






F o r e w o r d



What does wellness mean and what does it take to achieve it?

This workbook is written to help you find your individual way to wellness.

We tend to be too focused on problems, symptoms, and diseases and we obsess over how to get rid of them, with the assumption that wellness will come when we are free from problems. Such an approach actually focuses our attention on the 'negatives'. Life has its ups and downs and it is never realistically possible to have a problem-free life. However, that should not stop us from living an enriching and meaningful life, with the ability and resources to handle the challenges that come along.

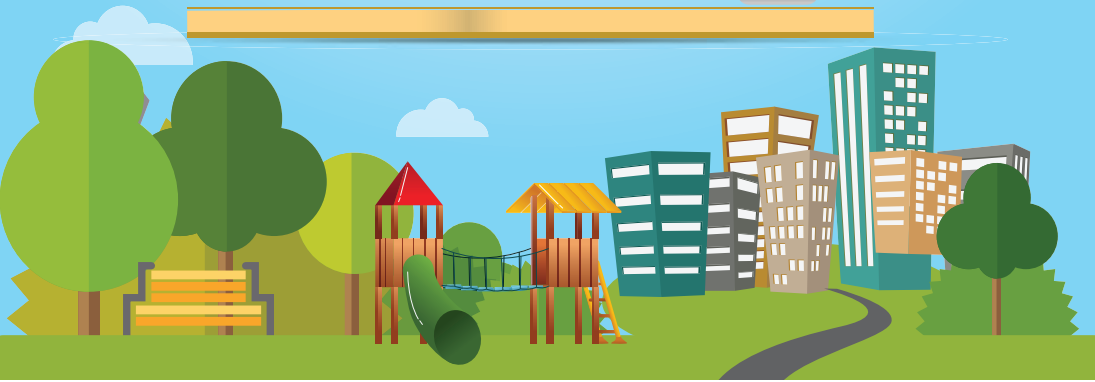


The "WOW" workbook provides a visual representation of the eight life domains that make up your Wheel Of Wellness (WOW)—Family & Loved Ones, Community Engagement, Learning & Self-Development, Physical Self-Care, Recreation & Hobbies, Social Network, Spirituality, and Work—and the role each of them plays in fulfilling your life. Neglect of any domain may cause you to go off balance. The "WOW" workbook has step-by-step instructions to help you discover how much each domain contributes to your personal wellness, whether your current activities are aligned with your values, and how you can take simple and achievable steps towards wellness. Concepts are explained clearly and translated into practical advice on how you can nurture the important things in your life.

Ultimately, you can achieve the 'WOW' factor in your life!

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What comes to mind when

you think about wellness?

When we ask some people this question, some common answers we get are:



Wellness is about not having problems, symptoms, or illnesses !
I am well if I have no problems, pain, ailments and illnesses!



Wellness is about being physically active and healthy.
As long as I exercise, eat healthily and take care of my physical health, I will be well!



Are they similar to or different from your answer?
Such an understanding of wellness and health, while not wrong, misses out on some important aspects of wellness.

It does not pay attention to emotional, psychological and mental wellbeing that are crucial to one's sense of wellness and health.

It gives the false impression that physical wellness and mental wellness are separate. However, physical and mental wellness are actually related and they influence each other.

It makes people misunderstand that they can achieve wellness by focusing on eliminating the negativity in their lives.

**Is it true that a
problem- or illness-free
life is necessarily
a happy and fulfilling life?**



Consider someone who is cash-rich, owns a beautiful house and drives a comfortable car. This person has educational qualifications and is highly valued by his employer. He has good health and is keeping in good shape by hitting the gym regularly. What's more? He has a good-looking spouse who is the envy of others.

Sounds like this person has everything one would like to have. However, is this person necessarily a happy person?

Are you one of them?

Do you know someone like the person described? One that seems unfulfilled, grump, resentful and even unhappy?



There is more to wellness and health than physical health or not having problems!

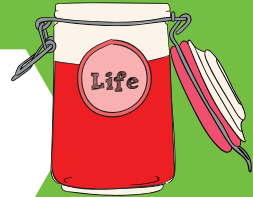
Wellness is not just about having physical health and being problem-free!

