



# SUMMIT

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Scaling Up Maternal Mental healthcare  
by Increasing access to Treatment

## BA ACTIVITY BOOKLET

# RESOURCE AND INFORMATION GUIDE

Did you know that 1 in 7 perinatal patients suffer from depression during and after pregnancy? These are some common symptoms of depression:

- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling tired
- Feeling irritable or angry with those around you
- Having difficulty bonding with your baby
- Having problems with eating or sleeping
- Worrying that you might hurt your baby or yourself

It can be scary to feel like this, but it is not your fault, and you are not alone.

We encourage you to seek additional support if:

- Your symptoms are getting worse
- You are having thoughts about harming yourself or someone else

If you are in Canada, please know that you can reach the Distress Centres of Greater Toronto at 416-408-HELP (4357) or Crisis Services Canada at 1-833-456-4566. You also may call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room if you are having thoughts of hurting yourself.

If you are in the United States, please know that you can reach the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline by calling or texting 1-833-852-6262, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 988, or the National Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.

Postpartum Support International is a well-respected program that provides mental health resources during pregnancy and the postpartum. You can find local resources on as well as their helpline on their webpage: [www.postpartum.net/get-help/](http://www.postpartum.net/get-help/). They have educational information and supportive resources for depression and anxiety on their website that you may find helpful.

If you ever feel like you or your baby are in immediate danger, call 911. When you call 911, medical professionals will work with you promptly to ensure that you and your family are safe, and to connect you with professional medical and mental health services.

## Welcome!

Given the importance of the experience of becoming a new parent, it is surprising that the experience does not come with some sort of instruction guide! The many changes of pregnancy and having a baby are stressful at some points for everyone. Although the sense of miracle and joy during this transition is certainly present, at the same time, all of the demands, unknowns, and uncertainties involved in becoming a parent can be tough, even if you already have another child. Many women experience depression at this time of life.

This brief overview is designed to give you important information about BA and the ways in which it may support you. BA focuses on the connections between what we do and how we feel. It has been demonstrated to help people who are feeling sad, stressed, tired, or lonely. I am excited to share these skills with you. Because the core of BA is about helping you get active, we want to start with this very first practice by encouraging you to read as actively as possible. We would like you to mark up this overview as you read it and bring it back to our next session so we can talk about it.

Please put a " ✓ " next to parts that are a fit or make sense to you; put a " ? " next to parts about which you have questions or are unclear; and an " ✕ " next to parts that do not fit for you or with which you disagree.

To recap, please mark sections as follows:

- ✓ = fits with my experience or makes sense to me
- ? = I have questions or don't understand
- ✕ = doesn't fit with my experience or disagree

As your treatment provider, I look forward to talking about your observations, reflections, and questions!

**Please note:** We use the term 'women' to encompass all perinatal persons inclusive of all gender identities and expression.

## Overview of Behavioural Activation

Many people experience depression throughout their lives. If this is true for you, you are not alone. BA is designed to help you to build or rebuild ways of being active and involved in your life in order to support you in leading a life that is rich and rewarding and that supports your ongoing wellness.

When people hear the word “depression,” they may think that it means that they have failed or are cursed, or that it only affects those who are weak. However, in reality, depression is not the fault of the depressed person, and it is not permanent. Patients can work hand-in-hand alongside a BA Treatment Provider to gain support in feeling better. Depression can be very lonely, isolating, and overwhelming, but change is possible through working with a BA Treatment Provider who understands depression and practical skills to feel better.

Understanding depression is the first step to finding a path out of depression. In BA, we start with the skill of mapping to understand the context of your life – what’s been happening and the impact of events in your life on how you feel and what you do (or don’t do).

Sometimes depression is triggered by a clear event like losing a job or moving to a new home. Other times, it might be the buildup of stress over time, like conflict with someone you care about or hassles at home or work. Events also can be things that happen inside the body, like changes associated with being pregnant or having a baby.

