



ALYSSA MOORE
COUNSELING

Behavioral Activation

Behavioral activation really taps into the way that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors all impact one another from the behavior/activity side of things. When we feel low, we often don't do the things that we enjoy, that we need to do, or that help us feel better. Behavioral activation helps us to track what you are doing daily, helps to make get you more balanced in the types of things you are doing, and works to build an upward spiral of motivation through activity. The idea is that you want to schedule activities that are enjoyable and meaningful, that help you build a sense of mastery, and that will help you to decrease your vulnerability to feeling low.

We want to come up with a good mix of activities for you to schedule and we want to start with just a few so that you don't feel overwhelmed. Generally, I recommend that you pick two things that make you feel good, two things that are responsibilities, and two things that will help you to be less vulnerable to the low mood. Some example of what those types of things might be are:

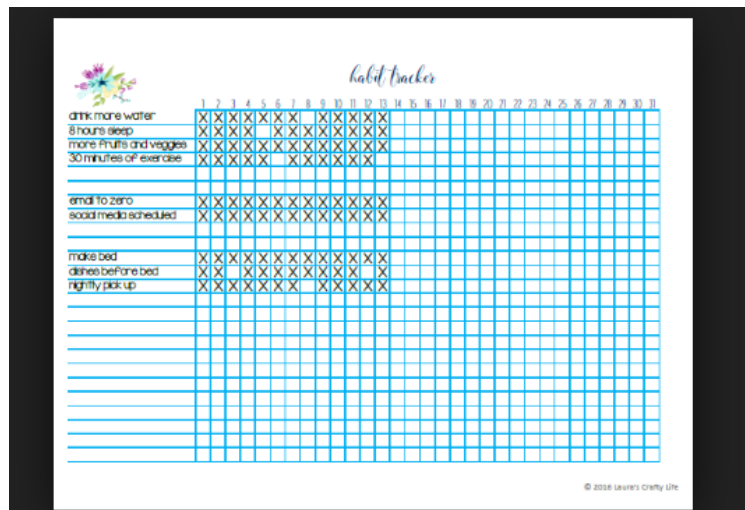
Feel Good -- cooking, reading, going to a coffee shop, having a piece of dark chocolate in the evening, painting, watching a show you enjoy, playing a video game, listening to music, etc.

Responsibilities -- going to work, doing the dishes, making your bed, doing laundry, paying bills, walking the dog, etc.

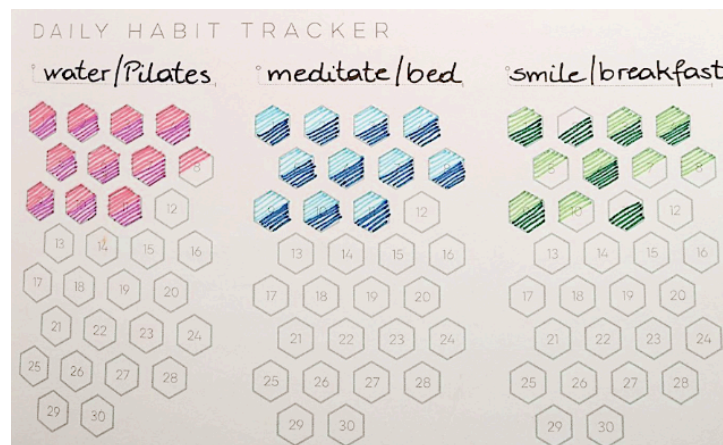
Lowering Vulnerabilities-- eating regularly, drinking water, getting good sleep, physical activity, moderating alcohol or other substances.

You want to pick goals from each of those domains that are going to be achievable, but not easy. Those goals should also be really specific (think about the difference between "I'll go for a

walk” and “I will go for a 15 minute walk once each day”). Then you want to track them in some way. For some people they want to just write it down and be done with it like this



Some people want to make it more fun or want to tap into their artistic side and do something like this



Some people use apps on their phone like Habit or Habit Tracker. It doesn't really matter as long as you keep track of the goals. The other thing is that you need to give yourself credit for what you are doing even if it falls a little short, so if you set a goal to go for a 15 minute walk each day and you go on a 10 minute walk, you give yourself credit toward the goal. If you don't meet a goal on a certain day, you don't beat yourself up for not meeting it, you just come up with a plan for how you are going to meet it the next day.