Redefining wellness with the Wheel Of Wellness WOW

So what is wellness?

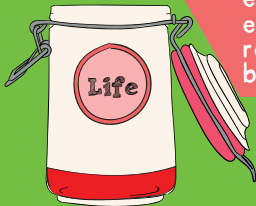
1

Imagine that this jar represents your life. Perhaps, at this moment, you see that it is filled with many problems, issues, unhappiness or symptoms of your illness.



Most people around you think that the way to become better is to reduce all these negatives, so you spend much time, effort and energy looking out for them in order to eliminate them. Suppose that you manage to reduce these negatives so that your jar now becomes emptier. What's next?

2



3

If your jar only contains "negatives," it is natural that you will focus much of your attention on looking out for them and preventing them. It is then no wonder that you may feel miserable, stuck and that there's not much to look forward to in life. Even though you may not enjoy dealing with these negatives very much, you may actually feel "empty" and not know how to spend your time when they are gone. On the other hand, it is normal for every one of us to encounter some challenges or ups and downs in life. Thus, we can never get rid of all the problems and negatives from our jar. It is important for you to add things that you value, enjoy and find meaningful into your jar!

Wellness is not just about reducing and eliminating problems and symptoms, it is also about filling your life with colours, meaningful things and activities that you value.



What is the Wheel of Wellness? (WOW)



The Wheel Of Wellness shows eight different colours that represent eight important domains in our lives. (Hint: These are clues to how you can fill your jar of life with colours.) You will find that you value some of these domains more than others. These are your life-giving domains.

- Life-giving domains connect with your ethics, principles, ideals, standards and morals. They give you a sense of worth, meaning and purpose.

What is the Wheel of Wellness? (WOW)

Knowing which are the domains you value is a very powerful way to help you tolerate stressful situations.

You may not be able to eliminate all problems, but remembering these domains can give you strength to face challenging situations.

Strengthening your valued domains is a way to boost your resources to handle stress.

Even when you are not facing any challenging situations, nurturing these domains gives you a good foundation to enjoying wellness!

The Wheel Of Wellness adds the WOW factor to your life, that's why we call it "WOW"!

This booklet includes three activities.

Activity 1 guides you to identify the life domains that you value —these domains make up your personal Wheel Of Wellness. We will call this wheel 'WOW' because strengthening your important life domains on this wheel adds the 'WOW' factor to your life.

Activity 3 guides you to prioritise the domain that you want to work on now to strengthen your personal wellness and increase your resilience to stress.

Activity 2 helps you to understand what you are spending your time and energy on, and whether they are aligned with your values.



Activity 1

Getting to Know your personal **WOW**

What comprises your personal WOW? Rate the following to find out.

Instructions:

- Rate how important each of the following life domains is to you from 0 to 10, with 0 being not important at all, to 10 being extremely important
- Your rating should be based on how important you personally think the domain is, NOT based on others' expectations or how much time you are spending on each domain (there's no need to compare your answers with others!)
- Be honest with yourself



| | Not important at all | | | | | Moderately important | | | | | | Extremely important |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|------------------------|
| Family & Loved Ones | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Spirituality | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Social Network | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Community Engagement | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Recreation & Hobbies | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Learning & Self-Development | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Physical Self-Care | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

Adapted from: Wilson, K. G., Sandoz, E. K., Kitchens, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2010). The Valued Living Questionnaire: Defining and measuring valued action within a behavioral framework. *The Psychological Record*, 60, 249-272.

Activity 1



You can adjust the different flaps on this paper wheel on the cover of the folder to reflect how much you value each domain relative to each other. You can also see this as the ideal way that you would like to spend your time and energy across different domains. The more you value a domain, the more space you should show that domain in your wheel. This wheel shows you the important domains that add the WOW factor in your life!

Activity 1

Example: Jamie's WOW

Jamie is a 65 year old man who has recently retired. He is married with two children aged 27 and 30 who have both started working. Here's how Jamie rated the different domains.



