

Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB7



Goal Setting: Taking Care of Your Health

Caring for a loved one can take a toll on the health of a caregiver. It is important that caregivers set goals to maintain or improve their own health over the long-term.

So, how do you begin setting goals?

- 1) Think about any health conditions you may have.
- 2) Set goals to improve your own health.
- 3) Create an action plan to meet your health goals.

When was the last time that you had a checkup with your healthcare provider?

Many caregivers do not think of making appointments for their own health. This may be a good time to make an appointment to discuss your health goals. Most people see their healthcare provider at least once a year.

Your next appointment is:



What chronic health conditions do you have? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ High blood pressure (High risk above 140/90; Caution 120-139/80-89)
- ☐ High cholesterol (High risk above 240; Caution 200-239)
- ☐ Diabetes or high blood sugar
- ☐ Heart condition (e.g., heart failure, heart attack, atrial fibrillation)
- ☐ Lung condition (e.g., asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, COPD)
- ☐ Neurological condition (e.g., stroke, epilepsy, brain injury)
- ☐ Musculoskeletal condition (e.g., arthritis, osteoporosis, bone or muscle)
- ☐ Gastrointestinal condition (e.g., ulcer, gallbladder, liver, bowel disease)
- ☐ Genitourinary condition (e.g., kidney, bladder, prostate, uterus, other?)
- ☐ Skin condition (e.g., rashes, psoriasis)
- ☐ Cancer (any type) _____
- ☐ Depression or anxiety
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ None of the above (***Are you at risk for any of the above?***)

What acute health conditions do you have? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Common Cold or the Flu or COVID
- ☐ Injury (e.g., bruise, sprain, broken bones)
- ☐ Infection (any type) _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ None of the above (***Are you at risk for any of the above?***)

What symptoms do you currently have? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Fatigue or tiredness
- ☐ Physical limitations
- ☐ Gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., nausea, heartburn, constipation)
- ☐ Difficult emotions (stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms)
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ None of the above

What are your current positive health habits? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Sleep 7-8 hours per night
☐ Exercise 30 minutes at least 3 to 4 times per week
☐ Eat a healthy diet every day or almost every day
☐ Drink plenty of water
☐ Do not smoke
☐ Consume no more than 1 alcoholic drink per day
☐ Other _____
☐ None of the above

Which of the above health habits could you improve? _____



Based on your self-assessment, where could you improve your health? There are no right or wrong answers. It is what you want to work on to improve your health.

Chronic health conditions	Acute health conditions	Current symptoms	Positive health habits

Your highest priority: _____

If you chose an acute or chronic health condition or symptom, what health habit would be your highest priority to improve this condition?

Your highest priority health habit: _____

Example: I do not eat a healthy diet. I mostly eat fast food or pre-prepared foods. My doctor has told me that I am overweight.



Setting A Goal for Your Highest Priority Health Habit

Your goal should be specific and realistic for you. Only focus on one goal at a time to have the best success! It must be something that **YOU** want to do.

Write down one goal related to your highest priority health habit.

How will you measure it? How much time do you want it to take to achieve your goal?

My health goal: _____

Examples:

- I will lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days.
- I will go to bed each night by 10 p.m. for the next 7 days.
- I will exercise 30 minutes 3 times a week.
- I will not smoke more than 3 cigarettes per day for the next week.

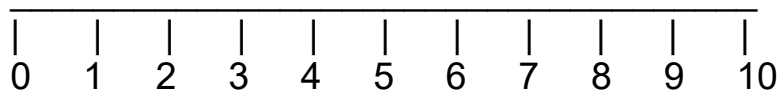
How Realistic is Your Goal?

Rate yourself on how confident you are that you will reach your goal.

Place an X on the line below.

0=Not confident

10=Totally confident



Boost your Confidence to Achieve your Goal

If you rated low on your ability to reach your goal, do not worry! There are some things that you can do to help boost your confidence. Listed below are some strategies that can help:

1. Increase confidence in your own abilities

Think about your past successes. What goals have you reached in the past? What are you most proud of?

When you think of past successes, you increase confidence in yourself. Never be afraid to try something new! Believe in yourself!

What can you do to boost your own confidence for your own health goal?

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2. Find a role model

Find role models who have reached their health goals. What local groups (face to face or online) are there that can help you? Who do you know that has met a goal like your health goal?