Often, such changes and experiences can increase stress and limit our access to experiences that are rewarding in our lives. Problems and demands can build up over time. Or, it might be that life’s usual enjoyments and rewards just fade away, like all the colour draining out of the world around you. Everything turns grey.

As we talked about in doing your map, often, our emotions and feelings in the body are the first to register this impact. You may feel slowed down and fatigued, mentally and physically. Everything feels like an effort, and you tire easily. Changes in emotion may include feeling sad or down. Many women often feel anxious, stressed, or tense as well. You also may feel irritable or have an urge to snap at others.

## The Downward Spiral of Depression

The tough part about depression is that when people feel sad, down, anxious, or tense, they often start to pull away from the world around them. They might avoid people and places and activities that used to be a regular part of their lives. They might stop caring about activities that they used to enjoy and lose interest or motivation for even those things that used to matter and feel rewarding.

As we showed in your map, these ways of pulling away or avoiding can set off the downward spiral of depression. Although pulling away and avoiding is both common and understandable, such actions also keep women stuck in depression.

Pulling away might provide some temporary relief from not having to face the demands of the world around you, but the relief is often short lived. In fact, as you do less, you might find that you feel more and more sad or stressed or worried, and have less energy and motivation. You even can start blaming yourself for doing less. Moreover, new stressors in your life can develop or the same problems stick around or get worse.

## Our Work Together

It is important to recognize that your depression does not reflect some personal failing within you. Depression is not your fault. It is a signal that something needs to change. The good news is that understanding the downward spiral of depression sheds light on how you can get out of depression.

There are a number of possible ways to overcome depression, and we will be working closely together to use one that is supported by research. It is based on the idea that changing what you do can change how you feel.

Activity can reverse the downward spiral of depression. It helps to build upward spirals of wellness instead of the downward spirals of depression. It is possible to use activity to change how you feel and how you think. In fact, activity can change the very biology of your body. But not just any activity— activity that will help you to build (or rebuild) a life that is rich and rewarding.

### How do we do this?

As we begin our sessions, I will share with you a set of skills that have been very helpful to many perinatal patients. I will share how learning to track daily events and activities and also the effects that these activities have on how you feel. Then, I will show how you can use this information to help you plan doable steps to participate in activities that are enjoyable, help you feel more productive or help you solve specific life problems.

After each of our sessions, you will leave with specific actions you can practice. Often, we will focus first on the activities of pulling away that contribute to the downward spirals of depression. Getting active again can help you to feel less tired, help you to stop dwelling on difficult parts of the past or worrisome parts of the future, help you think and concentrate more effectively, and help you to feel more motivation.

Often, when they are depressed, people think, “I could do that if I felt better or if I had the motivation.” BA works with the idea that being active itself is the most effective way to increase motivation. The more you do, the more you feel like doing. Over time, as you became more active and involved in regular daily ways, and you are feeling better, I can share with you some skills that have helped other parents to tackle some of the bigger problems in life that may be adding stress to your life or getting in the way of feeling reward.

