

Chapter 18: Maintaining a healthy lifestyle

Setting Smart Goals: downloadable chart

Purpose of this chart: To set goals that are realistic and manageable as a way of leading a fulfilling life while keeping an eye on your illness.

Tips for completing this chart:

- Setting small goals can be particularly useful if you have symptoms of depression
- Remember if you have symptoms of mania/hypomania you need to cut back on goal setting to allow yourself time to rest and recover
- By answering each question along the goal setting chart you will be able to see if your goal is realistic and achievable
- Some degree of flexibility is often required in goal setting – the key is to set something that is worthwhile to achieve – but doesn't create excessive pressure or stress in the process
- Remember to use the Mood and activity schedule (chapter 16) to see that the goals you pursue do not disrupt your health.

For more detailed instructions and explanations about using this chart see pp. 228 of *Living with Bipolar*.

Setting SMART goals

1. My goal is
2. Is your goal SMART? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is your goal <i>Specific</i>? It needs to be clear what exactly you want to achieve e.g. wanting to get fitter is too vague – to go swimming three times a week is much clearer.• <i>Measurable</i> How will you know that you have achieved it? Again greater detail is the key here, e.g. your goal might be to go swimming three times a week, and swim ten laps each time.• Is your goal <i>Achievable</i>? Identify any barriers or risks involved in achieving your goal. Are these able to be overcome or should you consider or modify your goal. For example, your plan to swim ten laps three times a week might not be possible if you have not exercised for some time. Setting a lower target of three laps may be more within reach when starting.• Is it <i>Realistic</i>? In setting a goal that is realistic, you are asking yourself if it is practical. Consider your strengths, abilities, situation, illness, and time restraints. Do you have the experience, skill, time, money or other resources necessary to achieve your goal? What may be the consequences of pursuing your goal if it is not realistic? Some goals may need to be postponed or divided into smaller steps.• Time frame. What is a flexible time frame for achieving your goal considering your current commitments and other goals?? This can help keep you motivated and focused on achieving your goal. But remember not to place too much pressure on yourself in setting a time frame.
3. Divide your SMART goal into goal steps and list them here:
4. Plan the first step
5. Rehearse and carry out the first step towards your goal.
6. How did it go? <p><i>What have you learnt? If you managed to complete the step congratulate yourself. Problems solve about how to overcome barriers to achieving your goal or consider changing your goal if difficulties have cropped up.</i></p>
7. Do the same for the next steps until you have achieved your goal <p><i>If your mood is stable, you may find you can manage to do a few steps at a time but keep an eye out to see this does not disrupt your sleep or mood.</i></p>