



BAcPac



Actively beating depression

Get Active Feel Good!

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Jane's case study





JANE'S STORY

Jane's story is about someone who used behavioural activation to help improve her low mood. Once her low mood began to lift she was encouraged to gradually increase her physical activity.

Jane is a thirty three year old mother of two with three main loves in her life. She loves Jason her husband and girls Marsha and Alice, her job as a legal secretary and her garden. The past few years were very good and recently she had given birth to her lovely daughter Alice, finally finished her Open University degree in English Literature and had got her ideal job, as a Personal Assistant to a lawyer in a very successful legal practice. Whilst she loved her job, it had required her to move to the other side of the country and away from her mum, with whom she was very close.

About a year ago, Jane's world was turned upside down when her mother died unexpectedly. She started to feel a lot of guilt, believing that she was selfish for chasing her own dream and thinking that she should have spent more time ensuring her mother got to know Alice. Since that time Jason started to notice that Jane's mood had become very low. She had difficulty sleeping, was not eating well, and no longer doing the things she used to love, such as bathing the girls and pottering around in the garden. At first Jason put this down to the death of Jane's mother. But now a year on he felt things should have improved and finally managed to convince Jane to see her GP.



JANE'S FIRST APPOINTMENT

Following an assessment with Sally, a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP), Jane was identified as having depression.

Sally explained what depression was and then identified how it was linked to Jane's feelings of tiredness, thoughts that she had 'Let everyone down' and could explain why she had given up a lot of things she used to enjoy. Sally also listened to the way in which Jane's difficulties were impacting on her life, and working together they identified some things Jane wanted to get out of treatment.

Sally then introduced something called Behavioural Activation and explained that research has shown it to work well for depression and was recommended by the NHS. She said it helped people to put structure back in their lives by gradually starting to increase everyday activities and by becoming more physically active. Jane really liked the idea of getting physically active again so Sally gave her a self-help programme called 'Get Active; Feel Good!' Sally explained how it would take her through behavioural activation. Her job was to support Jane working through the programme at her speed. Sally then set up a time to see her and requested that she complete a 'My Starting Point Diary' over the course of the next week. This would help them both see how much activity she was currently doing.



What Do You Want to Get Out of Treatment?

The first thing to think about was identifying some things Jane wanted out of treatment.

Today's Date 5th March

Item 1

Give my daughters a bath by myself every night

I can do this now (circle a number):

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

Not at all

Occasionally

Often

Anytime

Today's Date 5th March

Item 2

To do gardening to get it looking as good as it did before

I can do this now (circle a number):

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

Not at all

Occasionally

Often

Anytime

SESSION 2

During the next session Jane and Sally reviewed her 'My Starting Point Diary'.

Jane's Starting Point Diary

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning	What	Work	Work	Phoned in work
	Where			sick
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	In bed feeling
	Where			drained
	Who			
Afternoon	What	Work	Work	In bed feeling
	Where			drained
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	In bed feeling
	Where			drained
	Who			
Evening	What	Watched Television	Fell Asleep	Had a bath
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Went to bed early	Went to bed early	Watched television
	Where			
	Who			
Comments		Felt tired all day	Just wanted to sleep	Very low and
			when I got home	exhausted
			from work	

Jane was alarmed to see how her week mostly consisted of working, watching television and sleeping, and contained very little physical activity. She was also shocked to see that she was hardly spending anytime at all with Jason or the girls. This made Jane feel very sad. However it also helped her realise that she really needed to do something to sort herself out. Jane felt a bit better when Sally said that the way she felt was perfectly normal, and that with Jane's hard work and her support for something called Behavioural Activation they could get on top of her depression.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Work	Work	Watched television	Made breakfast
Work	Work	Walked to shop	Tried to read newspaper
Work	Work	Fell asleep	Made lunch
Work	Work	Walked around garden	Fell asleep
Cooked microwave dinner	Got takeaway	Had a bath	Sat in garden alone
Had a bath	Watched television	Watched television	Went to bed early
Not very productive at work	No work tomorrow, great!	Good to get out and to the shop this morning	The garden really needs work but too overwhelming to do anything

WORKSHEET A

Jane knew a little about Behavioural Activation already as she had read about it in 'Get Active; Feel Good!' but was pleased to go through it again.