3. Surround yourself with supportive people

Others can influence your ability to reach your goal. Who are the support people in your life that will help you reach your goal?

4. Remember, mood matters

How you feel at a given moment may influence your ability to reach your goal. If you feel sad, angry, or nervous, you may not believe in yourself. Feeling happy and balanced allows you to meet the challenge with a stronger sense of confidence. Rather than doubting your ability to meet your goal, believe in yourself and be positive. **Positive self-talk helps!**

How do you deal with negative emotions? If you deal with negative emotions with unhealthy behaviors, what can you substitute for the unhealthy behavior? Consider calling a supportive friend, church member, or family member? Go for a walk? Play music? Pray?

See **Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB6 Stress Management Workbook for Caregivers and Survivors** in the TASK III Resource Guide for strategies on how to manage stress and improve your mood.

What stress management strategies will help with your health goal?



Creating an Action Plan

Once you have set your goal, and how to boost your confidence in achieving that goal, the next step is to create an action plan. Your actions need to be very specific and important to you.

Your action plan should include:

- a) strategies to boost your confidence
- b) specific steps toward achieving your goal
- c) ways to overcome barriers to reaching your goal

Sample Goal and Action Plan:

Example Goal: I will lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days.

Action 1: Write down everything I ate and drank in the last 24 hours. Then, determine what are healthy and unhealthy food choices. Determine what I do well and not so well in terms of eating.

Action 2: Explore diet plans that fit my age and size and can help me achieve my goal. What is available online?

Action 3: Write down in a journal when I overeat and what I am feeling at that time (e.g., bored, stressed, sad). Learn 3 new stress management strategies when I am feeling this way.

Action 4: Find a role model who has lost weight that I can talk with once a week (e.g., every Tuesday afternoon at 4P).

Action 5: Make an appointment with my doctor to discuss my weight loss goal and to ask about my health conditions.

What Actions Will You Take to Achieve Your Goal?

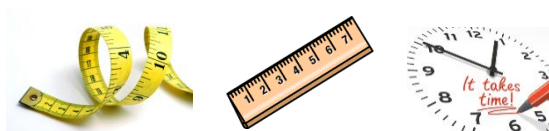
Goals are more likely to be met when you create an action plan. It is important to write down your action plan. Make sure your actions are realistic. Your actions should be things that you think you can do.

My health goal: _____

Action 1: _____

Action 2: _____

Action 3: _____



Your health goal should be specific enough that you can measure it, and that you can do it within a certain time period.

Your actions should include steps on how to meet your goal, ways to boost your confidence, and ways to overcome barriers.

Tips for Keeping Track of Your Progress

- **Write it down!** Use a journal so that you can keep track of what you are doing. At the end of each day, make notes about your actions. What worked? What did not work? What other actions can you try?
- **Check it off!** Making a list and checking things off every day helps you feel better and keeps you motivated to reaching your health goal.
- **Consider going public!** Sharing your plans with family and friends helps you to stay on track and motivated. However, before you do, what are the pros and cons? Who are the best people to share your action plan with?

Talking to Your Healthcare Provider about Your Health Goal and Action Plan

Your healthcare provider is your partner in improving your health. Any time you make a change in your health, you need to give your healthcare provider a head's up! Below are some tips about what is important to talk to your healthcare provider about at each visit:

- **Prepare a list of questions for your healthcare provider**
 - It is easy to forget your questions if they are not written down.
- **Don't be afraid to ask about things you want to know. Ask about things you don't understand about your health.**
 - Your healthcare provider should make sure you understand what he/she tells you about your health. Speak up if there is anything that you do not understand.
- **Discuss personal problems that may impact your health.**
 - Sometimes personal problems in your life can put you at risk for health problems. Be sure to share personal problems with your healthcare provider.



See **Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB5 Communicating with Health Professionals**. This tip sheet has a worksheet that caregivers have found helpful in preparing for visits with healthcare providers.

Where can I find more information about taking care of my own health?

Other TASK III Resource Guide Tip Sheets: Check out the TASK III Resource Guide Table of Contents for tip sheets that may be related to your health goal. While some of these tip sheets may apply to caring for the stroke survivor, many strategies may also apply to your own health goals.

