

Brief Behavioural Activation for adolescent depression (Brief BA):

How we can all support young people with their mood

Presenter: Laura Pass

Host: Hannah Vickery

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The logo for Charlie Waller is located in the top right corner. It consists of a white speech bubble with a blue outline, set against a dark blue circular background. Inside the speech bubble, there is a stylized logo of two overlapping circles (one blue, one orange) above the text "Charlie Waller". "Charlie" is in blue and "Waller" is in orange.

Charlie
Waller



About us

Charlie Waller was a dynamic, funny, kind and successful young man, with a close and loving family. To the outside world, he had everything to live for. Yet in 1997, at the age of 28, Charlie died by suicide. He was suffering from depression.

In response to this tragedy, his family founded the Charlie Waller Trust, to open up the conversation around depression initially, and to ensure that young people are able to understand and look after their mental health and to spot the signs in others.

Charlie sits at the heart of our story, our vision and our purpose.



Evidence based offer



Positive

We take a positive approach to mental health. We focus on prevention and early intervention and recognise the importance of offering hope.



Proven

Our consultancy, training and resources are all based on sound clinical evidence.



Practical

We give people practical strategies and tools to care for their mental health, and to support others in doing so.

Let us introduce ourselves...



Dr Hannah Vickery

CEO of the Charlie Waller Trust

Previously worked as a Clinical Psychologist within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and as Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Reading

Dr Laura Pass

Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) Programme Director at the University of East Anglia (UEA)

Previously worked as a Research Clinical Psychologist at the Anxiety and Depression in Young people (AnDY) Research Clinical at the University of Reading

Some acknowledgements

- Brief BA was developed with Professor Shirley Reynolds, previous Charlie Waller Chair in Evidence Base Psychological Treatments at the University of Reading
- With thanks to the Titcomb Foundation, Charlie Waller Trust and other generous charity donors who made this research possible,
- Thanks also to Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for the collaboration across Brief BA development and piloting



A self-care reminder

Most (if not all) of us will have some personal experience of depression

Look after yourself in whatever way is best for you during this webinar



DSM-5 Diagnostic symptoms of adolescent depression



	Young person A	Young person B
Low mood	x	
Irritability		x
Anhedonia (loss of interest/pleasure)	x	
Fatigue	x	
Negative self-perceptions/Worthlessness		x
Cognitive disturbances		x
Increased/decreased sleep	x	
Suicidal ideation		x
Increased/decreased appetite		x
Physical restlessness/slowness	x	

Why is this important?

- Adolescent depression symptoms VERY commonly misunderstood and/or misdiagnosed
- Often young people themselves (as well as others around them) struggle to recognise symptoms like irritability and anhedonia
- You don't need to be sad to be depressed
- Under-referrals for adolescents with low-risk depression symptoms
- These symptoms can be huge barriers to therapy
- Huge variation in presentations: need to understand individual and tailor approach

