




Problem Solving Treatment

How Does it Help?

- When we can't effectively solve stressful problems, this can lead to emotional or behavioral difficulties
 - Focused on a current situation; solve current issues and set future goals that will support well-being
 - Well-suited for primary care and can be done by phone
 - Helps patients gain a sense of mastery and learn skills that can be used again in the future
 - Can help prevent relapse
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Sharing the Concepts of PST with Patient's

- Frame it: Learn a set of skills to solve problems for now and in the future, rather than just discussing problems
- Normalize: We all get stuck in problems and it can help to step back and try to solve from a new angle
- Emphasize: Structure, idea of 'homework,' and follow-ups
- Muscle building: As we practice, skills often become easier

Care Manager Tips: Ask permission and emphasize autonomy



Problem Solve Treatment



1. Compile a list of problems
2. Select and define the problem
3. Establish realistic & achievable goals
4. Brainstorm possible solutions
5. Weigh the pros and cons of each solution
6. Evaluate and choose the solution
7. Implement the solution
8. Evaluate the outcome

Compile List of Problems

1. Job dissatisfaction
2. Isolation from family and friends
3. Loneliness
4. Weight problem
5. Lack of enjoyable activities



1. Select and define the problem

- **#4 - weight problem**
- Explore and clarify the problem
 - Eating unhealthy because no time for shopping and not exercising because lack of structure for exercise
- Break down problem into small manageable parts
 - Focus on diet or exercise – whichever is simpler
- State the problem in a clear and objective form
 - **Lack of exercise**



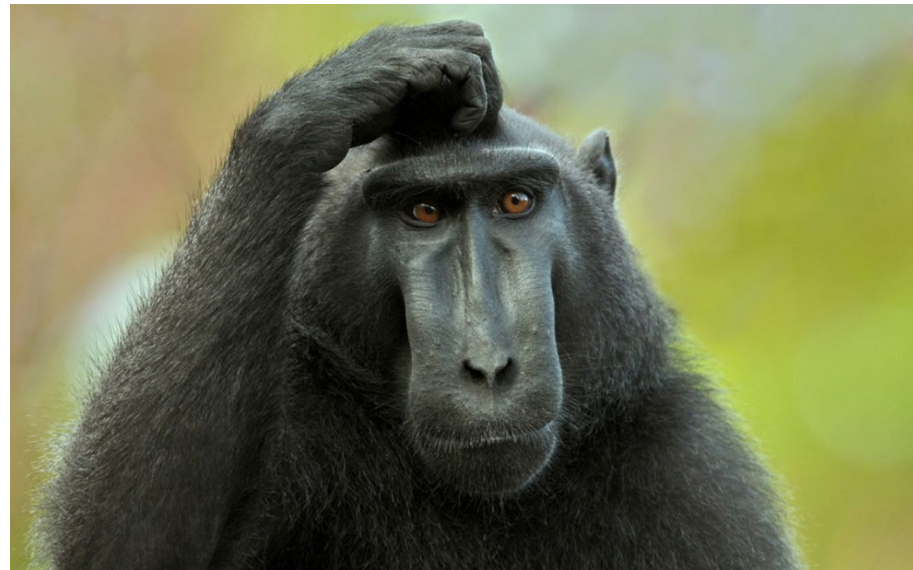
2. Establish realistic & achievable goals

- Exercise every morning at 5am
- Exercise everyday
- Exercise 5 days consecutively next week
- Exercise 2 days during the next week



3. Brainstorm multiple solutions

- Join a health club
- Establish an exercise program at home
- Buy exercise equipment
- Take walks with friends and co-workers



4. Pros and Cons

- **Join a health club**

- Pros
 - Exercise equipment readily available
 - Trainers on hand
 - Option during bad weather
- Cons
 - Membership fee
 - Time to go to and from club
 - Prefers a partner
 - Self-conscious



4. Pros and Cons

- **Taking walks with friends and co-workers**

- Pros

- More fun to exercise with others
- Company of others is motivating
- Presence of others increases safety
- No cost involved
- Can walk during lunch

- Cons

- Has to find a partner
- Coordinate with others



Review of progress during previous week:

Rate how satisfied you feel with your effort (0 – 10) (0 = Not at all; 10 = Extremely): ____

Mood (0-10): ____

1. Problem:

2. Goal:

3. Solutions:

4. Pros vs. Cons (Effort, Time, Money, Emotional Impact, Involving Others)

a)	a) Pros (+)	a) Cons (-)
b)	b) Pros (+)	b) Cons (-)
c)	c) Pros (+)	c) Cons (-)
d)	d) Pros (+)	d) Cons (-)
e)	e) Pros (+)	e) Cons (-)