Not important
at all

Moderately
important

Extremely
important

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Family & Loved Ones | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Spirituality | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Social Network | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Community Engagement | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Recreation & Hobbies | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Learning & Self-Development | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Physical Self-Care | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |



Activity 1

Here's how Jamie's WOW looks like.

Try this activity with others you know. Each of us has things that we value personally. Don't be surprised that yours and others' wheel may look quite different from each other.

Learning & Self-Development



Wellness is subjective and personal.
Wellness means different things to different people.

Therefore, it is important that we discover our personal meaning of wellness and not impose our interpretation of wellness on others.

Further understanding your WOW...

Look at your **personal WOW** and pay particular attention to the domains that occupy most space on your wheel (i.e., you rated most highly).

Wellness depends on ...



Your Thinking

Your expectations vs. what is really happening in each domain; the smaller the gap between your expectations and the reality, the better your wellness. One way to improve your wellness is to adjust your expectations so that they are more realistic.



Your Feelings & Emotions

The ratio of positive vs. negative experiences you encounter in each domain; the more positive experiences you have relative to negative experiences, the better your wellness. You can do things to create positive experiences. There is only so much space in your jar of life; the more you fill it up with positive experiences, the less space it has for negative experiences!



Your Actions

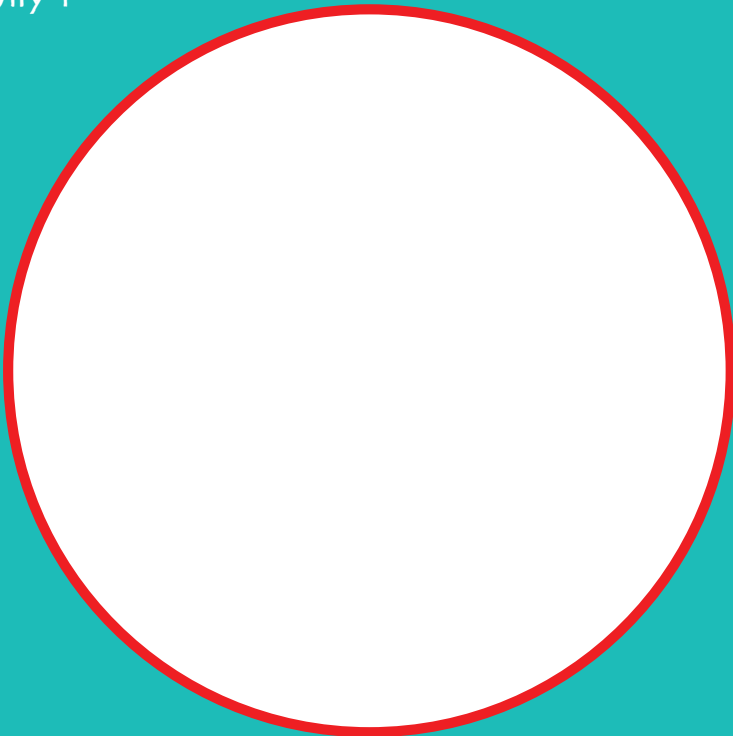
What you are doing now; the more your current actions go towards nurturing your life-giving domains (i.e., the less you neglect them), the better your wellness. Channel at least some energy towards strengthening the domains you value!

Activity 2

Finding out where you are putting your time and energy

Instructions:

- Draw out how much time and energy you are putting into each of the eight domains at the moment in the circle below.
- Compare that with your personal Wheel Of Wellness from Activity 1