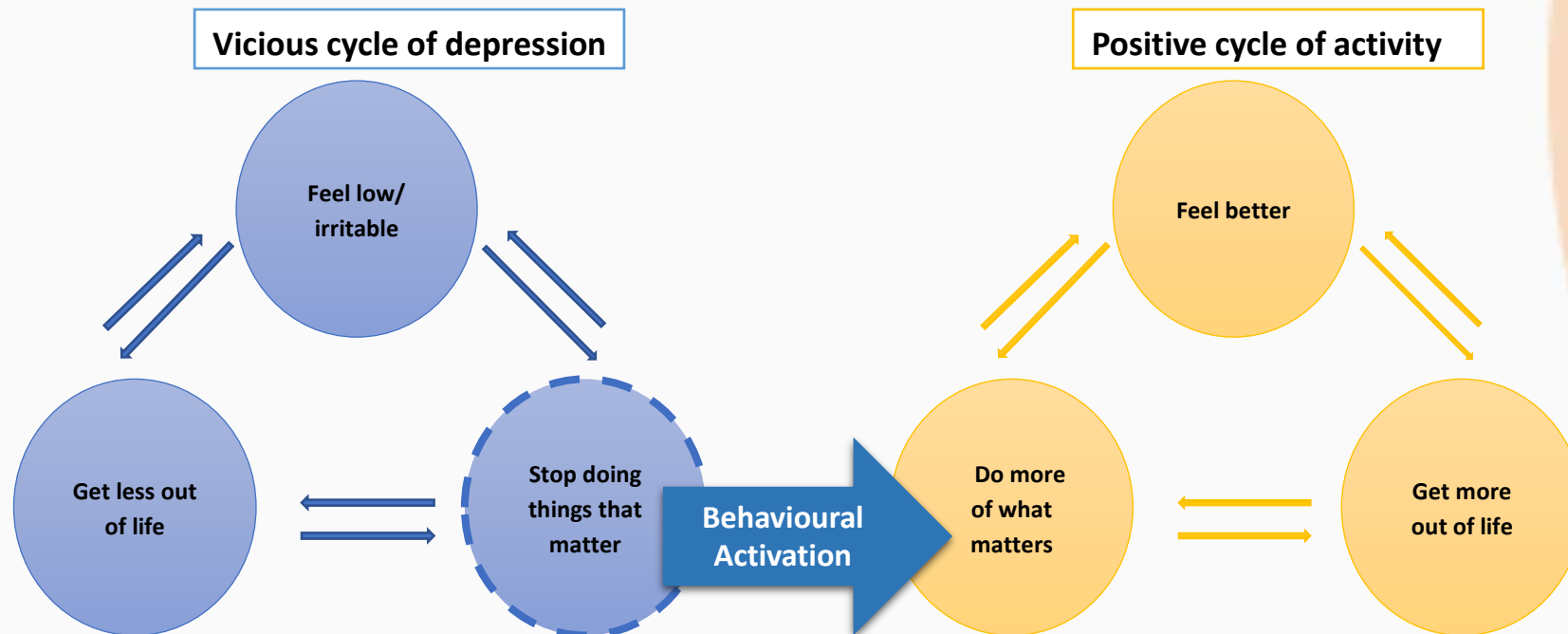
You can make a big difference!



What is Brief Behavioural Activation (Brief BA)?

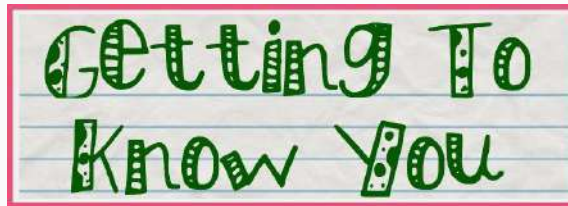
Structured, practical behavioural treatment for depression symptoms (across severity/clinical threshold)

Adapted from an adult approach (BATD; Lejuez, Hopko et al, 2011) with adolescent focused



Why bother with values?

- **Engagement:** Often first time someone has asked the young person what is important to them
- Developmentally salient – identity formation
- Identifying what is rewarding for the individual?
 - Translating a film into Spanish
 - Playing internet-based computer games
 - Building with Lego
 - Dressing up as Disney characters
 - Campaigning for human rights
 - Cheerleading
- Identifying values-based activities increases likelihood of engaging in that behaviour



Getting To
Know You



What does Brief BA look like?

- Therapist and young person work 1-1 to identify:
 - How the young person is spending their time
 - What is important to them (their values)
 - How they can spend more of their time doing things that are important (what matters) to them
 - Structured parental/carer/other adult involvement at key points
- Simple, structured, transparent treatment: Easy to understand and to deliver



Beating depression with Brief Behavioural Activation:

1) **Doing** things differently

LEADS TO

2) **Thinking** and **feeling** differently



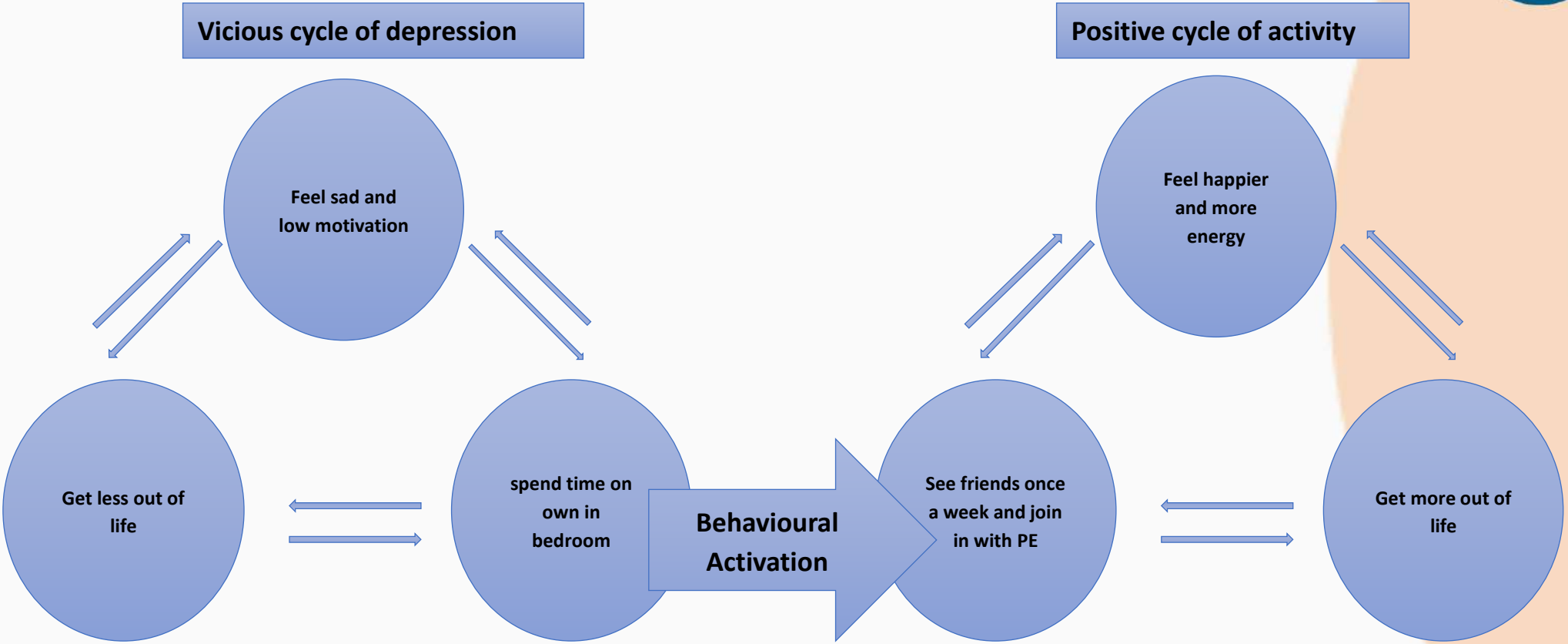
Brief BA therapist focus on engagement

- Brief BA is collaborative- the therapist should engage, coach, encourage/reward
- Therapist role is to provide encouragement for every indication of non-depressed behaviour, to validate the young person's efforts
- Bringing in the supporters around the young person (parents/carers, school staff, and others)
- Work as a team sharing the same aim: to help the young person get more out of life





Example Brief BA cycle



Brief BA in secondary schools

- 3.5 year project in 7 secondary schools
- Whole school surveys of emotional health
- Brief BA delivered in school setting
- Targeted additional interventions as indicated (anxiety workshops, sleep workshops, referrals to specialist services)
- Staff: mainly low intensity psychological practitioners

Project overview:

- 2,397 students screened, data fed back to schools
- 112 started Brief BA, 102 completed
- Additional liaison/referral for many other students



Brief BA in secondary schools – take home messages



Good news:

- Brief BA can be successfully delivered in the school setting by low intensity therapists
- Now on curriculum for both Children Wellbeing and Education Mental Health Practitioner training
- Young people that start Brief BA appear to engage well (7.5% drop out)
- Significant improvements in self-reported depression symptoms and functioning from before to after Brief BA (same pattern also found in parent/carer report)
- Brief BA seen as acceptable by young people, parents and school staff

But some challenges:

- Engagement can be challenging across the system around the young person: e.g., barriers to consent, risk management and facilitating therapy
- High quality supervision essential to manage risk and keep true to Brief BA model

Brief BA Adolescent feedback: what did you like best?



- “They listened to you, gave good advice, and didn’t judge”
- “It helped me to work out what mattered to me and that by doing these things I could improve my mood”
- “It gave me my own strategy to deal with low mood and gave me independence to do it”
- “It helped me realise what I do day-to-day is not what I enjoy doing. Encouraged me to do more of what I enjoy”

Parents' experience of brief BA in schools



- “Brief BA was easy for my son to access, very discrete, arranged at a time suitable so he didn't miss important lessons. Telephone contact was helpful, so I knew what was happening (it revealed things I didn't know about how he felt)”
- “It was good that it was done in a familiar environment that put my child at ease straight away. It wasn't pushy and they opened up without being forced by direct questioning”
- “I liked the intent to support a child's well-being and trying to encourage child to recognise their own choices”
- Due to the delivery in schools, many parents reported a limited understanding of the specific Brief BA approach, even when they reported it had seemed helpful

Brief BA in schools school staff feedback



- “All of them [students] have been happy to keep coming...you might be the most amazing child therapist in the world but if you can’t keep a young person in the room it’s pretty irrelevant anyway”
- “Be in no doubt that this project has been life-changing for that young man. In all things I am of the view that if even one person’s life is made better than it was worth doing. I know there will be other [YP name] out there, but on behalf of this particular one, congratulations on a job well done.”

