

St. Helier & Sutton CFS Service

Value Based Goal Setting

Values

Values are like directions on a compass, they are never 'achieved' but they can influence the quality and clarify the purpose of your life journey.

Values are not something that you can store in a box and put away, we live with them from moment to moment; they are active and ongoing.

Recognising your values helps them to come alive; they can then begin to direct the journey you take.

NB: The value directs your journey but ultimately it is the journey that matters!

Values are:

- Principles, standards, qualities or activities that you consider worthwhile
- Things that are important to you
- Something that brings meaning to your life
- What you want your life to be about

When deciding what your values are, try to be honest with yourself.

This is about *what is important to you* not what someone else says or thinks is important.

When thinking about **values** you may wish to consider:

- Family and friendships
- Spiritual/religious beliefs
- Work and career
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and learning
- Pleasure/leisure

REMEMBER...

This is a process and can sometimes bring up uncomfortable feelings. It is important to be true to yourself. There are no shortcuts to living joyfully – you can't ignore the discomfort and distress of living with CFS/ME. However, the process of becoming aware of your values and committed to following them allows life to become more vital and meaningful than just struggling to keep your illness at bay.

By defining your values you can begin to set meaningful goals

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Goals

Goals can be thought of as stepping stones that move you towards your values.

How does this work in practice?

Here is an example of a value and a goal:

My value: I want to be a good friend

My goal: To phone my friend once a week. (This may be one of many goals on your way to becoming a good friend).

Goal Setting

When setting a goal try to think in terms of something to *move towards*. For example, 'I want to be creative' as opposed to something to *move away from*, such as, 'I don't want this illness'.

You might like to try writing down some activities that will move you in the direction of your values. These may be activities that you enjoyed in the past or things that were important to you before you became unwell. They might include work, relationships, hobbies or leisure activities. It might be helpful to decide which of those activities you'd like to reintroduce first.

Try to make your goal(s) **SMART**:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time managed

The next step is to make a plan:

- **What will I do?** *phone a friend*
- **How much?** *speak on the phone for 15 minutes*
- **When?** *in the afternoon*
- **How Often?** *twice a week*
- **Confidence:** *use a scale of 0-10 with:*

0 = not confident at all **10 = totally confident**

If your confidence level is lower than 5 think about what might prevent, or get in the way, of you achieving your goal. It is better to set an achievable goal than to set a goal which is too high and fail.

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Getting Started

1. Start with something you would enjoy doing
2. Start by setting one goal
3. Choose something that is both realistic and achievable
4. Write it down

After a week or two re-evaluate –did you achieve what you set out to do? If not, then it may be worth asking yourself what you could have done differently. Go through the process again:

- Was I **S**pecific?
- Was the goal **M**easurable?
- Was the goal **A**chievable?
- Was I **R**ealistic?
- Was my goal **T**ime managed?

Then make the necessary adjustments, for example; extend the time frame that you expected to achieve it in.

Most importantly be gentle with yourself and congratulate yourself for the effort and progress you have made.

Tips for Increasing your Goals

1. Increase your goals one at a time
2. Increase your goals slowly by no more than 10 - 20% every three weeks
3. Re-evaluate your goals on a regular basis
4. Congratulate and reward yourself for all your achievements no matter how big or small!

References:

1. Chapter 8 Values and Values-Based Action in Contextual Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy for Chronic Pain, Vol.33, by Lance M. McCracken, IASP press, Seattle, © 2005
2. The Patient Guide to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & Fibromyalgia, Bruce Campbell from the website, www.cfidsselfhelp.org/patient_guide.htm
3. Therapy Today October 2007- Vol 18, no 8, pp 14-18