Sally started by explaining how most people's lives are made up of three types of activities called routine, necessary and pleasurable. She then helped Jane to identify a few of each and write these in Worksheet A.

Jane was soon able to identify a few activities in each area and Sally suggested that Jane complete the list at home before the next session. Jane was happy to do this but was concerned that some of the activities would be too hard. But Sally helped her to grade them in terms of how difficult they were.

Jane's Worksheet A : Identifying activities

Under each type of activity write down what you want to be able to achieve.

Routine e.g. cooking, cleaning, food shopping	Pleasurable e.g. going out with friends, reading	Necessary e.g. opening letters, paying bills
_____ Cooking proper meals!	_____ Sort my garden out	_____ Need to pay gas bill
_____ Grocery Shopping	_____ Going out with Jason	_____ Car tax need renewing soon
_____ Getting girls bathed	_____ Taking girls to Pleasureland'	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ Going for walks	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____

WORKSHEET B

Jane was asked to write down all the activities identified in Worksheet A, or any new ones she thought of, in terms of how difficult she would find them to do on Worksheet B.

Initially Jane struggled as she found all activities very difficult and put them all in 'The Most Difficult' section. However with some support from Sally she remembered some advice in 'Get Active; Feel Good!' about breaking tasks down into easier ones. Using this advice she was able to break the task 'Sort my garden out' into smaller activities such as 'Plant some daffodil bulbs for the spring' which she felt was far more possible. Using this method Jane was soon able to organise her activities from least to most difficult.

Once Jane knew what she was doing she was encouraged to complete Worksheet B on her own, as Sally was keen to use the remainder of the session to start putting some of the 'Least Difficult' activities into Jane's 'Next Steps Diary'.

Jane's Worksheet B : Listing activities according to their difficulty

Least difficult	Medium difficult	Most difficult
Go shopping for one days groceries	Cooking proper meals	Do a weeks shopping
Plant some daffodil bulbs for the spring	Take girls to 'Pleasureland'	Pay gas bill
Bath one of the girls	Go out with Jason	

Sally then worked with Jane to begin to put some of the activities from the 'Least Difficult' section of Worksheet B into the 'Next Steps' diary. She stressed it was important that Jane spread these activities across the entire week, that they felt manageable, and could be done at a specific time. Sally was however worried that Jane had written down 'Pay gas bill' in the 'Most Difficult' section but this was not added to the diary. She asked Jane what the consequences of not paying the gas bill could be. Jane admitted that if she did not pay them soon she could be cut off.

Jane's Week 1 Next Steps Diary

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
Afternoon	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
Evening	What	Bath one of the		Cook a simple meal
	Where	girls 6.30-7		6-6.30
	Who			
	What			
	Where			
	Who			
Comments		Felt tired but enjoyed bathing Marsha	Glad nothing planned for today	Really tired today, and managed to do a pasta but not great

Equally however she felt that this activity was just too difficult to manage. Sally therefore helped Jane problem solve ways she may be able to pay it, and it was decided that sharing this difficulty with Jason may help. Once Jane understood how to put activities into the diary she was encouraged to give it a go and see what she could manage over the next week. At the end of each day Sally also suggested that she write any comments she may have in the diary. These would be useful to discuss at their next session.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Work	Work	Walk to shop 9-9.20	
Work	Work		
Work	Work	Cook a simple meal	Plant spring bulbs 1.00-2.00
Work	Work		
Bath one of the girls 6.30-7			Chat to Jason about gas bill 6.00
This was OK actually, enjoyed the time with Alice	Glad nothing planned for this evening	Good to get out of the house this morning. Felt exhausted after dinner	Felt groggy this morning but once I got going felt better. Great to sort gas bill and be in garden

AS THE WEEKS PASSED

With Sally's help Jane continued to increase her activities. Together they reviewed progress made during the previous week.

