

Demystifying the SMART Goal Setting Elements for Therapists Using the CBT Technique

SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS

Ask any future-oriented person, and they'll tell you that setting new goals and constantly trying to outperform themselves is what keeps them going. Goal setting is a clear-cut and evidence-proven way of effectively deciding what you want to achieve, how you plan to realize that feat, then structurally focus on them as you remain in control. When using CBT therapeutic techniques, goal setting is more important than ever. This paper will teach you to use SMART goals in your CBT therapeutic practice.

COVERED IN THIS PAPER:

Why Goal Setting Matters

Elements of Goal Setting in CBT:

The Three Goal Setting Rules

Smart Goal Setting Technique in CBT

SMART Goal Setting Example



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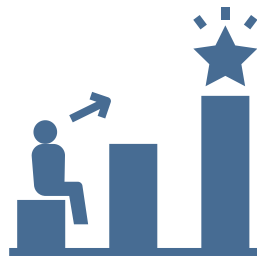


WHY GOAL SETTING MATTERS

Goal setting is a clear-cut and evidence-proven way of effectively deciding what you want to achieve, how you plan to realize that feat, then structurally focus on them as you remain in control. But here's the catch; as you race towards realizing your goals, you may come across various stumbling blocks, such as physical health complications, that may cause you to lose focus. When these limitations face you, you may start having second thoughts that you can "no longer keep pace with your goals" or "you have to give up on everything." However, that can never be more inaccurate.

While limitations like physical health problems may force you to do things differently, that doesn't mean you should give up chasing your goals altogether. Instead, you should revise your old goals and/or set new ones to get right back on track. But be warned; setting new goals or modifying old ones isn't as easy as it sounds. You're no longer the same person as you were before your health issues, so your body will take time to adapt. Also, you may not know much about living with your problems to tell what types of goals to set and how to set them.

And that's where SMART goal setting comes into play. With the assistance of your CBT therapist, you can effortlessly modify your old goals or set new ones through SMART thinking. Curious to find out more? Great! Keep scrolling this White Paper for an in-depth review of the smart goal setting techniques, plus a smart goals worksheet example that therapists can add to their existing worksheet.



ELEMENTS OF GOAL SETTING IN CBT

Part 1: The Three Goal Setting Rules

Set Three Goals

You're just trying to get back on track, and you don't want to feel overwhelmed. So setting no more than three realistic goals is an excellent start. You should cooperate with your therapist to review these goals regularly to revise them or set new ones if you find it trouble-free meeting the set goals. Of course, as you get back on track, you'll find yourself setting more longer-term goals.

Keep them Short-Term for the Start

DO NOT hurry to set longer-term goals when you're just getting back on your feet after a setback in life. Achieving your plans for the first time after a long time gives you the motivation to keep forging ahead, and that's a feat you can only realize if you go short-term. But what if you struggle to set short-term goals in the first place? One way to solve that is by breaking down the long-term goals into medium and shorter ones. For instance, if you plan to clean the house, you can start by making the beds, arranging the sofas, vacuuming the living room for 10 minutes, and so on. And as you proceed, your CBT therapist can help you strike a balance between short, medium, and long-term goals.

Keep the Goals Positive

It's common knowledge; you can't get your life back on track if you don't possess a positive mindset about your goals. Drive your attention to what you can achieve instead of what you want to let go of or reduce. For instance, you should focus on working out 20 minutes 3-5 times a week rather than binge-watching the TV all day long.



ELEMENTS OF GOAL SETTING IN CBT

Part 2: Smart Goal Setting Technique in CBT

We've talked about the three rules that should guide your goal-setting process. But how do you ensure that the goals are realistic, achievable, and make your problems more manageable? That's where the S.M.A.R.T goal-setting technique comes in handy. The S.M.A.R.T acronym stands for:

Specific

The more specific your goals are, the higher the chances of accomplishing them. If possible, attach the resources, dates, time, etc., that you'll need to achieve each of your goals.

Measurable

Knowing when you've met your goals or what it'll take to complete them keeps you motivated to push up to the last minute before opening the next chapter. So you should have clear-cut progress measuring criteria to guide you.

Achievable

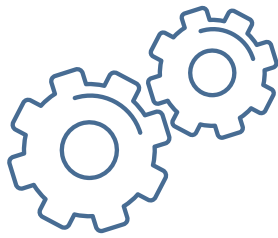
Cut your coat according to your size, they say. Don't be over-ambitious when setting your goals, as you may quickly lose focus and fail when you realize you can't match your expectations.

Relevant

Be sure to set goals that are directly relevant to the problem you're trying to address. For example, ask yourself, what would help get your life on track in the short term? Also, is it something that you'd like to do again?

Time-Specific

At the start, you want to set three short-term goals that will help with your recovery. And as you continue, you want to strike a balance between short, medium, and longer-term plans to accomplish. But remember, each of your goals, whether temporary or long-term, should have a specific time by which you'd like to achieve them.



SMART GOAL SETTING EXAMPLE

Here's a simple SMART goals worksheet example that therapists can leverage to help their patients realize their goals and overcome their problems:

Setting S.M.A.R.T Goal

Write the Original Goal Here: For instance, a client is stressed out as they're overweight, and they want to start working out more frequently despite not exercising previously.

Writing and Refining the Goals According to S.M.A.R.T

Specific

I want to walk around the park in the city center every weekday for 40 minutes after I come from work.

Measurable

I will use a fitness tracking smartwatch to measure and record such aspects as steps made, distance covered, calories burned, heart rate, etc.

Achievable

I will take my dog with me for its routine walk so that I'll have no excuse for not exercising. I'll also reduce or increase the intensity as needed to ensure that I comfortably achieve my goals.

Relevant

40 minutes is just about the time it takes to complete a walk around the park. What's more, walking is pretty cheap so that it won't affect my tight budget.

Time-Specific

I will keep up with this routine for a month and review the results to see if I'm consistent with my goals.



CONCLUSION

There you have it! Setting SMART goals for CBT isn't a daunting task, after all. Once you master the three rules of setting no more than three initial goals, keeping them short-term, and maintaining a positive mindset, you can then follow the S.M.A.R.T technique to accomplish those goals trouble-free. Remember to keep records of how smart you've worked towards your goals each week for your therapist to review your progress and weigh in their professional input to help you further.

For more resources on CBT techniques and worksheets, visit KASA's Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Resource Library.

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