

Managing Big Emotions and Behavioral Activation

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Behavioral Activation Activity List

Below are some ideas for fun activities to boost your mood. Check off the ones you think you might enjoy. See the following pages for descriptions of the activities.

- Read a book
- Make a safe obstacle course
- Go on a walk
- Play a musical instrument
- Draw a picture
- Create a crossword puzzle from learned sight words
- Pretend to jump rope
- Do a word search
- Watch a movie
- Do jumping jacks
- Listen to music
- Do a virtual museum tour
- Have a dance party
- Do a body scan
- Do yoga
- Practice mindfulness
- Look at pictures
- Make slime
- Bake
- Write a story
- Make a collage
- Practice mindful eating
- Play a board game
- Play "I'm going on a picnic"
- Text or call a friend
- Do a math scavenger hunt
- Prepare a skit from a provided prompt and perform for your family
- Sticky note scavenger hunt
- Play freeze dance
- Make a card for someone
- Go for a bike ride
- Do a color hunt
- Write in your journal
- Play video games
- Go to the park
- Cook
- Use a toy washing bin
- Do crab walk races
- Take a bath
- Paint a picture
- Sing
- Pretend you're an animal
- Make a gift for someone
- Do a guided meditation
- Play "I Spy" Bingo
- Make and use mindfulness sticky notes
- Play Simon Says
- Write a poem
- Play with a pet
- Play a game online with friends

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Mindfulness Activities	
Games that bring our attention to the moment	<p>“I’m Going on a Picnic”</p> <p>A person begins the game and says, “I’m going on a picnic, and I’m going to bring [something that starts with the letter A]. The next person in line must remember what the person before them said and come up with their answer using the following letter of the alphabet.</p> <p>“I Spy” Bingo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ On a Bingo board, write in everyday items found around a home.■ Mark an ‘X’ on the Bingo board if you can see that item.
Guided Meditation	On YouTube or a phone app, complete a guided meditation. A guided meditation is a meditation that is described by a narrator.
Body Scan	On YouTube or a phone app, complete a body scan meditation. The purpose of the body scan is to pay attention to what the body is feeling.
Mindful Eating: Journal your Observations	A writing activity that allows participants to explore the senses and immerse themselves fully in an eating activity. Have participants experience what they are eating through the five senses and specifically note their observations.
Mindfulness Sticky Notes	Write mindfulness activities on sticky notes and post them around the house or apartment. As you go about your day and notice the sticky notes, complete the activity (e.g., do 5 deep breaths and focus only on your breathing).
Toy-Washing Bin	Let your kids wash their plastic toys. Add tear-free bubbles, sponges, towels and other supplies.

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Movement/ Exercise Activities	
Yoga	On YouTube or a phone app, participate in yoga for a specified amount of time.
Dance party	On YouTube, a phone app, or from your music library, listen to music and dance for a certain amount of time.
Pretend to jump rope	Pretend to jump over an invisible rope for a specified amount of time.
Jumping Jacks	<p>Jumping Jacks are an exercise performed by jumping to a position with the legs spread wide and the hands touching overhead, and then returning to a position with the feet together and the arms at the sides.</p> <p>Do this for a specific amount of time or in intervals for a certain amount of time.</p>
Pretend animal movements	Participants are prompted to act like a stated animal. By using your imagination, pretend to be that animal through body movement.
Freeze Dance	Participants dance until the music stops and then you freeze. Continue to dance when the music turns on again.
Create a safe obstacle course	Participants should look around the house for items that can set up the course. Items such as blankets, chairs, rope, towels can be used safely and creatively.
Go on a walk or run	Spend some time outdoors with an adult. Run or walk around for a specific time limit.

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Competitive Games

Simon Says	One player takes the role of “Simon” and issues physical action commands to the other players. These commands should be followed only when prefaced with the phrase “Simon says”.
Classic board game	Play a board game with a partner or group.
Crab walk races	Crawl in a “crab” position and race someone at home or digitally.
Color hunt	Participants are given a designated color. Each participant is asked to find as many items of that color within a time-limit.

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Problem Solving Games

Math
Scavenger
Hunt

Using a board like a Bingo board, write different prompts. Make it challenging and encourage students to find all the items. Prompts may include: “find something that is a triangle”, “find something that is longer than 3 inches”, “what time is it?”, and “what’s the temperature?”

