



Setting Goals and Moving Forward

Psychosis can stop people in their tracks.

Many people with psychosis just stop doing things they used to do, such as work, school, taking care of themselves, seeing friends, and having fun.

It's not that you have lost all your goals. But starting to do these things again may seem almost impossible. You may feel that it would require just too much effort and you can't even get motivated to start.

In this section we will look at how you can gradually start to set goals and move forward. **The key is to start slowly and set goals that you can achieve.** Don't use a lack of motivation as an excuse not to start. Start by setting and achieving small goals. Success with small goals will increase your feelings of confidence and competence and motivate you to set larger goals.

Four steps you need to take to start setting goals and moving forward:

- 1. Select your goal**
- 2. Define your goal**
- 3. Move towards your goal**
- 4. Review your goal**

You will need to work through each of these four steps in order.

Start with smaller goals that you are likely to achieve. This will help you learn good goal-setting skills. You can try your skills with larger goals after you achieve success with a few smaller goals.



Understanding

Using Special Goal-Setting Worksheets

Take a Look at this Example.

Before his psychosis, Sam used to keep his days very busy. He had a job at a local restaurant where he got along well with his co-workers. He was on a soccer team that played twice a week. A couple of nights a week he would go to the movie theatre with friends. Since his psychosis, Sam's days have been empty except for weekends when he spends time with his friends Ray and Joey. From Monday to Friday he spends most of his time alone in his room feeling bored.

Sam has many large goals. He wants to be able to work, play soccer, and have money to go out to movies with his friends. Sam knows that it will take time before he can accomplish all these goals. He knows that goal-setting skills will help him. To start practicing goal setting Sam picks a smaller goal. He decides to set a goal of getting out of the house more often to alleviate his boredom.

Sam knows that goals are best when they are specific, scheduled, supported, and realistic. He records his goal in the goal-setting worksheet.

GOAL-SETTING WORKSHEET			
GOAL	HOW OFTEN?	WHEN EXACTLY?	WHO WILL SUPPORT ME?
Go to the community centre to practice soccer.	Twice each week for half an hour.	Tuesday and Thursday at 2pm when the community centre is available for drop-in.	My mother has agreed to remind me if I forget.
If anybody else is practicing, ask if I can join them. Otherwise, practice alone.			She has agreed to remind me only once. If I decide not to go, it is my decision.



Understanding

1. Select Your Goal

Your first goal should be something that is small but important to you. Start with a goal that you can achieve in a short period of time, something you can do within the next week. It's also a good idea if your goal is something that you enjoy.

If you have problems coming up with a goal, think about whether there is anything in your life that you would like to change. Perhaps you would like to socialize more with other people. Perhaps you would like to get into better physical shape. The process of thinking how your life could be better will help you identify a larger goal.

If you have a large goal that is really important to you, then set a smaller goal that takes you one step towards your larger goal. This smaller goal should be something you can accomplish within the next week. Let's say you want to lose fifteen pounds. This is a large goal that will take some time to accomplish. A smaller goal that takes you one step in this direction would be to go for a 15-minute walk, four days a week.

Your Support Person can help you select a goal, but the goal that you decide on should be your own. **It should be something that you really want.**

After thinking about your goals for a while you may find that you have a lot of different goals. It's great to have lots of goals. Don't try to achieve them all at once, though. **It's best to focus on just one goal for now.**

Goal setting can be useful for:

- Carrying out a plan for a solution to a problem (via the problem-solving method)
- Connecting with people or practicing your social skills
- Taking care of your health, such as losing weight, exercising regularly, or quitting smoking
- Pursuing dreams, such as goals for school, work, travel, and family
- Fun activities, such as hobbies, sports, and recreation





Your Turn!

Your Turn!

Pick a goal that you want to start working on and write it down here.



Understanding

2. Define Your Goal

Now that you've selected your goal, spend some time refining it. The best goals are *specific, scheduled, supported, and realistic*.

SPECIFIC

Be as specific as you can when you define your goal. Vague or unclear goals have less chance of success. A goal such as “*get more exercise*” is vague. It doesn't tell you exactly how this goal will be accomplished. A more specific way to express this goal would be to state “*go for a 30-minute bike ride at the park on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.*”

SCHEDULED

Use the following questions to help set a schedule for your goals:

- Exactly when will I do this? What days and at what time?
- For how long will I do this? 10 minutes, 30 minutes, or one hour each time?
- Where will I do this? In my house, at the park, or at the community centre?

SUPPORTED

Will having support in place help you achieve your goal? Think about who can best support you and how they will do this. You may choose to have somebody remind you of your goal. Agree in advance how they will give you this reminder.

Other types of support can involve help with finding out about information, transportation, or the resources (financial or otherwise) you need to get started.





Understanding

3. Move Towards Your Goal

Once you have defined your goal, the next thing is to track your progress. Are you doing what you set out to do?

The best way to track your progress is by using a calendar or day planner.

Write down your schedule for the goal and check it off each time you've accomplished a positive step toward that goal.

If you miss a scheduled time, for whatever reason, reschedule for another time. For example, if Sam wasn't able to go to the community centre on Thursday because it was a holiday, then he could reschedule for Friday, making a note in his calendar.

Using a Calendar

A calendar or day planner is also a good place to track your other activities and write down reminders. You can list your:

- Appointments
- Times to see friends
- Important dates like library-book-due dates and deadlines for paying bills

Your calendar provides you with a place to plan your activities for each coming week. By looking at your coming week you can make sure that you have a good balance of time for:

- Responsibilities
- Friends
- Recreation
- Relaxation





Understanding

4. Review Your Goal

After you have done some work towards your goal, take time to review your progress.

Sometimes you may find that you have not made any progress toward your goal. Don't blame yourself if that's the case. There are no failures in goal setting, just readjusting the difficulty of the goal and the steps you are taking to get there.

Here are three common reasons why goal setting may not work.

1. Problems encountered along the way

Sometimes unanticipated problems come up that prevent you from working toward your goal. It might be that there were some new stressors in your life, and your priority shifted to coping with these. Perhaps you didn't have all the resources you needed to work on the goal. There could have been a problem with money, transportation, or another resource. Maybe your original plan was no longer possible. You may have planned, for example, to go for a swim three times a week, but then the pool closed for repairs.

Your problem-solving skills can be used to explore solutions for any problems you encounter along the way to your goal.

2. The goal you set was too difficult

Finding the right *level* of goal takes time and practice. It's common for people to set ambitious goals when goal setting and then find out later that these goals were much too difficult. Revising the difficulty of your goals is part of the goal-setting process and is to be expected.

3. The goal is no longer attractive

Your goals may simply change over time. Just because something was your goal a few weeks or months ago doesn't mean that it is today. If your goal no longer seems important to you, then change your goal. Goal setting is simply a skill to help you achieve the goals you *want* to achieve.





Understanding

You should expect to revise your goals, especially when first starting to practice this skill. It is challenging to set goals at the right level of difficulty. Practice will help you get better at this.

In reviewing your goals, you will often find that you have made progress. Congratulate yourself when this happens! As you work towards a goal, whenever you have achieved a step or made a significant effort, take time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so.

REWARD YOURSELF

It's a good idea to build in some rewards for yourself in your goal setting. Rewards don't have to be something that cost money. Rewards can also involve taking time to do something nice for yourself, such as spending the afternoon at the park with a friend or going on a picnic with your family at the beach.