University Counselling

GOAL SETTING

Our goals are driven by our values system; they are derived from what is important to us and how we want to live our lives. When we act in a way that is not consistent with our values, or strive towards a goal that does not matter to us, then we may struggle with the task and feel frustrated or distressed. Here are some guidelines to follow to set effective goals:

1. **SPECIFIC**
   - Define the goal as much as possible using clear language.
   - Who is involved? What do I want to accomplish? Where will it be done?
   - Why am I doing this? What constraints or requirements do I have?

2. **MEASURABLE**
   - How will I track my progress and measure the outcome?
   - How much? How many? How will I know when my goal has been accomplished?

3. **ATTAINABLE/ACHIEVABLE**
   - Is my goal realistic given my current circumstances?
   - Make sure the goal is not too ambitious or below standard performance.

4. **RELEVANT**
   - Is the goal worthwhile and in line with my values?
   - Is this goal consistent with my other goals?
   - Does it fit with my immediate and long-term plans?

5. **TIMELY**
   - Your objective should include a time limit e.g. "I will complete this step by day/month/year."
   - This will establish a sense of urgency and prompt you to better manage your time.

It is important to set both long-term and short-term goals. Short-term goals help us to keep on track on a day-to-day basis, and long-term goals help us to keep sight of the bigger picture and what all of our hard work is for. You may have several short-term goals which are linked to a long-term goal, like those below.

- BECOME A NURSE
  - COMPLETE FIRST YEAR
  - COMPLETE SECOND YEAR
  - COMPLETE THIRD YEAR

- OBTAIN EXPERIENCE
  - COMPLETE PLACEMENTS
  - VOLUNTEER WORK

ONLINE RESOURCES

ReachOut
au.reachout.com/how-to-set-goals

Online Counselling
www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling

Check out the other tips sheets on time management, planning for a good semester, enhancing your cognitive functioning and getting a balance for more information that may help with goal setting.