PST Worksheet



5. Evaluate and choose the solution

- **Taking walks with friends and co-workers**
- Lack of money
- Low motivation exercising alone



6. Implement the solution

- Committed to start walking next Monday
- Speak with co-workers about their interest in walking
- Find a common time to walk
- Will buy walking shoes this weekend
- Goal changed to 3 days per week due to meetings



7. Evaluate the outcome

Session 2:

- Follow-up on action plan:
 - Arranged to walk lunch hour with two co-workers
 - Walked on 2 days the first week
 - Walked on 1 day the second week
- Compliment on successes
- Analyze failure to meet goal:
 - Overlooked bi-weekly lunch meeting at work
 - Meetings scheduled too close to lunch
- Problem-solve obstacles:
 - Won't schedule clients past 11:30am
 - Skip walking on bi-weekly meeting days





Facilitate Problem-solving

Modify patient's perceptions and beliefs

Patient's experience using problem-solving model

Review of progress, highlight of successes

Problems are a normal, predictable part of life

Everyone has the ability to solve most problems

Negative emotional/physical symptoms are cues

- <https://youtu.be/g7xzPDZEr6c>

Behavioral Activation

Behavioral Activation

- Evidence based
- Focused on “external” factors rather than internal deficits of individuals
- Time sensitive



What is Behavioral Activation?

- Structured, brief psychosocial approach
- Based on premise that problems in vulnerable individuals' lives and behavioral responses reduce ability to experience positive reward from their environments
- Aims to systematically increase activation such that patients may experience greater contact with sources of reward in their lives and solve life problems
- Focuses directly on activation and on processes that inhibit activation, such as escape and avoidance behaviors and ruminative thinking



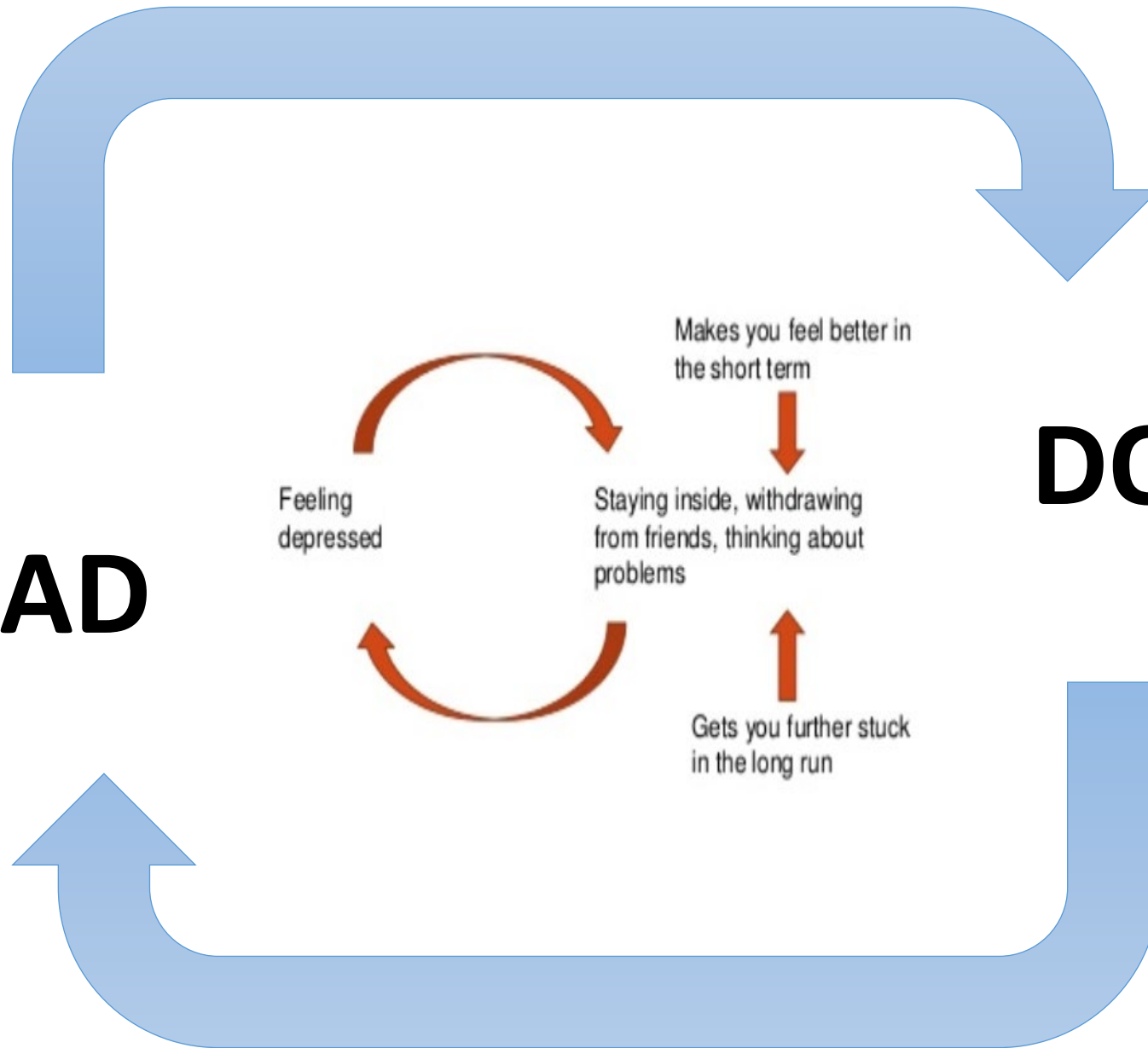
When Do I use BA?



