

Goal Setting in Everyday Life

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Overview

- What is goal setting?
- Why & how do we do it?
- How is goal setting affected by brain injury?

Overview *cont'd*

- How can we set & meet goals effectively in everyday life?
 - research and theoretical perspectives
 - “best practices” for clinical and everyday goal setting
 - unanswered questions
- Audience successes & challenges with goal setting & goal attainment

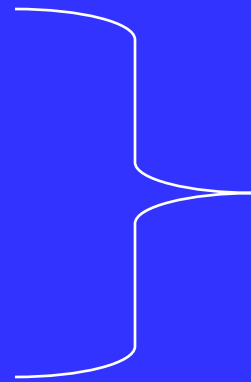
Goal Setting Is Natural

- All (most) of human behavior is goal directed
- We are always moving toward multiple goals simultaneously
 - most of them are not “conscious“ at a given time
 - think about all the “levels” of goals you are meeting right now!
- We are naturally motivated to reduce the disparity between “where we are” and “where we want to be:”

Current State vs. Desired State

– *Desired state*

– *Current state*



Desire to reduce this discrepancy =
motivation; action to reduce it = goal directed behavior

(if our current state is negative, we call this “problem solving”-- if neutral, “goal setting” or “goal management”)

How Do We Move from a Current State to a Desired One?

- We engage in **self-regulation**.
- Self-regulation = the ways we organize and control our *behavior, thoughts* and *emotions* to meet goals
- Self-regulation theories are about how this control is (or isn't) achieved.



Self-Regulation Theories Are Big Business!

- Sports



- Addictions control
- **Health management**
- Education & special education:



- Mood management:



(before)



(after)

- Organizations & workplaces:



Goal Setting & Self Regulation After Brain Injury

Brain injury disrupts goal-directed behavior in several ways:

1. The brain is the organ that does our thinking, problem-solving, and adjusting of behavior
 - can be harder to recognize that there IS a problem
 - harder to figure out what to do about it
 - harder to see “did my solution work?”
2. The brain also controls drive states—motivation to act may be reduced

Goal Setting & Self Regulation

After Brain Injury *cont'd*

How else is goal-setting disrupted by brain injury?

2. Injury often wipes out entire areas in which one has been “naturally” setting & meeting goals (work, school, relationships, sports & hobbies)
3. Injury leads to new, *unfamiliar* problems that need to be managed, including figuring out medical system, insurance, etc.

How Can Goal-Related Abilities Be Strengthened or Regained?

- Research on goal attainment tells us what helps people (not necessarily with brain injury!) to achieve goals more effectively.
- 2 levels:
 - goal level: improve performance in specific areas or on specific activities
 - self-regulation level: learn strategies to manage (select, set, adjust) one's own goals

What Aspects of Goals Improve Performance?

- Specificity
 - “stay on the treadmill for as long as you can” or “stay on the treadmill for 10-1/2 minutes”
 - “do your best to be accurate” or “get at least 90% of these right”
- Challenge
 - “do the best you can” or “do 10% better than yesterday” or “do twice as well as yesterday”
 - does it matter whether the goal is attainable?
 - depends on how “new” the activity is

What Kinds of Goals Improve Performance? *cont'd*

- Distal (long term) or proximal (short term)?
 - a combination works best
- Who selects the goal?
 - self-set vs. other-set vs. negotiated
 - **goal commitment** is best when the person understands the rationale (no matter who sets the goal)
- Goal commitment is more effective when intentions are translated into “action steps” (not: “I will exercise” but “I will go to the gym 3x/week”)

How Does Having a Goal Affect Behavior?

- Goals improve our levels of **effort** (oomph)
 - we exert more effort
 - over longer periods of time (persistence)
- Goals direct our **effort** toward relevant activities and away from irrelevant ones
- Goals help us to learn new ways of doing things
 - when you're committed to a goal, you *need* to figure out how to meet it.

Learning Goals

- May be contrasted with Performance goals:
 - “Run a mile in 8 minutes”
 - “Cut down my anger outbursts to 1 or less per week”
 - “Get a job”
- **Learning goals** focus on the process of getting there:
 - “Try different training schedules till I find one that improves my running speed.”
 - “Learn 2 new strategies for coping with anger and frustration.”
 - “Learn more about what jobs are available and what jobs I am suited for”

Advantages of Learning Goals

- Help to improve self-evaluation skills (important for self-regulation) because you learn what approaches work best for you, learn what you are good at
- May work best for new, complicated or very challenging goals
 - in fact, setting performance goals in this situation may interfere with success (perhaps by raising anxiety)

Self-Regulation

- Broader than single goals
- How do you even figure out what goals (or problems) are?
 - what exactly needs to be worked on?
 - how?
 - over what time frame?
 - with what evaluation process? (How will you know it's working?)
 - what's Plan B in case it doesn't work? etc., etc.

Self-Regulation Can Be Learned

- Example: Self-Management Training (SMT) for chronic health conditions: diabetes, arthritis, asthma, stroke
- <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/>
- In controlled studies, has been shown superior to standard patient education programs for:
 - Health related knowledge
 - Health related outcomes (symptom severity, doctors visits, ER visits etc.)
 - Quality of life

SMT Principles

- Assumes that every person is able to take *some* responsibility for self-management
- Teaches principles of behavior change based on self-regulation theory, rather than teaching “about” behaviors that need doing or changing
- Patients select behaviors to change, and set own goals (with modeling/ assistance)

5 Core Skills of SMT

(Lorig & Holman)

- Problem solving
 - Decision making
 - Finding and using resources
 - Forming patient/ provider partnerships
 - Taking action:
 - How to formulate 1-2 week action plans related to goals
 - How to evaluate **self-efficacy** (at least 7 out of 10) and revise action plan accordingly
 - May include diaries for self-monitoring & self-evaluation
- Includes setting goals related to symptoms and prevention (wellness)

What Leads to Effective Problem-Solving?

- Attitude toward problems
 - Effective = problems are challenges
 - Ineffective = problems are threats
- Knowledge about problem area
 - Sufficient or not? How to gain more?
- Transfer from past experiences
- Skills (approach used)
 - Effective = rational, systematic
 - Ineffective = impulsive OR avoidant

Goal Hierarchy

Long-Term Goals: Aims

Larger goals based on life priorities
Extend into the future

Intermediate Goals: Objectives

Activity level goals
Linked to aims

Short-Term Goals: Targets

More immediate goals
Linked to objectives

SMART Goals

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-based

SMARTER Goals

Ethical

Recorded

SSMART

S = Specific

or is it ...

significant, stretching, simple, stimulating,
succinct, straight forward, self owned, self
managed, self controlled, strategic, sensible

SMART

M = Measurable

or is it ...

Meaningful, motivational, manageable,
magical, magnetic, maintainable,
mapped to goals

SMART

A = Attainable

or is it ...

agreed upon, attainable, acceptable,
actionable, appropriate, ambitious,
aspirational, accepted/acceptable,
aligned, accountable, agreed, adapted,
as-if-now

SMART

R = Realistic

or is it ...

relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented, resources are adequate, resource, recorded, reviewable, robust, relevant to a mission

SMART

T = Time-based

or is it ...

timely, tangible, trackable, tactical, traceable,
toward what you want, time-limited

Unresolved Questions:

- What about cultural differences in “goal directedness”?
- Who should be involved in goal setting?
- What if the people involved in setting goals with a person disagree about what the goals should be?
- Do goals need to be SMART?
- What are the benefits of ambitious goals as compared to goals that are achievable?
- How do we evaluate goal achievement?

Our Goal for the Day!

