

SMART Goal Setting Guidelines

The following tips can help develop client goals and direction for CCP service sessions. The following guidelines can help develop a SMART goal plan with the client.

Goals should be “SMART”

S – Specific

M – Measureable

A – Achievable

R – Relevant

T – Time Based

S – Specific

The goal is clear and unambiguous; it should include exact expectations, why the specific goal is important, who is involved in achieving the goal and what steps need to happen in order to achieve the goal.

Questions to ask:

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why do I want to achieve this goal (specific reasons, purpose or benefits of the goal).
- Who is involved?
- Where does it take place (at home, at work, with friends etc.).
- Which requirements and/or constraints are there to obtain this goal?

M – Measureable

The criterion for obtaining the goal should be concrete and measureable (when possible). The idea is that even when a goal is not measureable many of the steps towards the goal are.

This helps both the client and the CCP Staff to determine if the client is on track, if changes need to be made or if a different goal may be required.

The measurement part of goal setting may answer some of the following questions:

- How will I know when the goal is accomplished?
- How will I know I am on track?
- How much?

All of the indicators should be quantifiable (measured by numbers and not abstract concepts).

A – Achievable

Goals should be realistic and attainable by the client. This means that they are not too hard to accomplish but not too easy to obtain. Working with the client is important in order to make smaller, more attainable goals through the service (as opposed to one large, broad goal).

A good question to get started is “how can the goal be accomplished”? By writing out the steps involved both the CPP Staff and the client can identify if the goal is achievable while also identifying what needs to be done to achieve it.

R - Relevant

This component stresses the importance of picking goals that matter. Identifying the most important goal(s) is important. Make sure the goal is relevant to the client's needs and the direction of the services.

Some questions to ask to determine relevance of the goal are:

- Is this goal worthwhile?
- Is this the right time to pursue this goal?
- Does this match current needs or other general goals?
- Are there other goals that require attention before this goal can be attained?

T - Time Bound

This section stresses the need for goals to be based in a timeframe. This means that there is a "due date" or a goal date for achieving the SMART goal. This may be daily, weekly, monthly and/or a finalized time-based requirement.

This may not be as relevant for some client's goals or it may be hard to determine a time-frame for specific goals. Do the best that you can and make time-based goals whenever possible. Basing the goal in a time frame creates a sense of responsibility and urgency to achieve the goal.

Some questions to determine the time frame for a goal are:

- When can I do it?
- What can I do today?
- What can I do six weeks from now?
- What can I do six months from now?

These tips and guidelines can be used to help construct goals for individuals. You can use the SMART Goals Template in the CCP Standards Manual or your own goal planning sheet. SMART goals may not be appropriate for every client but can be helpful for some clients. Being able to verbalize and write down how to achieve a goal makes it more likely to be achieved.

Source: Meyer, Paul J (2003). "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals". Attitude Is Everything: If You Want to Succeed Above and Beyond. Meyer Resource Group, Incorporated, The.