- Moderate to severe depression
- When patient lists too few pleasurable activities as a problem
- When patient's problem is outside of their control
- When the solution to patient's problem is noxious
- When patient insists they have no problems to work on

FEEL BAD

DO LESS



Activity Monitoring

An Important First Step!

- In order to know how to fix a problem, we need to know what's going on!
 - While it doesn't resolve the depression, it can create understanding (the first step)
- To many, this might feel meticulous or unnecessary
 - However, people tend to learn a lot about themselves.

Month: _____

Activity Log						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes:

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Tips:

- Provide worksheets
- Documentation can be simple
- Complete for ~1 week
- Review worksheet together

[Behavioral Activation Worksheet](#)



**FEEL A LITTLE BIT
BETTER**

**DO A LITTLE
BIT MORE**

INSIDE-OUT

Motivation must come first.

**“As soon as I feel motivated,
I’ll go for that walk I’ve been
meaning to take.”**

OUTSIDE-IN

**Motivation follows
action.**

**“I really don’t feel like it,
but I told myself I’d take
that walk.”**

Explore Values & Priorities

- What are you doing more or less of since (you lost your job, began dealing with chronic pain, got out of a relationship)?
- What are your goals/values?
- What do you see other people doing that you wish you could?
- What is the relationship between specific activities/life contexts/problems and mood?
- Explore what is getting in the way of acting differently or feeling better.

Values

- Our values reflect what we find meaningful in life. They are what you care about, deep down, and what you consider to be important.
- They reflect how we want to engage with the world, with the people around us, and with ourselves.
- Values are different from goals. Goals can be achieved whereas values are more like directions that we want to head in.

Values

Connecting activities to values can provide more positive reinforcement over time (and an urge to stick with it) than randomly selected activities



It can be helpful to have patients think through different *life areas*, and then consider their values, e.g.:

Spirituality

Physical
well-being

Family
relationships

Emotional
health

Employment



Examples of Values

Family relations

- Work on current relationships
- Spend time with family
- Take an active role in raising my children
- Maintain consistent healthy communication

Marriage/couples/intimate relationships

- Establish a sense of safety and trust
 - Give and receive affection
 - Spend quality time with my partner
 - Show my partner how much I appreciate them
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Pleasure

This includes activities that we enjoy just for the sake of the activity itself (there is typically no greater goal or learning attached)

Hobbies, games, nature, friends, and some sensory activities (e.g. a warm bath)

Mastery

- Skill development in a particular area
- Example areas include career, sports, learning an instrument, or art



<u>Pleasure</u>	<u>Mastery</u>
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____

<u>Valued Activities</u>
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Work together to create a “Master List” of activities. This will help prepare for the next step: Activity Planning!

Don't Forget to Follow UP!

- Checking in communicates importance and value
- In the case of success, praising efforts can be very reinforcing and rewarding
- In the case of falling short:
 - This can be hard, and it's also okay! Try not to get discouraged
 - Opportunity to troubleshoot further:
 1. "What got in the way?"
 2. "What might work better?"
 3. "How is this activity goal feeling to you? Would you like to modify?"
- Now what?
 - This is a systematic, gradual process – keep scheduling!
 - Continue doing the things that worked
 - Incorporate new activity goals to keep it fresh and to graduate up

Questions?