



# Reimagine<sup>≡</sup>

## Mental Health

A GOAL-SETTING WORKSHEET



## A Goal-Setting Worksheet

To enhance our mental health, most of us wouldn't mind making a few small changes. Instead of simply wishing things could get better, you can possibly identify the changes that you'd want to see. After that, you may move closer to your objectives by taking tangible steps.

Setting mental health goals can be empowering and give you confidence that things can change. This process can also build accountability and discipline. You may feel more in control of your life and how to move forward.

Sometimes just figuring out where to start can be overwhelming. This worksheet will lead you through identifying the right goals for yourself and then how to get there. While this tool is designed to be used on its own, you can increase its effectiveness by working with a mental health professional.

Believe that things can change. Reimagine your mental health, and what your life could look like. Each small step you take in setting your goals and taking action to achieve them gets you closer to better mental well-being. Let's go!

### 1. Check in with yourself.

Let's start by taking a look at where you are right now.

How satisfied are you with your current state of mental health? Your stress levels? Do you feel like you're able to cope with the challenges that life has been throwing at you?\*

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What are some of the things that you have been doing to help your mental health?

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*\*Note: If you're currently in distress, you can call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 24/7 for help from a trained counselor.*

Now reflect on the areas you'd like to improve in your mental health and list them here. Think about your emotions, stress levels, how you tend to deal with difficulties, and anything else that you feel has been causing problems for you.

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## 2. Consider the possibilities.

Based on the areas you've identified as needing improvement, you may already know exactly what you want to work on. If there are many potential areas, you'll need to prioritize what to focus on as your goal.

Some examples of goals include: reducing your stress levels, improving your medication routines, building stronger relationships, or addressing your anxiety. The possible goals are endless, but you know best what's most relevant to your life.

If you can do so without getting upset, think about what's led to problems you've had or situations that sparked negative emotions. What could you have done differently to prevent or deal with them?

Use this space to brainstorm goals that could make a difference for your mental health.

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Now put a star next to the goal that you feel will have the biggest impact on improving your mental health. We'll focus on that one for this worksheet. (You can always repeat this process for other goals!)

## 3. Get specific.

Now it's time to think about the specific actions that will get you to your mental health goal.

For example, rather than saying that you want to reduce your stress levels, detail what you will actually do to address your stress. Start a mindfulness or meditation habit? Work with a therapist to reduce the procrastination that makes every task a last-minute scramble? Start exercising regularly? Learn how to ask for help when you need it?

You may be tempted to take on several new behaviors at once. Your chances of success are usually higher if you focus on just one at a time, unless the actions are tightly linked. And the more specific you can get on what that action looks like, the better.

Describe the specific action(s) you plan to focus on to reach your goal. How often will you do it? In what situations?

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## 4. Find Your Why.

This probably won't come as a huge surprise, but...making changes to our lives and habits can be hard. To help stick with your plan, let's think through what's driving you to change.

Knowing the reasons why you want to take action can help you stay motivated. Start by answering the question "Why do you want to make this change?" Then reflect on why that reason is important to you, going several levels more until you get to your ultimate "why."

This process can reveal insights about yourself you may not have realized before. While some motivations may stem from difficult experiences, they also reflect your values and desires for personal growth. Remember, it's not about judgment but about understanding what truly matters to you.

For example, Monica wants to start writing down the things she's thankful for in a gratitude journal every night. Why does she want to do this? Because she often finds herself dwelling on negative experiences, leading to feelings of anxiety. Why does she want to think more positively? Because dwelling on the negative affects her mood, often causing her to snap at her kids. Why does she want to change how she reacts to her kids? Because she values being a nurturing mom. Why is being a loving parent important to her? Because she wants to create a positive family dynamic, different from the relationship she had with her own mother.

Your turn!

Why do you want to make this change?

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Why is that reason important?

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And why is that reason important?

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And why is that reason important?

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If you feel like you got to the heart of your “why” you can stop here, or keep going until you can’t dig any deeper.

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## 5. Plan for the bumps.

The most effective goal-setting strategies anticipate potential snags that might come up — and plan for them from the beginning. Start by thinking through why you haven’t taken action on this goal yet (or why it didn’t work when you previously tried).

What got in your way to success?

Some examples of barriers and potential solutions could include:

- Struggling with self-compassion while dealing with anger, so learning some new coping skills.
- Not having time to invest in self-care, so getting creative about fitting a walk outside. during your lunch break or waking up 30 minutes early to practice mindfulness.
- Not being able to afford private therapy sessions, so finding a local mental health clinic or community based organization that offers sliding scale or free services.

What are some barriers that might come up for you, and how can you take preventive action to make sure they don't stop you from making progress?

Potential Barrier	Potential Solution

## 6. Pick your team.

If you have people in your life who can safely support you in moving toward your mental health goal, they can make a big difference in keeping you motivated and accountable. If you don't have someone you trust to share your goal with, look for an online mental health community with people pursuing similar goals who can cheer you on and give you ideas for dealing with setbacks.

Who are the people you can share your goal with to help keep you motivated?

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Consider also if there are people in your life who could potentially harm your goals. For example, if you are working on reducing your alcohol or substance use, try not to hang out with the people you drank or used with. Or if there are certain people who bring out negative emotions in you, avoid them or minimize your time with them.

Who are the people or communities you might try to minimize connection with?

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## 7. Nudge yourself.

Many behaviors need to happen at a specific time or place. If you can set up reminders or ways to make it easier for yourself to take action, you'll be more likely to be successful.

For example, keep your gratitude journal or walking shoes in a place you pass by often. Or set a daily reminder alarm to stop what you're doing to practice a mindfulness exercise, or to take your medication. Write your ultimate "why" on a sticky note and put it on your bathroom mirror.

What are some reminders or shortcuts you can set up to make it more likely you'll take action?

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## 8. Be in it for the long term.

Many mental health goals aren't just one-and-done — they require you to take action over and over. If you're consistent in building the behavior into your life, it can become a habit you don't have to think much about. But often, you'll have to continue to put effort into maintaining the change.

Tracking your progress can be motivating. Tracking could just involve noting each time you took action on your calendar, or keeping a journal to reflect on the process and results. Looking back at how far you've come is a great feeling!

If you don't reach your goal, that's okay. Change is hard for most of us! And progress is not always linear. Working on our mental health is a lifelong process of ups and downs.

At some point, you may decide it's time to review and adjust your goals. Think about whether your goal was realistic and effective. And consider if there's anything else going on in your life that needs to become your top priority instead.

How will you track your progress and success with your mental health goal?

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You can use this goal-setting method whenever you want to put a new plan into motion for your mental health, or other life goals. We encourage you to continue to reimagine what you want your life to look like.

For more ways to improve your mental health, check out the Take Action for Mental Health website at **TakeAction4MH.com**

