



# **A GUIDE TO GOAL-SETTING (Responding to NCD Survey Outcomes)**

THE HEALTHY CHURCHES TEAM



## Goal-setting (Responding to NCD Survey Outcomes)

The purpose of Goal-setting meetings is to support church leaders and help them move from the Understanding Phase of the NCD Cycle (when 8EQs feedback is provided) to the Planning Phase where they begin to formulate a response to address the most important health issues.

Prior to your meetings review section 6. Planning Phase (p.29 to 33) in the *Coventry Diocese - NCD Cycle Manual*. NCD mentors are required to help churches identify actions they wish to take to respond to the NCD outcomes and ways of maintaining progress. This task may be summed up as:-

1. Setting goals to improve congregational health
2. Maintaining progress.

### 1. Setting goals to improve congregational health

In Corinthians, St Paul writes how love acts in a host of different ways - being patient, rejoicing in truth, etc. Until love is perfect, its imperfections will show in the quality of our love and in our surveys indifferent ways. The mentor can highlight clues where aspects of love may appear weaker than others from the quality(s) and statements the church has given themselves. The mentors' challenge is to help the incumbent and key leaders work out what they can do, in collaboration with the Spirit, so they are transformed by growth where they need it most.

#### *The role of the mentor...*

To help the incumbent and key leaders to think imaginatively and creatively about how to respond to what the survey has revealed.

#### What do we mean by 'goals'?

Change or transformation just means moving from where we are now to some new, different place. However, what we need is not just to help a church to move to any new place, but to move to a better, more loving, more Godly place. That is the point of setting goals.

Goals will help the church move in the right direction.

One really useful way to think is to keep in mind three very different types of goals that work together.

#### 1.1.1 Action goals

Action goals are specific things which we will do to help move us in the direction we intend to go. For example, if I want to lose some weight, an action goal might be "I will join a gym in the next month, and do 30 minutes of exercise there twice a week".

Action goals really need to be specific and detailed, rather than vague intentions, so it is helpful to check that action goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed).

The downside of action goals is that they focus attention on the effort, rather than progress or purpose. Action goals tend to make change feel like hard work that, to

be honest, we'd often rather avoid. We need action goals so we know what we are going to do, but action goals alone can be off-putting rather than inspiring.

### 1.1.2 Objective goals

Objective goals describe the destination: the new place we can imagine, that want to get to. To continue my weight example, my objective goal might be *"I will be 14lbs lighter in 6 months' time"*.

To be meaningful, objective goals also need to be SMART. *"I'll lose some weight sometime"* is pretty meaningless, and it's impossible to tell if you've actually achieved what you intended. But when objective goals are specific they help us focus on a desirable endpoint. I may not want to go to the gym, but I do want to lose that weight. And arriving at an objective goal is a real cause for celebration and motivation. We identified where we wanted to be, and now we've made it. We have proved that with God we can change and improve. What does God want us to achieve next?

The downside of objective goals is that on their own, they achieve nothing. Knowing my objective doesn't tell me what to do about it and by itself it won't get me there. I need the action goals - things to actually do - to have any chance of getting to my objective.

### 1.1.3 Attitude goals

Attitude goals focus on purpose and direction of travel. To continue the weight example, my attitude goal might be *"I'm burning fat"*.

This is a simple statement of what I'm about (until I get to my objective goal and re-plan). In one sense, it is a statement of the bigger purpose that the objective and action goals express. In another sense it states a direction and attitude that can influence how I go about doing *everything* I do. Faced with getting to the third floor of a building, knowing I'll go to the gym later has no impact; what I weigh in 3 months' time is irrelevant; but knowing *I'm burning fat* means I'll decide to take the stairs, not the lift. Again, an attitude goal alone isn't enough. It's not specific enough to prompt you to do something new or different, or to tell you when you've been successful.

## ***The role of the mentor...***

**To help the incumbent and key leaders explore different types of goals, so that in collaboration with the Holy Spirit, church members are able to set goals that are likely to improve church health .**

So which are the most important goals? Action, objective or attitude? The point is that that is the wrong question. A better question is how can a church express the transformation God longs to see in them using all three types of goals. As in the slimming example, the three types work together, and for different situations one type or the other might feel like the most helpful. So how might this look for issues the survey might identify? The Appendix provides some examples to help get leaders thinking along the right sort of lines.