The first to finish is the winner.

Prepare a
skit from a
provided
prompt and
perform for
your class

The skit can be fun or related to an educational topic. Provide time for student preparation, teacher review of the skit, and performance.

Create a
crossword
puzzle from
learned sight
words

Explain what a crossword is and provide an example. Ask students to submit and then create a workbook of all submitted crossword puzzles.

Sticky note
scavenger hunt

Draw shapes, letters, numbers, words or math problems on sticky notes and hide them around the house for your child to find. Then, have the child match them up on a “key” that hangs on the wall.

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My Daily Activity Schedule

The Wellness Toolkit Behavioral Activation Tracker

Instructions:

1. Make a list of the activities you find most enjoyable!
2. Decide what activities you want to do each morning and evening.
3. Complete a feelings check-in, both pre- and post-activity.
 - Rate how happy you are feeling and note the change in happiness after a fun and enjoyable activity.
4. Refer to the Understanding Feelings, Feeling Intensity lesson if you need help.
 - A rating of 1 = a little bit of happiness
 - A rating of 10 = A LOT of happiness
5. Remember that positive behaviors lead to positive emotions!

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
How are you feeling pre-activity?	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:
My morning activity							
How are you feeling post-activity?	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:
How are you feeling pre-activity?	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:
My evening activity							
How are you feeling post-activity?	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:	Rate how happy you feel on a scale from 1-10:

