INITIAL THERAPEUTIC GOALS

What would you like to be doing with your life? Your career? Your relationships? What things does your vision of yourself hold for you in the next year? Do you even have a personal vision for yourself next year? Will you still be waiting for that next “big break”? Are you going to be anticipating a financial windfall that will solve your money problems? Will you be looking for Mr. or Ms. Right to fall into your life? Or maybe you will still be waiting for Mr. or Ms. Wrong to fall out of your life? How about your body? Are you going to still be waiting to exercise more or possibly to stop smoking? The list goes on!

Many of us have ideas about what we would like to be doing, what things we want to have accomplished, or where we want to be in our life by a certain time or a certain age. For most people, the time WILL pass and they will reach that certain time or that certain age whether or not they accomplish the goals they have set for themselves. Because time will pass whether we are getting closer to our goals or not, why not use the time to move forward toward your goals and closer to the vision you have of yourself?

The problem with this isn’t that people don’t have noble and important goals. The problem with this is that people don’t plan their goals with success in mind. Planning for success doesn’t take a whole lot of time, and in the end it takes far less energy than planning for failure or, at best, planning for mediocrity. But planning for success does take just that, some planning, and this is a skill that many of us have not been taught or have not learned to practice with any kind of diligence.

As therapists, we have especially seen the effectiveness and necessity of both support and accountability in planning for and reaching success. In order to reach your goals, important people in your life need to know clearly what your goals are. You will also benefit from having other people to check in with regularly who will hold you accountable for the goals you set out to accomplish in the time-frame you said you would accomplish them within. As we work with you in accomplishing your therapeutic goals we encourage you to develop and include your support system in that journey as well.

In order to help you with your goals we have including the following "S.M.A.R.T.S.” guide below. We have found this to be a very effective tool in our clinical work because the guide gives some structure to your goal setting process and structure helps make planning for and reaching goals more manageable. Setting goals is an important aspect of living because having goals helps you identify where you are now and creates the map for you where you want to be. Having a clear plan or map also allows you so see your progress over time and to have a sense of accomplishment at achieving your goals. This sense of accomplishment then fuels your commitment to reach your goal.

Setting goals is an important aspect of working therapeutically because it helps you identify where you are now and to create the map for you where you want to be. Having a clear plan also
allows you to see your progress over time and to have a sense of accomplishment at achieving your goals. With this in mind, please identify three goals or areas you would like to address while working therapeutically. Use the following guide below to help you develop your goals:

| S | SPECIFIC | Measurable goals that show I am making progress  
|   |         | “What will I be doing, thinking and feeling when I reach my goal?”  
|   |         | (Be very specific.)  
| M | MEANINGFUL | Personally significant and enlivens your passion  
|   |         | “Something I want to invest my time, energy, money, and resources.”  
|   |         | (Be careful of “should”.)  
| A | ATTAINABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE | Achievable goals that someone expects me to complete  
|   |         | “Small goals I know I can reach. Baby steps lead to bigger successes.”  
| R | REALISTIC AND RELEVANT | Ensures success at reaching my goal  
|   |         | “Goals I know I could accomplish and also will accomplish.”  
|   |         | “Goals that fit my values, environment, and life situation.”  
| T | TIME-SPECIFIC | A set time-frame  
|   |         | “By when or what time in my life do I want to achieve this goal?”  
| S | SUPPORT | Internal and External Resources I can call upon  
|   |         | “Things like friends, family, books, support groups, determination, persistence, and patience.”  

- Goal #1: __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  Time Frame: ______________________________________________________

- Goal #2: __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  Time Frame: ______________________________________________________

- Goal #3: __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  Time Frame: ______________________________________________________

Client Name: ______________________________________________________

Client Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Therapist/Witness: ___________________________ Date: __________________

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