

Setting goals

Sometimes it might feel like having cancer has meant that you have lost control of your own life. As frustrating as this is, there will still be things in your future that you can focus on.

This information sheet covers how you can set goals and work towards achieving them. Because you decide what your goals are, and how you're going to complete them, setting goals can help you feel in control.

What goals could I set?

It's up to you. Think about what you really want to achieve. It doesn't matter how big or small goals are, or what the timescale is.

You may choose to set yourself the goal of learning to drive by the time you are 19, for example, or to email a friend by a particular date to let them know how you are getting on.

Tips for setting goals

- Decide what you want to achieve. This is not what you think you should achieve or what others want you to do
- Don't feel you have to achieve everything by one date; some goals may be long term, others short term
- Goals can cover all areas of your life: friends, family, education, work, finances, healthy living, fun, as well as your cancer and treatment
- Be realistic and be kind to yourself. Cancer can get in the way of your goals sometimes, so keep coming back to them to check if they are achievable just now
- If you have to extend your timelines, or don't achieve some of your goals, don't get stressed about it. Setting goals is all about making you feel better – not worse!

Getting started

1. Write down your goals in each of your categories on paper or type them on your computer and print them out. Getting your goals down on paper, rather than just keeping them in your head, will mean that you are more likely to stick to them
2. Check that your goals sound positive and that you've been as specific as possible. This will help make them feel more achievable.

Setting yourself the goal to 'complete my essay by the end of the month', for example, feels much more achievable than 'don't fall behind with course work'

3. Read through your list again and think about how much control you have over the goals. Keep in mind that you will be having treatment and lots of unexpected things could come up.

As an example, setting the goal 'don't be sick after chemotherapy' is not realistic as you have no control over how your body will react. But you could set the goal 'find out three ways I can minimise how sick I feel after chemo'

4. How many goals have you got? If you have lots, set some priorities so that you don't feel overwhelmed
5. Break each goal down into small steps or 'mini goals'. This helps you focus on what you need to do next in order to achieve your goal – plus you get to feel good about achieving things sooner!

Setting goals

Category (your cancer, friends, education, etc)	Goal/steps (make sure these are realistic, precise, and measurable)	By when? (check regularly/revise)	Done?
eg Friends	eg email Jamie	eg Friday, 12th Jan	✓
	• Think about what to say	Saturday, 13th Jan	✓
	• Send email		
eg Education	eg Finish essay	eg Wednesday, 9th June	✓
	• Research topic	Sunday, 12th June	✓
	• Write first draft	Thursday, 16th June	✓
	• Proof-read	3pm Friday, 17th June	✓
	• Submit essay before deadline		✓

Do you have more questions, or need some help?

CLIC Sargent has been working with young people for over 20 years, and we understand what you're going through. Our care professionals include social workers, youth support workers and nurses, who provide clinical, practical and emotional support. Talk to your CLIC Sargent care professional, or call us on **0300 330 0803*** and we'll put you in touch with someone who can help.

You can also visit our website at www.clicsargent.org.uk or email us on info@clicsargent.org.uk

* Calls to 03 numbers are charged in the same way as calls to a geographic (01 or 02) number. Check your phone contract to see how much you pay for this type of call - it may be included in 'inclusive minutes'.

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For information about the sources used to put this publication together, or if you have any comments or queries about it, please contact us on 0300 330 0803 and ask to speak to the information manager.