Cycle of an Emotion

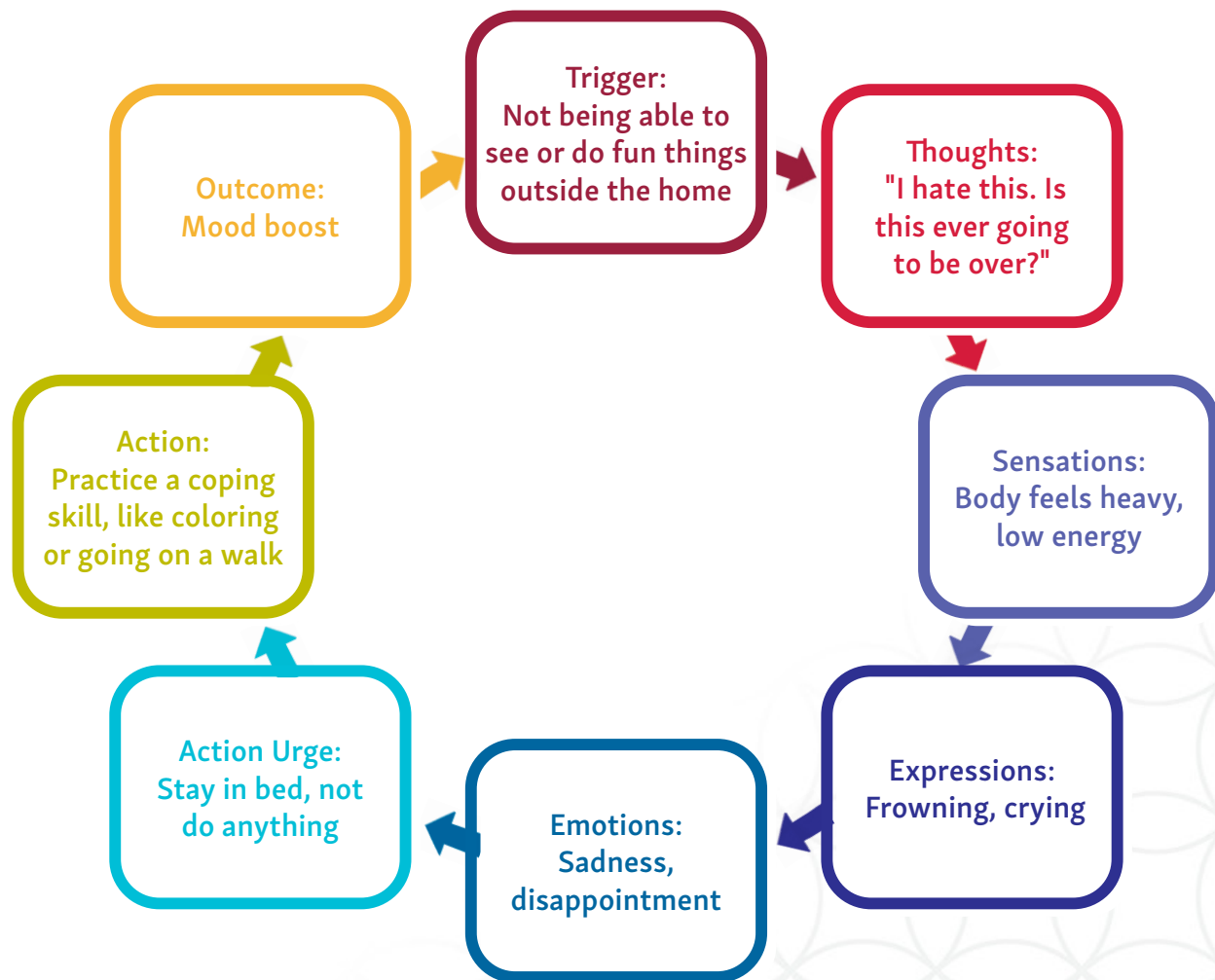


Adapted from Rathus, J. H., & Miller, A. L. (2014). DBT Skills Manual for Adolescents. Guilford Publications.

