

Information handout

UK English

Activity Menu



Activity Menu

Description

Behavioural 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 behavioural 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
- Organise 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
- Organise a dinner party



Create

- Draw a picture
- Paint a portrait
- Take a photograph
- Doodle / sketch
- Organise 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 / neighbour / stranger
- Volunteer at a charity
- Make a gift for someone
- Try a random act of kindness
- Do someone a favour
- 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
- Practise 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

Resource details

Title: Activity Menu

Language: English (GB)

Translated title: Activity Menu

Type: Information handout

Document orientation: Portrait

URL: <https://www.psychologytools.com/resource/activity-menu/>

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