Follow-up Q&A

The Charlie Waller Trust

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Additional Resources



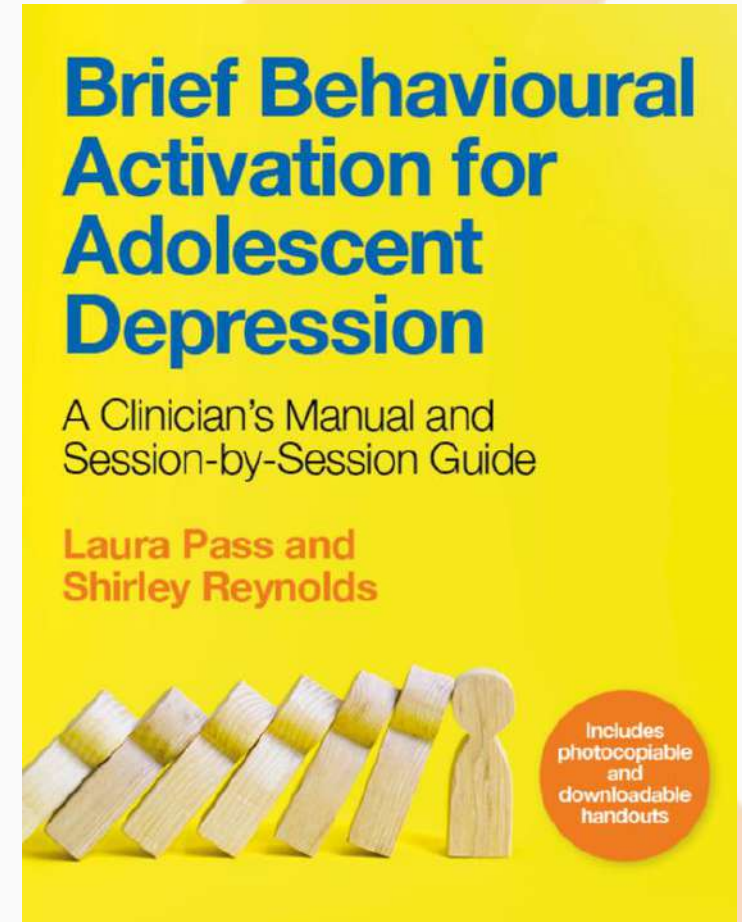
- [Charlie Waller Trust resources](#) – FREE downloadable (and FREE printed) resources on a range of topics
- Time limited FREE access to a fantastic publicly accessible course: [Future Learn Course on Understanding Depression and Low mood in young people](#)
- [MINDED resources](#) – FREE resources on a range of topics including depression, suicidal ideation and self-harm

A screenshot of a web browser displaying a course page on Future Learn. The browser's address bar shows the URL: futurelearn.com/courses/depression-young-people?tr=54. The course title is "Understanding Depression and Low Mood in Young People" with 52,782 enrolled students and a "Join course" button. The course is categorized under "Psychology & Mental Health" and is offered by the "University of Reading". The course description includes a 4.8 star rating from 352 reviews and a brief overview: "Understand how to recognise depression and low mood in teenagers and learn how to help." There is another "Join course" button and the enrollment count "52,782 enrolled on this course" repeated at the bottom of the course card.

