



## New Year Resolutions

### How to Make Them and How to Keep Them

As 2023 came to a close and you reflect on the past year. Did you achieve some of the goals you set? You may also be thinking about what 2024 will bring, What goals will you set to start new year? Will it be to lose weight, eat healthier, save some money or reduce your debt? Spend more time with family and friends? Maybe it is to quit smoking or reduce our alcohol consumption or even get more organized. Whatever it is, I want to share some ideas that might make it easier for you to do.

Before deciding to take on this task, ask yourself 4 questions.

1. Right now, do you feel more motivated to make a change than to not make a change?
2. Do you feel confident that you are ready to take the steps and put in the work it takes to make this change?
3. If you answered yes to the above questions, then what steps are you going to put in place to put you on the path to success?
4. How will you know when you have made the changes you desire?

The S.M.A.R.T. goal method, developed by George T. Doran is used to help with goal setting. It's an acronym that stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely . A SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving your goal for the new year.

- **Specific:** choose a goal and be specific. For example, saying I want to get fit is very vague. Instead say I want to lose 25 pounds. Or I want to put away \$500 this year in a savings account.)
- **Measurable:** make sure your goal is measurable. For example, say something like I want to lose 1-2 pounds a week. It can be helpful to write down your progress in a journal because keeping track will help you stay more motivated. For the savings account if you put away \$10 every week you will have saved \$520 by the end of the year.
- **Achievable:** be honest and realistic with yourself. For example, saying you want to lose 25 pounds by the end of January is not very realistic setting a goal of June aligns with your goal of 1-2 pounds a week. Do you have \$10 a week extra that you could put aside? Maybe eating at home rather than going out to eat 1 time a week would work.
- **Realistic:** If you have a chronic health condition or if going to the gym is not in your budget then setting a goal of working out in the gym 2 times a week would not be realistic.
- **Timely:** With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date it will keep you on task to reach your goal.

The longer you stick with your goal the more likely it will become a part of your life. Try to remember, it is better to do something than nothing. If you slip up it is ok. Resiliency is the key. Don't let one missed workout or not putting \$10 in your account for a week be an excuse for giving up. Instead, acknowledge your slip up and recommit to moving forward.

I will end by quoting a Japanese proverb that says if you fall 7 times, stand up 8. As Always, if you have any questions or want to talk with someone, please feel free to contact me. Cyndie Gilliam, LMFT, TANF Therapist at (619)460-3400 ext. 210 or [cgilliam@sctca.net](mailto:cgilliam@sctca.net). May the New Year bring you new strengths, new hopes and new dreams.

