

My Recovery Plan[®]
My Goals

Goal Setting Guide

Purpose

To set, track and meet Goals can empower you to make positive changes in your life and promote self-improvement.

Objectives

By the end of this course you will know how to:

- a. Define Goals.
- b. Identify Personal Strengths.
- c. Identify Obstacles and define Tasks to overcome Obstacles.
- d. Identify Rewards for achieving Goals.

Target Audience

Includes Veterans, Servicemembers, Caregivers, Family Members, and Health Care Team members.

Outcomes

You will be able to set a Goal, identify Strengths and Obstacles, define Tasks and measures, and identify Rewards for meeting a Goal.

“The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you're willing to work.”
- Oprah Winfrey

Why Are Goals Important?

- A Goal is a something specific in your life that you would like to change or achieve.
- Setting Goals helps provide direction and purpose and tracking your progress towards achieving your Goals gives you a sense of accomplishment.
- Setting Goals helps you take stock of the areas of your life and decide what you want to achieve.

What Are The Benefits Of Achieving Goals?

- Tracking and completing Tasks helps provide motivation.
- Achieving your Goals helps to build self-confidence and promotes self empowerment.
- Sharing your Goals with your health care team promotes teamwork and partnership.

Six Steps For Setting And Achieving Goals

Step 1: Goals - create and prioritize your Goals.

Step 2: Personal Strengths - list your talents, skills, knowledge, experience, and interests.

Step 3: Obstacles - list problems that can stand in the way or hold up progress.

Step 4: Tasks - create and manage Tasks used in reaching a Goal.

Step 5: Start and End Dates - set Task target dates to help work on or complete Tasks.

Step 6: Rewards - set a Reward you can look forward to when you meet your Goal.

How Do I Get Started?

- Start by brainstorming. Think about what you want to be, do, have, give, etc.
 1. Set aside a specific time so you can focus.
 2. Relax and free your mind to let out all your ideas and possibilities.
 3. Be open to your ideas and do not criticize or judge - they are your ideas - so they are not 'right' or 'wrong'.
 4. Think of your past experiences as a springboard for ideas.
 5. Dream of everything you want, or anything you have wanted in life.
 6. Think of role models or mentors that have achieved what you wish to achieve.
- Group your Goals by short-term and long-term.
 - › Short-term Goals are ones that could be accomplished in a few weeks or months.
 - › Long-term Goals are ones that may take many years to achieve.
- Prioritize the Goals that are most important to you and rank them in the order in which you want to work on them.

"Achievable
goals are the first step to
self improvement."
- J.K. Rowling

How Do I Get Motivated?

Your motivation is like having internal batteries – they help you carry out your Tasks. Your doubts, negative emotions, fears, and frustrations can drain your batteries.

To keep moving toward your Goals, you need inspiration and motivation. This will help you 'recharge your batteries' to overcome and clear the Obstacles that are in your path to achieving your Goals.

Create a personal toolkit to help inspire and motivate you into action and keep you moving forward:

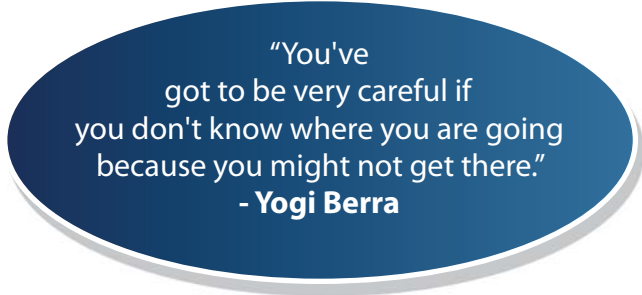
- Identify your wins and successes: list all the things you have already accomplished in your life.
- Look forward: close your eyes and see yourself doing whatever it is that you wish to be doing. Write your future story down, review and update it as you achieve your Goals.
- Look backwards: you see where you were and how far you have come. This can keep you heading in the right direction.
- Learn: read, talk about, listen, and experience everything you can about your particular Goal or dream.
- Find a role model or mentor: choose a person you can learn from. You will not have to reinvent the wheel when you follow the example of someone you respect.
- Put up motivator reminders in plain sight: place signs, posters, notes, or objects that remind you of your Goals and dreams. Place reminders in your home, office, car, wallet, planner, or calendar.
- Read motivational stories: newspapers, libraries, and the internet contain inspirational quotes and success stories.
- Get positive: surround yourself with positive people instead of negative people.

Goals

Goals should be specific and clearly define what you are going to do (Who, What, Where, When, Which, and Why?).

Think about where you are now and what you would like to accomplish in life. There may be some short-term Goals, which could be achieved in the next several months, and long-term Goals, which could be achieved gradually over a long period of time.

Example Goals: Unclear	Example Goals: Specific and Clear
Be more open.	I will share my feelings with my wife when I am sad.
Get a job I like.	I will find a job that will let me use my knowledge about car engines.



How Do I Identify My Personal Strengths?

Strengths are your strong points, such as your talents, skills, knowledge, and experiences. Think about which of your personal Strengths can help you reach each of your Goals.

Internal Strengths

- Make a list of things that you like about yourself.
- Ask people who know you to list the qualities about you they value and see as your Strengths.
- Use your list as a reference and update it as new Strengths are identified.

External Strengths

- List your support systems (family, friends, the VA, organizations, spirituality, and social networks).

