



Breaking the Cycle of Depression: Why Schedule Activities?

AIMS CENTER

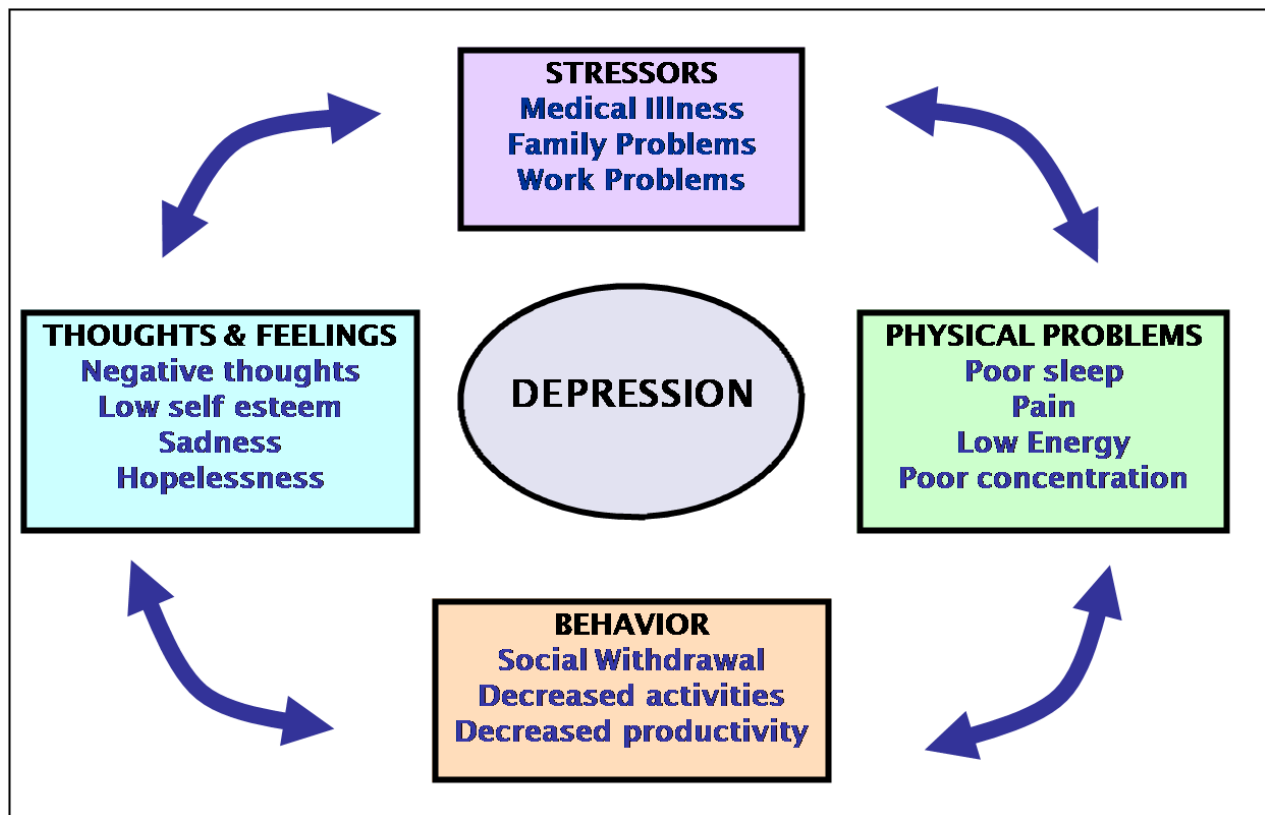
W UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

Why scheduling activities is important

- When people are stressed or depressed they often stop doing activities that they used to enjoy and that helped them feel good.

Spiraling Down

- It works both ways – the less you do the more depressed you feel and the more depressed you feel the less you do.



Spiraling Up

- By doing more pleasant activities, even if you don't initially feel like it, you can break the vicious cycle of depression.

Types of pleasant activities

- Pleasant activities are ones that make you feel better because they are rewarding, meaningful, inspiring, relaxing or fun.
- They don't have to be special activities. In fact, most are everyday activities.

Remembering pleasant activities

- When a person is depressed, it's hard for them to remember that any activities have ever been pleasant.
- Ask them what it is that they used to enjoy, no matter how long ago.



Positive Activities for Behavioral Activation

Create a list of activities that you find rewarding. Rate each activity in two categories: How easy the activity will be for you to complete, and how rewarding it is (with 10 being very easy or rewarding, and 1 being difficult or not at all rewarding).

| ACTIVITY | EASE (1-10) | REWARD (1-10) |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| <i>Example:</i> <i>Go for a walk.</i> | 9 | 6 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Weekly Schedule for Behavioral Activation

Create a schedule of activities that will lead to you having positive experiences in your day. If you are feeling depressed or unmotivated, it might be difficult to complete large or complex tasks. If this is the case, start with simple goals and work your way up to more challenging activities.

| DAY | MORNING | AFTERNOON | EVENING |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>Example</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wake by 8 AM</i> • <i>Eat a full breakfast</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Go for a 15 minute walk</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Call a friend</i> • <i>Practice guitar</i> |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |

Activity List

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Write in a journal | Go out for coffee | Watch a movie |
| Watch the sunrise or sunset | Go stargazing | Go swimming |
| Go rock climbing | Go to the beach | Do a puzzle |
| Draw or paint | Play a sport | Play an instrument |
| Cook a meal | Go to the library | Work in a garden |
| Go to a play | Visit neighbors | Listen to the radio or a podcast |
| Go to a concert | Call a friend | Bake a dessert |
| Visit a friend | Volunteer | Visit a tourist attraction |
| Start a blog | Explore somewhere new | Play a board game |
| Research an unfamiliar topic online | Rearrange your furniture | Make origami |
| Read a book | Visit a museum | Go for a bike ride |
| Take photos | Knit | Visit a park |
| Do yoga | Write a poem | Search for new music to listen to |
| Exercise | Hike on a nature trail | Care for a pet |
| Go for a walk | Play cards | Write a letter |
| Meditate | Have a picnic | Try a new food |