### The Importance of a Team

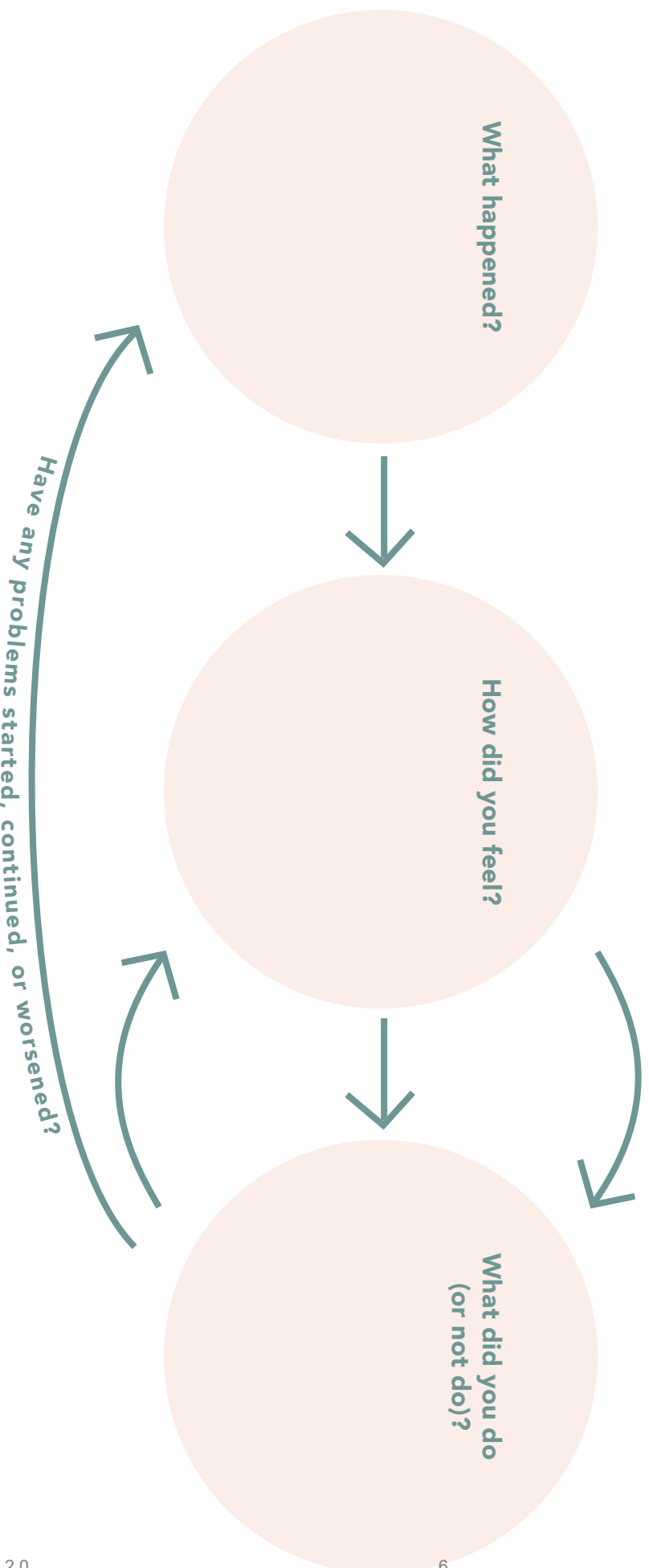
Getting active and involved when you are depressed is hard work. The BA skills are simple, but that doesn't mean that putting them into practice is easy. Having support is essential.

We will work together in this process. As your BA treatment provider, I will be with you every step of the way during our 6-8 sessions. We also will work together to identify some family or friends who can support your efforts. You need people who can support your coming to our sessions and practicing new skills. Many people find depression can be isolating, as well as stressful for other people in their lives. Family and friends, who may have been supportive at first, can become confused and angry over time. Keeping the people who are close to you informed about and involved in what you are learning can be very helpful. It's helpful as you start treatment to identify one person with whom you can talk about SUMMIT BA treatment.

As we begin our work together, remember that you are not alone. The skills of BA have helped many other new parents.