SB#1. Strengthening existing skills
 SB#2. Screening for depressive symptoms and other emotions
 SB#3. Maintaining realistic schedule and expectations
 SB#4. Problem solving strategies
 SB#5. Communicating with health professionals
 SB#6 Stress management workbook for caregivers and survivors
 Tip Sheet #3: Risk factors for another stroke
 Tip Sheet #4: Recommended lifestyle changes after stroke
 Tip Sheet #5: The stroke survivor's medications
 Tip Sheet #8: Where to find resources
 Tip Sheet #9: Helping the stroke survivor to eat
 Tip Sheet #11: Helping the stroke survivor to exercise
 Tip Sheet #22: Learning how to manage finances
 Tip Sheet #27: Dealing with my own emotions
 Tip Sheet #28: Dealing with new responsibilities
 Tip Sheet #29: Finding the best way to ask family and friends for help
 Tip Sheet #30: Dealing with other things in my life
 Tip Sheet #31: Taking care of my own health
 Tip Sheet #32: Keeping my energy level up
 Tip Sheet #33. Keeping my own social life going

Recommended Book for Goal Setting and Healthy Lifestyle:

Lorig, K., Sobel, D., Laurent, D., Minor, M., Gonzalez, V., & Gecht-Silver, M. (2020). Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions: Self-management Skills for Heart Disease, Arthritis, Diabetes, Depression, Asthma, Bronchitis, Emphysema, and other Physical and Mental Health Conditions (5th ed.). Boulder, CO: Bull Publishing Company. www.bullpub.com

Goal Setting Worksheet: Creating an Action Plan

A. List all of your current health conditions and health habits:

Chronic health conditions	Acute health conditions	Current symptoms	Positive health habits

B. Your highest priority: _____

If you chose an acute or chronic health condition or symptom, what health habit would be your highest priority to improve this condition?

Your highest priority health habit: _____

C. My health goal: _____

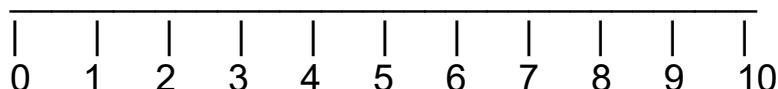
Create a goal that will address your highest priority health habit. Be sure to include how you will measure it, and how much time it will take to achieve your goal.

D. Rate how confident you are that you will reach your goal.

(Place an X on the line below).

0=Not at all confident

10=Totally confident



E. My action plan:

Your actions should include steps on how to meet your goal, ways to boost your confidence, and ways to overcome barriers. Include a visit to a healthcare provider.

Action 1: _____

Action 2: _____

Action 3: _____

E. Keeping track of your progress: _____

How will you keep track of your progress? A notebook, journal, iphone app, website, reminders, or support from friends or family?

F: Evaluating your goal: _____

Were you able to reach your goal? Do you need to revise your goal?

As you work toward achieving this goal, you will find what works and what does not work for you. Making changes is normal for everyone. You will have days when things go well and days when things do not.

Stay positive and believe in yourself! You can do this!

Note: You may repeat this process with a new health priority. Goal setting can be a lifelong process to maintain your health long-term. What is your next highest priority health habit?

Always remember, your health as a family caregiver is a top priority.



Goal Setting Worksheet: Creating an Action Plan (extra)

A. List all of your current health conditions and health habits:

Chronic health conditions	Acute health conditions	Current symptoms	Positive health habits

B. Your highest priority: _____

If you chose an acute or chronic health condition or symptom, what health habit would be your highest priority to improve this condition?

Your highest priority health habit: _____

C. My health goal: _____

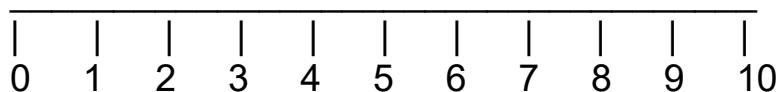
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D. Rate how confident you are that you will reach your goal.

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E. My action plan:

Your actions should include steps on how to meet your goal, ways to boost your confidence, and ways to overcome barriers. Include a visit to a healthcare provider.

Action 1: _____

Action 2: _____

Action 3: _____

E. Keeping track of your progress: _____

How will you keep track of your progress? A notebook, journal, iphone app, website, reminders, or support from friends or family?

F: Evaluating your goal: _____

Were you able to reach your goal? Do you need to revise your goal?