Jane's Week 5 Next Steps Diary

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
Afternoon	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
Evening	What	Bath the girls	Cook dinner	Bath the girls
	Where	6-6.30	6-6.45	6-6.30
	Who			
	What	Read to the girls		Read to the girls
	Where	6.30-6.45		6.30-6.45
	Who			
Comments		Really enjoyed time with the girls	Wanted to rest when I got home but forced myself to make dinner	A little tired today but enjoyed time with the girls

When good progress had been made, they would continue to schedule in new activities from Worksheet B into the 'Next Steps' diary to use the following week. It was not always easy going however. During her fourth week of treatment Jane found it really difficult to complete the activities she had set herself and became so upset that she gave up altogether. However, she did attend the next session and was glad that Sally was pleased to see her.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Work	Work	Shopping for 3 days groceries 9-10.30	Weed the garden 10-11
Work	Work		
Lunchtime walk	Work	Plant spring bulbs 1-2	Cook Sunday lunch
Work	Work		
	Cook dinner 6-6.45	Out with Jason	Bath the girls 6-6.30
			Read to the girls 6.30-6.45
Noticed mood lifted when I went for a lunchtime walk	This was OK, feel more tired if the activity is not so enjoyable	Bit of up and down day, but notice mood lifts when active	A good day, got a lot done, loved being in the garden

Together they reviewed the 'Next Steps' diary to identify what had gone wrong. With Sally's help, Jane was soon able to identify that, as the previous two weeks were so successful, she had got a little carried away and added too many activities for that week. To make matters worse she added them just to the first two days following the session! Although having a setback, Jane now felt she had a much better idea as to how to proceed.

Since then things had gone really well. When looking back over her previous 'Next Steps' diaries with Sally, Jane realised how much more she was now doing and how her life was looking almost normal again.

MOVING ON WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

During the sixth support session Jane discussed feeling really proud with her progress. She was spending a lot more time with her family, and was really pleased to have started pottering around the garden again; even if it did still look a bit of a mess.

Jane also highlighted how she felt better in herself. She was beginning to find her old energy again, was eating better, was more focussed at work and was having fewer guilty thoughts about moving away and leaving her mother. Scores on the questionnaires filled out every week by Jane were indicated her low mood was beginning to lift.

Jane was really pleased with her progress and was interested when Sally talked again about increasing physical activity. Looking over her previous diaries they both noticed how much Jane seemed to particularly enjoy being in her garden, and how this was a good example of a physical activity. Sally also commented how this activity was outdoors and often it was this type of physical activity that seemed to be really helpful. Sally and Jane also chatted about the wider health benefits of being physically active. Jane was keen on this as over the past 12 months her physical health had got a lot worse and she had put on weight.

However, Jane was also aware that she had not done a lot of physical activity since playing hockey in her twenties. Whilst wanting to get fitter, equally she did not feel exercising was right for her at the moment. Sally, however, soon put Jane at ease. She discussed how actually being more physically active did not have to mean doing more exercise. It could simply mean focussing more upon the things she was already doing and trying to build these up.

To help Jane think about better types of physical activity Sally introduced her to Worksheet C. Sally stressed that as well as the activity involving movement it was equally important that Jane only chooses physical activities that she would enjoy, and where possible could build on over time if she wanted to. Jane struggled with this however.

Looking back over her previous diaries she noted she was not doing very much physical activity except her gardening. Sally suggested that perhaps this would be a good physical activity to focus upon as Jane clearly enjoyed it and it certainly involved movement. However Jane was unsure. It was true she enjoyed it, but equally she was concerned about how she would find the time. Looking at her previous diary Jane felt the only way she could build on time spent in the garden was to have less time with the girls. However bathing and reading to the girls had become very special again and Jane was not prepared to give these up. Talking about this further Sally had some useful advice.



Worksheet C : Thinking about physical activity

Jane thought about activities that she might like to do by thinking about what she might enjoy and what was realistic to fit into his normal week.

Proposed physical activity	Difficulties doing physical activity	Ways to overcome difficulties
Walking with my family	Relying on others makes it unpredictable	Tricky one as girls very young. Perhaps plan trips out
Jogging	Not done anything like this, seems too big a step at the moment	Perhaps after I have started doing more walking, but a long way off?
Gardening	Love it but hard to find the time	Perhaps involve girls when bigger but difficult at the moment
Walk part of the way to work	Not sure where I could park or how long to walk for?	Ask a few people at work as I know some live near work and walk

She suggested that rather than think about doing extra activities, or doing them more often, sometimes current activities could be done in a different way to increase the amount of physical activity included. Jane found this really useful advice and was soon able identify several physical activities she felt she could manage. These were written down in Worksheet C. Jane and Sally then identified any problems that may arise when trying to do the physical activities and also tried to identify potential solutions.