**I look forward to working with you on your path to wellness!**

# MAPPING



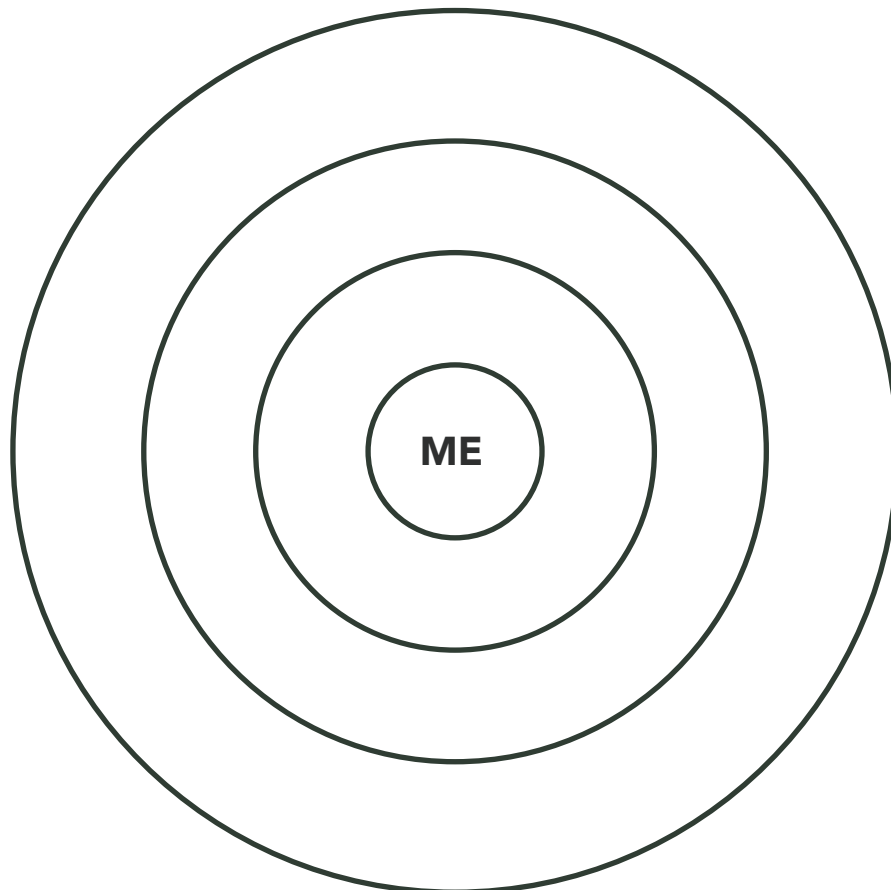
# CIRCLES OF CONNECTION

## Instructions

Take a moment to think of the people in your life. Who are the important people in your life? Who are the people with whom you have a sense of connection and to whom you feel close? Who are the people who support you? Support might include any of the following: helping to take care of the baby or children, listening to your worries and concerns, helping with finances or other practical problems like errands and household chores, spending time with you having fun or visiting, or giving advice or guidance.

Write their names and their relationship to you (e.g., Mariana/sister) on the circles below, with those in the center circle being the people who are most important in your life.

Now that we've identified the people in your circles of connection, identify one person with whom you can talk about SUMMIT BA treatment after reading the booklet.



# TRACKING

## Instructions

In each time block that you plan to track, write down what you were doing (specific activity) and how you were feeling. For tracking how you were feeling, you can use the instructions for tracking based on the Mood Ladder, or the instructions for tracking a specific emotion (e.g., sad, frustrated) or general state (e.g., stressed, lonely), or the instructions for tracking Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting, or other feelings. Tracking with the Mood Ladder:

- Use a specific number ranging between 0 and 10 (0 = feeling worst , 10 = feeling best). To give yourself a guide as you do the tracking, it is helpful to create anchors based on your own life. What are some examples of when you felt a "1", a "5", or a "10"?
- Use a colour (red, yellow, green).
- Use an icon ( 😞 😐 😊 ).





# OTHER TRACKING OPTIONS

In addition to tracking your mood, you can also track **Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting** as well as other feelings.

## Tracking Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting

You may choose to indicate when an activity on your tracking sheet was a Pleasure, Mastery, or Connecting activity. Remember that:

- PLEASURE activities provide a sense of enjoyment, delight, or nourishment.
- MASTERY activities provide a sense of accomplishment, a sense of getting things done, even if the activity itself is not particularly enjoyable.
- CONNECTING activities engage you with other people

To track these Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting activities on your tracking sheet you simply may add a P, M, or C next to the activities you write on your sheet. You can also use numeric ratings for each of these with the same 1-10 scale, with 1 being low and 10 being high. Thus, you might write P2 for getting stuck in traffic or M9 for finishing an important project. To begin, define a guide for you to do the tracking by creating anchors based on your own life. What are some examples of when you felt P, M, or C as a "1," a "5", and a "10"?