Additional Resources



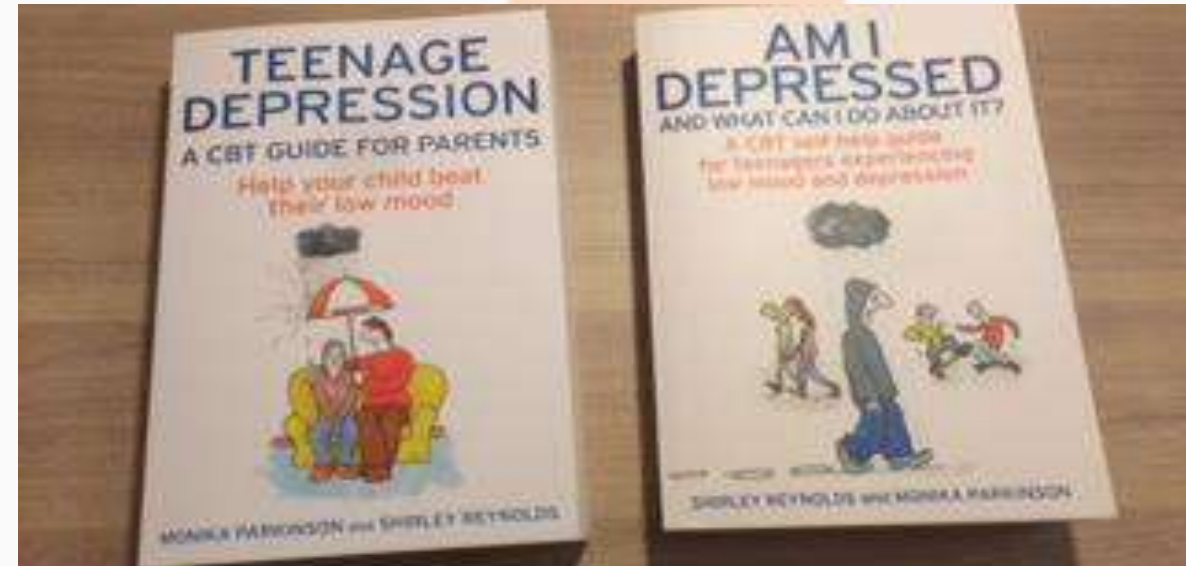
- Dr Laura Pass' and Professor Shirley Reynolds' Brief BA book
- Pass, L., & Reynolds, S. (2020). Brief Behavioural Activation for Adolescent Depression: A Clinician's Manual and Session-by-Session Guide. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Includes webpage link and code to download all session worksheets



Additional Resources



- Useful self-help books
- Reynolds, S., & Parkinson, M. (2015). Am I Depressed And What Can I Do About It?: A CBT self-help guide for teenagers experiencing low mood and depression. Constable & Robinson.
- Parkinson, M., & Reynolds, S. (2015). Teenage depression-a CBT Guide for parents: help your child beat their low mood. Robinson.



References



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- Lejuez, C. W., Hopko, D. R., Acierno, R., Daughters, S. B., & Pagoto, S. L. (2011). Ten Year Revision of the Brief Behavioral Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD): Revised Treatment Manual (BATD-R). *Behavior Modification*.
- Lewis-Smith, I., Pass, L., Jones, D. J., & Reynolds, S. (2021). "... if I care about stuff, then other people care about me". Adolescents' experiences of helpful and unhelpful aspects of brief behavioural activation therapy for depression. *Psychotherapy Research*, 1-12

Parents of teens! Got 30 mins?

- Want to learn to spot **teen depression symptoms** and tell them apart from more common mood changes typical to the adolescent period?
- Help researchers at the University of Bath to test out their new one-off, online, self-help activity designed with and for parents of teens.
- Please note, this work is unrelated to the Brief BA research discussed in this webinar



The graphic features a laptop displaying the 'Project SPOT' logo, which includes a hand holding a magnifying glass over the word 'SPOT'. To the right is a QR code and the text 'Use the link or QR code to participate:'. Below these is a yellow box with participation details, a purple box with an incentive, and the University of Bath logo and name. At the bottom, it lists the research department and ethics approval number.

Use the **link** or **QR code** to participate:



Who can take part?
✓ UK-based **parents of teens** aged 12-19

Where?
✓ Project SPOT is **completely online** and can be done from any internet browser on any device!

bit.ly/ProjectSPOT

Opt in to complete an additional brief questionnaire **2 weeks later** and receive a **£10 online shopping voucher** as a thank you for your time.



UNIVERSITY OF BATH

University of Bath Data and Digital Science Research
Ethics Committee approval ref: 13809-17181

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Your support allows us to provide vital resources, guidance, and opportunities and build a brighter future.



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Make an
impact!



Upcoming webinars

Charlie Waller Workplace series

How to manage your wellbeing during times of change and uncertainty
Thursday 28 May 12:30

How to have conversations about mental health at work
Wednesday 10 June 12.30

Making Knowledge Matter series

Sleep with Faith Orchard
Wednesday 22 July

SoRTS: Supportive Response to self-harm
Wednesday 23 September

More information on our website

charliewaller.org/mental-health-training-support/mental-health-webinars



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feedback

