Module 03 - Taking Action and Providing Services

Goals are an important part of the helping process as they set the direction of work to be done. Practitioners collaborate with clients to identify goals and what the client wants to achieve. The clients' participation in goal setting is critical to success. Questions that seek clarification help clients figure out what goals they are motivated to achieve. Use exception-finding questions to explore times when the problem was not present and/or times when the problem was smaller or less problematic.

**MAPS (Measurable, Attainable, Positive, and Specific) Goals**

Every practitioner has a different style, and many agencies have different expectations. Some practitioners use MAPS goals all the time, and some agencies require very specific, measurable goals. Other practitioners prefer to work with more general goals but may identify very specific steps as they help clients think about ways to reach their goals.

**Identifying Measurable, Attainable, Positive, and Specific (MAPS) Goals**

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| **Goal Type** | **Characteristics** |
| Measurable and Specific  | * These goal types make it possible for clients and practitioners to evaluate changes that have been made.
* They provide a clear direction and focus for work.
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| Attainable  | * A goal needs to be something the client believes is possible based on available resources (time, money, and people power).
* Establishing a series of small goals helps clients experience success.
* The amount of change defined in the goal should seem attainable to the client and practitioner.
* Unattainable goals involve changing another person.
* Time determined to reach the goal must be relatively close to the client's decision to make a change.
* Clients who participate in setting goals are more likely to believe goals are achievable.
* Goals should be visualized in concrete, specific, behavioral terms.
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| Positive  | * A positive goal keeps the focus on what the client wants to do rather than what client doesn't want to do.
* Practitioners can use open-ended questions to help clients think in positive terms.
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When you help clients move from general to specific goals, you accomplish two things:

* Establishing clear goals lays the foundation for the action phase of the work.
* Doing so limits confusion about the desired end goal.

**MAPS Example**

Your client tells you that she wants to be nicer to her sister.

Possible MAPS goals are:

1. Sharing three toys with her sister every week
2. Letting her sister watch her favorite television show on Tuesdays at 5 PM
3. Saying one nice thing about her sister every day