How to get your bearings with SMART goals

Specific

Identify the specific behaviors that were/are harmful

Achievable

It has to be actually possible for the person to do

Measurable

Improvement needs to be able to be measured

Relevant

Target behaviors need to be related to the harm

Timely

Change will take longer than you expect but you need to have a review timeline

Finding SMART Goals

Let's work through the steps of finding SMART goals via an example:

Your friend has started to have trouble with money - the main source of the trouble is that they are constantly getting expensive speeding tickets and their car insurance is becoming more and more expensive, until your friend is at risk of losing their driver's license. If they lost their driver's license, they would also lose their job. Moreover, their car is their main connection to their friends and their main private space for de-stressing and relaxation.

What might SMART goals look like here?
What more information would you need?

Finding SMART Goals

Specific -

To find a specific goal, consider:

- What needs to be accomplished/changed?
- What are the behaviors that facilitated the harm?
- What steps need to be taken in order to make change possible?

Specific goals reduce stress and uncertainty by focusing on smaller steps and individual behaviors.

Finding SMART Goals

Measurable -

To find a measurable goal, consider:

- How will we know if things are changing?
- Are there milestones we can set along the way?
- How can we track changes? Will we need to get reports from others? Who will record this information?
- Is the thing we can measure actually indicative of progress? How do we know?

Being able to track progress reduces stress and uncertainty and can contribute to a sense of empowerment.

Finding SMART Goals

Achievable -

To find an achievable goal, consider:

- Does this goal fit the realities of the person and their life?
- Does this person have all the resources they need to achieve this goal? If not, can they get them?
- What are the logistical needs and barriers to this goal?

Failing to achieve a goal that is not actually achievable can be demoralizing.

Finding SMART Goals

Relevant -

To find a relevant goal, consider:

- Have we looked for patterns and root causes related to the problem?
- Will this goal actually tackle the root cause and the things that facilitate the problem?
- Does this goal help the person identify and practice more adaptive behaviors?

If a goal isn't related to the core problem it won't produce the right outcomes.

Finding SMART Goals

Timely -

To find a timely goal, consider:

- How much time does the person have to spend on this a week?
- How often can we check in about the progress?
- Have we talked about how long consequences or restrictions are likely to be in place? And if relevant, which milestones they are tied to?

Things often take longer than expected and this creates stress.
Set at least a date for review and updating of the goal.