

Goal Setting/Action Planning

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Definition of Goal Setting/Action Planning

Imagine life without goals. We would have no sense of direction, lack any motivation to accomplish something meaningful, would be unable to make any plans and would have very little, if any, control over our lives. Our ability to set goals and develop plans to achieve them is essential to our sense of self-efficacy and ability to achieve.

The following definition of goal setting was retrieved from:
<http://sbinfoCanada.about.com/od/goalsetting/g/goalsetting.htm>

Goal Setting/Action Planning

➤ **Goal setting is the process of deciding what you want to accomplish and devising a plan to achieve the result you desire....goal setting is a two part process. For effective goal setting, you need to do more than just decide what you want to do; you also have to work at accomplishing whatever goal you have set for yourself."**

Goal setting and action planning are fundamental to the human experience. From the perspective of our four CBA constructs, goal setting and action planning are critical to our motivation to achieve, and to envisioning and realizing our future possible selves. Self-direction would be impossible without the ability to establish goals and develop plans. Our executive functions would be rendered non-functioning. Without goal setting and action planning we would not be able to use the knowledge we have about our metacognitive abilities to make plans to improve the processes by which we learn. And relationships would never be able to develop and deepen if we were unable to plan for our future with others.

As humans we rely on goal-setting in every aspect of our lives, therefore it is critical for our educational systems to teach goal-setting and action planning as core learning opportunities for students. We do not wait for our children to enter school before helping them to understand the need to set goals and develop plans, nor are goal-oriented learning opportunities limited to the PreK-12 learning continuum. Goal setting and action planning are life-long learning skills that we introduce early and continue to reinforce and refine as we age.

Goal Setting/Action Planning are Fundamental to a CBA

We have asserted often on this website that the role of school counselors is to help students learn how to learn, how to plan for their future success and how to cope with the myriad challenges of becoming proficient learners who achieve and succeed in school, work and life. Because goal setting and action planning are so integral to counselors fulfilling this role, a focus on these functions needs to be a foundational component of quality school counseling programs and effective school counselor practice.

School counselors have many opportunities to help students with setting goals and developing plans. For example, helping students with scheduling classes or responding to social-emotional problems or guiding high school students through college and career pathway selection and application processes are important interactions counselors have with students. The development of individual learning plans by students where they set academic, career and person/social goals places school counselors at the forefront of school's efforts to help students be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school.

Whether students are creating short, intermediate or long-term goals, school counselors are positioned to strongly influence how well students learn and apply goal-setting and action planning to their learning and lives. Plus school counselors are in a position to help students understand the connection between goal setting and action planning and their motivation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, thinking processes, behavior patterns and achievement.

Additional Resources Related to Goal Setting/Action Planning

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

Videos

A bear and a squirrel set a goal to illustrate what it takes to produce a well-constructed SMART goal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3y0Jja52B2o>

A video by Alexandra Garza on what she does to reach her goals and stay motivated. Practical suggestion. Good video to share with students.

<https://youtu.be/VcFpkB15E1A>

Websites

A discussion of important features of personal learning plans from the Great Schools Partnership geared toward journalists, parents and community members,

<http://edglossary.org/personal-learning-plan/>

A website from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability on individualized learning plans (ILP) from a workforce development perspective.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/fact-sheet/individualized-learning-plan>

A free white paper on ILPs by Naviance. It discusses connecting learning to life for K-12 students through the use of an individualized approach to education. The free report can be accessed by completing a simple form.

http://go.naviance.com/LP=585?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Individual%20Learning%20Plans%20-%20WS&utm_term=%2Bindividual%20%2Blearning%20%2Bplans%20for%20%2Bstudents

This is a 2012 report entitled “Individual Learning Plans: Improving Student Performance. It is an update to a 2009 report by Hobsons detailing states’ policies on individual learning plans (ILPs) for all students.

[http://www.mnschoolcounselors.org/Resources/Individual%20Learning%20Plans Industry%20Report_053012.pdf](http://www.mnschoolcounselors.org/Resources/Individual%20Learning%20Plans%20Industry%20Report_053012.pdf)