

THE POWER OF GOAL-SETTING

Young people often have big-picture aspirations that may feel difficult to achieve. Their everyday circumstances can also often present very real barriers to them attaining their goals. Goal-setting can help break down aspirations into more manageable milestones, allowing young people to get a more focused vision of where they want to go – and how to get there.

1 TALKING POINTS TO HELP DEFINE A S-M-A-R-T GOAL

Try these questions to help a young person see if they are setting S-M-A-R-T goals:

- **Specific:** What are your personal goal/s? What exactly do you want to achieve? Can the young person define their goal clearly? For example, if they want to study further, what do they want to study? Where do they want to study? How will they pay for their studies? Who will pay for their studies?
- **Measurable:** How will you know you are reaching your goal? Can the goal be broken down into milestones? For example, how much money do they have to save to pay for a course? How much do they need to save each month? Setting milestones can help youth keep on track and see problems early on!
- **Attainable:** What actions will you take to achieve your goals? What steps do they need to take to accomplish it? Do they have access to the resources to do so?
- **Relevant/realistic:** Why do you want to achieve this goal? Is the goal something the young person really wants to do – or is it something they just feel they have to do? Does the goal play to their strengths and interests (see left box)? Also, young people sometimes have unrealistic career or personal goals based on what they learn from mass culture... Talk together to explore if their goal is truly reachable.
- **Time-based:** When are you going to start working towards your goal? And by when do you want to achieve your goal? Does the young person have a deadline to ensure there is some sense of urgency?

CASE STUDY: PARALYMPIAN SAMKELO BECOMES A LAWYER:

When Samkelo was just nine years old, he was electrocuted when playing with high voltage wires. Despite winning medals at the 2012 Olympics, Samkelo set himself another goal: to become a lawyer! Given the career span of a sprinter is short, he was determined to have a plan B. "I enjoy talking and listening so my personality fits Law quite well. Apparently I like arguing too," he says about his career goal. Samkelo graduated from his LLB studies in 2014.

Share some of YOUR goals with a young person – including what inspired them and how you achieved them...

TOP TIP:

Discuss possible roadblocks and ways of dealing with them. Anticipating challenges ahead of time will help minimise the chances a young person will stop dead in their tracks and abandon the goals they have set.

2 PLANNING FOR ACTION

A good action plan can help young people set up realistic tasks or sub-goals needed to meet their bigger goal/s. Useful discussion points for drafting a good action plan include:

- Can you outline the different steps or actions you must take to reach your goal?
- Can you place the steps in order of priority – which step do you need to start with or is the most important to get you started; which step comes next; and so on?
- Can you assign start and end dates to each step?
- What resources do you need for each step, for example: transport money, a certified copy of your ID, etc.?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

"Personal goal setting – how to set SMART goals": Encourage youth to watch this clip for more about setting SMART goals: <https://www.mindtools.com/page6.html>

Download and print out our easy-to-use action plan for young people which is offered as part of this series.

