

Setting SMART Goals

Helping patients to set a “SMART” goal and follow through is a key to behavioural change. While not everyone is equally ready to make a change, research shows that even the smallest shift that moves an individual in the right direction is worthwhile, because:

- Goal setting helps people clarify their values, make decisions and monitor their progress.
- Long term goals cannot be reached immediately; they must be broken up into smaller steps.
- Reaching smaller goals improves self-esteem and creates a sense of satisfaction and motivation to continue to move towards a long term goal.

The creation of SMART goals is supported by motivational interviewing. Motivational Interviewing¹ includes:

- Asking open-ended questions
- Affirming successes and expressing empathy
- Listening reflectively
- Summarizing discussions

SMART Goals are:

Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time-Limited

When setting SMART Goals, consider:

The intention of the goal: What would your patient like to accomplish in the next few months?

Specific: How exactly can your patient go about achieving this goal? What concrete steps would your patient need to take?

Measurable: How can your patient measure their progress?

Action-Oriented: Is the goal dependent on an action that the patient can take? What will those actions be?

Realistic: Is this goal realistic for your patient to achieve?

Time-Limited: What timeframe does this goal require? When will your patient start? What is the best time during the week to work on this goal?

Refer to the **Sample Goal Setting Table** for examples of SMART goals in each of the FoH dimensions.

SAMPLE SMART Goals

Intention of Goal	Specific	Measurable	Action-Oriented	Realistic	Time-Limited
<p>What would you like to accomplish in the next few months?</p> <p>(Try using a more general/broad goal)</p>	<p>How <i>specifically</i> can you go about achieving this goal? What <i>concrete steps</i> would you need to take?</p>	<p>How can you <i>measure</i> your progress? How will you know when the goal is achieved?</p> <p>(Can you rate your progress out of 10? How often or for how long will you do the activity?)</p>	<p>Is the goal an action that you can take? What <i>specific actions</i> will you need to take?</p>	<p>Is this goal <i>realistic</i> for you to achieve? Is it doable in the next few weeks or months?</p>	<p>What timeframe does this goal require to achieve?</p> <p>(When will you start/finish? What is the best time in the week?)</p>
<p>Socially Active:</p> <p><i>Attend the Seniors Lunch Social</i></p>	<p>I can talk to a neighbour for more information or I could sign up on the sheet for the next Seniors Lunch Social in my community.</p>	<p>Seniors Lunch Socials are held once a week at the Seniors Centre, on Thursdays for two hours (11-1) and are ongoing throughout the year.</p>	<p>I need to put it in my calendar to sign up and attend the Seniors Lunch Social.</p>	<p>Yes- I'm free on Thursday from 11-1. The Social takes place at the Seniors Centre, and I can afford the costs associated with it.</p>	<p>I will attend the next four Seniors Lunch Socials over the month of November.</p>
<p>Physically Active:</p> <p><i>I need to get more exercise</i></p>	<p>I can find out where there are safe, level walking paths or trails in my area from the recreation guide or call the recreation dept.</p>	<p>I can go every day in the mornings before 10 am or late afternoon.</p>	<p>I will add a walk 4 mornings a week to my calendar and do it!</p>	<p>Yes – I can go as long as the weather is good and the path/trail is clear.</p>	<p>I will walk 4 mornings a week for one month.</p>
<p>Change How You Think about Aging</p> <p><i>I'd like to think more positively about getting older</i></p>	<p>I can make sure I think about the good things in my life and document them. I can get a small notebook at the Dollar Store.</p>	<p>I can write three things I'm grateful for in my life.</p>	<p>Every morning, after I have breakfast, I can write in my notebook.</p>	<p>I have time to do this each day.</p>	<p>I will write 3 things that I'm grateful for in my life each morning for 3 months.</p>
<p>Take Care of My Mental Health:</p> <p><i>I want to feel better</i></p>	<p>I can review my medications with my doctor and we can talk about the best times to take them during the day.</p>	<p>I will take my medications on time each day.</p>	<p>I can put a medication schedule on my fridge and set a reminder alarm on my computer/phone.</p>	<p>I can do this for two weeks to start.</p>	<p>I will take my medications on time each day for two weeks.</p>
<p>Learn New Things:</p> <p><i>I would like to learn to cook.</i></p>	<p>I could ask a friend to show me or I could take a cooking class – but I don't know where. (Together you can phone the local recreation dept. or food coalition to find out about classes.)</p>	<p>Community cooking classes are 3 hours per week, on Wednesdays from 9-12, for six weeks.</p>	<p>I need to put it in my calendar, and attend classes each week for six weeks.</p>	<p>Yes - I am free on Wednesdays, have a car to drive, and can afford the cost.</p>	<p>I will complete 18 hours of the cooking classes within the next two months.</p>