

Guide de pratique pour l'activation comportementale en format groupe, version anglaise

Guides pour les groupes de psychothérapie comportementale et cognitive de la dépression écrits par les psychologues de la clinique des troubles de l'humeur du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de service sociaux (CIUSSS) de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Le Dr **Alain Taillefer** a organisé la coordination du contenu et la sélection des thèmes. Il est psychologue clinicien au service des troubles anxieux et de l'humeur/TDAH du CIUSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Volet enseignement : Il est superviseur pour les internats cliniques des étudiants au doctorat en psychologie et il offre des formations cliniques aux psychologues. Il a été également co-chercheur pour une étude portant sur les mécanismes d'action des traitements TCC pour la dépression sévère.

Group Therapy

First Step

I actively participate to feel better

Tool BEHAVIOUR THERAPY

Reference Books

Addis M. E. & Martell C.R. (2004). Overcoming depression one step at a time. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Hayes S.-C. & Smith S. (2005). Get Out of Your Mind & into Your Life. The new Acceptance & Commitment Therapy. Oakland: New Harbinger Publication, Inc.

Realized by psychologists of the depression clinic

Service troubles anxieux et de l'humeur/TDAH

Programme services spécifiques et spécialisés

Programmes santé mentale et dépendance

Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Therapeutic program

First Part – Understanding depression

- Different treatments for depression
- Know your habits and make place for changes
- Important principles regarding behaviours
- What are my values?

Second Part – Ending depression

- Adaptive and non-adaptive avoidance
- Avoid TRAPs and get back on TRACs
 - TRAP: Rumination, Procrastination, Avoidance
- Take action: First steps toward changes

Third Part – Activation, a new way to live everyday

- Bring changes one step at the time (ACTION)
- The usefulness of our inner dialogue: what to do with rumination?
- Interpersonal Relationship
- Free yourself of mood dependence
- Accept what is there rather than try to control everything
- Appraise your personal journey and prevent relapse

Understand factors that influence your depression's recovery

Depression = Genetic vulnerabilities present in everyone of us + stress factors

What do we mean by stress factors?

- Psychological stress (life events)
- Physical stress
- Sickness
- Surgery
- Intoxication
 - Alcohol
 - Drugs
 - Caffeine (coffee, soft drinks)
- Lack of sleep and sleeping during the day (day-sleep is not as efficient as night-time sleep)
- Hormonal stress (menopause, post-partum, andropause)

What can we do?

The importance of a multifactorial treatment...

1. Sobriety

It is important to treat depression if there is substance consumption (alcohol, drugs, stimulants...). They have an important impact on depression.

2. Sleep

Sleep is a basic need. It is important to know that our brain's neurotransmitters repair themselves only when we sleep. Sleeping pills are not as efficient as normal sleep and are thus considered a second option when it comes to sleep quality. If there is a sleep problem, the first solution is to establish good *sleep hygiene*...

How to establish and maintain a good sleep hygiene?

- A regular bed time *before* midnight (Cinderella's rule)
- Reading (book, magazine, crossword, puzzle) is important before sleeping
- Close all screens (television, computer, tablet and cell phone) one hour before sleep because they have a stimulating effect on the brain and diminish sleep quality.
- If you don't sleep after 20 to 30 minutes... Turn the lights on and read again. DO NOT stay awake in bed for long periods.
- Sleep hygiene recommendations still apply if you take sleeping pills
- DO NOT take sleeping pills during the night.

3. Activation

- Exercising is really important!
 - But violent exercise is not necessary and does not bring more benefits.
- Going out three times a week for a 45 to 50 minutes walk is as much effective than an antidepressant, particularly for light depression.
- Integrate at least two pleasant activity per week: new activities and activities that you used to like.

4. Light Therapy

It is important to expose yourself to daylight... Go out at least once a day.

5. Medication

- *Antidepressants*: all antidepressants are equally effective.
 - Antidepressant's efficacy is between 60 and 70%, hence 30 to 40% of people are resistant to the first treatment.
 - It can take up to 6 weeks before maximal antidepressant effect. It is important to evaluate treatment efficacy after 4 weeks.

