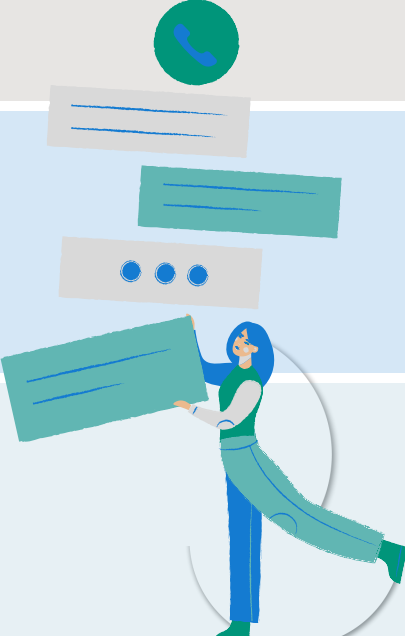

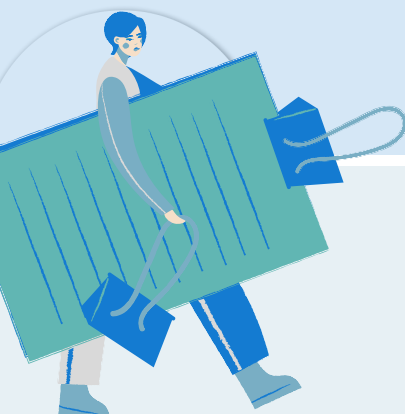





# Goal setting for young people experiencing anxiety and/or depression: what does and doesn't work?

This project was funded by the Wellcome Trust and led by the Anna Freud Centre. We've combined reviews of literature and additional sources (7 studies), along with consultation with experts by experience (8 young people and 6 clinicians / researchers). The purpose of the study was to find out if goal setting helps or not as part of therapeutic relationships for young people aged 14-24, experiencing anxiety and/or depression.

By goal setting, we mean agreements between the young person and the practitioner about specific goals they agree they want to work towards throughout their time in therapy.

What works?	What doesn't work?
 <p>Young people in Western high-income countries largely have agency to set goals</p>	<p><b>Culture and country are extremely important &amp; potentially limiting factors</b></p> <p>E.g. in Pakistan decisions about care are made by the family, in Brazil goals are not viewed as important at all.</p>
<p>Splitting actions into smaller manageable steps, particularly with anxiety</p>	<p><b>Levels of distress, personality traits must be considered</b></p> <p>Working on goals may exacerbate anxiety for some whilst for others this could be a helpful approach to reduce anxiety.</p>
<p>Can create a sense of being supported</p>	<p><b>Individual or age-related factors may negatively impact relationships</b></p> <p>Younger people (around 15) may find building relationships harder than older young people.</p>
 <p>A way to feel more involved and engaged</p>	<p><b>Being referred by someone else</b></p> <p>When referred by someone else (e.g. parents/carers), young people may not recognise the anxiety and/or depression symptoms identified, making goal setting difficult.</p>
<p>Can help create a sense of autonomy and control over young person's own care</p>	<p><b>In long-term therapy, goal setting may feel restrictive and meaningless</b></p> <p>It can be difficult for the young person to sort through complex difficulties to think of goals, and it is unhelpful if they are reviewed too often, or are not flexible.</p>
 <p>A way to feel understood and valued, which can help build trust</p>	<p><b>Language and power dynamics are key</b></p> <p>Young people attribute the term 'goal' to work and formal settings.</p> <p>Some young people won't feel able to express preferences due to power imbalance.</p>
<p>Useful self-regulation strategy which promotes positive behaviour change</p>	<p><b>Negative past experiences of goals</b></p> <p>'In life and previous therapy' was a limiting factor on how useful young people found goal setting in therapy.</p>
 <p>Helps create open communication between young person and practitioner</p>	<p><b>Personal preference is considered key</b></p> <p>Some young people said that goals helped to build relationships, others said that relationships needed to be built first before goals.</p>