

Goal Setting for Adults with ADD/ADHD

Objective

To overcome prior difficulties in setting and completing goals.

You Should Know

If you have ADD/ADHD, you might have trouble setting and completing goals. You might see the results in your mind, but have no clue how to complete what you've set out to do. Instead, you might find yourself on a zigzag path as you work toward goal completion – becoming frustrated or disappointed in yourself if you fail to achieve what you set out to do.

Goal setting helps you create a plan to achieve what you want. It isn't always easy and sometimes may not come naturally. Research shows that identifying "why" you want to achieve the goal will help you accomplish two things:

- You will be more interested in working toward the goal.
- You will be more focused as you complete each step toward completion of your goal.

What to Do

One of the hardest parts of goal setting can be deciding which goal you want to work on. You might have a long list and you can't decide where to start. Or, you might try to set large, unrealistic goals instead of breaking them down into more manageable tasks.

Describe one goal you'd like to achieve.

Why do you want to achieve this goal? Be as detailed as possible.

Break down your goal into smaller, doable parts. Write down each step needed to achieve your goal.

Are there things on your list that make you feel anxious? Explain.

Think about what tasks you need to start with. Do you have the time to start these tasks now? If not now, when?

Do you have the needed materials? For example, if it's a school project, do you have poster board, markers, stencils, and other supplies? List the materials you need.

Can you ask for help? Write down the names of two or three people who can help you complete the tasks.

Once you've identified the smaller, doable parts, choose a start date: _____

How can you measure your progress? Be specific. For example, if you want to lose weight, come up with a reasonable weekly goal, e.g., *I will lose 1-2 pounds each week. I will exercise 4 days/week.*

Creating measurable steps not only breaks goals into more manageable tasks, but can also help you stay motivated to reach the end result. Keep a journal and write down each step, or use an app to track your progress. Some great goal-setting apps include Toodledo, LifeTick, Habit List, Goals on Track, and Stickk.

Keep your journal in one place at all times so you'll remember to write in your steps and review your progress. If you choose to use an app, set up notifications or a daily phone alarm as a reminder.

What will you do to remind yourself to track your progress?

Here are a few more suggestions to ensure your success!

- Find a "cheerleader" who can hold you accountable, someone who can check in with you to see how you're doing. Ask this person if they will help you. Who can help you?

Did you ask them for help? Yes No

This person can check in each day via text message or phone call to encourage you to keep going.

- Take fifteen minutes each day to plan your daily activities and set priorities to achieve your goal. It will become easier once it becomes a habit.
- Build in small rewards for completing tasks. What can you do to reward yourself?

- Ask yourself about priorities before diving into a new task: “Is this what I should be doing now?” – no matter how tempting other options might seem.
- Tie the short-term tasks to larger goals so there is a feeling of greater progress with the completion of each small step.

After one month, review your progress, noting what went well and what didn't go so well. Do you need more time? Were the steps you identified reasonable? Remember, ADD/ADHD can make the way you set and achieve goals a bit different than other teens, and you might need to make accommodations for yourself so you can achieve your goal.

Reflect on your progress below.

Reflections on This Exercise

Did this exercise increase your ability to set and achieve a goal? Explain.

Did this exercise allow you to identify goal-setting strategies that actually work for you? Explain.

What accommodations might be helpful for you to increase the likelihood of your success?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