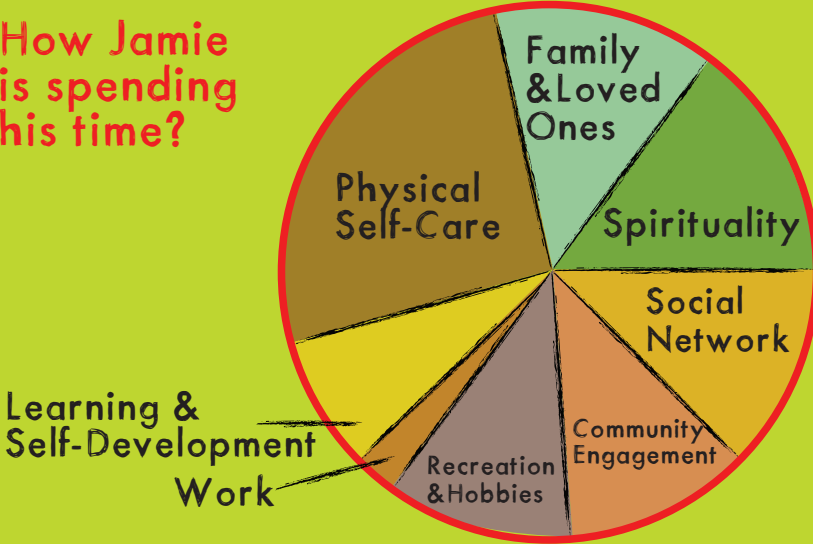
Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I overspending my time and energy on only 1 or 2 domains, and neglecting other domains of my life?
- Am I spreading out my time and energy across a variety of domains so that I am enjoying diversity and balance across different domains?
- For the top 3 domains that I value, am I spending enough time to nurture them, too much time that I am neglecting other domains, or too little time such that I am feeling unfulfilled?

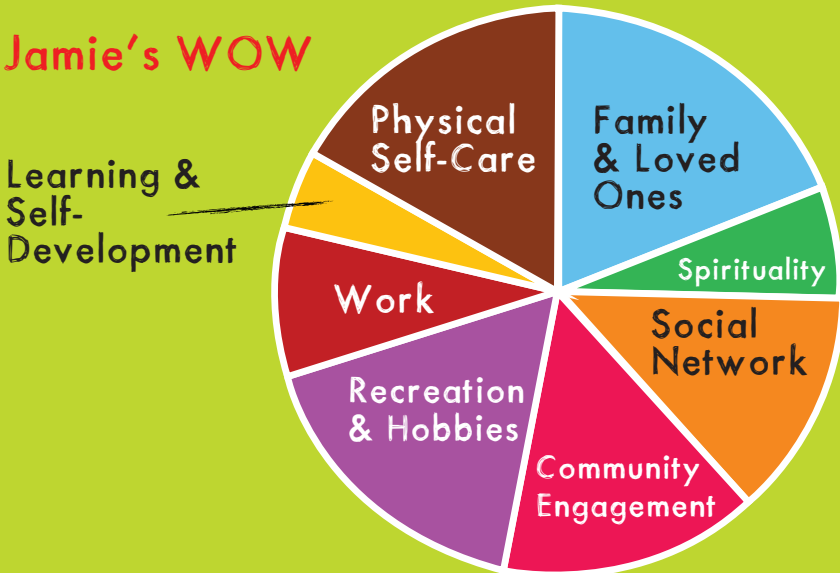
Activity 2

Example: How Jamie is currently spending his time and energy vs. his WOW

How Jamie is spending his time?



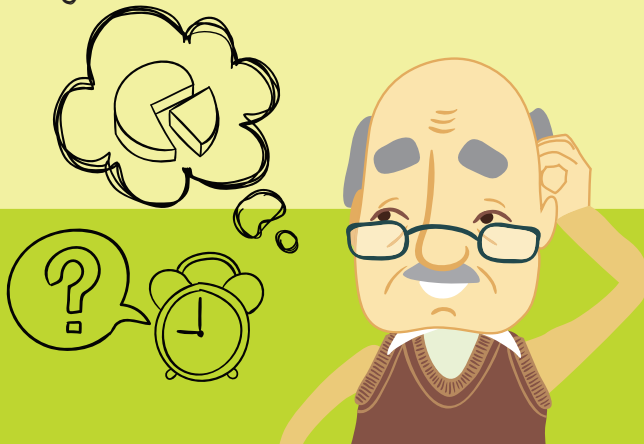
Jamie's WOW



Through the activity, Jamie got a better idea of where he was putting his time.

