

Creating a Routine and Staying Active

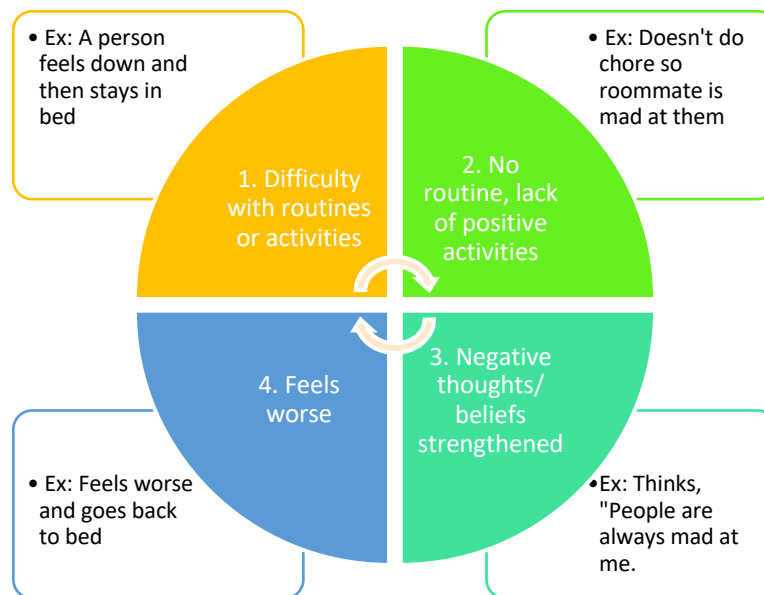
[BA Client Handout]

Are you finding it difficult to complete tasks or activities?

If so, then Behavioral Activation might help. Behavioral Activation is a strategy for focusing on what we **do**, so that we can **think** and **feel** better.

Thoughts, Feelings and Actions

What we **do**, **think** and **feel** are all connected. If you feel down then it's likely that you'll find it difficult to keep up with tasks and activities. The more that happens, the worse you'll feel about yourself or your circumstances, leading to a negative cycle. Take a look at the example below and see if it seems familiar to you.



Behavioral Activation can help you build routines and activities back into your life. Even if it feels like you're just going through the motions at first, taking these steps will help you to start a positive cycle.

Types of Activities

First, write down lists of the types of activities you want or need to be a part of your life (see attached sheet for an example). It can be helpful to divide them into three main types:

Mastery: Mastery activities are the types of activities that help you to feel a sense of accomplishment or personal growth.

- Examples include things such as learning a new skill, creating something, practicing and art or a sport, or trying something challenging.

Enjoyment: Enjoyment activities are things that we do just because they are pleasurable. They don't need to have a specific purpose or be productive.

- Examples include: going for walks, cooking a good meal for yourself, being outdoors, spending time with loved ones, reading a good book, or listening to nice music.

Tasks: Tasks are the things that we need to accomplish on a given day.

- Examples include: washing the dishes, paying bills, cleaning, housework, going to the doctor, etc.

Start Building a Schedule

Now that you have some lists of activities, it's time to start adding these onto a schedule in order to help you get into the routine of doing them.

- No need to start big; you can pick 1-2 activities per day to get started.
- Ask yourself what the maximum amount of tolerable time is for an activity, and then pick a reward for yourself once it's done.
- Slowly over time you can build more and more activities into your days. Ideally try to have a balance of all 3 activity types throughout the day.