Behavioural Activation

When people are feeling depressed, they tend to become relatively inactive and start to do less and less. They stop doing things they used to enjoy, they socialize less frequently, and often become isolated from friends and family. This lack of activity is not just a symptom of depression. It also feeds into and prolongs depression.

If you’ve fallen into this pattern due to depression, any increase at all in your level of activity can help you start feeling better. It’s important to find things to do every day, even if you don’t feel like it and find the thought of doing anything overwhelming. You don’t have to plan a full, busy schedule, but it is important to plan some activities throughout the week to help you avoid falling into the depression trap where you end up doing very little or nothing at all. When you’re feeling depressed, doing anything at all—no matter what it is—is almost always going to make you feel at least a little bit better.

When you’re feeling depressed and prone to inactivity, it’s important to schedule activities each day that can give you a *sense of pleasure or enjoyment*, a *sense of achievement or accomplishment*, and a *sense of connection or closeness to other people*. If you’re feeling depressed, it can sometimes be hard to come up with anything you could want to do. It can help to remember some of the things you used to do but haven’t been doing since you’ve been depressed. Write any of these you can think of in the space below:

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You may also want to consider doing some things you’ve wanted to do in the past but have never gotten around to. List any of these below:

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If you’re looking for more potential activities, Google: list of activities. You’ll find a number of long lists of activities. Write down any of these that might interest you or that you think you could do below:

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On the next page you’ll be asked to fill some activities in each of the three categories mentioned above— a *sense of pleasure or enjoyment*, a *sense of achievement or accomplishment* and a *sense of closeness to other people*—that you can incorporate into your week.

Sense of Pleasure or Enjoyment: As difficult as it can be to imagine something being enjoyable when you’re depressed, just doing anything is usually more enjoyable then isolating yourself, staying home all day, or spending most of the day in bed. You may find that activities are not as enjoyable as they used to be or as you’d like them to be, but when you’re depressed, finding any amount of enjoyment in something you do is an important step to recovering. In the space below, write down some activities you can do that could give you a sense of enjoyment:

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Sense of Achievement or Accomplishment: When you’re feeling depressed, it can be difficult to imagine that you could do anything that would give you a sense of achievement or accomplishment. You don’t need to be ambitious. These can be simple things such as going for a walk, calling a friend, doing the dishes, taking a shower, paying some bills, etc. Anything that could give you any sense of accomplishment or achievement counts, no matter how big or how small. In the space below, write down some activities you can do that could give you a sense of achievement or accomplishment:

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Sense of Connection or Closeness to Others: If you’re depressed, sometimes you just want to isolate yourself from people. Socializing can seem hard, and you can feel like you’re a burden to other people. But a sense of isolation is a big contributing factor to feeling depressed, so it’s important to find ways to socialize and be with other people. Some things, like going to a big party, may seem overwhelming, so focus on things that seem more manageable, whether it’s talking to someone on the phone, going for a coffee, having dinner with a friend, or even going out by yourself and just being around other people. In the space below, write down some activities you can do that could give you a sense of connection or closeness to others:

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Now use the calendars provided to schedule some of these activities, and to monitor what you’ve done throughout the week and how you’ve felt while doing it. If your level of activity is already great enough that you don’t need to schedule things, it is still helpful to have this list of activities to draw upon, as when are you feeling down or depressed, doing any of these activities can help improve your mood.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day/Time** | **Activity** | **Predicted** | **Actual** |
| Monday  11am | Went for coffee with my friends | **P:** 4  **A:** 1  **C:** 6 | **P**:7 **C:** 7  **A:** 4  **Dep:** 40  **Mood**: Anxious 70 |
| Monday  3pm | Went for walk through the park | **P:** 3  **A:** 2  **C:** 0 | **P**: 6 **C:** 2  **A:** 6 **Dep:** 30  **Mood**: Happy 50 |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **A: C:**  **E: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |

Behavioural Activation **Diary**

Use this calendar to schedule some activities you can do throughout the week. Include a balance of activities that can give you a sense of **P**leasure or Enjoyment, a sense of **A**chievement or **A**ccomplishment and a sense of **C**onnection or **C**loseness to Others, and record your prediction for how much of each they will give you. One you have done the activity, record how much of each they actually gave you. Then rate your level of **Dep**ression on a scale of 1-100, and write one word that describes your **Mood,** and rate the intensity of your mood from 0 – 100.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day/Time** | **Activity** | **Predicted** | **Actual** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |
|  |  | **P:**  **A:**  **C:** | **P: C:**  **A: Dep:**  **Mood:** |