



Somerset Community Pain
Management Service

**Working together
on my health**

Setting Goals – Getting on with what is important

Goals can bring back direction to your life. Completing a goal, however small, can give you a sense of achievement and encouragement to continue. One of the things that people with pain often say is that they ‘can’t do anything anymore’ and ‘have nothing to look forward to’.

Realistic goal setting is a way to help you get back to doing the things that you want to - despite the pain.

As with many people who have on-going pain you may have stopped doing a range of activities that you used to do, maybe without even realising it. These might include pleasurable activities, such as going to see a film or going on a bike ride. It can also include responsibilities, such as housework or childcare. Your husband, wife or partner may have taken over some of these responsibilities, making you feel down, frustrated, useless or hopeless.

Setting goals can help us to complete and enjoy these activities whilst managing pain effectively. This factsheet will give you more information about setting goals, and you can record your goals by clicking the ‘Goal Setting’ link on the ‘Take Action’ section of the patient online platform, available for patients registered with the pain service and accessible through the Pain Service website – the address is at the bottom of the page. You can also set goals on paper – read on to find out more.

Decide what goals you want to set

Goals are often focussed on

- ✓ Things we want to **achieve** and/or
- ✓ Things we **enjoy**

It may be very important for you to achieve more things at home, such as cooking and cleaning. These may be things that you have never particularly enjoyed but are important for your self-esteem or because they give you a sense of achievement when you complete them.

It may be that you get a great deal of enjoyment from going to meet a friend, playing a particular sport or playing a musical instrument. Achieving enjoyment centred goals can give a great boost to your confidence.

Goals that are **achievement** and **enjoyment** focussed can improve how we feel. Sometimes they are the same and sometimes different.

Goals have to be your choice, not chosen for you, so think about the things that are important to you and you value most. It might help you to consider the areas discussed in the section on Values - particularly the ones you rated highly. What value-based goals are most important to you?

You may have so many things that you want to achieve or get done that it can get overwhelming. This can make you feel despondent or that you have “failed”. It can be useful to make a list so it is clear which things are really important rather than doing them on “autopilot”, or because you have always done them, or because other people expect them of you.

Write down your ideas on the **Ideas for My Goals** chart below. You can then rate them on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being not important and 10 extremely important) for how important they are to you. This will give you a clearer idea of which one to start with. Your pain practitioner or online mentor can help you with this.

Ideas for My Goals chart

Number	Goal	Importance
1	<i>e.g. to see my friends more often</i>	<i>e.g. 7 out of 10</i>
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Once you have decided on a goal you might like to have a go at the **Checking out how important this is to me** exercise on the next page.

Checking out how important this is to me

This exercise helps you to think about the priorities for you right now. Managing pain is about making changes to the way you lead your life. However, most people will only make changes that are important to them. It's no good being "told" to do things by friends, relatives or health care professionals.

Choose a goal from the **Ideas for my Goal** chart above – it's best to choose one that you've given a high score. Write the goal and score in the boxes below.

GOAL:

IMPORTANCE SCORE:

Now ask yourself:

"Why did I score a(fill in your score) and not a score two or three points lower?" e.g., Why did I score a 6 and not a 4? Then write the reasons down below:

E.G. "Because doing this would make so much difference not only to me but to the whole family, because this I really need to do something to get me out of the house."

Checking out how important this is to me continued...

These reasons help you recognise the positive feelings you have about making this goal.

If you scored 7 or above this is obviously very important to you. You are probably ready to start setting your goal and move onto the next step. If you scored less than 7 it might be worth looking at your Ideas for my goals form again just to check that there isn't anything that's higher priority for you right now.

Make your Action Plans

Now that you have decided on your goal the next step is to break it down into the actions that you will need to take in order to achieve it. It may help to think of your goal as the thing you are working towards and your action plans as how you are going to get there. For example, if your goal is to lose weight your actions may include finding a slimming club, increasing your exercise and drawing up a plan for how much weight you want to lose every week. Some goals will have lots of actions, others perhaps only one.

Have a go at filling in the **Action Plan Chart** below for one of your action plans. We have added some examples to give you some ideas. If you need more sheets you can photocopy one or download one from our website by going to **www.somersetpain.tst.nhs.uk**.