Looking at the options listed on Worksheet C, Jane thought that 'Walking part of the way to work' was a really good idea, it would save some money and get her fitter! She also decided she would like to carry on doing her garden which she loved, especially as the evenings were getting longer and the flowers were beginning to bloom.

WORKSHEET D

Sally then introduced Jane to Worksheet D and discussed the need to make an explicit plan for each physical activity.

Sally then introduced Jane to Worksheet D and discussed the need to make an explicit plan for each physical activity. Then after doing the activity to record how long she did it for, and any comments she may have. Sally also introduced Jane to the idea of using a pedometer. Although she had never actually used one she had read about it in 'Get Active, Feel Good!' and was interested. They discussed how it would be great to use it to record the number of steps she took each day. Jane really liked this idea and was keen to see just how much she was doing.





Worksheet D : Setting and tracking physical activity goals

My physical activity goals for the week are:

1. Walk part of the way to work on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, ten minutes each way
2. Do my gardening both days at the weekend for one hour
- 3.

Date	Activity 1, 2 or 3	Time and/or steps taken	Comments
14th May	1	20 mins 3711 steps	Was a bit rushed today, but did it
15th May		2690 steps	Amazed I did this many steps with no physical activities set
16th May	1	20 mins 4111 steps	OK, weather not great but did it
17th May		3011 steps	Running around a lot at work and can see steps here
18th May	1	20 mins 3990 steps	Bumped into Kira on walk to work and chatted, great!
19th May	2	60 mins 4620 steps	Lovely day, garden looking good
20th May	2	60 mins 4995 steps	Another nice day, even went for walk later on as well!
Total number of steps this week		27128 steps	



OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS

Jane found it easier to achieve her physical activities and decided she wanted to do more. Reading 'Get Active, Feel Good!' Jane found F.I.T.T. a really helpful way to help her increase her physical activity.

To begin with she increased the frequency of her physical activity by walking to work every day. Once she got used to that she then decided to increase the time she walked by parking an extra five minutes further from work. By doing this she found she often bumped into a colleague from work and they walked together. She really enjoyed it when walking with her colleague as they would have a good chat and catch up on the office gossip.

With two young girls however, sometimes mornings were so hectic that Jane found she was not able to park this extra distance. So she learnt a good trick to keep her physical activity up on these days. Rather than walking further she would increase her walking intensity by walking quicker.

All of Jane's efforts to increase her walking were obvious. Looking at her pedometer readings recorded in Worksheet E it was clear that she was walking further every week and she noticed that she was able to walk more quickly without feeling as breathless as before.



Worksheet E : Keeping track of your activity by measuring steps each week

		Week									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total number of steps each week	70,000										
	65000										
	60000										
	55000										
	50000										
	45000										
	40000			X							
	35000		X								
	30000	X									
	25000										
	20000										
	15000										
	10000										
	5000										
	1000										
	0										

JANE'S WEEK 7 NEXT STEPS DIARY

Sally continued to support Jane with her 'Next Steps' diary to increase her other routine, necessary and pleasurable activities.

Jane's Week 7 Next Steps Diary

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning	What	Walk to work	Walk to work	Walk to work
	Where	8.30-8.45	8.30-8.45	8.30-8.45
	Who			
	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
Afternoon	What	Work	Work	Work
	Where			
	Who			
	What	Walk from work	Walk from work	Walk from work
	Where	5-5.15	5-5.15	5-5.15
	Who			
Evening	What	Bath the girls	Cook dinner	Bath the girls
	Where	6-6.30	6-6.45	6-6.30
	Who			
	What	Read to the girls	Read to the girls	Read to the girls
	Where	6.30-6.45	6.30-6.45	6.30-6.45
	Who			
Comments	Really enjoyed walking to work, lovely time		Felt a little tired, but perhaps to be expected as I have done a lot	Rained today, but still felt good walking

Looking back over her diary felt really good. She noted that during the last week she had completed some of the activities that at the beginning of treatment were at the top of her difficulty sheet. From her 'Next Steps' diary she was able to identify that she was now doing much more with the girls and Jason. She was even managing to get those difficult necessary activities completed, such as doing the full weeks shopping.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Walk to work 8.30-8.45	Walk to work 8.30-8.45	Gardening 10-11	Gardening 10.30-11.30
Work	Work		
Work	Work	Shopping for week 12-1.30	Walk with girls 2-3
Walk from work 5-5.15	Walk from work 5-5.15		Cook lunch 1-2
Cook dinner 6-6.45	Bath the girls 6-6.30	Meal with Jason 8-10	
Read to the girls 6.30-6.45a	Read to the girls 6.30-6.45		
Running late this morning so parked nearer to work but walked quicker	Great end to week, even had a drink with Kira on way home from work	Good day, got a lot done, and got my confidence back	Lovely time in garden feel 'normal' again

PREPARING FOR THE END OF TREATMENT

Jane reported feeling much more like normal now. She felt much less tired and had more energy than she had for a long time.