## Tracking other feelings

You may choose to track other feelings such as stressed, afraid, angry/frustrated, embarrassed, etc. To give yourself a guide as you do the tracking, it is helpful to create anchors based on your own life. What are some examples of when you felt a "1," a "5", and a "10"?

**Instructions:**

In each time block that you plan to track, write down what you were doing (specific activity) and how you were feeling (e.g., Mood Ladder rating, Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting rating, etc.).

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM - 6:00 AM							

**Instructions:**

In each time block that you plan to track, write down what you were doing (specific activity) and how you were feeling (e.g., Mood Ladder rating, Pleasure, Mastery, and Connecting rating, etc.).

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

# ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

As you track what you are doing and how you are feeling, it can be helpful to summarize the activities that have the biggest or most consistent effect on how you feel. You can jot down those activities on this list over time.

<b>What are the activities that I will continue doing to support my mood?</b>	<b>What are the activities that I will stop or reduce to support my mood?</b>

PERSONAL VALUES

**VALUES CARD**

**IMPORTANT TO ME**

**SORT ACTIVITY**

W.R. Miller, J. C'de Baca, and Matthews, D.B.,  
1999

**VERY IMPORTANT TO ME**

**LESS IMPORTANT TO ME**



**HELPFULNESS**

to be helpful to others

**TRADITION**

to follow respected patterns of the past

**SELF-ACCEPTANCE**

to accept myself as I am

**COMFORT**

to have a pleasant and comfortable life

**LEISURE**

to take time to relax and enjoy

**MASTERY**

to be competent in everyday activities

## **AUTONOMY**

to be self-determined and independent

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

to make and carry out responsible decisions

## **ACCURACY**

to be accurate in my opinions and beliefs

## **COMMITMENT**

to make enduring, meaningful commitments

## **RISK**

to take risks and chances

## **GROWTH**

to keep changing and growing

## **KNOWLEDGE**

to learn and contribute valuable knowledge

## **BEAUTY**

to appreciate beauty around me

## **ATTRACTIVENESS**

to be physically attractive for others

## **ACCEPTANCE**

to be accepted as I am

## **MODERATION**

to avoid excesses and find a middle ground

## **MONOGAMY**

to have one close, loving relationship

## **COMPASSION**

to feel and act on concern for other

## **CARING**

to take care of others

## **SAFETY**

to be safe and secure

## **FAITHFULNESS**

to be loyal and true in relationships

## **COURTESY**

to be considerate and polite toward others

## **CREATIVITY**

to have new and original ideas

## **REALISM**

to see and act realistically and practically

## **SELF-CONTROL**

to be disciplined in my own actions

## **WEALTH**

to have plenty of money

## **ORDER**

to have a life that is well-ordered and organized

## **POPULARITY**

to be well-liked by many people

## **STRENGTH**

to be physically fit and strong

## **ROMANCE**

to have intense, exciting love in my life

## **POWER**

to have control over others

## **DEPENDABILITY**

to be reliable and trustworthy

## **HEALTH**

to be physically well and healthy

## **GOD'S WILL**

to seek and obey the will of God

## **LOVING**

to give love to others



## **VIRTUE**

to live a morally pure and excellent life

## **PURPOSE**

to have a meaning and direction in my life

## **LOVED**

to be loved by those close to me

## **SERVICE**

to be of service to others

