**BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVATION**

What is behavioural activation?

Behavioural activation (BA) is when a young person participates in any planned activity, and specifically helps to make participation in that activity enjoyable and personally meaningful [2].

Why is BA important?

BA helps to break unhelpful behavioural patterns such avoidance and withdrawal which are mechanisms thought to underpin some types of anxiety and depression disorders.

Did the research show that BA works?

The team looking at this intervention conducted a literature review, where they identified 23 scientific studies involving 3149 young people. They found that there is evidence to suggest that BA is effective for depression when compared to not getting any treatment. They also found that BA and other similar treatments (such as some types of psychological treatments) both work about the same extent as each other. The authors also found that there was insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of BA for anxiety.

What did young people think about BA?

The researchers found that young people who engaged with BA believed it improved their mood and functioning, and felt that it is helpful because can be customised to a person’s needs, can help a young person feel more in control, and can also improve self-confidence and provide satisfaction.

How could a young person could try BA?

If you are feeling down, sometimes it might help to try to do something that you enjoy. For example, you could do an activity or play a sport, because this might help you feel a bit better in that moment.

Are there any other resources to help with BA?

There are some really helpful ideas for different types of BA, such as going for a walk or playing music, on this website: https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/

References

1. Wellcome. *Report summary: What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression*. 2022; Available from: <https://wellcome.org/reports/what-science-has-shown-can-help-young-people-anxiety-and-depression>.

2. Malik, K., et al., *Behavioral Activation as an ‘active ingredient’ of interventions addressing depression and anxiety among young people: a systematic review and evidence synthesis.* BMC Psychology, 2021. **9**(1): p. 150.