



**Community-based Behavioural Activation Training
(ComBAT) for Depression in Adolescents:
Feasibility Study & Survey**

RESULTS SUMMARY

Hello from the ComBAT Research Team!

Now that the ComBAT feasibility study has ended, we wanted to get in touch and let you know what we found. We also wanted to thank you again for taking part in the research. Your support with the study will help us to help other young people with low mood/depression in the future.

Why did we do this research?

We know that lots of young people can struggle with low mood/depression. We wanted to test a type of therapy for low mood that aims to help people take part in activities to help them feel better. This type of therapy is called Behavioural Activation (BA). We made a new BA intervention and asked some young people to test it out. We also asked young people, some parents/guardians and some professionals to tell us what they thought of BA.

1. Did young people use BA?



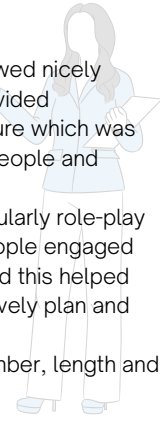
Overall, we offered BA to 20 young people across the North-East and North-West of England. The 20 young people were aged between 12 and 18 years and all agreed to take part in the research. Most young people completed between 2 and 9 sessions of BA. All 20 young people took part in an interview and told us what they thought of the BA. We also talked to 8 parents/guardians and 10 professionals.

"I quite enjoyed it because you go to describe what you're enjoying. Like so if you was in friends, you'd go through all the list of who your closest friends are and why they are, then like what they do to help you and stuff. I just quite enjoyed getting it all down on paper, rather than just having it in my head."

2. Why was BA helpful?

- Attending BA gave young people some routine
- Improvements in mood
- Increased activation
- Increased motivation and energy
- Young people learned new coping skills
- Young people gained an understanding of how they were feeling
- Increased confidence
- Increased independence
- Re-engagement with hobbies and friends
- Increased communication between parents and their son/daughter/child – young people opened up more about how they were feeling
- BA appealed to both sexes unlike some other therapies (i.e. counselling) than can appeal more to females.

3. What did people like about BA?

Young People	Parents & Guardians	Professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Pie -enjoyed getting things important to them down on paper • Activity calendar • Found BA simple to understand and manage • Somebody to talk to – felt heard/listened to/could talk freely • Flexibility about where and when sessions were held • Liked weekly sessions to allow time to complete activities between sessions • Felt easy for all ages to understand • Simple worksheets • Flexibility of BA • Step-by-step structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked the length of the sessions • Thought the frequency was right • Age appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age appropriate • Enjoyed delivering BA • Simple delivery and flowed nicely • Associated manual provided organisation and structure which was helpful to both young people and professionals • Training helpful – particularly role-play • Life Pie – felt young people engaged well with this activity and this helped professionals to effectively plan and deliver future sessions. • Happy with session number, length and frequency of BA 

"They've made it so that it's easy for all ages to understand"

"I like the simplicity of the intervention".

4. What were some challenges of BA?

- Some young people struggled to complete homework tasks through reduced motivation or forgetting to complete them.
- Some activities felt like a chore (e.g. activity calendar) when people are feeling low.

5. How could we improve the BA?

Young People	Parents & Guardians	Professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to complete the activity calendar on their phone/app/digitally • Wanted more sessions (or optional sessions at the end of treatment if young people felt they needed them) • Increased flexibility of where to complete sessions • Increased flexibility of how to complete sessions (in person, online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased parental involvement so they can provide support after sessions (e.g. scheduled time with a professional, summary of what has been covered in a session and how they can provide support) • Young people to receive regular check-ins with professionals so they can have encouragement and support between sessions • Increased session number • More support/task setting after sessions have ended so sessions don't just stop • Sessions on same day each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding in videos to explain BA to young people • Expand Life Pie to include additional categories such as sexuality and religion • Adding in an activities catalogue to support young people in selecting activities to complete • Focusing on activation earlier to capitalise on initial enthusiasm of some young people • Adding in an additional initial session for professional and young person to get to know each other • Adding in more interactive elements • Consider digital tool to support therapy delivery • More flexibility over where and when sessions completed • Including parents more – attending some sessions or having a summary BUT involvement decided on a case by case basis

What are our next steps?

Following the helpful feedback we received during this study we have been able to make changes to our BA which we hope has improved the treatment. We are now testing this newer version with a larger group of young people across the UK. As part of this we are looking to compare our BA to the care that is currently being offered in services for young people like schools, the NHS and other community-based organisations. In total we are looking for 236 young people to take part in the research. From this study we hope to find out whether our BA can help young people with low mood/depression, whether it can be cheaper to deliver than other forms of support and whether young people and professionals like the treatment.

"I would recommend it to others... I do like the format and the actual.. what they do, which is work with them to allow them to do things that they enjoy doing, that they want to do, for their wellbeing. It's definitely a positive thing."

"Following the training that we were given in our organisation I had ideas how it would be brilliant for school teachers, parents, family, caregivers to be trained in the intervention"



We thank you once again for taking part in this research. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact the ComBAT research team (combat-project@york.ac.uk). You can also keep up to date with the ComBAT programme of research on our website: combatdepression.org