- You should keep the antidepressant for at least one year after remission and then slowly reduce doses.
- Relapse will more likely happen if abruptly stop medication.
- *Mood Stabilizers*
- *Antipsychotic Medication*

6. Vitamins

- Omega 3 (1 gram per day): an essential fatty acid found in fish (for example). It is known to have a beneficial impact on mood, heart and brain.
- Vitamin D (1000 units per day): we produce it naturally when our skin is exposed to the sunlight and it has a beneficial effect on mood, immunity and bones.

The steps you should take to overcome depression

Step 1...

Understand how depression, especially the relationship between, on the one hand, what we do, where we do it and how we do it, and, on the other hand, emotions that we feel.

(Link between what we do and we feel).

Step 2...

Identify areas of our lives where our reactions to depression do not help us, and learn to change these reactions. **(Know yourself better).**

Step 3...

Learn to face difficult situations rather to continue to avoid them. **(Master your life troughs experimentation).**

Step 4...

Address situations that may put us at risk of another depressive episode. **(Cease avoidance).**

Important principles regarding behaviours

1. Our behaviours are for the most part automatic, so they escape our attention.
2. We often act on habits.
3. To change our behavioural schema, we first must learn to recognize them and define what and when to change.

These three principles can be applied to all our behaviours, happy or unhappy, including depressive mood and behaviours and their treatment.

To help you notice your habits, you can use the **daily self-observation grids** presented in the appendix of this guide.

It is preferable to describe your emotions with specific words

Pleasant emotions list

OPEN - INTEREST	HAPPY	ALIVE - STRONG	SECURE - PEACEFUL	LOVE
understanding	jubilant	playful	calm	comforted
optimistic	gay	courageous	peaceful	considerate
absorbed	joyous	energetic	at ease	affectionate
enthusiastic	glad	liberated	comfortable	sensitive
amazed	cheerful	spontaneous	pleased	tender
inspired	delighted	provocative	encouraged	devoted
sympathetic	overjoyed	dynamic	blessed	attracted
interested	gleeful	free	reassured	passionate
curious	elated	frisky	content	admiration
receptive	merry	animated	quiet	warm
accepting	thrilled	spirited	certain	touched
kind	ecstatic	determined	satisfied	loved
thankful	satisfied	tenacious	serene	close
hopeful	excited	brave	confident	fascinated
intrigued	surprised	rebellious	secure	certain

Unpleasant emotions list

ANGRY	SAD	CONFUSED - NUMB	HELPLESS	AFRAID
irritated	lousy	uneasy	incapable	fearful
enraged	disappointed	doubtful	powerless	terrified
hostile	discouraged	uncertain	paralyzed	suspicious
insulted	pessimistic	indecisive	fatigued	anxious
sore	distressed	unsure	useless	alarmed
annoyed	diminished	embarrassed	inferior	panic
upset	guilty	hesitant	vulnerable	nervous
hateful	dissatisfied	shy	empty	scared
indignant	miserable	stupefied	forced	worried
offensive	detestable	disillusioned	hesitant	frightened
bitter	repugnant	skeptical	despair	timid
aggressive	despicable	lost	frustrated	shaky
resentful	disgusting	distrustful	alienated	restless
inflamed	abominable	insensitive	woeful	doubtful
provoked	lonely	dull	pathetic	threatened
incensed	desperate	weary	humiliated	cowardly
infuriated	sulky	bored	ashamed	quaking
cross	sorrowful	preoccupied	dominated	menaced
vengeful	tearful	cold	rejected	wary
boiling	grieved	disinterested	victimized	tense
fuming	mournful	lifeless	crushed	terrified

Where am I going?

What are my values?

