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## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

# Goal setting

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Physical illness can prevent you from doing many of the things you used to enjoy. This can lead to feeling useless, unmotivated and low in mood. It is important to set yourself small goals to aim for, because this can improve your mood and give you a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

The goals you set yourself need to be achievable and meaningful to you. It is helpful to acknowledge the physical limitations you have and focus on what you can achieve now, not what you used to be able to achieve before you were ill.

Goal setting helps you to break larger activities and tasks into smaller, more achievable ones. This can enable you to regain a sense of control and achievement.

1. Ask yourself - "What do I want to achieve?" "What are my overall goals?" These can be general goals such as "to improve my mobility", "to see more of friends and family", "to do more housework". Start by choosing one or two goals from the areas of your life you value the most.

Please list below:

(a)

(b)

2. Now identify your specific goals by breaking down your overall goals so they become more achievable. For example, "to walk a bit more/go swimming", "to get in touch with a friend/the grandchildren", "to clean the kitchen/hover the house".

(a)

(b)

(c)

3. Now take one of your specific goals and break it down into lots of clear mini goals which will act as small steps towards achieving your specific goal. Think of the goal-setting process as a ladder with your long term goal at the top. You can't get there in one big leap. You have to do it rung by rung.

For example, the first rung of the “improving mobility” ladder might be to walk to the front gate.

The second could be to walk to the first lamppost and back three times a week. The third could be to walk to the local shop three times a week and the fourth to walk around the block every day. If you choose “keeping in touch with friends” as the goal, the first rung might be to choose a friend to phone, the second to invite them round for a coffee, the third to meet them at a quiet time in a cafe and the fourth to go out in a group to a pub.

4. Be clear about when/how many times per day/week you are going to do it.
5. Ask yourself how certain you are that the first mini-goal is achievable on a scale of 0-10, with 0 being certain you will not achieve the mini goal and 10 being certain you can achieve the goal. If you rate at less than seven out of 10, more rungs need to be added to the ladder. The goal needs to be made smaller or changed. Keep breaking down the goals until you feel you can make a start.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

6. Keep a diary (write out the days of the week and tick each day you achieved the goal, adding any comments you think might be helpful).
7. Review how you are doing at the end of the week so you can see what has been achieved and reward yourself. Each time you achieve a mini goal, you will feel more able to go on and take the next step.
8. If you don't achieve a step exactly as planned, don't be disheartened! You may need to put in an extra rung or two to get there.

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### Further sources of information

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. Stating a web address does not imply we endorse a particular site. Neither does not stating a web address imply lack of endorsement.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The PALS team is available to help with any of your comments, compliments or concerns and will ensure a prompt and efficient service. Contact details:

- King's Mill Hospital **01623 672222**  
(out of hours answer phone)  
Email: Pals.kmh@sfh-tr.nhs.uk
- Newark Hospital **01636 685692**  
(out of hours answer phone)  
Email: Pals.nwk@sfh-tr.nhs.uk

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact PALS, as above.

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To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL3025  
Created: Feb 2012 / Review Date: Feb 2014

*With thanks to Gloucestershire Pain  
Management*