



## **Setting Goals... and achieving them**

**For someone with an ABI or SCI, being able to set and achieve goals is an important part of rehabilitation. Goal setting and planning are important skills that will help the individual gain back their independence and confidence. This guide is intended to help individuals set, plan, and achieve their goals**

### **Step one: Choosing the goal**

Think of your goals or plans in as much detail as possible. How would you like your life to be different? Where do you see yourself in five years? What about ten? What are your hopes for the future? Jot your goals down in detail. Is there anything you need or would like to change in your life? What about your health? Then rate your goals and their importance to you.

It is very important to be realistic about your goals and what can be achieved without underestimating yourself. You don't want to set yourself up for disappointment, but equally you want to push yourself. If you are helping someone else set goals, remember that a person is going to be more motivated if they choose or are involved in the process. Goals must be important to their life, should have benefits or rewards, and can be sustained over time.

### **Step two: Breaking the goal into smaller steps**

Breaking the goal into smaller steps allows for the opportunity of many successes and learning experiences and reinforces the goal setting process. Many smaller goals also allows for continuous review and evaluation so that you may determine whether or not you need to readjust your goals and steps. Prioritise your goals. You may have many goals but choose only a few goals to work on at a time so you don't burn out. You will be able to put more effort into achieving your goals if you are not overloaded and spread too thin.

### **Step three: Planning**

Things to think about when planning how you will obtain your goals include: what am I going to do? When and how often will it happen? What resources or support will I need? How will you know when you are succeeding?

### **Step four: Reviewing the goal**

Set a time to review your goals. Don't set this date too far away as you will want the opportunity to check progress and change strategies. When reviewing your progress, write down what worked out and why it worked out as well as what didn't work out and why. Celebrate successes and learn from the process.

### **Step five: Setting new goals**

Think about what you need to change based on your progress. Perhaps nothing needs to be changed, but you just need more time. If you have completed a goal, make plans for a new one.

[info@neuroconnect.ca](mailto:info@neuroconnect.ca)

416-882-0233

Visit [www.neuroconnect.ca](http://www.neuroconnect.ca) for more resources and information

### **Step six: Identify barriers and work through them**

There are many barriers to goals including poor habits and behaviours. Most people set goals but few people are able to follow through with them. Examples of behaviour that is difficult to change includes getting more exercise, changing eating habits, or quitting smoking. Someone with a brain injury may have different barriers including cognitive, physical, social, behavioural and communicative barriers.

#### **Cognitive Barriers:**

- Planning and organizational problems
- Memory and learning problems
- Attention and concentration problems
- Fatigue and low energy
- Behavioural and Emotional
- Lack of motivation or initiation
- Reduced ability to generate ideas
- Poor impulse control
- Reduced ability to self-monitor progress or actions
- Low frustration tolerance
- Depression or anxiety
- Communication
- Inability to articulate or clearly communicate
- Difficulty communicating ideas or thoughts
- Difficulty with reasoning or understanding
- Social
- Lack of time or financial resources
- Low confidence in ability
- Lack of social or family support
- Lack of encouragement or feedback from friends and family

It is a good idea to write down barriers and think of ideas to deal with each barrier. Do you need memory strategies? Do you need to build your confidence by setting very small goals? Goal setting, planning, and achieving is a long process and takes patience. Don't get discouraged if you don't progress as quickly as you wanted to. Take that as a cue to break your goal into smaller steps and/or give yourself more time. Never give up. You may hear stories about people who talked or walked again when they never were expected to- this is because they had persevering attitudes and never gave up on their goals.

[info@neuroconnect.ca](mailto:info@neuroconnect.ca)

416-882-0233

Visit [www.neuroconnect.ca](http://www.neuroconnect.ca) for more resources and information