- Jamie noticed that he is spreading his time across a variety of domains and maintaining quite a good balance across different activities.
- He has retired so naturally he is spending minimal time at work, but he is wondering if he should spend more time on Learning & Self-Development to keep his mind active, for example, by taking up a new activity or course.
- Looking at his top 3 valued domains, Jamie is happy that he has been spending time to nurture his Family & Loved Ones, Community Engagement, and especially Physical Self-Care domains.

However, comparing his two wheels, Jamie noticed that he is not spending as much time on his Family & Loved Ones and Community Engagement domains as he would like to. No wonder he has been feeling like that was something missing or even a little unfulfilled from spending less with his family and volunteering.



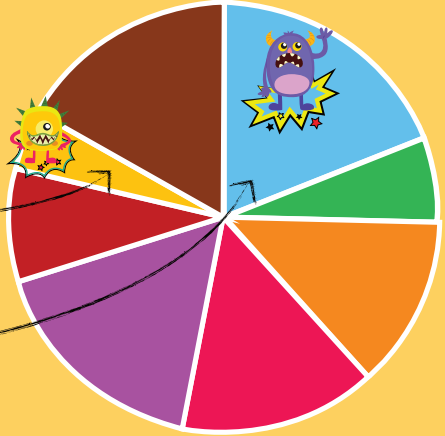
Activity 2

What happens to your WOW when stress attacks?

Scenario 1

Your wellness is less affected

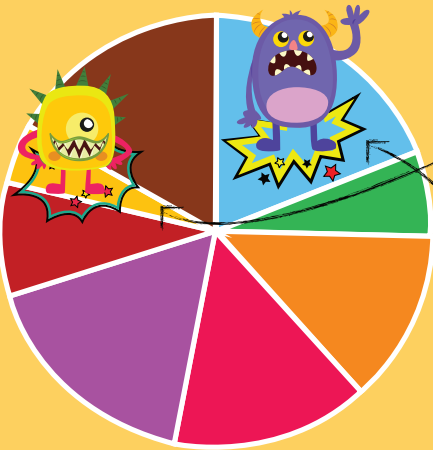
- A) When a little stress attacks a domain that you don't value much, or
- B) A little stress attacks a domain that you value, but you have enough resources to cope with the stressor.



Scenario 2

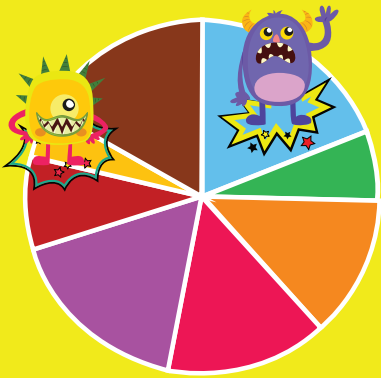
Wellness is negatively affected.

- A) When a big stressor attacks domain(s) that you don't value highly but takes away your time and energy from domains that you value, or
- B) Stress directly attacks domain(s) that you highly value and you don't have enough resources to cope.



Activity 2

Example: Jamie encountered some stressors



How can Jamie apply his understanding of his own WOW to strengthen his resilience for stress? Let's find out!



Jamie's Profile

- Recently, Jamie's two children got married and moved out to start their own families.
- Jamie's wife continues to work full-time. Suddenly the home seems much quieter. It is now even more challenging to find a common time for the whole family to get together.
- Jamie was considering taking up a photography course at the community centre to learn something new. Due to a low take-up rate, the course has been postponed indefinitely. Other courses either don't appeal to Jamie or are too expensive.
- These recent events have affected Jamie's wellness. He can't help but feel a little demoralised, and even bored and lonely.
- His wife has noticed that Jamie is becoming more irritable and blue recently.



Activity 3

Strengthening your personal WOW and resilience for stress!

Recall that filling up your jar of life with things you value 1) strengthens your sense of meaning and purpose in life, and 2) can be a powerful way to strengthen your coping ability and resilience to stress. Creating a life that honours the things you value is a way to boost your resources to handle stress so that it seems more manageable. It gives you something to look forward to when you are facing situations that are not so desirable or stressful and can help you to feel stronger in the face of challenges! Use this activity to kickstart your journey towards filling your life with valued activities.

