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# Behavioural Activation (BA) is a treatment that aims to increase rewarding experiences through structured activity.

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## Source

Mitchell, AEP. (2019). *Depression and behaviourism. Beating 'the blues' with activity. Psychology Review, vol. 24, issue 3*

Behavioural Activation (BA) is a structured treatment that aims to activate people in ways that increase rewarding experiences. The basic premise “is that we all are all sensitive to positive reinforcers, those things that give us pleasure, but when these are lost, the result is depression. To re-establish contact with positive reinforcers, we should schedule activity to find lost sources of activity that can give us positive experiences”. <sup>[1]</sup>

BA can be a treatment alone or used alongside other therapies or treatments. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) can help deal with unhelpful thoughts associated with depression and their impact on our mood. On the other hand, behavioural activation “helps us understand how behaviours influence our feelings. It is a tried and tested technique for breaking free of the ‘downward spiral’ of unhelpful behaviours.” <sup>[1]</sup>

## Key steps in breaking the cycle of depression

Step 1: Notice the relationship between types of activities and your mood

Step 2: Schedule more of the ‘up moods’ over the coming week

Step 3: Balance pleasure and achievement-based activities

Step 4: Reward yourself

The present behavioural activation definition <sup>[2]</sup> defines BA as a separate but fundamental component of cognitive behavioural therapy. However, when applied intensively using behavioural principles, it can also be used as an independent treatment. A related definition defines the core principles of CBT <sup>[3]</sup>, and a related article <sup>[4]</sup> investigates the effects of a short skills course on cognitive behavioural training for non-CBT therapists.

## References

1. <sup>a, b</sup>Mitchell, AEP. (2019). *Depression and behaviourism. Beating 'the blues' with activity.. Psychology Review, vol. 24,*

issue 3 .

2. <sup>^</sup> Mitchell, AEP. (2024). Behavioural Activation (BA) is a treatment that aims to increase rewarding experiences through structured activity. doi: 10.32388/9RARGA.
3. <sup>^</sup> Andrew Edward Paul Mitchell. (2023). Core Competences in Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy. doi:10.32388/6ceqmu.
4. <sup>^</sup> Andrew Edward Paul Mitchell. (2015). The Effectiveness of a Short Cognitive Behavioral Training Course on Awareness, Knowledge, and Transferability of Competencies in Clinical Practice. *Perspect Psychiatr Care*, vol. 53 (2), 87-94. doi:10.1111/ppc.12140.