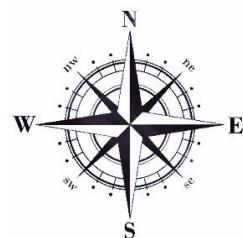
To choose what to do and what are our priorities, it is preferable to know what is good for you. Values can give direction to our choices, but are not objectives themselves, and don't have an ending. For example, if you value having good relationships with people, you won't lose this value when you will develop a new friendship.

Values help us choose between options. To continue with the previous example, there is more than one way to have good relationships. While we assess opportunities according to our values, it does not always help us to judge them. When we criticize our choices, it takes prevent us from thinking about the best choices for ourselves. Values are not goals, emotions, results or judgements.

Here are some examples of values:

- Being in a couple, an intimate relationship
- Caring for others (ex: children)
- Family relationships
- Friendships, social relationships
- Training, personal growth
- Health and physical well being
- Taking care of yourself
- Spirituality
- Environment, Eco-responsibility
- Aesthetic, art, music, literature

Assess on a scale from 1 to 10 how these different values are important for you. Are there any other important values for you that are not written there? Each of these values is a compass that helps you define which choice corresponds most to who you are.



Now all that remains is to follow these directions. You can also provoke changes, by setting yourself goals that are in line with your values.

If your values are the compass, your goals are the map to get there.

Here are a few questions that can help identify your values

What is important for me?

Imagine you are living the next 10 years without depressive symptoms. Where are you and what are you doing?

If a magician offers you to realise two wishes, what would they be?

Imagine that you are assisting to your 80th birthday and that people are paying you a tribute. What are they saying and remembering about you?

It is your last day on earth, how are you going to fill this day?

Your house is on fire, what are the five objects that you are taking with you?

Identifying Behaviours That Make Me Feel DOWN

Day of the week and moment of the day

Situation

Current behaviour

Alternative behaviours

Identifying Behaviours That Make Me Feel DOWN

Day of the week and moment of the day

Situation

Current behaviour

Alternative behaviours

Avoidance behaviours lists

Below, there is a list of situations and emotions that we sometimes try to avoid when we are depressed. Escape behaviour allow us to get out of an unpleasant situation, while **avoidance** behaviour happens when we repetitively escape unpleasant situations and learn to always avoid them. Avoidance is a natural response to pain and distress, it is not always intended. Avoidance is a learned behaviour that helps to relieve and appease us quickly, but temporarily. However, it does not allow us to adopt other, more effective strategies that could diminish distress on the long term.

Exercise: Browse the list below and circle what you tend to avoid. Think about what avoidance enables you to achieve in the short and medium term. Is this helping you feeling better? Does it help you to feel safe? Does it ameliorate or worsen your depression?

Situations or activities that you might have a tendency to avoid	Emotions that are often avoided
Potential conflicts with family members, friends and colleagues	Sadness / Anger
Difficult tasks or chores	Anger / Boredom
Important tasks related to changes in your life (finding a job, moving, ending of a relationship)	Grief / Fear
Socialize with others	Anxiety / Shame
Work	Fear / Shame
Exercise	Embarrassment / Boredom
Once pleasant activities	Guilt / Anxiety

Can you think of other situations or activities that you might avoid?

ADAPTIVE AVOIDANCE VS PROBLEMATIC AVOIDANCE

Avoidance can become a problem because it often prevents people from doing necessary steps to resolve problems in their lives or improve their mood. Avoidance can also become a problem when the avoidance process itself arouses additional unpleasant feelings.

For example, try not to think of a pink elephant... Are you able to do it? It is quite possible that you won't be able not to think about it!

The more we avoid thinking about something, the more we think about it. Hence, to ignore your thoughts is not an effective strategy to improve your mood.

A foolproof method to find out if your avoidance is problematic is to examine its **circumstances and consequences**.

