

## Behavioral Activation

If you track your activities and feelings of depression, you may discover that when you are depressed, you are less active. For this reason, an important part of recovering from depression is to increase the number of activities that you do each day. Even more important than just the number of activities are the types and quality of the activities that we do. In general, we get the biggest mood boost from activities that bring us pleasure and a sense of accomplishment, that lead to approaching rather than avoiding life's challenges, and that are connected to what we value most. Each of us needs to discover the right personal mix of these different types of activities to improve our mood. This section of the book helps you discover the right mix for you.

You can use an Activity Record to track your activities and discover how they affect your mood. When you keep this record for one week, it will help you identify what you are doing when you feel most and least depressed. In addition to identifying your activities and moods, the Activity Record can be used as a guide to see what changes in your behavior might help you feel better.

Look at Ben's filled-in Activity Record in Figure 13.2. Notice that Ben wrote only a word or two to describe his activity – just enough to remind him what he was doing when he looked back at the record. When he did more than one activity in a time period, he wrote down the one or two most important ones (e.g., “walk,” “breakfast”), or a word that described the overall experience (“shopping”).

Although Ben thought the Activity Record would be hard to keep, he found that he needed just a few seconds each hour to put down an activity and a depression rating. Notice that on Thursday from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M., when his depression changed a lot during the hour, he wrote both a low and a high rating to show the change.

Write in each box: (1) Activity. (2) Mood ratings (0–100). (Mood I am rating: Depression)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6–7 A.M.	Wake up 60	Wake up 70	Wake up 60	Wake up 50	Wake up 60	Wake up 40	Wake up 60
7–8 A.M.	Shower, dress 60	Lie in bed 80	Shower, dress 50	Shower, dress 50	Dress 60	Shower, dress 30	Dress 60
8–9 A.M.	Walk, breakfast 40	Get dressed 80	Breakfast 50	Breakfast 40	Breakfast 40	Breakfast 20	Serve breakfast at church 20
9–10 A.M.	Golf 40	Breakfast 80	Hardware store 40	Walk 30	Clean garage 40	Drive to Bob's 20	Walk 30
10–11 A.M.	Golf 40	Sit in chair 80	Fix door 30	Phone call (Bob) 30–60	Clean garage 30	Visit with Bob and kids 10	Shopping 40
11 A.M.–12 noon	Golf 60	Read 80	Fix door 30	Talk with Sylvie 60	Clean garage 30	Look at photos on the computer with Greg 10	Shopping 30
12 noon–1 P.M.	Lunch with Sylvie 40	Lunch with Sylvie 70	Lunch with Sylvie 20	Lunch 60	Lunch 20	Lunch 0	Lunch out 20
1–2 P.M.	Shopping with Sylvie 40	Wash dishes 80	Wash dishes 30	Therapy 50	Sweep garage 20	Go to park 0	Drive around with Sylvie 20
2–3 P.M.	Shopping 40	Sit in chair 80	Walk 20	Call Bert 40	Walk with Sylvie 20	Play soccer with grandkids 0	Home with Sylvie – relax 20

3-4 P.M.	Shopping 50	Pay bills 80	Read mail 20	Clean up workbench 40	Read news online, write email 20	Walk Bob's dog 0	Relax with Sylvie 10
4-5 P.M.	Unpack shopping bags 50	Drive Sylvie to doctor's office 70	Help cook 20	Help cook 40	Help cook 20	Drive home 10	Make dinner 10
5-6 P.M.	Sit in chair 60	Dinner out 60	Dinner with Sylvie 20	Dinner 30	Dinner 20	Dinner 10	Dinner 10
6-7 P.M.	Dinner 60	Walk at shopping mall 60	Wash dishes 20	Wash dishes 30	Wash dishes 20	Wash dishes 10	Wash dishes 10
7-8 P.M.	TV 60	Movie 50	Play cards 20	TV 30	Phone call with Bob 10	Sit in chair 30	TV 20
8-9 P.M.	TV 60	Movie 50	Play cards 20	TV 40	TV 10	Look at photo album 30	TV 20
9-10 P.M.	TV 60	Drive home 50	Talk to Sylvie 20	TV 40	TV 10	Talk to Sylvie 20	TV 20
10-11 P.M.	TV 60	TV 50	TV 20	TV 40	TV 10	TV 30	TV 30
11 P.M.-12 midnight	Bed 70	Bed 60	Bed 20	Bed 60	Bed 10	Bed 30	Bed 20
12 midnight-1 A.M.	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep

FIGURE 13.2. Ben's Activity Record.