



# Employee Assistance Program

## Setting Personal Goals

The start of a new year is a great time for taking inventory of your life and setting personal goals. Perhaps you've always wanted to learn how to play the guitar. Or maybe it's time to quit smoking. Whatever your goal may be, the following tips can help get you started.

### What You Can Do

**Identify your goals.** Make a list of your goal(s) along with what you want to get out of it. Knowing what you want to get out of your goal may help you find and maintain habits that will work best for you. Next, identify short-term goals, such as daily or weekly, which can help you stay on track for your long-term goals. Post this list somewhere where you will see it daily, such as on a bathroom mirror. Include photos, notes, inspirational quotes or other tokens to help keep you motivated. Consider using the **SMART** goal technique:

**S**pecific ..... Identify exactly what you would like to change.

**M**easurable ..... Identify a way that you can measure your progress.

**A**ction Oriented .... Identify a plan with specific actions that you will take to reach your goal.

**R**ealistic..... Identify small steps that you are physically and mentally ready to take after assessing your lifestyle.

**T**ime..... identify a date that you want to have achieved your goal.

**Make time.** One of the biggest challenges with achieving goals is finding time and energy in daily life. However, don't let this derail you. The key is to make sure that your plan addresses your lifestyle and preferences. For example, if your goal is to exercise more and you have children, plan activities that involve them, such as family walks, bike rides or pool time. Or if your day is full from morning until night, try breaking up exercise into 10 or 15 minutes chunks throughout the day.

**Keep a log.** Tracking your activities can help you celebrate your successes. It can also help you identify areas where you struggled. Use this information to look for patterns in your performance and how you felt, along with any obstacles. For example, if your goal is to lose weight, start a food diary and write down what and when you eat throughout the day.

**Prioritize.** If you find yourself continually pushing aside your plan for achieving your goal, consider taking a moment to reflect on what your goal means to you. Afterwards, refresh and restart. You may revisit your list of goals during this time and/or add a note about remembering to make it a priority!

**Overcome obstacles.** Know in advance what you will do should you be faced with a difficult situation. For example, if your goal is to save money, only go shopping with a list and enough cash to purchase those items (no credit cards) so that you won't be tempted to purchase impulsively.

**Reward yourself.** Treat yourself to something you enjoy when you have achieved a goal. Make sure this reward does not undermine your new habit or skill.

**Find Support.** Tell your family, friends, doctor and coworkers about your goals and ask for their support and encouragement. Consider joining a group or club where you will meet other people who share your same goal. Most importantly, remember to support and encourage yourself!

For more information about personal growth, visit the website or call the toll free number listed below.



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