



AGES 11–23

## Supporting young people to:

# MANAGE GOALS

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Manage Goals Is a young person's experience with an adult who assists them to set and manage goals that are important to them and that build upon their passions and interests.

Managing goals involves identifying personal and group goals, breaking these goals down into manageable bit-sized steps, reflecting on challenges and successes, and adjusting as necessary.



# WHY

## IS MANAGING GOALS IMPORTANT?

Manage Goals has been shown to increase motivation, impact our perceived control over our future, and promote overall positive youth development (Lerner, R.M., et al., 2011; Houston, H. 2020). Some studies find that, when goals match the challenges and demands of a young person’s life situation, they contribute to their overall well-being (Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2002; Salmela-Aro, Nurmi, Saisto, & Halmesmäki, 2001). Goals are dynamic, and young people reconstruct them over time to meet contextual realities (Brandtstädter & Rothermund, 2002). However, the more the goals are elaborated, the more likely they are to support a young person’s success (Aarts, 2007).

Research also demonstrates that managing goals is partly logical but mostly emotional. In his book titled *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Dr. Haidt describes our emotions as “a 5-ton elephant and our logic as a small rider on its back trying to direct it to take action” (Haidt J., 2006). To manage emotions, we need to set goals that we are passionate about or that we are emotionally invested in.

### DISCOVERIES FROM HELLO INSIGHT

Young people are dynamic and full of promise, with many different pathways to success. Every year Hello Insight mines our growing dataset of more than 125,000 young people, participating in more than 1,500 programs nation-wide, so that we can continue to learn what works for each and every young person.

- \* Supporting young people to manage goals is highly predictive of significant growth in social emotional learning for young people ages 16 to 24. And, it works well when combined with efforts to engage authentically and promote peer bonds. These variables work together to promote even greater SEL growth.

# HOW

## HAVE OTHER PROGRAMS INCORPORATED MANAGING GOALS?

PYD, including managing goals, is not a curriculum, it is a way of working with young people that has been proven to promote SEL. You can incorporate managing goals in a wide variety of interventions and programs. Here is how some Hello Insight members have integrated this practice into their programs.

### PROGRAM EXAMPLES

**At DREAM (formerly Harlem RBI), the TeamBuilders program engages young people in goal setting, reflection, and management through one-on-one check-ins with individual team members and their families.**



Often the goals that young people set for themselves are unexpected and not necessarily what the adult staff might have chosen for them. TeamBuilders staff report that they need to check their own assumptions and biases, allowing young people to choose for themselves. Through these interactions, TeamBuilders staff learn even more about the young people they serve.

**At Queens Community House's Access for Young Women Program, young women are invited to create personal mission statements, vision boards, and mantras that they use throughout the year.**



Staff and youth reference their vision boards throughout the program year and recite their mantra as a constant reminder of who they are becoming.

**A typical day at Play Rugby USA, starts with a "circle up" in which young people give input and provide suggestions to improve the team.**



They set aspirational goals and use both positive and critical feedback to help players improve - both on the field and off.

# HOW CAN OUR PROGRAM BEST SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO MANAGE GOALS?

Use this reflection guide with your staff to explore “bright spots” – practices that you already do, highlight potential “accelerators” – practices that you could easily incorporate into your work, and “challenges” – things that might make this practice difficult.

<b>PRACTICES</b> Ways to support young people	<b>BRIGHT SPOTS</b> Examples of what the program already does	<b>ACCELERATORS</b> Ways you could easily incorporate this practice	<b>CHALLENGES</b> What might make this practices difficult to do
<b>Support young people to set group goals</b>			
<b>Encourage young people to set their own goals</b>			
<b>Help them to create plans to achieve their goals and to review and reflect on progress</b>			
<b>Create opportunities to celebrate successes</b>			



This guide is part of a set meant to help youth-serving programs incorporate PYD. Visit [www.ins.gt/pyd-exp](http://www.ins.gt/pyd-exp) to learn more.

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