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Cycle of an Emotion

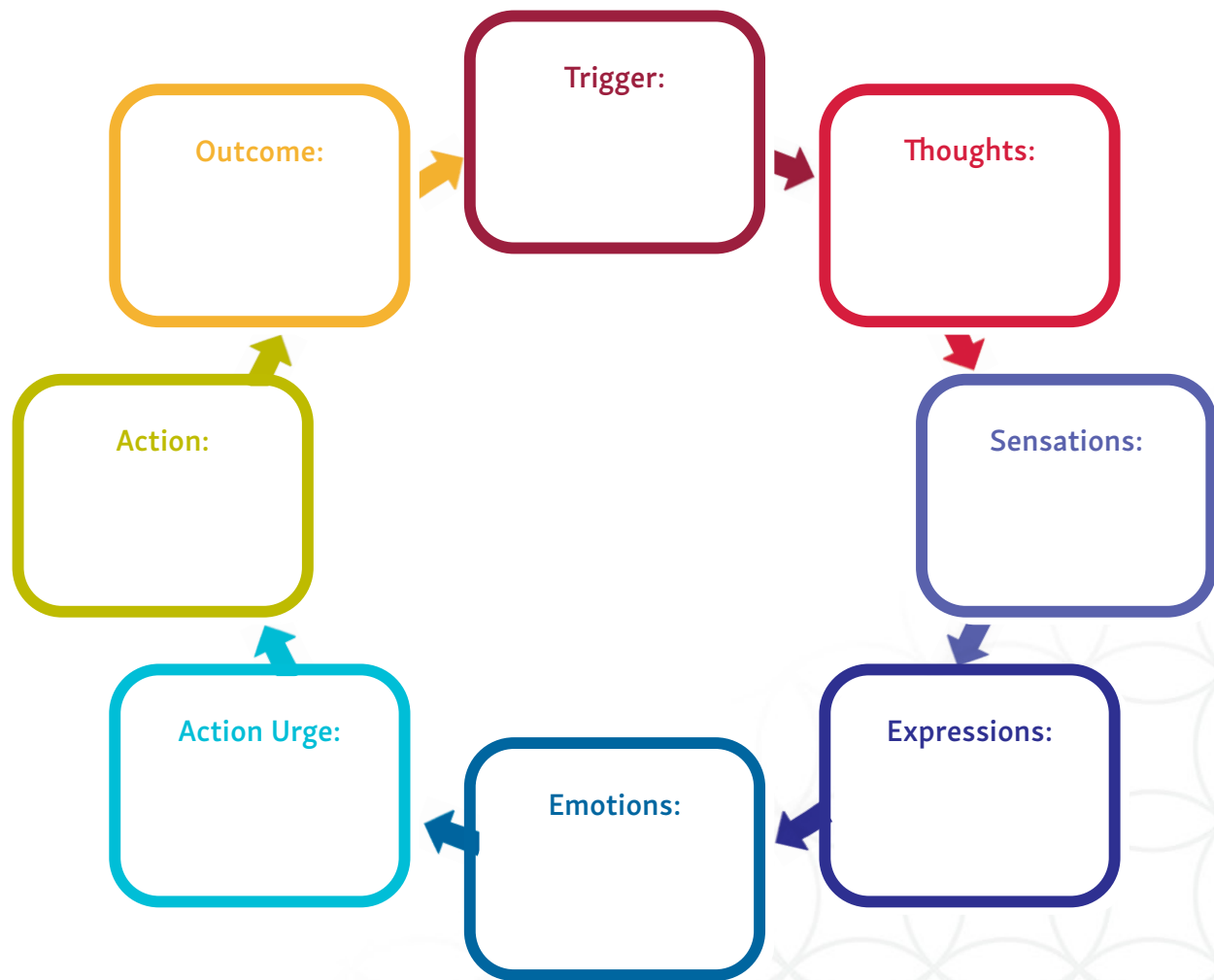
Example: Sadness



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Cycle of an Emotion

Practice: Anger



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What is in Your Self Soothe Kit?

Are you feeling overwhelmed? Angry? Upset? Out of control? Help calm your mind and body down by using your portable self-soothe kit to zero in on your 5 senses, using some of your favorite things to feel better.

Step 1: Find 1 small to medium-size portable bag that can fit in your backpack (ex: small pouch, pencil case, or Ziploc bag, etc.)

Step 2: Select 1 or more favorite items from each of the five senses to put in your kit (or have easy access to, such as on your phone or close by)

5 Sense	One thing that makes me calm and relaxed is:	Stumped on what to pick? Here are some suggestions:
See		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Calming colors■ A relaxing scene■ Small pic of my favorite person, family member, athlete; or place to visit
Hear		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Listen to rainstorm; ocean sounds■ Recordings of funny jokes or comedians■ Happy or soothing music
Smell		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Good-smelling hand lotion■ Small perfume bottle■ A candle
Taste		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Pieces of your favorite candy or other treat■ Gum, mints■ Tea
Touch		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Soft piece of satin ribbon or soft fabric■ A small pom pom or pouf■ A small feather■ A stress ball■ Slime

These strategies are drawn from evidence-based interventions including:
Linehan, M. M. (2014). DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets. Guilford Publications.
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Guess the Outcome

Think through what these situations make you want to do (**action urge**) and how you might handle them (**action**) so that a good outcome occurs. When you can think through what **outcomes** might occur based on your actions, you are more likely to make a good choice!

Trigger	Action Urge (What you want to do)	Action (What you actually do)	Outcome (Based on the action you chose)
Your brother steals the ipad when it's your turn.	Hit him or yell at him.	Walk away and practice belly breaths to calm yourself down. Then calmly ask for it back.	You won't get in trouble. He will be more likely to listen.
Your mom says you can't go over to your friend's house.			
You have to finish your school assignment, but you don't want to.			
Your sister calls you a mean name.			
You need help with a math problem, but your dad is busy with work and can't help you right now.			
Your grandma says you have to turn off the TV even though your show isn't finished yet.			

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Managing Intense Emotions

Everyone has strong urges that are caused by big, intense, and uncomfortable emotions, but they are not always the most helpful ones to use. The key is to ride out the urge, or **SURF THE WAVE**, using some helpful skills to feel better and gain more self-control.

Remember: No feeling lasts forever, and when we ride the wave out, we often realize the feeling and action urge is over sooner than we think.

Here are some helpful ways to ride out big emotions and feel better:

Count to 10 (or more) to slow down and cool off.

Stop and Think: Visualize a stop sign to remind you to slow down, like hitting the pause button on a video game.

Use Milder Words: Using milder words to describe how you feel lessens your anger and can help you feel better. Example: **“I have the worst mom in the world!”** vs. **“I’m mad that my mom grounded me.”**

Take a Break from the Feeling: Pay attention to the things you enjoy instead of focusing on what is causing the intense emotion.

