

Personalized Goals: Examples for Therapists



Personalized goals are a good way for clients to measure self-improvement. While standardized measures assess improvement of PTS, depression, anxiety and behavior problems, clients may be more motivated to learn and practice skills if they see more immediate and tangible progress towards a personal goal. Goals should be driven by the client and something they want to see get better. Below are some examples of personalized goals, using the personalized goal feature in toolkit for each CBT+ clinical target. Each session, the client is asked to rate the goal on a scale from 0 (no progress) to 10 (problem solved).

Behavior

- Keep my hands to myself – no hurting others
- Find healthy ways to deal with his anger (stop and think first)
- Get along better with siblings (no physical fighting, less arguing, doings something nice)
- Getting along better with other kids (list ways to do this)
- Stay in class, don't get kicked out
- Will have angry outbursts 4 or fewer times per week.

Depression

- Make more friends/be more social
- Not to think negative about everything
- Learn to cope with my emotions - depression and sadness
- I want to be able to slowly get out of my room and spend more time with my family
- Feel more proud or more confident in myself
- I want to feel more happy more often
- Go out with friends 3x a week
- Participate in hobbies such as reading an hour or two a day, going on walks 2x a day, and exercise lightly every day
- I want to think more positively. I want to be a 7 or above on the happy emotional scale every day
- I want to do more fun things that I used to do. (Demonstrated by lowering my PHQ-9 scores to below 9 for three consecutive sessions and by self-report).
- Get more exercise from no exercise to 1-2 times a week
- Get better sleep (fall asleep within 30 minutes 5 days/week, sleep 8 hours)
- Report feeling better than "Terrible" at least 3 days in a week. Terrible is at least an "8" on a 1 – 10 scale.
- Learn and use at least 1 new skill learned in counseling during each week.

Anxiety

- Feel less anxious when I go to school
- Get over my fear of dogs
- Be able to talk to kids my own age even if it makes me nervous
- Be able to go to school every day and stay through the day
- Be less worried about throwing up
- Live my life without letting anxiety get in the way
- To be able to have fun even if my parents aren't there

- Don't get anxious about little things like the bus being late or friends not texting me back right away
- Be more comfortable spending time in public places so I can go to the mall with friends

Trauma

- Be able to talk about what happened without falling apart
- Not blame myself for what happened
- Feel less scared/upset when I have bad nightmares or memories of what happened
- To be able to go to parties with friends
- To be able to take a shower without covering all the mirrors
- Find a way to accept my past and not think negatively about it

Example of a trauma goal for a 12 year old child (0 – no progress, 10 = problem solved)