Here are common examples of avoidance behaviour in people with depression:

1. **Procrastination:** Delaying or postponing something we could do now.
Example: Getting letters from the mailbox and not opening them, because we apprehend what we will find in it.
2. **Numbness:** Attempt at appeasing emotions like anger, sadness, guilt by adopting numbing behaviours.
Example: Thinking about the end of the holidays can cause anxiety. To avoid thinking about it, we eat a whole cake or go play a game of chance.
3. **Invasive tiredness:** Low energy and fatigue are often associated with depression. Abuse of naps, rest and sleep. Escape your problems by sleeping.
Example: Household chores are not done; everywhere we look it's messy (the floor is not cleaned, bathroom, dishes). We feel like there's too much to do, so we go back to sleep.
4. **Rumination:** Constantly thinking about something without problem solving, by reviewing different aspects of the problem.
Example: Pink elephant experiment. Distinguish between rumination and reflection.
5. **Depression symptoms and complaints:** To use depressive symptoms as an excuse not to do certain activities, to complain constantly about the symptoms.

Example: To cancel a dinner with friends because we don't want to tire ourselves.

6. **Social isolation:** To withdraw from social relationships and prefer to be alone.

Example: Not calling back because we think people are going to invite us to an activity, and we don't want to attend. A counterproductive interactive strategy: "I have nothing to say, only negative stuff. I prefer to stay alone".

In the left column, make a list of situations that you avoid when you do adaptive avoidance. In the right column, make a list of situations where avoidance is problematic for you.

“TRAPs” IDENTIFICATION

Definitions and examples

Definition: A behaviour in which people can get stuck without realizing it. It is also an acronym meaning:

Trigger

Response

Avoidance

Pattern

CIRCUMSTANCES: The environment, situation or context you are in.

Example: Pierre, at work, before lunch on Monday

TRIGGER: Something that initiates a series of events.

Here are some examples of avoidance behaviour triggers:

1. **Historical:** Personal history, developmental.
2. **Current:** At the present moment, to see, or hear on the phone, the Internet. To apprehend when you wake up a difficult conversation.
3. **External:** Events or situations, unpredictable stressor.
4. **Internal:** Personal and private experiences, like ruminations, worries, bad dreams.
5. **Interpersonal:** Conflicts with children, family members or loved ones can trigger avoidance behaviour.

Ex.: Pierre asks to a colleague out for lunch. She answers that she already has other plans.

RESPONSE: Reactions to triggers are often emotional: sadness, anxiety, anger...

Ex.: Pierre feels embarrassed and depressed.

AVOIDANCE PATTERN: Society encourages us to get rid of unpleasant emotions.

Most attempts to get rid of those emotions are unsuccessful and can cause other problems. Sometimes, the avoidance mechanism that you use to make up with negative emotions is so deeply rooted that it develops into a pattern: procrastination, rumination, numbing (ex: drugs and alcohol), passive activities (ex: stagnate in bed or in front of the television), justifying inaction with complains and depressive symptoms (ex: I don't feel like doing anything, so I don't call people back or I don't go out to take a walk).

Ex.: Pierre eats his lunch alone at his office, while thinking about the reasons for his colleague refusal.

CONSEQUENCES: Observe how you feel because of the avoidance pattern and note the consequences in the following hours and days.

Ex.: Pierre feels depressed for most part of the afternoon. He avoid to meet his colleague for the rest of the day.

“TRAPs” IDENTIFICATION

Auto observation grid

Identification of a TRAP I have run into.

Circumstance

Trigger

Response

Avoidance Behaviour

Consequences

“TRAPs” IDENTIFICATION

Auto observation grid

Identification of a TRAP I have run into.

Circumstance

Trigger

Response

Avoidance Behaviour

Consequences

“TRACs” IDENTIFICATION

Definitions and examples

Definition: A behaviour that free us of our TRAPs.

It is also an acronym meaning:

Trigger

Response

Alternative

Coping

CIRCUMSTANCES: The environment, situation or context you are in.

Example: Pierre, at work, before lunch on Monday.

TRIGGER: Something that initiates a series of events.

Ex.: Pierre asks to a colleague out for lunch. She answers that she already has other plans.

RESPONSE: Reactions to triggers are often emotional: sadness, anxiety, anger...