Action Plan Chart

MY GOAL IS TO:

E.g. Lose weight

THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE :

E.g. I will feel better about myself, it will help with my diabetes

I PLAN TO START THIS/DO THIS ON THESE DATES

E.g. From next Monday, or, on every other Monday

MY ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING THIS GOAL IS TO:

E.g. Start walking to work

Action Plan Chart continued...

I MIGHT HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES:

E.g. It might be raining, I might have a lot of pain

TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES I WILL:

E.g. Have an umbrella ready, check out the distance is realistic and that I can manage it on good and bad days

Make your Goal SMARTER

Once you've come up with an action plan, it's a good idea to go over it again to make sure that its achievable, realistic and will help to improve your outlook on your pain. The **SMARTER** acronym is a really good way to remember to check all the details of your action plans. Consider each of these questions on the chart on the next page:

The SMARTER Chart

S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Is my action clearly defined? • What exactly am I going to do, how often am I going to do it?
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable • How will I know I've done it? • Do I have a specific target e.g. a goal weight, length of time I'm going to do it for, how often etc.?
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievable • Am I aiming too high? • Is there a good chance that I won't be able to do this and will end up feeling even more fed up?
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic • Is there anything which might throw me off course? • For example, will it fit in with family commitments, will I be able to afford it?
T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time bound • Have I decided when I'm going to do this? • Putting a time to actions and knowing when you are going to start makes them more likely to happen
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficacy Scored • How confident am I that I will succeed? • Have a go at the How confident am I? exercise on page.....
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewarding • Will I enjoy doing this and/or will the end result be worth it? • If your action plan is difficult to do you might consider promising yourself some rewards along the way • e.g. £2 towards a new dress for every day you don't have a cigarette

Some examples of goals that *aren't* SMARTER

- ✗ I'm going to get fitter
- ✗ I'm going to go out more
- ✗ I'm going to go back to work

Some examples of goals that *are* SMARTER

- ✓ I am going to go swimming every Tuesday. I am going to start with one length and build up by one length a week. I know I can do this because I have checked out the price and I have a friend to come with me. I've done the **How Important is this to me?** exercise and I scored 8/10. When we've been going for 8 weeks we're going to have a day out.
- ✓ I am going to start walking the children to school every morning, starting from tomorrow. This is really important to me and my children (I scored 10/10 on the **How important is this to me?** exercise). I know I can walk the distance but if I am feeling anxious about it I can walk with one of the other parents. It will feel really good to do this and I can sit down with a cup of tea and relax when I get home.
- ✓ I would like to be able to relax more so that I feel more in control of the feelings I have when I'm in pain. In order to do this I am going to set aside half an hour everyday (after tea) to practice my relaxation exercises and deep breathing (for when I get anxious during the day).

Confidence Exercise

If you haven't done so already, complete the exercise below

This exercise is similar to the one about how important your goal is to you. This time it looks at your confidence levels.

Thinking about your goal plan, ask yourself the question: *“How confident am I that I can do this?”*

Put a cross on the line below to rate this on a scale of 1 – 10:

0 _____ 10
Not at all confident **Extremely confident**

Now ask yourself: *“Why did I score a (fill in your score) and not a score two or three points lower?”* E.g. *“Why did I score a 5 and not a 3?”*

Write the reasons down below:

e.g. Because this time I'm feeling much more positive, I feel I understand a bit more about my pain, my goal covers all the things that could go wrong.

Confidence Exercise continued...

These reasons help you to identify the positive thoughts and feelings that you have about this change.

