

CBT FOR PRACTICAL

GOAL SETTING

10

GET SUPPORT & FEEDBACK

Support from a friend, a therapist or someone with similar goals can help us sustain our motivation and commitment. Constructive feedback can also help us to gauge progress and direction on the path towards our goal. We can even set up our own feedback loop by recording our progress and achievements.

GOALS SHOULD BE RELEVANT

The goal we are aiming for must feel significant to us and congruent with our lives and values. They need to be goals that benefit us and are born of our own desires and life plan, not to please others.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Sometimes having a deadline or time frame for each step towards our goal can help to energise and motivate us to engage and complete. This can be a self imposed deadline or an external requirement of the task. Another aspect is to make sure the time is right for this goal, and to pace ourselves or prioritise.

MAKE ACTIVITIES MEASURABLE

If we know precisely what quantities or time frames are involved in our goal, it is easier to monitor whether we have achieved it or not. For example, "walk around the park each day for 15 minutes at 8am". Think 'how much' or 'how many'.

ASSESS WHERE YOU ARE NOW

Having identified and got clear on your goal, it can be useful to take an honest look at where the land lies currently. Making a realistic appraisal of how things stand in the present will help you to assess what changes you need to make. Then you can start thinking about what your first step is.

1

IDENTIFY & CLARIFY YOUR AIMS

Getting clear with yourself about what you ultimately want to achieve (as well as any sub goals on the journey) is important. Writing down your goals and looking at your reasons for wanting to pursue them can help with focus, resolve, assessing the benefits and can help avoid being distracted or sidetracked.

9

CREATE BITE SIZED CHUNKS

Rather than becoming overwhelmed and intimidated by large or complex goals, breaking things down into smaller, more manageable steps can help us stay on track. Smaller tasks are achieved in shorter time frames and are less scary. Accomplishing multiple smaller steps imparts confidence and focus.

ASSESS POSSIBLE OBSTACLES

It is important to do this with a positive focus. Many of us have a history of negative responses to our goals, so this step is for empowering, self-regulated assessment purposes. If we are mindful of things that might get in the way or pose extra challenges, we are better prepared and more realistic.

BE SURE GOALS ARE ACHIEVABLE

If goals are too easy, they may lack the motivation of challenge, but if they are too hard we often lose interest, or become discouraged and give up on our goal altogether. While it is important for goals to be challenging, they need to be realistic, within our reach, and achievable.

GET SPECIFIC ABOUT GOALS

If we replace vague and general goals with laser targeted specifics, it gives us something concrete and practical to aim for. For example, "get more exercise" could be replaced by "go for a short walk each morning before work". Think in terms of exactly who, where, when, why and what the particulars of the goal will entail.