



Recovery Session: Setting Goals for Realistic Recovery

DISCLAIMER

This resource is a work in progress. It was created by two students from within the Body Brave community and is not fully representative of the spectrum of experience. If you have any suggestions to improve this resource or lived experiences that you don't see represented here, please email info@bodybrave.ca.

“Recovery takes time, patience, enormous effort, and strength. We all have those things. It’s a matter of choosing to use them to save our own lives- to survive- but beyond that, to thrive”

- Anonymous

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

- Lao Tzu

REFLECTION

What does recovery look like to you? If you are unable to imagine this for yourself, imagine it for a friend. What would it look like for that individual? How would they feel along their journey? How would they know they are feeling better?

If you were to wake up tomorrow and be “in recovery” what would be the first thing you would notice that would tell you this miracle happened overnight?

TIPS FOR GOAL SETTING

Recovery entails doing a lot of new things and challenging old patterns, and it can be overwhelming. It helps to break recovery goals down into smaller steps that are more manageable. By setting smaller goals, you can incrementally experience success which will help build your confidence.

The SMART acronym is a great way to guide your goal setting. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Below is an example of how you might set a SMART goal for your recovery.

S: Be as **specific** as possible about the goals you set. Provide a clear description of what you want to achieve. For example, instead of saying “I want to recover” focus on a specific aspect of recovery:

“I want to increase my self-confidence with regards to recovery.”

M: Think about how you will **measure** your goal. Try to avoid using numbers, but make sure that there is a way to measure your goal. For example, you can measure your mood through mood tracking or your body checking behaviour through a body checking log.

*“I want to increase my self-confidence with regards to recovery **as measured by my mood tracking journal.**”*

A: Respect where you are in your recovery journey by setting **achievable** goals. Setting your goals too low might slow your progression but setting your goals too high may leave you frustrated and may make it easier to lose motivation.

*“I want to increase my self-confidence with regards to recovery, as measured by my mood tracking journal, **by repeating my favourite affirmation 5x when I feel negative emotions.**”*

R: Make sure the goal is **relevant** to you. When selecting goals, try to ensure the goal is worthwhile and aligns with your values and your recovery. If you don’t feel connected to your goals, you may not be as motivated to achieve them.

Increasing your self-confidence with regards to recovery is relevant because it will help you cope with the highs and lows along the way.

- It’s important to make sure the goal is relevant to be worked on right now. For example, someone heavily impacted by their ED should not be concentrating on the goal of furthering their education at this moment.

T: Give your goal a **time-limit**. By setting a specific date or time you want to accomplish the goal by, it will help keep you focused on your goals and where you see yourself in your recovery journey.

"I want to increase my self-confidence with regards to recovery, as measured by my mood tracking journal, by repeating my favourite affirmation 5x when I feel negative emotions every day for the next 2 weeks."

GOAL PLANNING

Adapted from Goal Setting Handout from TherapistAid.com

USE THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO BRAINSTORM SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL GOALS. THESE GOALS CAN BE BROAD AND ASPIRATIONAL. AFTER COMPLETING THIS GOAL PLANNING SECTION, YOU WILL CHOOSE ONE GOAL TO DEVELOP INTO A SMART GOAL.

Setting Goals

Something I want to accomplish in the next week:

In the next month:

In the next year:

In five years:

Obstacles to reaching my goals:

Things I will need to do to achieve my goals:

What I can begin doing today to work toward my goals:

SET YOUR OWN SMART GOAL

CHOOSE ONE OF YOUR PERSONAL GOALS AND LET'S MAKE IT A **SMART** GOAL. REFER BACK TO THE EXAMPLE ABOVE TO HELP GUIDE THE WORDING OF YOUR GOAL.

S: Be as **specific** as possible.

M: Think about how you will **measure** your goal.

A: Respect where you are in your recovery journey by setting achievable goals.

R: Make sure the goal is **relevant** to you.

T: Give your goal a **time-limit**.

TIPS FOR STAYING ON-TRACK WITH YOUR SMART GOAL

1. Keep track of your progress with a calendar

Have a calendar that is easily accessible to help you stay on top of your goals. This will help you create a realistic picture of the goals you are setting each day/week/month.

2. Reflect on your thoughts by journaling

As you progress through recovery, keep a journal to reflect on your thoughts, feelings and emotions. **Use the journal prompts below to help get you started.**

3. Practice mindfulness and self-compassion

Ask yourself if what you are doing is out of love and compassion or yourself. Remember you are in charge of your decision making. Increasing your mindfulness of the present moment rather than relying on automatic thoughts, behaviors or reflexes will help you get out of your own head when faced with resistance to meeting a goal.

JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR STAYING MOTIVATED

As you implement your goals, track your progress, describe any roadblocks and mental barriers that may be keeping you from reaching this goal today.

- Ask yourself:
 - Did I have any setbacks?
 - What have I done right?
 - What can I do differently tomorrow?
 - What benefits have I experienced so far from the goals I have set?
- If you feel happy or content, what exactly does that look like? What would change internally or externally? What feelings would arise within you?
- How did you handle a challenging situation one year ago versus how you would today? What is different? What lessons have you learned to help you make positive changes in your approach to challenges?
- Think about a slip or relapse you encountered during your recovery journey, write about what happened, what may have triggered it and how it could go differently next time. Remember slips and relapses are part of a normal recovery from an eating disorder. It is important to learn from these slips and relapses.
- Make a list of reasons why you *can* achieve full recovery. Search your soul for all the wonderful reasons within you that will help you get there. Refer back to this list when you get discouraged.

FURTHER LEARNING

Podcasts

[Food Psych with Christy Harrison](#) A podcast about intuitive eating, body image, and diet culture to help challenge restrictive dieting behaviors and learn some useful body-confidence strategies along the way.

[The Body Image Podcast with Corrine Dobbas, MS, RD](#) The Body Image Podcast is a podcast about body image and the many layers that go into making peace with our bodies. Like intuitive eating, self-compassion, mental health, self-care, body and size acceptance, embodiment, rejecting diet culture, and more.

[The Recovery Warrior Show](#) A podcast dedicated to boosting the emotional intelligence and resilience of people struggling with depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

Videos

[Unbroken: Mapping the Path to an Eating Disorder Recovery](#)

[SMART Goal Setting | Addiction Treatment Quickstart Guide](#)

Reading

[Motivation for Recovery: Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose](#)

[Your Recovery is About You: Maintaining Motivation in Eating Disorder Recovery](#)

Inspiration

[NEDA Inspiration for Eating Disorder Recovery](#): A Pinterest board full of inspiring images and quotes to help motivate and inspire you throughout your recovery journey

References

“Taking A Moment to Exhale: Journaling Prompts for Eating Disorder Recovery — Yoga For Eating Disorders Montgomery County PA Yoga Therapy Blog.” *Yoga For Eating Disorders Montgomery County PA Yoga Therapy*, <https://www.yoga4eatingdisorders.com/blog/2018/1/2/taking-a-moment-to-exhale-journaling-prompts-for-eating-disorder-recovery>. Accessed 4 June 2021.

Faulkner, Chloe. “SMART Goals in Eating Disorder Recovery.” *Libero Magazine*, 25 June 2019, <https://www.nyxiesnook.com/how-to-use-s-m-a-r-t-targets-in-eating-disorder-recovery/>.

