

AIMS CENTER
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
Advancing Integrated Care for Over 20 Years

Behavioral Activation 102

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:


- Summarize how to evaluate the outcome of patients’ efforts and problem solve barriers to action planning
- Describe typical challenges encountered in Behavioral Activation and explain effective strategies for addressing these challenges with patients

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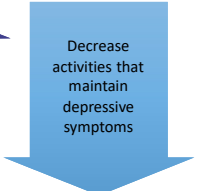
Three Goals of BA

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Increase adaptive activities, preferably for mastery and pleasure

2



Decrease activities that maintain depressive symptoms

3



Problem solve barriers to rewarding things

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BA: The 4 Steps

1. Explain the model
2. Assessment of patient experience and values to compile a list of activities
3. Select BA activities and make an action plan
4. Follow-up: Evaluate the outcome and problem solve barriers

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Step 1. Explain the Model

- How Depressive symptoms arise
 - Do less, avoidance, isolation, rumination
 - Possible short-term gain
 - Maintains depressive symptoms in the long run
- How BA helps to disrupt the cycle
 - Do more → feel better
 - Activities related to values, pleasure, mastery, and goals
- Important points about structure of treatment

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Introducing BA

Form A

Facts About Depression

What is Depression?
Depression is a medical illness. When low mood or sadness persists or interferes with everyday life it may be depression. Depression can last months or even years if not treated.

What Are the Symptoms of Depression?

- **Key Symptoms:**
 - Depressed or sad mood
 - Decreased interest or pleasure in activities
- **Other Symptoms:**
 - Significant changes in appetite or weight
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Restlessness or sluggishness
 - Fatigue or loss of energy
 - Lack of concentration or indecision
 - Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
 - Thoughts of death or suicide

What Causes Depression?
Depression is a medical illness with multiple causes including biological, psychological, social and medical factors. The symptoms of depression may reflect an imbalance in brain chemistry and may be brought about by genetics, stress or loss, or other physical changes co-occurring with medical illnesses. Sometimes depression can develop without any obvious cause.

How is Depression Treated?
Depression is treatable. Appropriate treatment, such as medication or psychotherapy, reduces symptoms for most individuals. Engaging in pleasurable and rewarding activities has also been shown to improve depression.

Form B

Why is It Important To Do More Pleasurable and Rewarding Activities?

When people get depressed they don't feel up to doing the kinds of things they typically enjoy. By doing fewer enjoyable and rewarding things, they begin to feel worse. As they feel worse, they do even less and get caught up in a vicious cycle.

As part of our meetings, we will help you set a goal of doing at least one pleasurable or rewarding activity each day. These goals can include physical activity, socialization, or other recreational activities or hobbies that have value and meaning to you. Engaging in pleasurable activities like these will help break the vicious cycle of depression and improve your mood, interest level, and energy.

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Compiling a List of Rewarding Activities

Form 1

List of Pleasant and Rewarding Activities

Instructions: Use the space below to list activities and rate the difficulty of each. Consider activities that you have previously enjoyed or have identified as mood boosters. Include any new or desirable activities, as well as activities that align with your personal values. It is also important to include any activities you have been avoiding or responsibilities you have taken away from. Remember this is a list of activities you are most connecting to, any activities at this point.

ACTIVITY	DIFFICULTY:
	E = Easy M = Medium H = Hard
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

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PRACTICE STEP 2: ASSESSMENT

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Step 3. Select BA Activities and Make a Specific Plan

- Start with small activities to promote success
- Develop detailed plan:
 - Date or days of the week
 - What time of day
 - How long
 - With whom
 - What obstacles could come up? What is a Plan B?
- Ask patient:
 - How likely are you to do this? What will you do if you don't feel like doing it?

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Scheduling Activities

Form 3

Meeting # _____ Date _____

Scheduling Activities

Plan at least one activity each day. This is an important way to deal with stress and depression. Schedule out a week's worth of daily activities.

Each day should contain at least one activity. There can be personal, social, or physical activities. For example, a pleasant activity might be meeting a friend or doing a hobby, or a social activity might be calling or video-chatting with a friend, and a physical activity might be going for a walk. You can also include activities you take the responsibility of responsibilities you have taken away from, such as paying the bills.

Have been satisfied you felt after doing the activity

Day	Date	Activity (what, where, when, with whom)	How satisfied did you feel after you did it?	
			1 = Not Satisfied at All	5 = Extremely Satisfied
Monday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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PRACTICE STEP 3: SELECT BA ACTIVITIES AND MAKE A SPECIFIC PLAN

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Step 4. Follow-up

- Evaluate the outcome
 - How did it go?
 - Ask about patient's experience with activity and level of satisfaction
 - Make connections between activity and impact on mood/symptoms
- Problem solve barriers
 - E.g., lack of buy-in, forgot, too challenging, etc.

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Evaluating the Outcome

- Completed plan and experienced improved mood
- Completed plan, no change in symptoms
- Completed part of the plan
- Did something other than what was planned
- Did not complete plan

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Common Challenges with BA

- Patient does not follow through with between session plan
- Difficulty identifying activities
- Patient is not improving, despite follow-through

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Issues with Follow Through: Understanding the “Why”

Unpredicted Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solve barriers, consider contracts • Identify plan B activities
Activity not achievable within timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break-down into smaller tasks
Not enough detail in the action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise to incorporate more details/steps
Forgetfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate cues/reminders or contracts

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Issues with Follow Through Cont.

- Apathy or Lack of buy-in**
 - Review treatment rationale
 - Daily monitoring of activities and mood
- Anxiety**
 - Incorporate anxiety management into action plan
- Pessimism or discouragement**
 - Frame action plans as experiments
- Ambivalence**
 - Motivational Interviewing, decisional balance scale

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Optional Tool: Contracts

Activity you could use help to complete	Identify up to 3 people who could help with this activity	Specific plan for <i>how</i> and <i>when</i> each person can help
Get outside on a daily basis	Neighbor	Coffee on front porch Sat & Sun morning
	Partner	Walk after dinner 2-3 times per week
	Mom	Daily text of encouragement. Ask how it is going during phone calls

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Optional Tool: Daily Monitoring

Time of Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Mood (1-10)							
Afternoon							
Mood (1-10)							
Evening							
Mood (1-10)							

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Not Improving

- Reassess for comorbid clinical issues
 - e.g. substance dependence, trauma, personality disorders, manic or psychotic symptoms, unmet social service needs
- Review patient selection activities
- Evaluate activity plans
 - Balance of pleasant and rewarding activities
 - Identify meaningful activities
 - Values Checklist
- Intensify or adjust treatment

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Patient Selection Criteria

<p>Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depressive disorder or symptoms • Mild cognitive impairment • Alcohol or substance use • Any life stress • Loss of loved one • Comorbid anxiety 	<p>Exclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia, or moderate to severe cognitive impairment • Current alcohol or substance dependence • Current manic or psychotic symptoms • <u>Significant</u> personality disorder
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Questions?



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