



UW PACC

Psychiatry and Addictions Case Conference

UW Medicine | Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION

‘How can I use Behavioral Activation strategies to treat depression in 5 minutes?’

CHRISTOPHER R. DECOU, PhD

UW PSYCHIATRY & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
HARBORVIEW INJURY PREVENTION & RESEARCH CENTER



GENERAL DISCLOSURES

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SPEAKER DISCLOSURES

No conflicts of interest to report.

OBJECTIVES

1. Case example
2. Addiction & Depression
3. Behavioral Activation overview
4. Behavioral Activation principles
5. Brief interventions using BA
6. Common pitfalls
7. Key takeaways
8. Questions/comments

CASE EXAMPLE

41 y/o male, identifies as gay, currently single

6 months abstinent from methamphetamine following daily use for more than 5 years

Significant symptoms of depression

Job search

Housing requirements

Basic Hygiene

ADDICTION & DEPRESSION

What do people with addictions and/or depression do with their time?

ADDICTION & DEPRESSION

- Decreased contact w/ primary reinforcers
- Reciprocal maintaining factors
 - Est. 10-60% lifetime Alcohol use disorder among MDD patients (Sullivan et al., 2005)
- Avoidance coping
 - Substance use, social withdrawal, procrastination

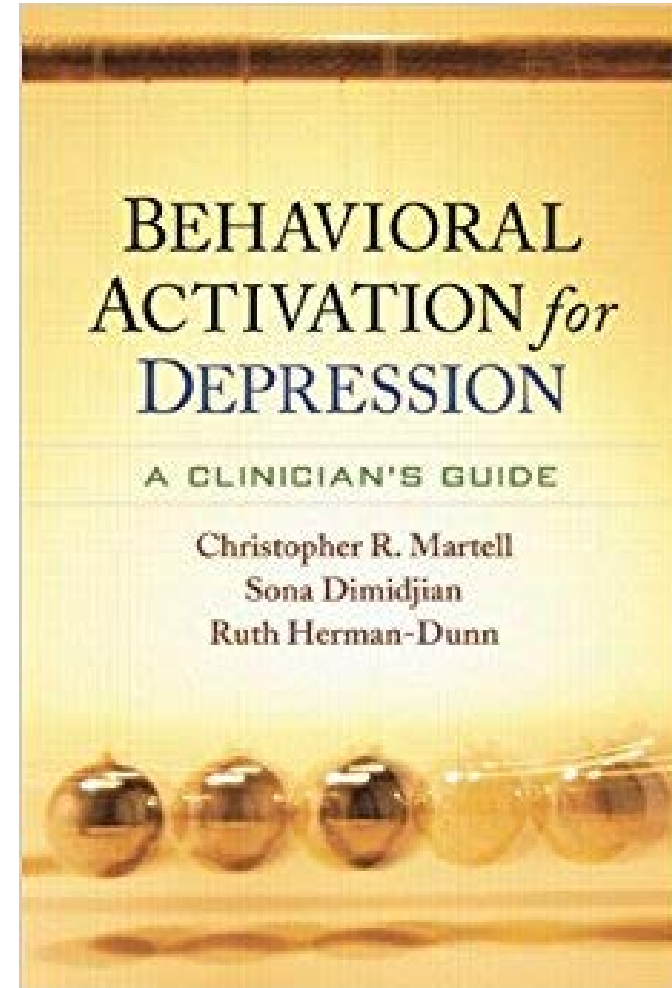
“...begin to act, even when mood and motivation are low...”





BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION

- Empirically-supported, short-term psychotherapy
- Connecting people with activities that matter to them
- Reducing escape/avoidance that maintains depression



BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION PRINCIPLES

1. Key to how people feel is what they do.
2. Short-term coping can keep people stuck.
3. What happens before behavior matters.
4. Activities should follow a plan, not a mood.
5. It is easier to start small.
6. Choose activities that are naturally reinforcing.
7. Provider acts as a coach.
8. All results are useful (value in the attempt).
9. "Don't just talk, Do!"
10. Troubleshoot in advance.

