

Activity Scheduling

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Activity Scheduling may help children who have depression or behavior problems. It teaches a child that fun activities can help them feel better. When a child keeps busy they may have less time to think or feel bad. Having less free time can help a child stay out of trouble. The therapist may have a child write down how they feel before and after an activity. By keeping track of their feelings, a child will see that doing fun activities helps them feel good.

How does this practice work?

- Brainstorm about activities they like to do with the therapist.
- Keep activities simple, free, and close to home.
- Keep activities fun and ones that make a child feel good.
- Include other children or adults whenever possible.
- Choose activities that allow a child to succeed.

The child puts a plan into action that increases their activity level. Here are a few examples:

Yasir's Summer Routine

1. Make bed
2. Eat breakfast
3. Do chores
4. Play outside with Noah
5. Eat lunch
6. Ride bike with Tom
7. Come home for dinner
8. Play a board game

Camila's List of Fun Things to Do

1. Visit Grandpa & Grandma
2. Go Camping
3. Play volleyball
4. Play with dog
5. Watch a movie
6. Go shopping with stepmom
7. Ride bike with friends
8. Rollerblading
9. Have a slumber party

Example:

Camila is 11 years old and has started seeing a therapist because she is living with depression. Camila tells the therapist that she doesn't do anything fun. The therapist recommends that Camila start doing "fun" activities because they will help improve her mood. Camila makes a list of things she thinks are fun. The therapist and Camila agree that she will do one of the fun activities on her list before her next therapy session.

She decides to visit her Grandpa and Grandma. Before her visit Camila writes in her notebook how she is feeling - sad and low energy. Camila notices after going to the park with her grandparents that she is feeling happy and has more energy. She reports this to the therapist during her next visit.