



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>

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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 8

Building the relationships
you want and tying it all
together

Session 8

Agenda

1. Review previous session on freeing yourself from mood dependence
2. Review between-session training on accomplishing short-term goals
3. Introduction to building the relationships you want
4. Tying it all together
5. Plan the next between-session training

Goals for this session

1. Review between-session training and previous seven sessions
2. Introduce relationships as a barrier to change
3. Review the learning from the group programme
4. Set further goals

Building the relationships you want

Relationships

- Are other people part of the problem for you?
- Do you withdraw from difficult relationships?
- How much do your relationships empower you to live the life that you want?
- Do you blame others for feeling depressed?
- What are the consequences and costs for blaming others?
- What would happen if you were to stop blaming others?

Action

1. Examine relationships with reference to TRAP and TRAC
2. Apply ACTION and problem solving approach
3. It is important to stay connected to people who support and sustain you. In what ways can you do this?
4. Practice assertiveness skills. Remember you can only be responsible for your own actions
5. Consider self-soothing in the absence of companionship and when acceptance of difficult experiences is required

ACTION

A → ASSESS how this behaviour works for you

- *Activity and Mood Monitoring Sheets* to evaluate the whole week and look for patterns. Are some activities associated with better or worse mood?
- *TRAP work sheets*. Very useful if avoidance is a particular coping style. Remember avoidance can take many forms, from the obvious not doing something, to doing or thinking too much.
- Is this activity consistent with my *values*?

C → CHOOSE an alternative

- *TRAC worksheet*
- *What are your choices?* worksheet
- *RCA – Rumination Cues Action*
- Some examples of alternative behaviours
 - o Do it despite thinking
 - o Approach rather than avoid
 - o Acceptance
 - Feel what is there to be felt
 - Think what is there to be thought
 - Do what is there to be done
 - o Acting 'As If'
- What would be consistent with my values, or my long-term goals for my life?

T → TRY it out

- Develop a plan for putting the new behaviour into practice
- Develop a '*graded hierarchy*' to start with the least difficult steps
- Make changes *one-step-at-a-time*
- Make a commitment to someone else if that would increase the chances of changing

I → INTEGRATE new behaviours into your routine

- Use the *Activity and Mood monitoring sheets* to plan a specific day and time to engage in the new activity
- Practice
- Develop a routine

O → OBSERVE the results

- Notice whether or not you were able to carry out your plan
- What was the effect on your mood?
- What would be the longer term effect if you were to continue to carry out the behaviour?
- Remember that, like with most skills, things may not change immediately

N → NEVER give up

- It is important to remain aware of times when avoidance and rumination become unhelpful
- Think ahead to possible difficult situations in the future and prepare possible alternative ways of coping

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

What have you learned about yourself?

It's often useful to consider what you've learned about yourself after you've spent some time making changes in your life. This can help you remember the sorts of changes that have a positive effect on your mood, so if you ever become depressed again you'll have a good idea where to begin and how to start working on it.

Since starting self-activation, perhaps you've learned which activities or interactions with others are particularly enjoyable to you. Maybe you've learned something about the most common ways you tend to respond when you feel sad or depressed. Perhaps you've noticed particular areas in your life, such as intimate relationships, friendships, family, or leisure time, that need more attention. These are just a handful of possibilities. In the space below, write down some things you have learned about yourself through working on self-activation.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Which changes in your behaviour have had the most positive effect on your mood?

Think about what changes in your behaviour have had a positive effect on your mood. Can you list the changes that have had the greatest effect? What are they?

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Addis, M. E. and Martell, C. R. (2004) Overcoming Depression One Step at a Time. New Harbinger: Oakland. Page 168. Reproduced with permission.

How helpful has behavioural activation been for you?

On the scale below, rate how helpful engaging in behavioural activation has been for you. Consider how much your mood has changed, what's happening in your life right now, how hopeful do you feel about the future now compared to when you started working on activation, and any other changes that are important to you.

Self-activation has been (circle one):

1

Not at all helpful

2

A little helpful

3

Helpful

4

Extremely helpful

Now, look at your score and consider why you rated the helpfulness of activation the way that you did. In the space below, write down the reasons that behavioural activation was helpful or not helpful. For example, if you thought activation was a little helpful, you could write down how it was a little helpful, and also why it wasn't more helpful or extremely helpful. Below is an example from Christina who found self-activation to be helpful.

Reasons why someone might rate activation as helpful:

1. It gave me something to do other than sit and think about my problems.
2. I was able to get back in touch with friends, which has really improved my mood.
3. I'm exercising now, which makes me feel better about myself.
4. I wouldn't consider it extremely helpful because I still get depressed once in a while. However, the periods don't last nearly as long as they did, and I have a good idea of how to deal with them when they happen.

Reasons why you rated self-activation as you did:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

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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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March 2017

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