This was also noted by her boss, who commented how he was getting “My old Jane back” as she was much more focussed at work, not to mention much more ‘chatty’. Her appetite had also returned and she really enjoyed going out for a meal with Jason. She could even enjoy having a pudding now she had lost some weight. Although still feeling upset at times now her mum had died she no longer felt any guilt. Given these improvements Sally suggested to Jane that as long as things were still fine next week it may be that her regular sessions could end.

Preparing for the end of treatment

All was well during the next session. Jane reported increasing her physical activity even further and reported feeling ‘back to normal’. Reviewing what she wanted out of treatment it was clear that she was now doing the things she wanted to do. It was agreed that Jane’s weekly sessions with Sally would now end.



What Do You Want to Get Out of Treatment?

Jane was now able to achieve the things he wanted out of treatment.

Today's Date 4th July

Item 1

Give my daughters a bath by myself every night

I can do this now (circle a number):

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Not at all Occasionally Often Anytime

Today's Date 4th July

Item 2

To do gardening to get it looking as good as it did before

I can do this now (circle a number):

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Not at all Occasionally Often Anytime

LOW MOOD ALARM AND ACTIVITY TOOLKIT

Sally discussed ways for Jane to try and stay well and together they went through Step 9 of 'Get Active, Feel Good!'.

Jane found it really helpful creating her own personal 'low mood alarm and activity toolkit' and thinking about the activities that helped her.

Sally also discussed how it was perfectly normal to feel down occasionally. However if Jane started to feel the way she had written in her 'Low Mood Alarm' for a while and this started to impact on her life again then it could be best to think once again about the things that helped. Sally also indicated how going back through 'Get Active, Feel Good!' could be useful.

ONE MONTH LATER

One month later as planned, Sally phoned Jane to check on her progress and see how she was getting along with her physical activity.

All seemed to be well. Jane was spending far more time with Jason and the girls and her garden was looking really lovely. Jane did say however that she still found some days were better than others. However once she got out in her garden or spent time with Jason and the girls things seemed better.

My low mood alarm and activity toolkit

Last time I was depressed I did the following things differently or stopped doing them altogether...

Took time off work, stopped doing things with the girls, stopped doing my garden, sleeping a lot in the day

Last time I was depressed the following unhelpful thoughts ran through my head...

"I should not have moved away from mum", "I am a waste of space", "I am a bad mum"

Last time I was depressed I felt the following physical symptoms...

Very tired, slow, put on weight, irritable, problems sleeping at night

Last time I was depressed, doing the following activities really helped...

Doing my garden, being with the girls and Jason, walking, spending time outdoors!



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr Paul Farrand is a Senior Lecturer within the Mood Disorders Centre and Director of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training within Clinical Education, Development and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Exeter. His main clinical and research interests are in the area of low intensity cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), especially in a self-help format. Based upon his research and clinical practice he has developed a wide range of written self-help treatments for depression and anxiety.



Professor Adrian Taylor specialises in developing and evaluating interventions and support for health behaviour change as a way of improving and regulating psychological well-being. As one of the Directors of Research in the College of Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Exeter, he has led and supported many nationally and internationally renowned research studies. His work has featured in a variety of clinical guidelines for helping people to gain control over various health behaviours as well as mood.



Dr Colin Greaves is a health psychologist and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Exeter Medical School. He has research expertise in developing and testing interventions to help people undertake lifestyle change. Based upon his research he has developed an intervention to help people with asthma manage their condition, several weight loss interventions and a self-help manual for people with heart failure.



Dr Claire Pentecost is a Research Associate at the Mood Disorders Centre, University of Exeter. Her research experience is in designing and delivering programmes for lifestyle change for people with diabetes, depression and other long-term conditions. Claire's most recent research looked at the reasons why some people do, and some people do not take up lifestyle change courses recommended by a GP.

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