To respond to what the survey reveals leaders may want to spend some time listening to God or spend some time together imagining possibilities. They might want to generate a series of options and test the congregation's enthusiasm to get involved and make them happen.

### ***The role of the mentor...***

To help the church appreciate that setting goals is both practical and spiritual and may require wide consultation, space for prayer and encouragement to listen to what the Spirit is saying.

In most situations churches might benefit from **limiting themselves to 3 objective goals**. Any more than that and they are likely to spread their efforts too thinly to make solid progress. You might have more than one *action goal* leading to each of those 3 objective goals. You'll probably want one attitude *goal* for each objective, but if, say, 2 objectives are about Bible use, you might have one attitude goal that works for both.

## **2. Maintaining momentum**

Even with great attitude goals in place, changing a church culture is hard. With the examples in the appendix, as with most of the goals churches may decide to set, the biggest challenge is not identifying them, or quantifying them, or being able to do them, the biggest challenge is probably just remembering about them and sticking with them.

Limiting the number is the first key step. It will be hugely powerful if the church can identify just one attitude goal that embraces the most important things to change. For the year following the survey, the church motto could be "*Worship frees us to appreciate God*". It could be on every welcome sheet, every PCC agenda, in big text across the middle of the notice board, etc. They may get bored seeing it, but most of the congregation may only notice it once a week, so keep sharing it, telling it, writing it, living it.

The other really effective thing is to connect people so they join in a shared goal with others. That way they can remind one another, encourage one another, do some of the action goals alongside one another, and gently hold one another accountable to whatever action each one of them has committed to. There is a well-worked system to help you do this in a way which is motivating and fun which we refer to as DoX. Contact the Healthy Churches Development Mentor for more information on how you might use the DoX in your church.

### ***The role of the mentor...***

To inspire the incumbent and their team, giving them the confidence to face the cost of change for the sake of the gospel.

And finally, encourage teams to schedule their next survey for the same time next year. It can be hugely motivating for them to see how its perception of life together has changed. The fresh

survey with differing highs and lows gives a fresh impetus and renewed motivation. All this can be seen in the fact that across the diocese the survey ratings of churches which repeat the survey on its anniversary tend to improve the most, and the slower they are to repeat, the less progress they tend to make.

***The role of the mentor...***

1. To provide the incumbent and their team with the action points pro-forma for them to complete and return to the Diocesan Office (you may need to complete this yourself)
2. To agree a date for the next survey.

### Appendix : Example goals

<i>Challenge area</i>	Attitude goals	Objective goals	Action goals
<i>I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.</i>	I'm loving people like Jesus loved people	By this time next year, 4 new people, who don't currently go to church, will count me as a friend.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will write a list of 12 acquaintances who do not go to church, and pray for them weekly.</li> <li>2. In each of the next 4 months, I will invite 3 new people to share a meal with me.</li> <li>3. I will offer to do a favour for, or pray with, someone at least once a week.</li> </ol>
<i>I enjoy reading the Bible on my own.</i>	When I read the Bible I expect to hear from God	By the end of each of the next 3 months, I will have experienced 'reading' a gospel in a new way.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Month 1 I will get a copy of a modern paraphrase or translation of a gospel which is new to me, and read a chapter a day.</li> <li>2. Month 2 I will listen to David Suchet's recording of John's gospel from the NIVUK.</li> <li>3. Month 3 I will watch a film that re-enacts one gospel. Twice over.</li> </ol>
<i>I am often bored during the worship service.</i>	Worship frees me to appreciate God	By the end of the year, I will have a 'worship diary' recording at least 12 inspiring moments I have experienced during our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before I walk into the service building, I will imagine Jesus, sitting in there, in his usual seat, waiting for me to join him</li> <li>• In each hymn I will find an attribute of God, and meditate on that as I sing</li> <li>• During Bible readings I will put myself into the scene - imagining the sights, sounds and smells</li> </ul>

*The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.*

<p>My faith shapes my every choice</p>	<p>By Autumn our congregation will have heard what Jesus' life and words show about faith impacting on his everyday life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will run a sermon series on how we might think Biblically about money, careers, relationships, sex, food, shopping; based on Jesus' words</li></ul>
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