Instructions:

1

Compare your WOW (Activity 1) current wheel (Activity 2).

Get a sense of the domains that you are spending enough time on - thank yourself for taking care of these domains!

2

Now, look at the domains that you have neglected and would like to spend more time on, paying particular attention to the 3 domains that you value most highly.

3

If you have been taking care of all the domains you value highly, congratulations! Pick one domain that you would like to continue to strengthen and nurture for this activity.

4

Congratulate yourself for taking this step towards filling your jar of life with more meaningful activities!

If you have neglected one or more domains, pick one that you would like to prioritise and work on for this activity.

5

Set an intention for your chosen domain, your intention will guide you to formulate specific committed action to strengthen the domain.

Activity 3

The domain that I prioritise to strengthen now:

My intention for this domain:

To complete this activity, select one of the eight accompanying booklets that will guide you to work on the domain you pick.



Example:
Jamie's selected domain

Since Jamie's children moved out, the family has set aside every Sunday to have a meal together, during which they will update each other on their lives. Jamie decided that his children are now grown-ups and need personal time for their own new families. Thus, as much as he would like more time with them, he has decided to prioritise strengthening his Community Engagement domain now.

The domain that Jamie prioritises to strengthen now:
Community Engagement

Jamie's intention for chosen domain:
To get to know my neighbourhood better and participate in neighbourhood activities.

Tips to Maintaining Your WOW

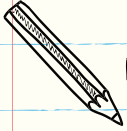


- The **JOURNEY TO WELLNESS** and filling your jar of life with **MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES** never ends.
- It is an **ONGOING PROCESS** that always has room for improvement—this keeps life fresh and interesting! It will take some time to get used to the rhythm of doing new things for your chosen domain, and sustaining your efforts! **BE PATIENT** with yourself!
- Eventually, you will get there. (Refer to 'Tips on strengthening your domain – Setting **SMART** goals' to learn how to set clear, committed actions for your chosen domain.)
- When you are satisfied that you have built a new routine which incorporates daily committed action into your first chosen domain, choose a second domain and keep going!

Reassess your WOW periodically

Your ratings for different life domains may change with time, as you transition into different life phases and your priorities shift. Therefore, your WOW will need periodic reviews and updates. You can revisit this booklet whenever you feel that your priorities have shifted or simply review this yearly. You can use this WOW booklet to help you take stock of the past year and recalibrate it to set the following year's resolutions.





Summary



Wellness is not just about having physical health and being problem-free!



Wellness means different things to different people, so it is important that you understand what makes up your wheel of wellness.



Wellness is not just about reducing and eliminating problems and symptoms. Its also about filling your life with colours, meaningful things and activities that you value.



Adjusting your expectations to ensure they are realistic



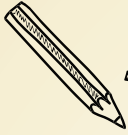
✓ Actively engage in activities that increase your ratio of positive to negative experiences



Ways to improve wellness

Knowing your WOW – that is, understanding your values and the domains that are important to you, then making committed action to nurture them

Strengthening your valued domains is a powerful way to increase your sense of meaning and purpose in life, as well as increasing your resilience for stress.



Appendix

Tips on strengthening your domain – Setting SMART goals

Use these principles to set smart goals for your chosen domain to increase your success in achieving them!

Specific – Be specific in what you want to do.

- ✓ I will jog 3km.
- ✗ I will exercise.



Measurable – State clear targets (e.g. the number of times, frequency, duration).

- ✓ I will jog 3km, 3 times per week.
- ✗ I will jog a few times per week.

Achievable – For a start, set a goal that is realistic which you can comfortably achieve. When you are able to sustain achieving the goal, you can build on your confidence and try something more ambitious.

- ✓ I will aim for a jog instead of a marathon since I haven't exercised for a long time.
- ✗ I will do a marathon next month.

Relevant – Your goal should be relevant to the domain you want to nurture.

Time-limited – Set a specific time that you want to start your action so you know when you are done with it!

- ✓ I will jog 3 km every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7pm.
- ✗ I will jog in the park a few times a week.

Visit ktp.com.sg/psychmed for mental health information.



