

AIMS CENTER
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

Behavioral Activation II: Strategies to Increase Homework Adherence

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Behavioral Activation: The Four Steps

1. Review symptoms and explain the model
2. Ask lots of questions to develop a list of rewarding activities
3. Schedule activities for the week
4. Follow-up meetings: review symptoms; review activity plans; overcome obstacles and schedule new activities

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Behavioral Activation Forms

List of Pleasant and Rewarding Activities
Instructions: List desired activities and rate the difficulty of each.

ACTIVITY	DIFFICULTY: E = Easy M = Medium H = Hard

Scheduling Activities
Pleasant - Social - Physical

Plan at least one activity each day. It is an important way to deal with stress and depression. Schedule and record each day's activities.

Each day that you do an activity, there can be pleasant, social, or physical activities. The socially-rewarding activity might be talking to a friend or going to a hobby. Social activities might be calling or texting a friend or a family member. Physical activity might be going for a walk.

Note how satisfied you feel after doing the activity.

Day	Date	Activity (what? where? with whom?)	How satisfied did you feel? Rate from 0 to 100. 0 = Not Satisfied at all 100 = Extremely Satisfied	Completed
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Why is it Important to do More Pleasant and Rewarding Activities?

When people feel stressed or down, or are unable to see family members and friends in person, they may not feel like doing the tasks of living that cause stress. By doing these enjoyable and rewarding things, they begin to feel better. As they feel better, they do more and get caught up in a positive cycle.

Do More Rewarding Activities
Feel Better

Feel Bad
Do Less and Avoid

As part of our work, we will help you set goals of doing at least one pleasant or rewarding activity each day. These goals can include physical activity, meditation, 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 negative emotions and improve your mood, interest level, and energy.

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Importance of Homework Adherence

- Discussion of problems/insight into nature of depression only the first step in treatment
- Action is necessary to solve real world problems
- Breaks cycle of inactivity and avoidance
- Promotes sense of mastery and self-efficacy
- Opportunity to learn skills, practice out of session, and continue to use after termination

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Ensuring Success Proactively

- Ensure client understands BA rationale
- Ensure client creates specific detailed plans
- Ensure goals are feasible within 1 week
- Inquire about obstacles; discuss steps to overcome; specify Plan Bs
- Final assessment of confidence level

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Ensuring Success Proactively (cont)




- Ensure client establishes a goal important to him/her
- Ensure goal is feasible within 1 week
- Ensure client creates a specific detailed plan
- Inquire about obstacles; discuss steps to overcome; specify Plan B
- Final assessment of confidence level

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Step 4: Follow-up Meetings

- Review symptoms
- Review activity plans
- Overcome obstacles
- Schedule new activities

If goal not accomplished, ask 3 questions:

-  Do they have buy-in to the treatment?
-  Did they simply forget?
-  Was it a Mt Everest? (too hard)

ALWAYS ask about target behaviors at follow up meetings.

Expect that patients might not do the activities. Do not judge.

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Understanding Poor Homework Adherence

- Understanding/assessment is first step in addressing poor adherence
- How assess? Explore reasons during HW review
 - What happened? What got in the way?

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Understanding Poor Homework Adherence (cont)

- Did you remember the plan you created?
- Was it not feasible to do within a week?
- Did we pick activities that were important to you?
- How do you feel about not following through, or not completing what you had planned?

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Understanding Poor Homework Adherence (cont)

- Did you feel unmotivated or too tired to do it?
- Did you feel pessimistic about it helping you?
- Did you feel overwhelmed or anxious beforehand?

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Strategies to Enhance Homework Adherence

- *Reason:* Activity not achievable within a week
- *Strategy:* Scale back. Gradual progress will pave the way for tackling the next aspect. Success experience will lead to increased self-confidence.

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Strategies to Enhance Homework Adherence

- *Reason:* Action plan not detailed enough
- *Strategy:* Discuss value of revisiting plan and adding more steps and details (which day, time, for how long, with whom).

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Strategies to Enhance Homework Adherence

- *Reason:* Apathy or forgetfulness interfered
- *Strategy:* Educate on power of depression. Revise action plan with more detail (which day, time, for how long, with whom). Incorporate cues and reminders (alarm clock, timer, others).

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Strategies to Enhance Homework Adherence

- *Reason:* Anxiety interfered
- *Strategy:* Teach or reinforce basic anxiety management techniques (deep breathing; relaxation; meditation; prayer). Incorporate into action plan.

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Strategies to Enhance Homework Adherence

- *Reason:* Pessimism/discouragement interfered
- *Strategy:* Educate on impact of depression on negative thinking, and on follow through. Encourage positive expectations. Frame action plans as experiments, and encourage observation of impact on depression.

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Discussion and Questions



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