Ex.: Pierre feels embarrassed and depressed.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE COPING BEHAVIORS (alternative behaviours to make up with difficult situations): A solution could be to allow yourself to feel your emotions, while acting in accordance with the goals that you have set (values). Therefore, the alternative coping answer cannot be avoidance.

Ex.: *Instead of eating is lunch alone at his desk while thinking about the reasons for his colleague refusal, Pierre ask another colleague out for lunch, or suggests another day to his colleague. He can also choose to eat alone and then go out for a walk.*

CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE SET A TIME TO TRY IT

CONSEQUENCES: Observe the effects of your different choices and of the alternative behaviours on your mood and your demeanour.

Three things to consider when you want to change your behaviour

- ❖ **Commit yourself as much as possible to the activity.**
 - Concentrate on what you're doing instead on past or future events.
- ❖ **Don't assess results while running the experiment.**
 - When you are trying to assess if it's working or not, you are not committed to the task at hand.
- ❖ **Repeat the experiment.**
 - Good researchers repeat their experiments because results may vary from time to time.
We are asking you to try *at least three times* before assessing your alternative behaviour.

“TRACs” IDENTIFICATION

Auto observation grid

Identification of a TRAC I have experimented.

Circumstance

Trigger

Response

Possible alternative behaviours for this situation

Choose an alternative behaviour to try out

Set a time to try it

Consequences: observe the consequences of your choice and of the alternative behaviour on your mood and your demeanour.

“TRACs” IDENTIFICATION

Auto observation grid

Identification of a TRAC I have experimented.

Circumstance

Trigger

Response

Possible alternative behaviours for this situation

Choose an alternative behaviour to try out

Set a time to try it

Consequences: observe the consequences of your choice and of the alternative behaviour on your mood and your demeanour.

Recognize the traps in which you fall

Remember:

- **Recuperative sleep and sleep that is not.**
- **Search for security at all costs, reassurance.**
- **To complain could be a sign of avoidance**

How to get back on track?

- **Find an alternative coping behaviour (TRAC)**
- **Face your fears**
- **Self-appeasement can help you to reach your goals; it's a way to take care of yourself.** Self-appeasement behaviours provide a sense of peacefulness and calm. They even can be a source of pleasure during periods of emotional suffering. They don't completely relieve the pain, but bring a temporary respite without being avoidance. You need to appease your distress, without anaesthetizing yourself! Self-appeasement is caring for yourself. Anaesthetizing goal is to neutralize distress.
 - **Take a hot bath**
 - **Take a walk**
 - **Go out to take a coffee with friends**
 - **Gardening**
 - **Listening to music**
 - **Work on an interesting project**
 - Experiment and find what suits you!

ACTION power: beyond avoidance
There is problem solving!

ACTION

- A** = pay **A**ttention to your moods and behaviours;
- C** = **C**hOOSE alternative behaviours;
- T** = **T**eST your alternative behaviours;
- I** = **I**ntegrate profitable changes into your life;
- O** = **O**bsERVE the results;
- N** = do **N**ot give up and assess your results.

A

Pay **A**ttention to your moods and behaviours

- What I am doing at the present moment?
- How do I feel?

- Should I change something in my actions or in the way I do things?

C

Choose alternative behaviours

The objective is to find new ways to address situation in order to be able to replace actual problematic behaviours. It is important to choose the way you react to situations instead of letting yourself react out of habit or without thinking.

Ex.: Behaviour to change: _____

First, you must brainstorm all the possibilities. The more you find alternatives, better are your chances to find an interesting option (aim for 10 options). Do not judge your ideas, assess them after writing down your 10 options.

Option 1: _____

Difficulty: (1-5): _____

Usefulness (1-5): _____

Option 2: _____

Difficulty: (1-5): _____

Usefulness (1-5): _____

Option 3: _____

Difficulty: (1-5): _____

Usefulness (1-5): _____

T

Test your alternative behaviours

Plan to try at least three times every alternative behaviours before assessing their effect on your mood. Your commitment can be verbal or written. It is better to specify the time, duration and frequency of your alternative coping behaviours.

