

Smarter Goal setting

Setting goals is an important part of achieving the best out of life. Having specific goals **motivates** and helps you to keep a sense of **progress**. Goals do not have to be huge; walking for half an hour 3 times a week is a small goal but could benefit you in many ways. To help you to have more success with your goal setting, try applying the SMARTER formula which is used in both commerce and education settings.

S - Specific - your goal needs to be very specific i.e. by session 6 I would like to be able to....By Christmas I want to.....

The language you use is also important, try to use positive words such as *achieve*, *change*, and *increase*, and avoid words such as *give up*, *lose*, and *not*.

M - Measurable - how will you measure your progress towards your end goal? Do you need to set smaller targets i.e. decreasing or increasing gradually a behaviour you want to change? Can you use a diary, journal or some form of measurement to record small achievements?

A - Appealing - What will be better in your life if you achieve this goal? We all need motivation to get through the times when success seems out of reach. Spending some time at the beginning considering your own personal motivators will increase your chances of success. **When a goal is attractive, appealing or desirable to us, we are more motivated and driven towards achieving it.**

R - Realistic - goals need to be realistic and achievable. We know that when we succeed we are encouraged to push ourselves, when we fail we lose confidence. So do not set yourself up for failure by setting unachievable goals. **Smaller and more realistic goals are sometimes better than one large unrealistic one.**

T - Timed - if you have a time limit on the achieving of the goal, you then have a framework within which to measure the smaller successes. If you review your progress regularly you will soon recognise if you have set an unrealistic goal or time frame.

E - Evaluate - It is important to take stock regularly while working towards a goal. Ask yourself questions, such as "Have I chosen the best way of measuring my progress that keeps me motivated?" - "If I am struggling, is it because I am trying to change someone else's behaviour rather than my own?"

R - Review/Reset - it may be necessary to redefine your goal after evaluating.