

Behavioral Activation – Rehabilitation Mobile App: Patient Education



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Introduction

Returning home is an important step after the intensive care unit (ICU). Once at home, you may find changes from before you were in the ICU.

You might not be able to return to work or other activities right away. You may have difficulty walking or climbing stairs.

It is common to lose interest in things that you enjoyed before the ICU. You may feel sad or anxious. Your relationships with family or friends may have changed.

We are making a program to help with these types of problems.

The Behavioral Activation – Rehabilitation Treatment Program

Behavioral Activation can help you feel better.

Research shows that Behavioral Activation (or BA, as we call it) helps people get active and be happy. This is especially important when we are dealing with new and uncomfortable situations. BA also helps us to live life to the fullest.

Depression gets us “stuck”

People can become depressed for many reasons. We may be down after losing a job, getting sick, or having a fight with family or friends. Our daily hassles also may get us down. No one is happy all the time.

Sometimes these feelings will go away over time. But, if they remain, these problems can reduce the joy of living. When this happens, we get stuck and depressed. We have trouble doing things. We have trouble finding happiness.



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Pulling away from the world is normal when we get stuck

When we get stuck, we learn that our actions don't always help. It can feel difficult to get things done. It is common to pull away from the world when life gets hard. It doesn't mean that we are "weak" or "lazy." It happens to everybody.

We can have unhelpful thoughts and feelings when we get stuck

When we get stuck, we may have some unhelpful thoughts ("I can't do this"). We also may have some unhelpful feelings (feeling sad or blue). These unhelpful thoughts and feelings may come and go. But, if they do not go away over time, we must deal with the real problem. That means we must take actions to get "unstuck."

How avoiding feeling sad seems to help, but doesn't really help

When feeling down, we often avoid doing things. We may stay in bed. We may skip work to reduce the stress. We may not try something new to avoid "failing". These actions may help us feel a little better at first.

But avoiding doing these things over a long time, keeps us from feeling joy and success. Without such "rewards," we feel more stuck and depressed. So, avoiding sad feelings can make the situation even worse.

Doing valued activities and having more "rewards"

With Behavioral Activation, or BA, we work on getting active. We stop avoiding activities and life situations. We start, once again, to experience the "rewards" of living. Sometimes that means enjoying a fun activity. Sometimes it means doing other activities, like cleaning the house or going to the grocery store. Often rewards come from taking action in areas that are important to us. We call these "valued" activities. BA helps people feel like they are living life to the fullest.



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Little by little you will do more of your valued activities

BA helps you plan your valued activities. You should start where you currently feel comfortable. Then you gradually increase your activity. You gradually take on more challenging activities.

Focus on doing, not feelings

We can't always wait to feel better before taking action. Especially when we feel stuck, we must take action to feel better. Think about exercising or going to a class. Usually, after we have taken action we are glad that we did.

BA helps us focus less on how we feel. You will focus more on your goals and action plans. BA works when you take action, even if you don't feel like acting at that time. This is a different way to think about things, but it works.

Okay, so enough talking about BA. Time to get started!!

Tell people you are working on a program to get more active and to feel better

Tell your family and friends that you have a goal to get more active. Ask them to help you be more active. Ask them to not let you avoid activities.

The Behavioral Activation – Rehabilitation Treatment Program

In this program you will be visited, at home, by a Physical Therapist (PT) and an Occupational Therapist (OT). The PT will develop a program to get you stronger, safely in your home. This program will combine BA with an App. The OT will help you set goals for your daily activities. These goals will focus on your most valued activities. These goals will be put into the App so you can track your progress. This part of the App will be called the "Progress Tracker".



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Every week, you will receive a text message or email (your choice) reminding you to use the Progress Tracker on the App. You tell us how you are doing with meeting your goals. And you tell us the kinds of problems you are having with your goals. You will always receive instant responses providing advice and support. Also, if you are having a lot of trouble meeting your goals, the OT will call you to help. We want to support your efforts. We want you to be successful and improve your mood. We want you to get back into the swing of life!

One more thing; you can choose one of those family members or friends we talked about earlier to be your study-partner. We hope that they can help you in your recovery and assist you in reaching your goals. They will get all of your text messages or emails.

We hope you will enjoy being part of the BA-Rehab Program.



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