I

Integrate profitable changes into your life

Our habits are behaviours schemes that we repeat in a regular fashion like eating, sleeping... Habits usually help to be more efficient in our day-to-day life. You need to accept that it is difficult to master a new ability (or a new habit) and keep working to improve yourself.

O

Observe the results

When you try a new behaviour, take some time to assess your mood a few minutes before your experimentation. Then, briefly note how you feel during and after the change in behaviour. It is also the time to assess the utility of this new ACTION!

N

do Not give up and assess your results.

The process of taking action is always active, every hour and every day of your life. At any time you have and make many choices. This does not mean that you are always free to do what you want when you want. One of the things we loose when we are depressed is the feeling that we can make choices. Taking ACTION is a mean to recover this feeling.

→ To prepare for change

- ✓ Keep being curious and don't assess too fast the changes you are making;
- ✓ The new behaviour is not a willpower test or a mean to assess your personal value. ACTION is an experiment that aims to help you learning (researcher attitude);
- ✓ The new behaviours must be realistic and reachable;
- ✓ Better make little changes at the same time and have modest expectations;
- ✓ Divide the process into small steps. "Little steps" principle;
- ✓ Don't judge while trying a new behaviour. Shame, guilt and anger does not help.
- ✓ Thoughts like "It's easy, you just have to do it to succeed" are not helpful. If changes where that easy, you would already have made them.

ACTION's power

Exercise: What are your observations?

What do we think about and for what purpose?

Psychologists make a distinction between thoughts *content* (what we think about) and *function* (what purpose does it have). In our program, there is another group therapy which sole purpose is to change thoughts content. In this group, emphasis is put on your thoughts function, that is to say the purpose of your thoughts. Hence, the important thing right now is to determine what thinking brings you in a particular situation.

Rumination

To ruminate is to dig up and rehash past negative events, painful feelings and emotions and worries associated with it.

Rumination comes in different forms

Here are some examples:

- To worry;
- To analyse or think excessively about something;
- Being obsessed by something;
- To mope or brood;
- To rack one's brain on a problem;
- Getting frustrated for a long time about a problem.

Differences between rumination and reflection

Rumination	Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Searching for errors, faults and culprits.• Tend to over simplify problems.• Tend to simplify with <i>only one cause</i> of problems.• Tend to judge.• Tirelessly seeking “why”.• Concentrating on the problem, not on the overview of the situation.• Concentrating on the consequences of the problem (this will end badly...).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Searching for solutions...• Taking perspective and take an interest in the problem without exaggeration.• Trying to understand• There is generally several causes to a problem.• The goal is to resolve the problem or to free yourself from it.• Address situation precisely and step by step.• Searching for solution, mending and prevention.

Excerpt from: C. André. (2009). Dépressions sévères: aspects psychologiques de la prise en charge. *L'Encéphale. Supplément 7*, S330-4.

Rumination deteriorates your mood

- It makes you less willing and less able to solve problems;
- It makes you less attentive to your surroundings;
- People often think it is useful to ruminate to face their problems;
- It can sometimes be good to think about the causes of a problem without ruminating on it;
- It can become an efficient avoidance strategy;
- It should not be confused: emotions, rumination and problem solving.

How to manage rumination

Recognize rumination when it happens. To detect it, **continue ruminating for 2 minutes**, then ask yourself:

- 1. Am I making progress in solving this problem?**
- 2. Do I understand better the problem (or my emotions related to this problem)?**
- 3. Am I less critic toward myself or less depressed than before thinking about the problem?**
- 4. Did it help me?**

Rumination can be a signal to take action!

Every time that you are ruminating, tell yourself “I am ruminating right now”, then do another activity. If you do that for a few days, you will observe a significant decrease of the time you spend ruminating.

The importance of focussing on what is being sensed at each moment

Paying attention to what you are experiencing is an excellent mean to manage rumination. Tools like mindfulness and anchoring can help you to stay attentive to what you are living at the present moment, without judgment.