- Play music, watch something funny, color, journal, read
- Create a different image in your head — visualize your happy place
- Take break and walk
- Meditate or practice other forms of mindfulness
- Splash cold water on your face, or take a hot or cold shower
- Do something nice for someone else
- Challenge your brain with a puzzle or word search

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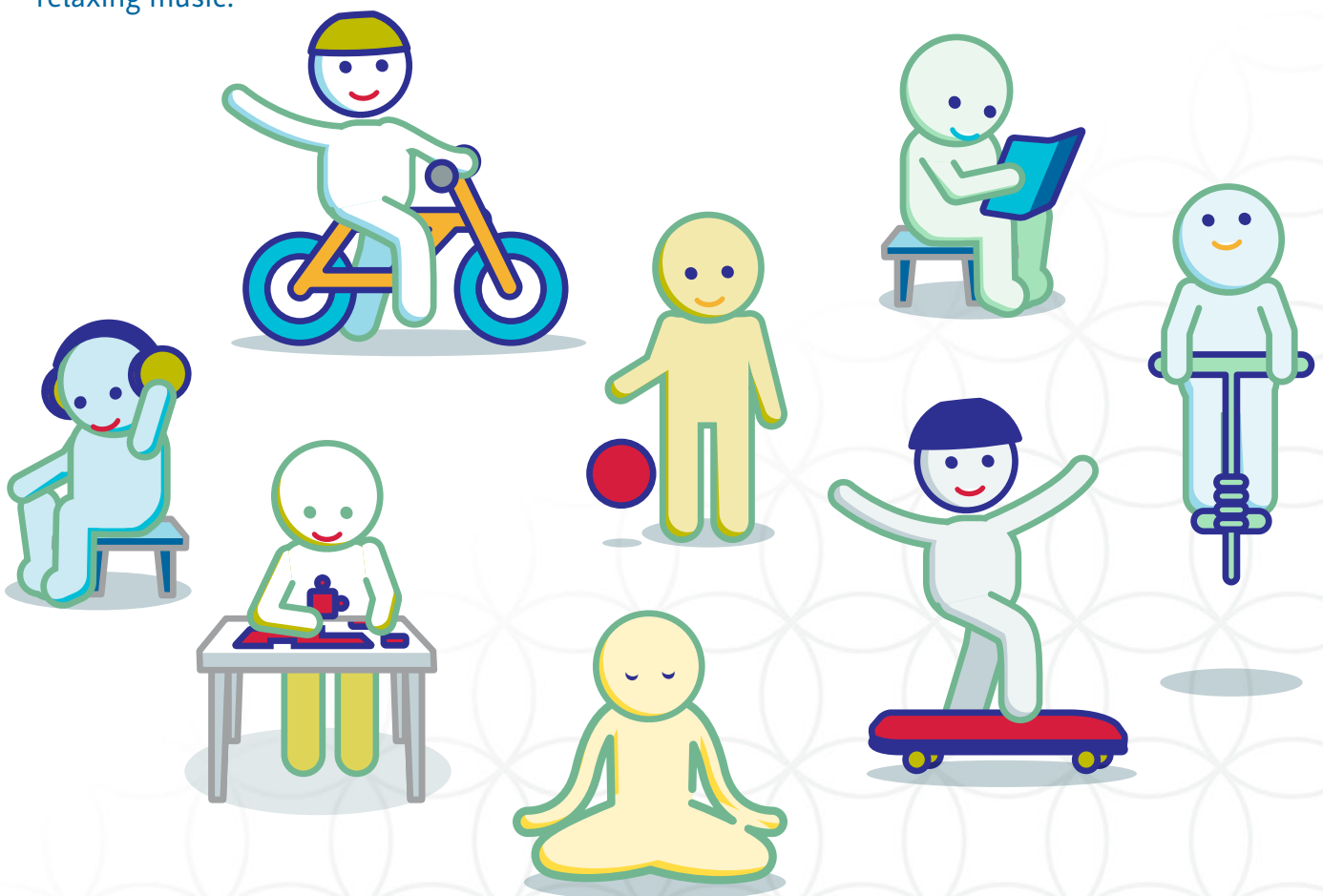
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Managing Intense Emotions

Do Belly Breaths: Inhale for 3 seconds, exhale for 6 seconds. Try to breathe from your belly and not from your chest. Breathe slowly and deeply.

Move Your Body: Channel your action urges into exercise. Do jumping jacks, pretend to jump rope, run around, have a dance party, etc. Exercise until your body feels calm.

Be Gentle with Yourself: Do something soothing for yourself like playing with slime, hugging a stuffed animal or warm blanket, stretching your body, or listening to relaxing music.



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