## **CONTRIBUTION**

to make a lasting contribution in the world

## **SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

to have a deep and honest understanding of myself

## **GENUINENESS**

to act in a manner that is true to who I am

## **ADVENTURE**

to have new and exciting experiences

## **JUSTICE**

to promote fair and equal treatment for all

## **FUN**

to play and have fun

## **STABILITY**

to have a life that stays fairly consistent

## **FRIENDSHIP**

to have close, supportive friends

## **ACHIEVEMENT**

to have important accomplishments

## **DUTY**

to carry out my duties and obligations

## **AUTHORITY**

to be in charge of and responsible for others

## **SPIRITUALITY**

to grow and mature spiritually

## **ECOLOGY**

to live in harmony with the environment

## **FLEXIBILITY**

to adjust to new circumstances easily

## **GENEROSITY**

to give what I have to others

## **LOGIC**

to live rationally and sensibly

## **WORLD PEACE**

to work to promote peace in the world

## **FAME**

to be known and recognized

## **FORGIVENESS**

to be forgiving of others

## **TOLERANCE**

to accept and respect those who differ from me

## **HONESTY**

to be honest and truthful

## **INDEPENDENCE**

to be free from dependence on others

## **INNER PEACE**

to experience personal peace

## **HUMILITY**

to be modest and unassuming

## **SIMPLICITY**

to live life simply, with minimal needs

## **FAMILY**

to have a happy, loving family

## **COMPLEXITY**

to have a life full of variety and change

## **PLEASURE**

to feel good

## **INDUSTRY**

to work hard and well at my life tasks

## **HOPE**

to maintain a positive and optimistic outlook

## **HUMOR**

to see the humorous side of myself and the world

## **INTIMACY**

to share my innermost experiences with others

Other value:

Other value:

Other value:

Other value:

# ACTIVITY SELECTING, STRUCTURING, AND SCHEDULING

**Activity Selecting.** You may want to focus on activities:

- that you have been avoiding, that have been weighing on you or causing stress (see Mapping worksheet)
- that have the potential to bring you pleasure, mastery, or connection (see Tracking worksheet or your Activities Summary worksheet)
- that you used to be part of your life or routines and that help you feel like your usual self (see Values worksheet)
- that are important to you and consistent with your values (see Values worksheet)

*Tip: Start with more do-able activities and work up to more challenging ones.*

**Activity Structuring.** Remember, “One step at a time”. It is important to break down goals into multiple, achievable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed and help you accomplish your goals.

*Tip: Check that each step is clear, concrete, and observable.*

**Activity Scheduling.** Make a specific plan for when, where and for how long you will do the chosen activity.

*Tip: Anticipate barriers that might get in the way of doing the activity when you have planned, and develop a plan for how to overcome those barriers. Consider the ways that challenging logistics, emotions, and thoughts may get in your way.*



**Goal:** Take a 30-minute walk during my lunch break one time per week.

**Step 5:** Night before the walk, pack a healthy snack and water bottle; lay out comfortable clothes.

**Step 4:** Scope out a walking route on Tuesday evening that will take approximately 30 minutes and is pleasant.

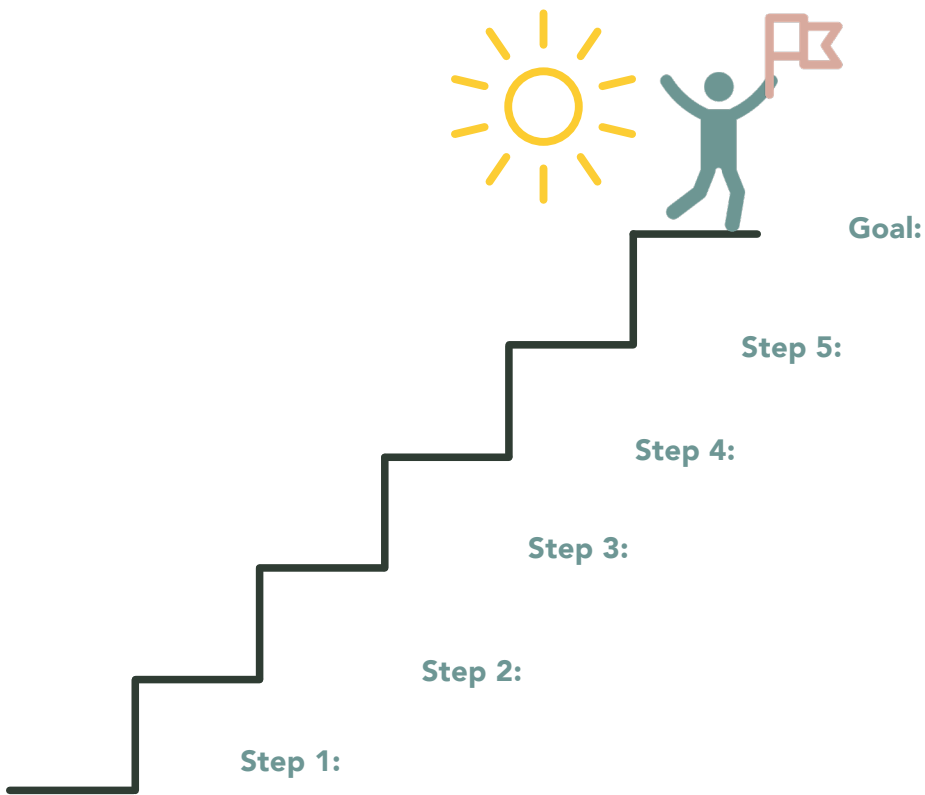
**Step 3:** Ask co-worker/friend to go on walks with me and be an accountability partner. Have a back-up co-worker/friend in mind if she says no.

