



# **Behavioural Activation in Groups**

Handbook

## Introduction

This handbook was originally created by Joe Curran and Paul Bliss (Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapists, Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust) to accompany their group format of Martell and colleagues' Behavioural Activation for Depression (BA). In collaboration with NHS Education Scotland (NES), Joe Curran and Paul Bliss came to Scotland in 2015 to provide training in that group format, Behavioural Activation in Groups (BAG).

Martell and colleagues have been developing BA over the last 30 years. The extensive evidence-base for its effectiveness has led to BA being recommended in 'The Matrix: A Guide for the Delivery of Evidence-Based Psychological Therapies in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2015), the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) clinical guideline (2010) and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2009) clinical guideline for the treatment and management of depression in adults.

NES has provided training in Behavioural Activation in both individual (BA) and group (BAG) formats, and Brief Behavioural Activation for Depression (BATD-R), to increase the access for people experiencing depression to evidence-based psychological therapies and to standardise the quality of the therapy available across Scotland. For more information, the most up-to-date version of Martell and colleagues' BA for Depression can be found in the following:

*For people currently experiencing depression*

Addis, M. E. and Martell, C.R. (2004) *Overcoming Depression: One Step at a Time: The New Behavioural Activation Approach to Getting Your Life Back*. Oakland: New Harbinger.

If assistance is required in obtaining a copy of this book, GPs and local libraries should be able to assist through the 'Books on Prescription' scheme.

*Clinical guide for BA Practitioners*

Martell, C.R., Dimidjian, S. and Herman-Dunn, R. (2010) *Behavioural Activation: A Clinician's Guide*. New York: Guilford.

*A digital version can be accessed online via Athens here: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/nhsscotland/detail.action?docID=10356630>*

## Copyright

The following handbook contains material from:

1. Martell, C. R., Addis, M. E. and Jacobson, N.S. (2001) *Depression in Context: Strategies for Guided Action*. New York: Norton.
2. Addis, M. E. and Martell, C. R. (2004) *Overcoming Depression One Step at a Time*. New Harbinger: Oakland.
3. Martell, C.R., Dimidjian, S., Herman-Dunn, R. (2010) *Behavioural Activation: A Clinician's Guide*. New York: Guilford.

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The e-book of Martell et al (2010) is there for BA clinicians to use as a reference. Its limited photocopy license allows worksheets to be copied for personal use or individual clinical work but not for making additional handouts for therapy groups.

# Session 5

Developing responses  
to rumination

## Session 5

### Agenda

1. Review last session on values
2. Review between-session training
3. Introduction to thinking, worry and rumination

### Goals for this session

1. Review between-session training and previous four sessions
2. Introduce the significance of rumination in behavioural activation
3. Plan next between-session training

## Monitoring rumination

Over the next week, see if you can recognise and label dwelling, brooding, obsessing, or other ruminating behaviour when it occurs. When you recognise it, say to yourself 'This is ruminating'. You will be surprised at how powerful it can be to simply increase your awareness of what you're doing. You will probably find that labelling rumination will help to lessen its impact.

Use the space below to monitor ruminating when it happens. In the first column, record the situation in which you observed yourself ruminating. In the second column record exactly what you were ruminating about. In the third column identify the consequences of ruminating. An example of how to monitor episodes of ruminating is provided in the first row.

	Situation	Rumination	Consequence
1.	<b>Lying in bed awake on a Monday morning, due to attend computer course.</b>	'I can't be bothered to go' 'I'm so depressed, I can't snap out of it'.	Cancelled appointment on computer course. Felt more depressed. Felt guilty.
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Addis, M. E. and Martell, C. R. (2004) *Overcoming Depression One Step at a Time*. New Harbinger: Oakland. Page 98. Reproduced with permission.

## Putting RCA to work

Look over the list of rumination situations you have made. Now, copy each one into the column labelled 'Situation' in the table below. In the next column, write down what you were ruminating about. Then, for each situation and rumination, list at least two other activities you could engage in rather than ruminating. The first row gives an example.

	Situation	Rumination	Cues	Action
1.	<b>Lying in bed awake on a Monday morning, due to attend computer course.</b>	'I can't be bothered to go' 'I'm so depressed, I can't snap out of it'.	➔	1. Get up, have a shower, make breakfast. 2. Sing along with the radio.
2.			➔	1. 2.
3.			➔	1. 2.
4.			➔	1. 2.
5.			➔	1. 2.

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## Paying attention

Over the next few days, practice attending to your experience in situations where you might normally ruminate. Below is a space for you to write down the situations you are in and the things to which you attended. We completed the first row as an example.

Day	Situation	I attended to...
Mon	Walking to computer course.	What was going on around me – the sound of the birds, the colour of the cars. Noticing sensations and movement in my feet, legs, arms.

## Responding to rumination

### 1. Focus on the consequences of ruminating

When you notice yourself ruminating, congratulate yourself for noticing and ask yourself how ruminating is changing your mood. In that moment, is rumination useful to you? Is it helping you to solve a problem? Is rumination helping you to be less depressed? If you can, try to complete a 'Monitoring rumination' sheet (Page 36).

### 2. Problem-solving

When you notice yourself ruminating, congratulate yourself for noticing and try breaking the cycle by using your problem-solving skills. Take yourself through the eight stages of problem-solving you have been practising. If you can, try to complete a 'Using problem-solving to change my behaviour' sheet (Pages 25-26).

### 3. Redirect your attention outwards

When you notice yourself ruminating, congratulate yourself for noticing, and try the 'Two Minute Rule':

- a. Check your watch and continue to allow your thoughts to go round and round for another two minutes.
- b. When the two minutes is up, stop and consider whether any helpful problem-solving has actually occurred. Consider whether you feel more or less depressed after those two minutes.
- c. If nothing helpful has happened, and if you feel worse, then you can be sure this thinking was unhelpful rumination and there is no benefit to continuing with it.
- d. Your task now is to redirect your attention outwards. In the real world here-and-now. You can use anything helpful to hold your attention outwards such as music, focusing on whatever task or activity you are currently engaged in or focusing on your senses.

Like most skills, the more you practice the Two Minute Rule the more effective it is likely to become and the more frequently it is likely to occur to you to make use of it.

## Self-reflection sheet

### Session number:

1. What did I learn from today's session?
2. What training for the week did I plan?
3. Thinking about today's session, I noticed myself behaving in this way... (Describe...)
4. This way of behaving/being is helpful because...
5. This way of behaving/being may be unhelpful because...
6. If I were to usually behave this way in my everyday life the likely consequences would be...
7. Is there anything I need to change as a result of my reflections?



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