

Information handout

US English

Activity Menu



Activity Menu

Description

Behavioral activation (BA) is a robustly evidence-based treatment for depression. BA interventions aim to help clients to increase their levels of rewarding activity even if they do not initially feel motivated to do so. Increasing activity provides people with more opportunities to experience pleasure and achievement, to have positive social interactions, and to act in accordance with their values.

Helping clients to choose which activities to target during behavioral activation can be accomplished in a variety of ways: activity monitoring can be used to identify currently rewarding activities; an exploration of client values is a popular way of helping clients to connect with valued life domains; and choosing 'essential' activities (such as washing or shopping) is a helpful approach when the client's activity levels are initially very low. Some depressed clients may have difficulty choosing activities to target during BA, even after phases of activity monitoring or exploration of values. Using an activity menu is a practical solution which overcomes the obstacle of clients having to self-generate activity targets. This *Activity Menu* presents example activities for a number of important domains encompassing: animals, be active, clean, connect with people, cook, create, expression, kindness, learn, mend, mind, music, nature, plan, read, schedule, self-care, shop, travel, try something new, watch, write.

Instructions

"Remember that one of the best ways to overcome depression is to do more of the things that give you feelings of achievement, pleasure, or connections to other people. There are lots of ways to choose activities that lead to those feelings: you can monitor your activity to examine what is already working well, or you can explore your values and reflect on what really matters to you deep down. A very quick way of getting active is to choose things from an activity menu that you think you might find rewarding. Would you be willing to have a look at the activities on this form and see which ones you would like to try?"

References

- Hopko, D. R., Lejuez, C. W., Ruggiero, K. J., et al (2003b) Contemporary behavioural activation treatments for depression: procedures, principles, and progress. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 699–717.
- Martell, C. R., Addis, M. E. & Jacobson, N. S. (2001) *Depression in Context: Strategies for Guided Action*. Norton.

Activity Menu



Animals

Pet an animal
Walk a dog
Ride a horse
Volunteer at an animal shelter
Go bird watching
Go fishing
Listen to the birds
Visit the zoo



Be active

Go for a walk
Go for a run
Go for a swim
Go hiking
Go cycling
Go to the gym
Go bowling
Go ice / roller skating
Play golf / football / tennis
Throw a frisbee
Fly a kite
Try a martial art



Clean

Clean the house
Clean the yard
Clean the bathroom
Clean the toilet
Clean your bedroom
Clean the fridge
Clean the oven
Clean your shoes
Do the washing up
Fill / empty the dishwasher
Do laundry
Do some chores
Organize your workspace
Clean a cupboard



Connect with people

Contact a friend
Invite a friend to come over
Be with friends
Meet a friend for coffee
Make new friends
Join a new group
Join a political party
Join a book club
Join an exercise class
Join a mother & baby group
Join a dating website
Ask someone out
Go on a date
Go 'people watching'
Send a message to a friend
Write a letter to a friend
Reconnect with an old friend



Cook

Cook a meal for yourself
Cook a meal for someone else
Bake a cake / cookies
Roast marshmallows
Have a BBQ
Find a new recipe
Organize a dinner party



Create

Draw a picture
Paint a portrait
Take a photograph
Doodle / sketch
Organize photographs
Make a photograph album
Start a scrapbook
Finish a project
Do some sewing / knitting



Expression

Laugh
Cry
Sing
Shout
Scream



Kindness

Help a friend / neighbor / stranger
Volunteer at a charity
Make a gift for someone
Try a random act of kindness
Do someone a favor
Offer to babysit
Teach somebody a skill
Do something nice for someone
Plan a surprise for someone
Make a list of your good points
Make a list of things or people you are grateful for



Learn

Learn something new
Learn a new skill
Learn a new fact
Enrol in a class
Go back to school
Watch a tutorial video



Mend

Repair something in the house
Repair your bike / car / scooter
Make something new
Change a lightbulb
Decorate a room



Mind

Daydream
Meditate
Pray
Reflect
Think
Try relaxation exercises
Practice yoga



Music

Listen to music you like
Find some new music to listen to
Go to a concert
Turn on the radio
Make some music
Sing a song
Play an instrument
Listen to a podcast



Nature

Try some gardening
Plant something
Do some pruning
Mow the lawn
Pick flowers
Buy flowers
Go for a walk in nature
Swim in the sea
Hike in the mountains
Walk in the woods
Sit in the sun
Go to the park



Plan

Set a goal
Create a budget
Make a 5 year plan
Make a 'to do' list
Make a 'bucket list'
Make a shopping list



Read

Read a favourite book
Read a new book
Read the newspaper
Read your favourite website



Schedule

Get up extra early
Stay up late
Sleep in late
Book a day off
Tick something off your 'to do' list



Self care

Take a bath
Take a shower
Wash your hair
Give yourself a facial
Trim your nails
Go for a massage
Sunbathe (wear sunscreen!)
Take a nap



Shop

Shop for groceries
Shop for clothes
Go to a car boot sale / yard sale
Take things to a charity shop



Travel

Go for a ride in the car
Take the bus somewhere
Catch a train
Plan a holiday



Try something new

Try a new food
Take a walk in a new place
Listen to some new music
Watch a new TV show or movie
Wear some new clothes
Read a new book
Try a new class
Do something spontaneous
Express yourself



Watch

Go to the cinema
Go to the theatre
Watch a movie
Watch a TV show
Watch a YouTube video



Write

Write a letter of complaint
Write a letter with compliments
Write a letter to your politician
Write an angry letter
Write a grateful letter
Write a 'thank you' card
Write a journal / diary
Write your CV
Start writing a book

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