

Mental Health Matters



January 2021

How Setting Goals Can Help and Hurt Your Mental Health

The research is clear: People who set goals are more successful.

While goal setting is a beneficial practice in most cases, it's not a miracle cure for all your problems like some internet coaches would have you believe. It's not a foolproof way to achieve any and everything. If you're tone-deaf, you're not going to become an accomplished singer by setting goals.

However, goal setting can definitely benefit your mental health and happiness in many ways, but it can also have some detrimental effects.

Setting Goals Goes Against Your Brain's Natural Tendencies

One challenge with goal setting is that it goes against how your brain naturally works. Past research shows that your brain inherently wants to prioritize and choose routine over novelty every time on its own. Makes sense – its top job is always to keep you safe. When trying to change a behavior, brain circuits for habitual and goal-directed action battle it out in your head for control. Therefore, any goals that require radical behavioral or thinking-pattern changes are going to be met with resistance initially.

Your brain is also wired to seek rewards and avoid pain, discomfort, and fear. However, that doesn't mean that the more comfortable path is in your best interest. It just means that your brain prefers it. In fact, these preferences are "demotivators" and leave you with the desire to return back to the safety of your habitual behavior and thought patterns. However, with conscious effort, you can override these feelings and change your brain and behavior.

The Benefits of Goal Setting

Dopamine Boost

When you want something and get it, whether it's a bonus, candy bar, or text message — your brain gives you a shot of dopamine. Dopamine is often called the "feel good" neurotransmitter.

Because of this, it's possible to boost dopamine levels by setting small goals and accomplishing them. For instance, your brain receives a spike in dopamine if you promise yourself you're going to work out and then you actually do. This is one reason people like to-do lists. It feels good to check things off because you get a shot of dopamine. Each time your brain gets a hit of dopamine, it encourages you to repeat the corresponding behavior.

You'll keep the dopamine flowing if you break goals down into bite-sized, achievable pieces. For example, if you want to exercise three times a week, check off each success with a bright marker on a calendar so that your brain sees and registers the accomplishment. If you want to write a book, make a goal to write for 15 minutes every day and reward yourself when you do.

Full article found at <https://thebestbrainpossible.com/goals-mental-health-brain-habits/>

New Year, New You:

Mental Health Resolutions for 2021

1. Exercise routine – have a daily exercise routine

A healthy body creates a healthy mind – it is the same as a healthy mind can create a healthy body too. Doing daily exercise can help decrease life stress and soothe your fatigued body. Taking care of your mental health can simply be done by exercising several times a week. The brain produces feel-good endorphins that act as mental medicine every single time you that you exercise. Healing our mind allows us to be tough against different changes that happen on our day-to-day work.

2. A new beginning – start a new beginning

There's so much of life that you can't control. Because of this, you need to have mastery over the things that are within your control. Learn to be more resilient no matter what life may throw at you along the way. Learning to let go of the things that you can't control is giving yourself the freedom to get over of the stress and anxiety, with this you are learning to appreciate the little things in life.

Full article found at <https://www.psychreg.org/new-year-resolutions/>



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In case of an Emergency:

- 911 For Immediate Support
- Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 – (24 hours)

Mental Health: FACTS

Poor mental health increases the risk for long-lasting (chronic) physical conditions like heart disease, stroke, and cancer

About 1 in 5 American adults and 1 in 5 children will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives.

Research shows that people with mental illness can get better and many recover completely.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people ages 15-34 in the United States.

Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.

How to Create Your Own Self-Care Plan

You may have heard it before: You can't help others without taking care of yourself first. Self-care is an important way to protect your physical, mental and emotional health so you can better adapt to changes, build strong relationships and recover from setbacks. You can also better support those around you who might be in need.

If you're ready to take care of yourself and practice self-care, **use this information from the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) curriculum to create a realistic and effective plan.**

When creating your self-care plan, it's important to consider the following questions:

What will I do for self-care? Stick to the basics and add certain self-care activities to your calendar. Some examples are getting enough sleep, exercising as appropriate for your own health, eating healthfully, spending time with loved ones, using relaxation exercises and practicing meditation.

Whom can I call at any time? Identify people in your life who you trust and can talk to about the good and bad that may happen.

Whom can I reach out to if I need more help? Identify who you can call if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sad. This may include loved ones, a coach or teacher, or mental health professional.

As you start to think about what activities you want to include in your self-care plan, it can be helpful to explore these domains and brainstorm people, programs and activities that are important and feel safe to you within each. You may find that you have things for one domain, a few, or all of them:

8 Dimensions of Wellness



Remember that everyone's self-care plan will be different — and that's OK. Equally important, don't be afraid to ask for help. Reach out to the supportive people in your life and discuss self-care methods that may have helped them and what you're hoping to achieve. You can also use these tips from MHFA to care for yourself while practicing physical distancing. With the right information and tools, you can #BeTheDifference for yourself every day.

If you or someone you care about feels overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression or anxiety, or like you want to harm yourself or others call 911.

You can also contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or text MHFA to 741741 to talk to a Crisis Text Line counselor.