

## ACT Behavioural Strategies for Depression

Depression can make it hard to get moving, but ACT encourages you to take small, meaningful steps that align with your values, even when you don't feel like it. Here's how you can use ACT to take action and build momentum:

### 1. Behavioural Activation: Engaging in Meaningful Activities

Depression often leads to withdrawal and inactivity, which can make things worse. Behavioural activation helps you reconnect with activities that matter to you.

#### Examples and Interventions:

- **Small Steps:** If you value creativity, spend 5 minutes drawing or writing, even if it feels hard.
- **Daily Routine:** Create a simple schedule that includes one activity you enjoy, like walking in nature or listening to music.
- **Values Check:** Ask, "What's one thing I can do today that aligns with my values?" Even small actions, like texting a friend, can make a difference.

### 2. Exposure: Facing Discomfort

Avoiding difficult emotions or situations can keep you stuck. ACT encourages you to face them with openness and curiosity.

#### Examples and Interventions:

- **Emotional Exposure:** If you're feeling sad, allow yourself to sit with the emotion for a few minutes without trying to change it.
- **Activity Exposure:** If you've been avoiding socialising, reach out to a friend for a short chat.

### 3. Committed Action: Taking Value-Driven Steps

Set small, specific goals that align with your values and take consistent action, even when you feel unmotivated.

#### Examples and Interventions:

- **Value-Based Goals:** If you value health, commit to a 10-minute walk three times a week.

- **Break It Down:** If a task feels overwhelming, break it into smaller steps. For example, instead of cleaning the whole house, start with one room.

#### 4. Mindfulness Practices: Staying Present

Mindfulness helps you observe your thoughts and feelings without judgment, reducing their power over you.

##### Examples and Interventions:

- **Mindful Breathing:** Spend 5 minutes focusing on your breath, noticing how it feels to inhale and exhale.
- **Body Scan:** Slowly scan your body from head to toe, noticing any sensations without trying to change them.

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#### Key Takeaway for Depression

Depression can make it feel like you're stuck in a fog, but ACT's behavioural strategies help you take small, meaningful steps forward. By engaging in value-driven activities, facing discomfort, and practicing mindfulness, you can reduce the power of negative thoughts and feelings and build a richer, more fulfilling life.