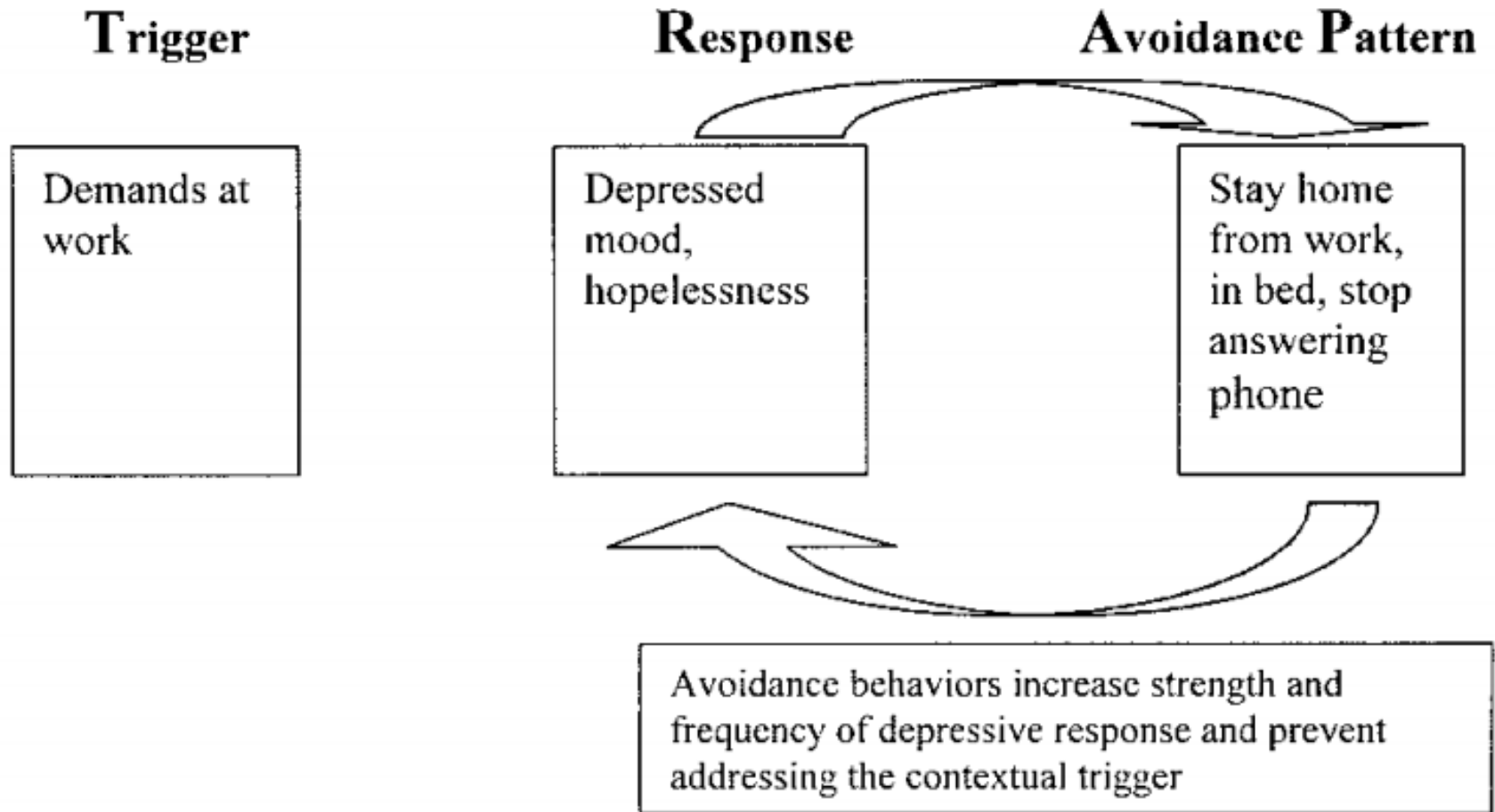
(Martell, Dimidjian, & Hermann-Dunn, 2014)

BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION PRINCIPLES

1. Key to how people feel is what they do.
2. **Short-term coping** can keep people stuck.
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TRAP – “ACTING INSIDE-OUT”



(Jacobson, Martell, & Dimidjian, 2001)

TRAC – “ACTING OUTSIDE IN”

Trigger

Demands at work

Response

Depressed mood, hopelessness

Alternative Coping

“Approach” behaviors using graded tasks



Alternative coping behaviors block avoidance patterns, break the feedback loop with the depressive response, and allow for the possibility of modifying the contextual trigger

ACT DIFFERENT TO FEEL BETTER

- Start small
- Incremental & collaborative
- Exhaustive & molecular
- Activity scheduling/planning, Troubleshooting
- Experimentation/Exploration

COMMON PITFALLS

- Too much, too quick, too complicated
- Only arbitrary reinforcers
- Any version of “just do it!”

BACK TO OUR CASE...

- What short-term coping is problematic?
- TRAP or TRAC?
- What “outside-in” behavior can we help scaffold in 5 minutes?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Start small (build a ramp).
- Outside-in, not Inside-out.
- Put something in writing at once (i.e., mobile device), & troubleshoot in advance.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Christopher R. DeCou, Ph.D.
decou@uw.edu