**Step 2:** Bring pair of walking shoes to work to keep in the office on Monday morning.

**Step 1:** Review work schedule for the week on Sunday evening and block out time in calendar to take a walk. Commit to not scheduling anything else during this time.

# WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

What are the steps you can take to get there?



# COPE

**Instructions:** COPE highlights the specific steps that you can take to start taking an active problem solving approach in your life.

<p><b>1. CLARIFY</b></p> <p>Start by choosing one problem, then clarify what exactly the problem is. Write down the one problem and the facts. What about this one problem is stressful, challenging, or difficult? Also, ask yourself, is this a problem that I have control over? If not, you may not be able to solve this one; consider redefining the problem as one over which you have some control.</p>	
<p><b>2. OPTIONS</b></p> <p>Brainstorm options. Don't worry about whether these options are "good" or "bad." Be specific and think of options that are concrete, specific, and structured. Check to see if the options are doable, even if challenging. If you are having a hard time thinking of options, ask yourself if you have you ever faced a similar problem? Have others in your life? How did you/they problem-solve?</p>	
<p><b>3. PERFORM</b></p> <p>Pick an option to and put it into action. There may be no "perfect" solution to some problems. Pick the option that is most promising and that can be implemented.</p>	
<p><b>4.EVALUATE</b></p> <p>Evaluate how it worked. Pay close attention to the outcome. Reflect on what worked, what didn't? Did you get the desired outcome? If yes, congratulations! You faced a problem and solved it, rather than avoiding it. If you didn't get the desired outcome, go back to the first step and cycle back through each step. Remember that some problems take a few problem solving efforts to solve.</p>	

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS: FOUR QUESTIONS

**Instructions:** This four-step tool can help you simply ask for something or say no. In order to get your needs met, it can be helpful to plan what you'll say in advance. Come up with one sentence in response to each question below, then practice saying the four sentences altogether.

## 1. Facts: What is the situation?

*Describe the current situation. Stick to the facts. Say, "I have not showered today," rather than "I never get a break!"*

## 2. I Feel: How do I feel about it?

*Express your feelings and opinions about the situation. Don't assume that the other person knows how you feel. Remember that feelings often can be expressed with one word: angry, sad, scared, embarrassed, happy, etc. Say, "I feel irritated and grimy."*

## 3. Rquest: What do I want?

*Ask for what you want or say no clearly. Say, "Will you watch the kids while I shower?"*

## 4. Make benefits clear: What are the benefits of agreeing to what I am asking?

*Explain the positive effects of agreeing to what you are asking; how will this bring benefit for you and the other person. Say, "I will feel better and be in a better mood if I shower." It's a plus for the whole family!*



# ENDING WELL

## Summary of Learning:

What situations may increase my risk of becoming depressed in the future?

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What are the warning signs that I may be getting depressed in the future?

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Based on my Activities Summary (below), what activities might improve my mood and help me continue to stay well?

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What or who will support me in doing the activities that help to improve my mood? This includes helping me act according to my goals or values (rather than my mood) and acting acting from the "outside in" (rather than "inside out").

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