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## Exercise: Use Your Problem-Solving Skills

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Pick a worry from your notebook that you think fits the criteria of a productive worry—one that is plausible, current, and solvable. Now take that worry and go through the following steps:

1. Define the key elements of the problem. Be as specific as possible. Be sure to also write what you would like to be different.
2. Write down every possible solution you can generate. Include any possible options, no matter how silly they may seem.
3. Now pick the solution that you think has the best chance of success and that seems most workable.
4. Break down that solution into any smaller steps needed to achieve the goal.
5. Go do it!

You may find that this process is tedious or difficult at first. But with practice, you'll be able to go through the process much more efficiently and effectively. Over time, you'll develop more confidence in your ability to use your problem-solving skills, and you may even find that you're able to eliminate some of the worries on your list.

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# **PROBLEM SOLVING**

**Step 1: What is the problem?**

**Step 2: What are some solutions?**

**Step 3: For each solution ask:**

**Is it safe?**

**How might people feel?**

**Is it fair?**

**Will it work?**

**Step 4: Choose a solution and use it.**

**Step 5: Is it working? If not, what can I do now?**

Second Step 1-3, (1992) Committee for Children

Community Group Treatment Program. London, Ontario

# Does Your Goal Have S.M.A.R.T.S.?

## # RULES OF SMART GOALS

SPECIFIC. CLEAR AND WELL-DEFINED

MEASURABLE. CAN BE VALUED PRECISELY

ATTAINABLE. POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE

RELEVANT. ALIGNED WITH PERSONAL LIFE

TIME-BOUND. HAVE A DEADLINE

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## S – Specific

Exactly what do you want to accomplish? Your goal should be detailed and precise, not vague. Instead of planning to “exercise more,” for example, you could plan to “buy a pedometer and walk 10,000 steps every day for 3 months.” Specific goals often include answers to popular “W” questions like “who,” “what,” and “where.”

## M – Measurable

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress towards your goal. Ask questions like: “how much?”, “how many times?”, “how will I know when it’s accomplished?”. If it’s a more long-term goal, set some milestones by considering specific tasks to accomplish. In the exercise example above, the measurable quantity is 10,000 steps a day for 3 months.

## A – Attainable

Set reasonable expectations to inspire motivation, not discouragement. Your goal should be doable, real and practical. Don’t be afraid to aim high, as long as you’re being realistic. A high goal can actually be easier to reach because it’s more exciting to follow it through. The exercise example above is a high goal, but also a realistic one given that the American Heart Association recommends 10,000 steps a day.

Think about how to accomplish your goal and if you have the tools, skills and attitudes needed. If not, consider what it would take to attain those tools, skills and attitudes. Personal and situational factors may influence your ability to reach a goal, so be honest with yourself about what you can reasonably accomplish at this point in your life.

Break down goals into actionable objectives to keep from becoming overwhelmed. Each objective moves you closer to achieving your goal. In the exercise example above, the 10,000 steps per day gives you a daily objective.

## R – Relevant

Your goal should be something that applies to you personally and that you feel is worthwhile. Consider how important it is to you and if it makes sense within the context of your broader ambitions.

## T – Time-Bound

Set a time frame to help you focus on achieving your goal. Pick a specific deadline and be realistic about what can be accomplished within that time frame. You can always re-evaluate the deadline if need be, but setting one makes you far more likely to succeed.

If you have a longer-term goal in mind, identify some milestones along the way with their own deadlines attached. In the exercise example above, two time frames have been identified – walking *each day*, for *3 months*.

## S – Shared

Tell others about your goal so they can support you. This can help keep you motivated and give you a sense of accountability.

# S.M.A.R.T.S. GOALS WORKSHEET

**INITIAL  
GOAL**

Write the goal you have in mind.

**S**

**SPECIFIC**

What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?

**M**

**MEASURABLE**

How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?

**A**

**ATTAINABLE**

Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?

**R**

**RELEVANT**

What is the motivation for this goal? Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?

**T**

**TIME-BOUND**

What's the deadline and is it realistic?

**S**

**SHARED**

Who can support you?

**SMART  
GOAL**

Review what you have written and, if necessary, craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed.



