

Behavioral Activation to Break the Cycle of Depression - Weekly Tip

Behavioral activation is an evidence-based treatment for depression that can help patients learn how to reengage in their lives. Individuals experiencing depression are likely to withdraw, creating a cycle in which symptoms are maintained or further exacerbated.



The goal of behavioral activation is to decrease avoidance and increase engagement. Research shows that increased engagement in meaningful activities reduces symptoms of depression and has long-lasting positive effects. The key message of behavioral activation is: **When you're down, don't wait until you "feel" like doing something. Just do it! Changing what you DO can change how you FEEL.**

You can help patients brainstorm activities that will bring joy, allow opportunities for connection, and foster a sense of accomplishment. Individuals with depression may need support and encouragement in setting small, achievable goals for participating in activities and celebrating their successes. The attached patient [handout](#) can also help with this process.