Interpersonal relationships

Several authors in psychology consider that depression is almost always associated with interpersonal problems. It is possible that those interpersonal difficulties have contributed to your depressive mood or that your relationships are affected by your moods.

You might experience difficulties in making and keeping friends or issues about having a difficult conversation with someone important for you. Interpersonal conflicts can also be especially painful when we are depressed. If a difficult relationship worsens your depression, you might hesitate to discuss it with the person concerned. Eventually, you will have to solve this conflict if it is in the thick of your difficulties. To do this, **you can use the problem-solving tool and use it with your interpersonal problems**. It is important to adopt the right stance in front of a problem: identify what is part of the problem and what can help me with it.

Once you have identified a solution, it is preferable to divide this new personal challenge into smaller steps.

One small step at the time...

Doing household chores and finding a new job can also be split into small steps. It helps us avoid a sense of failure and brings us closer to our goal, our well-being.

How can you face something that is discomforting for you?

Establish an anxiety stimulus hierarchy. You must first create a discomfort scale from 0 to 100 and place discomforting things along the scale. These scales were initially developed for phobia treatment, but can be used for other emotions than anxiety, sadness for example. Start with the less discomforting situations and then face the more difficult ones.

When our emotions prevent us to take action

Your moods are made of a series of emotions. Letting yourself be governed by your emotions is letting them dictate your actions and the goals you are pursuing. Instead of engaging in activities, you are waiting to have more motivation or to feel less depressed. An alternative is to undertake and pursue goals and activities, whatever your mood. To achieve that, it takes practice!

We wrongly believe that our behaviours should be dictated by our moods. In the occidental culture, we are taught that emotions and mood are the source of our behaviours. In recent years, psychologists have learned through studies that **our moods are only a small part of what guides our behaviour**. Our behaviours are also guided by the situation you are in, thoughts, goals and expectations. It is therefore wrong to believe that you must always act on what you are feeling.

You must know that emotions are a fundamental component of a human being. Emotions indicate that something important is happening in our life. However, **emotions do not necessarily induce the behaviour, they guide it**. Emotions, although often useful, are not always the best indicator of the most beneficial behaviour you could adopt in a given situation. For example: avoid going out because you feel lousy.

The solution: act in a proactive manner, not in a reactive manner. **Acting in a proactive manner means that you establish a goal and that you will pursue it, no matter what your mood is.** Moods are like temperature, they affect how you perceive things, but they are not always a trustworthy indicator of what is true or important in a situation. Thus, you must set short/mid term goals and long-term goals accordingly to our values (see page 9 and 10 for a reminder about values).

Accept what you cannot change, instead of trying to control everything!

Examples to illustrate seeking control over reality or refusing reality

	Fleeing strategies		Fighting strategies
To hide, escape	Avoid places and situation that make negative emotions emerge	Take control	To remonstrate yourself and force yourself to be happy
To distract yourself	Exceedingly try to distract yourself from unwanted emotions	Depreciate yourself	To criticize, demean and blame yourself
To detach, stupify	Try to escape unwanted thought with drugs and alcohol	Suppress	Banish or fend off thoughts
		Argue	Argue with yourself

To accept reality:

Even if you are mostly in control of your reactions to different events, there could be situations, thoughts or emotions over which you have no or very little control. Trying at all cost to control everything in your life makes things worst. Acceptation is now an important component of psychotherapy. Suffering is part of life, as much as happiness and joy. To accept solely what is pleasurable means not accepting life. Acceptation does not mean resignation or approbation; it's accepting what is there in our lives, nothing more. It's an active opened and welcoming attitude toward thoughts, sensations and emotions, considering them as it is, without trying to modify them or diminish their intensity.

Annex

Self-observation Grid

Time	Activity	With Who?	Emotions (1 to 10)
5 :00			
6 :00			
7 :00			
8 :00			
9 :00			
10 :00			
11 :00			
12 :00			
13 :00			
14 :00			
15 :00			
16 :00			

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23 :00			
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2 :00			
3 :00			
4 :00			