

## Running Head: Psychological Inflexibility and Distress

**Authors :** Steven M. Sanders, April T. Berry, David W. Hollingsworth

**Abstract :** Previous research has shown that veterans have higher rates of mental health concerns compared to non-veteran populations. A potential risk factor for the development of mental health concerns (i.e., depression & anxiety), particularly in Black veterans, is psychological inflexibility. Psychological inflexibility, a component of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT), is a process by which behavior is expressed in ways that attempt to control emotional and psychological reactions to uncomfortable stimuli and situations rather than by direct contingencies or personal values. The present study explored the relationship between psychological inflexibility, symptoms of depression, and symptoms of anxiety in a sample of 131 Black veterans. Results demonstrated that Black veterans who endorsed psychological inflexibility also endorsed higher levels of both depression and anxiety symptomology. These findings indicate the deleterious consequences of experiencing psychological inflexibility, which could be treated through ACT.

**Keywords :** psychological flexibility, veteran, black, psychological distress

**Conference Title :** ICMPPA 2023 : International Conference on Military Psychology and Applications

**Conference Location :** Miami, United States

**Conference Dates :** March 16-17, 2023