

## Collaborative goal-setting for cognition

### Benefits of collaborative goal-setting

- Motivates patient and family.
- More likely to see real-world improvements at re-assessment.
- Shorter, more focused sessions and less documentation.

### Start gathering information before you even sit down

- Note any issues when you call to set up the initial appointment.
  - If you talk to a family member, ask about recent cognitive changes.
- Email team members already working with your patient to see what they've noticed.
- Was the patient expecting you when you knocked on the door?
- Is their home organized?

### Allow your patient to talk first

- Invite them to share their concerns and hopes for therapy.

### By just listening, you can learn:

- What matters to them.
- Which family and friends are supportive.
- The challenges they recognize.
- Potential barriers to participating in therapy.
- A little about their cognitive skills.

## Still no goal? Ask open-ended questions

- How would your life be different if you had a better memory?
- What do you need to be able to do that you can't do now?
- How well are you managing your day-to-day activities?
- What would you like to be able to do?
- How are things going for you in terms of communicating with your family?

### Areas to probe:

- Life roles: spouse, parent, child, friend, community member, employee, volunteer.
- Responsibilities: paying bills, making appointments, shopping, handling the mail, laundry, cooking, medication management.
- Leisure activities/hobbies.

## Running out of time?

- Stop the conversation, and ask them to think it over for the next session.
- Start your standardized assessment and complete other necessary tasks.

## Final steps in setting collaborative goals

- Complete the standardized assessment to learn strengths and weaknesses.
- Help them understand their profile and which goals may be quicker to address.
- Allow your patient to pick the most motivating goals to work on.
- Identify people who may be able to help patient with assignments.
- Determine if your patient is willing to use technology in therapy (as appropriate).
- If multiple therapy approaches are possible, ask your patient which they'd like to try.

## Possible problem: Too many goals

- If your patient identifies several goals, help them pick the most motivating one(s).

## Possible problem: Goals seem unreasonable

- Don't convey that you don't think they can achieve those goals.
- Instead, work to identify an intermediate step and make that your long-term goal.

## Sample patient-driven SMART goals

- Patient will demonstrate ability to correctly recall and employ correct sequence of steps for transitioning between sitting to walking with cane on 5 of 5 trials independently to improve safety and independence by [date].
- Patient will name at least 4 of 5 grandchildren from memory across two consecutive sessions to improve communication and reduce frustration by [date].
- Patient will independently enter 3 of 3 appointments into electronic calendar with 100% accuracy to improve time management and reduce frustration by [date].

## Other sample life participation targets

- Using the clock, calendar, TV remote, or cell phone.
- Taking medications on time.
- Going to the dining hall or planned leisure activities on time.
- Sending email to grandchildren.
- Remembering to use a cane or walker.
- Enjoying reading again.
- Remembering information: names, birthdays, current age, current year, current president.
- Consistently using a chin tuck with thin liquids.

## How to write goals if collaborate goal-setting isn't complete

I write more general goals:

1. Patient will complete cognitive communication assessment with further goals to be determined as indicated by [date].
  2. Patient will demonstrate ability to use 2 recommended strategies independently while completing two memory exercises with 80% accuracy independently to improve memory for functional tasks by [date].
- Focus of short-term goal #2 is to teach my patient how to use memory strategies.
  - “Memory exercises” can cover any memory-related activity.
  - Honestly, I don't often re-write these goals after finishing the collaborative goal-setting process, as long as they cover the activities we're doing.

Read the post for more information: <https://eatspeakthink.com/collaborative-goal-setting-cognition>