

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

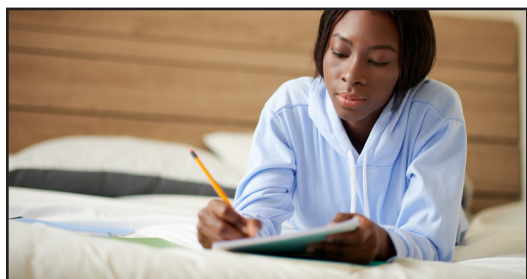
Goal Setting in the New Year

While making New Year's resolutions is a popular practice, they are often hard to sustain over time. Goal setting, a more gradual process, may be a better way to achieve positive change because your goals can be approached in smaller steps. Here are four strategies you can try to help with developing goals for the upcoming year.



■ SET SMART GOALS

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. When goals are vague and unrealistic it decreases the likelihood of follow through. The SMART method is applicable to both professional and personal goals and gives you the steps to be successful.



■ WRITE YOUR GOALS DOWN

Achieving goals requires stepping outside your normal day and challenging yourself. When we write goals down, it allows us to free up mental clutter and visualize things we want to achieve. Even the most skilled multi-taskers forget things. After you have written your goals down, check back in every so often and mark off completed tasks. This will create motivation for you to keep going.



■ EMBRACE FAILURE

Although goal setting is an opportunity to set yourself up for success, the outcome is not always expected. Instead of dwelling on an uncompleted goal, take a moment to strategize on how to make improvements to your plan. Tweak your goal and try again. Failure has a way of teaching us lessons when we need them most and helping us build resiliency.



■ ENJOY THE PROCESS

Most people have a combination of long and short-term goals. When working on long-term goals, be sure to celebrate every small victory along the way, and do not forget to enjoy life as you pursue your goals. Goal setting does not have to be boring!

— Adapted from "How to Set Goals Instead of Resolutions for the New Year" by Malika Boyd, LCSW