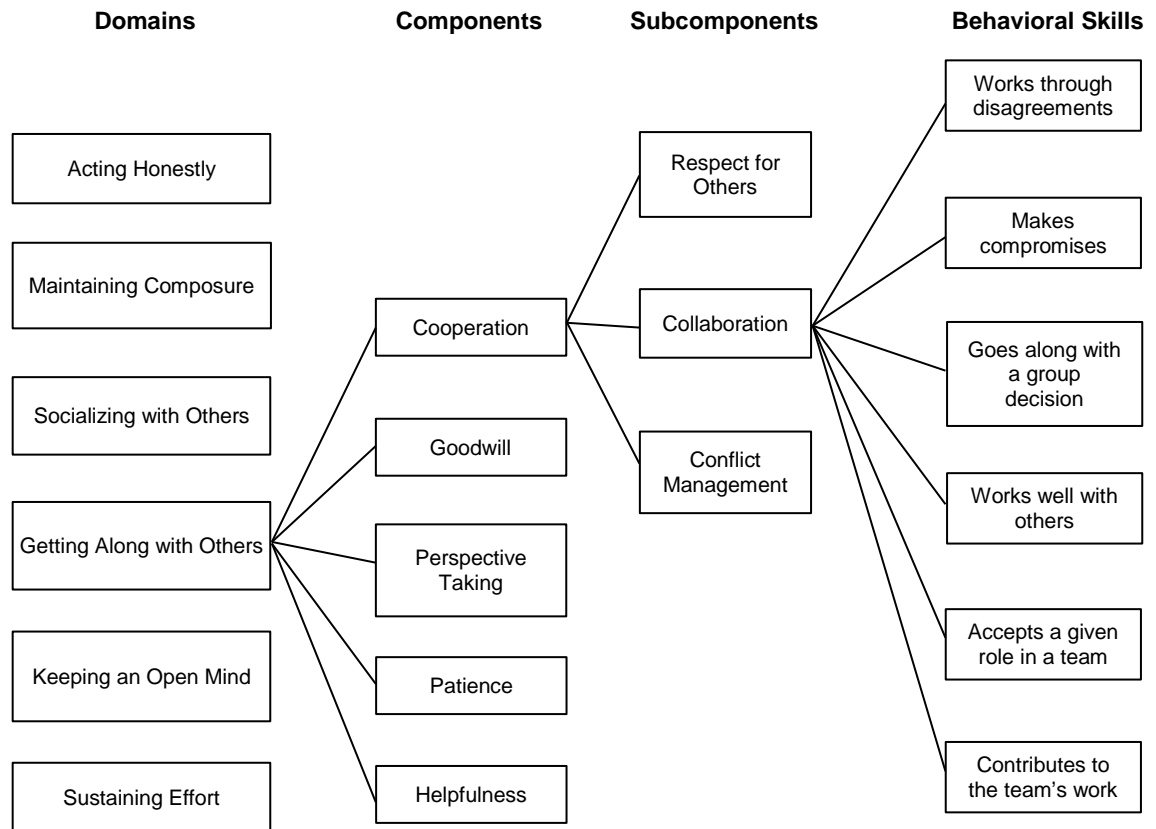


Figure 1. Illustration of the ACT Behavioral Skills Framework organized from broad domains to Performance Level Descriptors

The following sections outline each of the six domains of the ACT Behavioral Skills Framework.

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Acting Honestly (Honesty-Humility)

Definition: The extent to which a person values and adheres to ethical and moral standards of behavior, as well as personal level of humility.

Component: Genuineness, Fairness, and Modesty

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PR-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory

Comparison:

- The HEXACO Honesty-Humility taxonomy as well as related components from other personality domains are accounted for within the Acting Honestly domain.
- Aspects of this domain are included in other models of personality and more recent research suggests it is valid and useful to include.⁵

Maintaining Composure (Emotionality)

Definition: The extent to which a person is relatively calm, serene, and able to manage emotions effectively.

Components: Stress Tolerance and Self-Confidence

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PI-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory, DeYoung et al., 2007

Comparison:

- All Emotionality related frameworks are accounted for within the Maintaining Composure domain.
- This domain does not include aspects of impulse control, calmness, emotional bonds with others, or not complaining, as these are incorporated into other domains of the Behavioral Skills Framework.
- The Self-Confidence component is included less frequently in other models.

