

Feeling Deadly, Working Deadly



NCETA
Australia's National Research Centre
on AOD Workforce Development



W4. Setting Work Goals: A Guide For Workers

Theory Into Practice (TIP) sheet for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander AOD workers

This TIP sheet is for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander¹ alcohol and other drug (AOD) workers. It is part of a series of resources produced by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction at Flinders University. These TIP sheets aim to enhance Indigenous worker wellbeing and reduce work-related stress.

A TIP sheet on clinical supervision has also been developed for managers/supervisors (Managers/supervisors TIP Sheet No.S6) and forms part of this resource Kit.

Introduction

This TIP sheet looks at goal setting as a way to help Indigenous AOD workers perform more effectively. Goal setting is familiar to many AOD workers as a counselling technique. What is sometimes overlooked, however, is the value of goal setting as a tool to help workers stay motivated and on track.

Goals and objectives

Goals are targets. Longer-term goals and objectives are useful. Goals are the overall desired long-term outcomes, or what the individual worker and/or team are aiming to achieve or change. Objectives are more specific shorter-term actions, behaviours and work practices that are needed in order to reach the goal.

How does goal setting work?

Setting specific and challenging goals/objectives helps workers to do their jobs by:

- Helping them to focus on doing the things that are needed to achieve goals
- Encouraging workers to be persistent when times get tough
- Helping to work out whether workers, teams and organisations are achieving what they are setting out to achieve.

¹ The terms Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are used interchangeably throughout this document. We understand that some people have a preference for using one term over the other and we have used the terms interchangeably to be sensitive to these differing perspectives.

Effective goal setting

In order for goal setting to be effective, five strategies are needed:

1. *Set specific and challenging goals and objectives*
Setting vague goals (such as “provide high quality service to clients”) is unlikely to be useful.

Specific goals and objectives:

- Refer to observable behaviours or work practices (e.g., exactly how will we work with clients)
- Clearly indicate the standards or outcomes that are required (e.g. how will we know when we have achieved our goals/objectives)?

Goals and objectives need to be both realistic and sufficiently challenging.

2. *Building and supporting your commitment to achieving the goal and objectives*
For goal setting to be effective, it is important that workers accept the goals and are committed to achieving them. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring that workers are involved in the development and setting of goals and objectives
- Making sure that workers understand the benefits for clients, workers, the team and/or the wider organisation of achieving the goals and objectives
- Ensuring that supervisors/managers enhance the confidence of workers about achieving their goals and objectives.

3. *Feedback, rewards and recognition on the achievement of shorter-term objectives, as well as the final goals*

Goal setting and feedback go hand in hand. Without feedback, goal setting will not be effective. To maintain motivation and

commitment to a goal, it is important to give and receive feedback on short-term objectives which are steps towards achieving a longer-term goal, as well as the final goal itself. Feedback should be given on how the work (i.e., how were the goals and objectives achieved), as well as the final outcomes were achieved.

Just like feedback, recognising and rewarding achievement should focus on both shorter term objectives as well as achieving final goals. Rewards do not have to be financial.

Effective non-financial rewards include:

- Public recognition and praise
- Team celebrations
- Preferred work assignments, roles or responsibilities
- Opportunities to act in higher duties
- Attendance at workshops/conferences.

4. *Ensure that resources and support are available*
Resources and support are essential to achieve work-related goals and objectives. This could include things such as regular supervision (particularly important in the AOD sector), flexible working arrangements and having a good environment to work in. The goal setting process should include discussion with workers about ways to maximise supports and minimise problems in the work environment.

5. *Ensure that workers have the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities required to achieve the goal and objectives*

It is worthwhile to take the time to assess whether workers have the skills and knowledge required to do the work needed to achieve the goals and objectives. Workers should seek assistance from their supervisor/manager to enhance knowledge or skills.



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Copies of resources developed as part of the 'Feeling Deadly, Working Deadly' resource kit are available for download from the NCETA website: www.nceta.flinders.edu.au