

Goal Setting

Best Practice Resources - Match Support

We can support young people to develop goals by helping them differentiate between specific needs to be met today, and desires for tomorrow. All goals originate from the same question:

What do I want?

Most of us can think of many things that we want. But this question becomes more difficult when we are asked to narrow our ideas down from anything imaginable to desires that are most important, achievable, and time bound.

I would like to . . .

- Win the lottery
- Be a good friend
- Ride horses all day everyday
- Become a strong public speaker
- Travel the world

Given my existing skills and resources some of these wants are more accessible to me than others. While I may never win the lottery, the likelihood that I can achieve at least one of these goals increases when I focus on what's most important and visualize my success.

To help a young person focus on what's most important to him or her:

- Listen
- Reflect
- Encourage

Active Listening -Means paying close attention to what's being said, both the words and the body language. This requires paying special attention to the meaning beneath the words.

Reflect -Listen closely and reflect two parts of a person's message both fact and feeling. Do not attempt to identify, sympathize, or evaluate.

Encourage -Focus on effort not outcome, recognize and build internal motivation and point out positive aspects of behavior. Encouraging statement acknowledge another person's contribution, assets, and appreciation.

Elements of a strong goal:

- **Specific:** Anyone reading the goal would know exactly what it means
- **Achievable:** Given my specific strengths and weaknesses, the goal is something I can do.
- **Time Limited:** There is a clear end to the goal and I will know when I've achieved it

Keys to success:

- Regular updates (what's working and what's not?)
- Track and celebrate progress with frequent small rewards
- Continue to visualize