Socializing with Others (Extraversion)

Definition: A person's preferred level of social interaction, behavior in interpersonal situations, and optimism.

Components: Sociability, Optimism, and Assertiveness

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PI-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory, DeYoung et al., 2007, Watson & Clark, 1997, Davies, 2015, Naragon-Gainey et al., 2009

Comparison:

- All Extraversion frameworks are accounted for within the Socializing with Others domain.
- This domain does not include components of sensation seeking or energy/activity level, which are found in other models, due to the expected applications of this framework.
- Some components of other models of Extraversion were reorganized under different domains of the Behavioral Skills Framework.

Getting Along with Others (Agreeableness)

Definition: The extent to which a person interacts positively and cooperates with others, and is generally kind, friendly, and tactful.

Components: Patience, Helpfulness, Goodwill, Perspective Taking, and Cooperation

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PI-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory, Kern et al., 2013, DeYoung et al., 2007, Davies, 2015

Comparison:

- All Agreeableness frameworks are integrated into and accounted for within the Getting Along with Others domain.
- Some Agreeableness models tend to incorporate aspects of Honesty-Humility and Conscientiousness which are integrated elsewhere in the Behavioral Skills Framework.
- Consistent with HEXACO research, some components of other models of Agreeableness seem to be more closely related to the Acting Honestly domain.

Keeping an Open Mind (Openness to Experience)

Definition: A person's level of open-mindedness and curiosity about a variety of ideas, beliefs, people, and experiences.

Components: Creativity, Curiosity, Flexibility, and Accepting Differences

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PI-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory, DeYoung et al., 2007, Mussel et al., 2011

Comparison:

- Most Openness frameworks are accounted for within the Keeping an Open Mind domain.
- This domain does not include components such as appreciation of aesthetic beauty or receptiveness to one's own feelings, which are found in other models, because they were determined to be less relevant to academic and career success.
- The Flexibility component of this domain is not usually included in other models.

Sustaining Effort (Conscientiousness)

Definition: A person's level of diligence, effort, organization, self-control, and compliance with rules.

Components: Order, Persistence, Dependability, Self-Control, Goal Striving, Rule Conscientiousness

Other Models: Big Five: NEO-PI-R, HEXACO, Hogan Personality Inventory, Roberts et al., 2005, MacCann et al., 2009, and Dudley et al., 2006

Comparison:

- Most Conscientiousness models are accounted for within the Sustaining Effort domain.
- The Sustaining Effort Dependability component appears to be not defined as well in other models.
- This domain divides some aspects of Conscientiousness as it is defined in other models and repositions them under Agreeableness, Emotionality, and Honesty-Humility.

New Contributions of the Behavioral Skills Framework:

- Unique organization including restructuring of components
- First structure of personality to include subcomponents and PLDs
- Focus on behavior rather than personality traits permits for the tangible identification of strengths and less developed behaviors
- Describes developmentally appropriate behavior for elementary school, middle school, high school, postsecondary, and workforce

Notes

¹For more information, see Colbow, A., Latino, C.A., Way, J.D., Casillas, A., & McKinnis, T. (2017). *The ACT Behavioral Skills Framework: How does it compare to other behavioral models?* Iowa City, IA: ACT.

²For more information, see Mattern, K., Burrus, J., Camara, W., O'Connor, R., Hansen, M.A., Gambrell, J... Bobek, B. (2014). *Broadening the definition of college and career readiness: A holistic approach.* Iowa City, IA: ACT.

³Lee, K., & Ashton, M. C. (2004). Psychometric properties of the HEXACO personality inventory. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 39*(2), 329–358.

⁴(e.g., Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1985). *The NEO personality inventory.* Odessa, FL, US: Psychological Assessment Resources; Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative “description of personality”: The big-five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*(6), 1216–1229; Peabody, D., & Goldberg, L. R. (1989). Some determinants of factor structures from personality-trait descriptors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*(3), 552–567.)

⁵(e.g., Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2005). Honesty-Humility, the Big Five, and the Five-Factor Model. *Journal of Personality, 73*, 1321-1353.; Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2007). Empirical, Theoretical, and Practical Advantages of the HEXACO Model of Personality Structure. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 11*(2), 150–166.; Lee, K., Ashton, M. C., Morrison, D. L., Cordery, J., & Dunlop, P. D. (2008). Predicting integrity with the HEXACO personality model: Use of self- and observer reports. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 81*, 147-167.)