



Behavioural activation

Combat Stress. Session 4

What is behavioural activation?

Depression keeps us down and stops us doing from things that bring enjoyment and meaning to our lives. Behavioural activation is an 'outside in' approach meaning we are focused on changing your behaviours even when it does not fit with how you feel to help reverse this vicious cycle as opposed to trying to change the inside or our emotions. Research has consistently found this type of approach is the most effective approach in tackling depression.

What do you value?

Values are our hearts deepest desires for the way we want to interact with and relate to the world, other people and ourselves.

They are the leading principles that can guide us and motivate us as we move through life.

Choosing activities which connect to your values will give you the best chance of breaking out of the vicious cycle of depression.

E.g. suggesting you go swimming would be a waste of time if you did not strongly value physical fitness in your life. On the other hand, if you found being creative to be important for you then you might be more motivated to engage in creative pursuits.

Reconnecting with your values

4 Steps

1. Identify your values
2. For each of the 3 most important values brainstorm activities you could do or are already doing which connects with these.
3. Write down 1 activity you are going to do which falls in line with your values
4. Strategies I will use to help me do this activity

Breaking the vicious cycle



The idea here is to start small and get yourself some early wins to help build up your momentum. If you set your goals too high then you are likely to fail and become disappointed with yourself, again feeding into the depression. For example, instead of giving yourself the task of cleaning the entire kitchen, start small, perhaps with the washing up.



Depression often results from life not being the way we expect it to be. We believe the story we tell ourselves. Imagine a news reporter presenting a story of your life, how do you want them to describe you? And the way you spend your time? How you related to others? What was most important to you?



If you are feeling depressed thoughts like "things will never change" and "There is no point of trying" might be experienced. Learn to question these thoughts are thoughts or facts. Thoughts are only an opinion or story we tell ourselves. They are not facts!

Values