Now ask yourself: *“What would it take to move up a couple of points, say from a 5 to a 7?”*

Write the reasons down below:

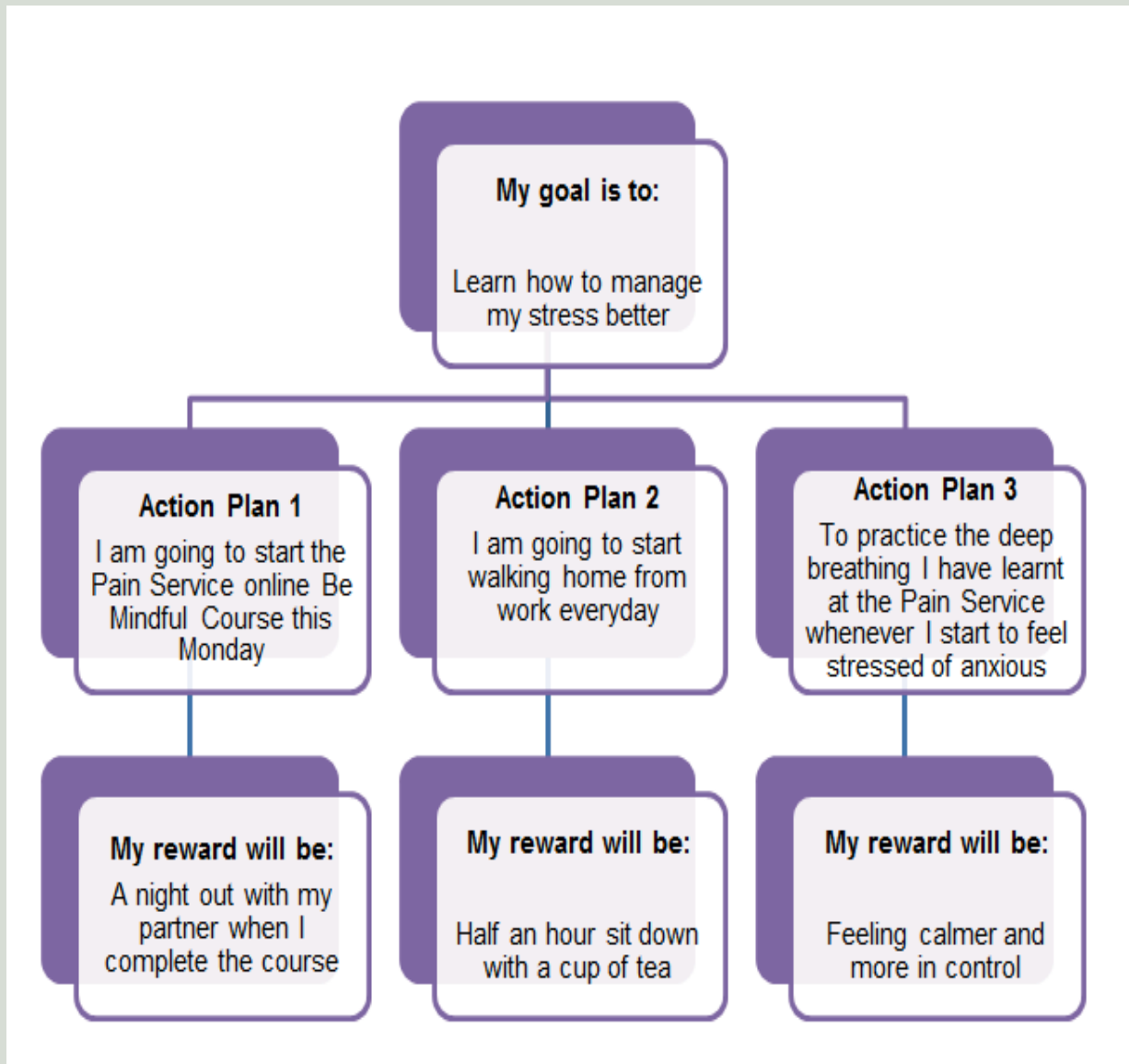
e.g. *“If I felt everyone at home was behind me, a bit more information about my condition, getting a better night’s sleep”*

This will help you identify the things that you could work on to make your goal more achievable and realistic.

Review your Goal and your Action Plans for achieving it

This step is to summarise your Goal and the Action Plans that you have made. We have given an example below. You might want to consider printing off the sheet and putting it somewhere around the house to remind you about what you are trying to achieve. For example, a ‘cooking a meal goal’ in the kitchen, a ‘getting a better night’s sleep goal’ in the bedroom, a ‘walking more goal’ on the front door!

Goal Review and Action Plan Chart



Good Luck!