Goals	Personal Strengths
I will share my feelings with my wife when I am sad.	I have support from people that care about me. I am a good listener. I keep my promises. I honor my commitments.
I will find a job that will let me use my knowledge about car engines.	I have worked on car engines for over 10 years. I am a hard worker and like to do a good job. I can practice and learn new skills.

How Do I Identify My Obstacles?

An Obstacle is something that you will need to overcome to achieve your Goal. This may be a challenge, an excuse, or a problem that can stand in the way of, or hold up your progress.

It is important to order your Obstacles so that you are prepared to face the challenges ahead.

Tips for Overcoming Obstacles

- Clarify and set priorities.
- Be realistic and willing to make adjustments.
- Find and keep your motivation.
- Enlist people that will support you. This 'network of care' could be family, friends, your VA health care team, religious leader, or others.
- Recognize and limit interaction with people that could keep you from achieving your Goals.

Goals	Obstacles
I will share my feelings with my wife when I am sad.	I may upset my wife if I share my sad feelings. I think it is weak to cry in front of my wife.
I will find a job that will let me use my knowledge about car engines.	I need to find a job near my home so I can take the bus. I may not fit in with the other workers.

How Do I Determine My Tasks?

Tasks are action steps used to help you overcome Obstacles to accomplish a Goal. Tasks are similar to a "To-Do" List and help you focus on one activity at a time.

If you want to make a change in your life, defining a Goal along with Tasks can help you reach it. Change is hard and you may feel uncomfortable when trying something new. After about 30 days, change becomes more of a daily routine and you do not even think about it anymore.

Goals	Tasks
I will share my feelings with my wife when I am sad.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a daily journal to help me identify my feelings. 2. Practice what to say to my wife. 3. Make a list of all of the times I have been scared but still went through with my plan.
I will find a job that will let me use my knowledge about car engines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess Program. 2. Get a referral for a work program through my State or County employment agency. 3. Search job ads. 4. Check the bus routes near my house.

Tracking Progress

- Review your Goal and your progress often (such as weekly).
- If you had trouble making progress, ask yourself "why" and find out what is in your way.
- Re-work your Tasks so you can succeed.
- Find a friend with a similar Goal and offer to work together to achieve and motivate.
- Talk to your 'network of care' or health care team and enlist their help if needed. Sharing and connecting with others brings accountability and will help keep you motivated to succeed.

Set Up Rewards

- Achieving a Goal requires you to keep working at it until you reach it. As you plan your Goals, identify a personal Reward that matches the amount of effort it will take to achieve the Goal. Each accomplished Goal should be celebrated!

"Opportunity
is missed by most people
because it is dressed in overalls
and looks like work."
- **Thomas A. Edison**

Key Takeaways

Goals - Get Started!

- Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into a reality.
- Setting Goals helps you to organize your time and your resources so that you can make the very most of your life.
- Setting clearly defined Goals allows you to measure and take pride in the achievement of those Goals.
- Completing Tasks helps you measure progress towards achieving Goals and promotes self-confidence, as you recognize your own ability in achieving your Goals.
- Instead of "I wish I could..." ask "What Steps do I need to take so I can..."
- Size your Goals:
 - Create your 'big picture' and identify the large-scale Goals that you want to achieve.
 - Break these down into the smaller and smaller Goals.
- Break Tasks into manageable pieces.
- Review your Goals daily.
- Every time you make a decision during the day, ask yourself "Does this take me close to, or further from, my Goal?"

"You
have to have confidence
in your ability, and then be tough
enough to follow through."
- **Rosalynn Carter**

Key Takeaways

Motivation - Keep Going!

- Changing habits takes work, time, consistency, and patience.
- Take time to enjoy your success and remember the time and effort you invested in completing your Tasks and achieving your Goal.
- Enjoy your Reward and take time to regroup before you tackle the next Goal.
- Achieving your Goals requires you to keep moving forward even when you are tired, frustrated, or just want to give up.
- Step out of your comfort zone.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Live in the present moment, look to the future, and learn from the past.
- Keep a journal to help track your feelings and experiences.
- Take care of yourself – eat well, sleep, exercise, spend time with loved ones.
- With the experience of having achieved a Goal, review the rest of your Goals. Apply what you have learned to your other Goals.

“Always
bear in mind that your
own resolution to succeed is more
important than any one thing.”
- Abraham Lincoln

Additional Resources

Who Can Provide More Information About My Goals?

For clinical support, you can contact the My HealthVet Coordinator at your local VA facility.

Or, you can submit questions to the MRP National Coordinator at the following email address:

myrecoveryplan@va.gov.

Who Can I Contact With Comments Or Suggestions For Improving My Goals?

My HealthVet welcomes all comments or suggestions. To send your feedback, please use the Contact MHV tab at the top of any page on the website.

Or, you can submit comments or suggestions to the MRP National Coordinator at the following email address:

myrecoveryplan@va.gov.

The Following Sites May Also Be Helpful With Setting Goals:

www.myhealthvet.gov

www.vetsuccess.gov

www.move.va.gov

www.prevention.va.gov

To contact My HealthVet: [Contact MHV](#)

Veteran Crisis Line:

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

1-800-273-8255 Press 1

Text to 838255

Footnote

The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) http://www.littlerock.va.gov/LITTLE ROCK/services/Health_Promotion_and_Disease_Prevention.asp tool to help the Veteran set *S.M.A.R.T goal for self-management* to improve health and well-being was referenced in the creation of this guide.