

# Behavioural Activation (BA)

Information for parents and carers

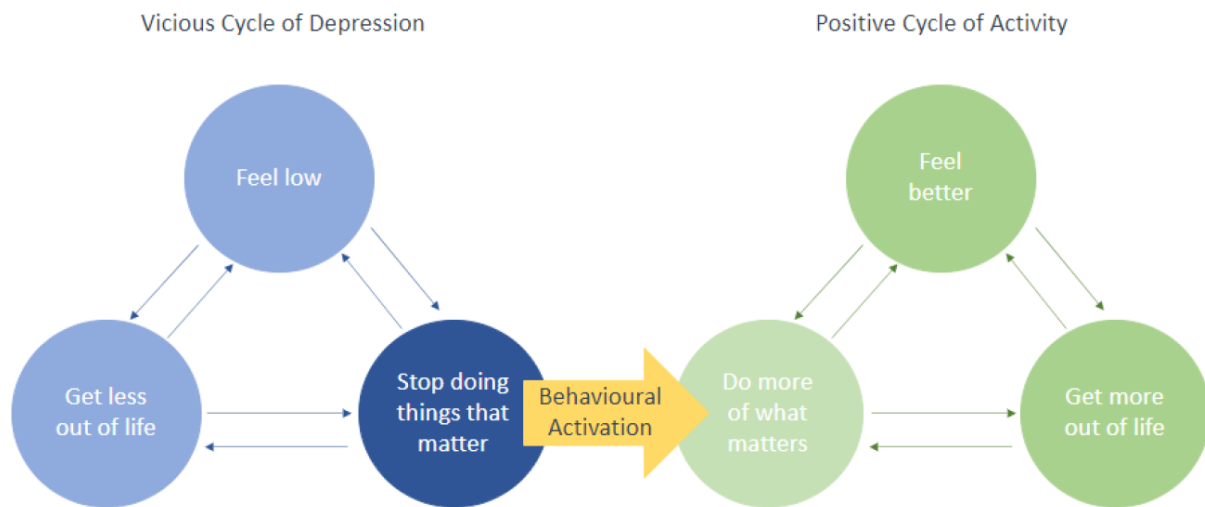
## What is BA?

BA focuses on encouraging children and young people to get more out of life through activities to lift their mood. It is used when they are feeling low.

When they are feeling low in mood, they may find it difficult to carry out everyday activities and so find themselves withdrawing and avoiding these activities. For example, they may avoid seeing friends, stop doing their homework and put off responsibilities because they lack motivation or find them overwhelming.

Initially the pressure could make them feel that avoiding the activity would be a better solution, however, the longer they avoid it, the more difficult it becomes to build the routine up again.

# Breaking the cycle



The vicious cycle of depression (low mood) and positive cycle of activity above, is used to show how the more we do that we value, the more we enjoy life.

We use BA to highlight these activities to support people in getting the most out of what they enjoy.

# How does it work?

When feeling low, the tendency to do less in the longer term means that things that have to be done tend to pile up and the young person may find they are doing less of the things they enjoyed. They also have more time to dwell on negative thoughts. Over time, this lack of activity can make their mood worse rather than better. Then of course, they are likely to want to do even less and this makes them feel even worse – it is a downward spiral (or a black hole as some people describe it).

BA tries to break this cycle by encouraging them to start doing things again – a little at a time. This puts the spiral into reverse and things start to improve. By taking small steps they will start to feel better and have more energy and more confidence to take the next step. Best of all, they are the one who will set the pace, and they are the person who will decide what to do and when.

# How can I support my child?

The important thing is being open to talk. Encourage your child to discuss their logs with you if they are willing and speak through what they got from them.

This may even help them make the important connections. Ensure your child is doing the homework. A big part of BA is the work outside of sessions. It is important that the young person completes this to get the most out of their intervention.



Hull Mental Health  
Support Teams

[howareyoufeeling.org.uk](http://howareyoufeeling.org.uk)