

Set yourself up for success by crafting achievable resolutions

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With the start of a new year, people often set goals or resolutions for themselves. For caregivers, setting new goals or trying to tackle a new task can feel daunting and overwhelming. Of course, there will always be items on your to-do list, but what can we do when setting goals or trying to accomplish our wishes—without adding to the stress we are already feeling?

One technique that can be helpful to caregivers comes from an evidence-based program called Powerful Tools for Caregivers. In this class series, they teach a technique called “action planning.” This gives caregivers the opportunity to break down a large goal that may seem unattainable into smaller, more achievable parts.

For example, if the goal identified is making more time for yourself to move your body more or exercise regularly, this could be broken into smaller tasks that are more easily achievable. So perhaps the first week is putting thought into whether this means joining a local gym, walking outdoors, finding an exercise video, or using exercise equipment at home. Once that is decided, the next step might be finding someone to sit with the person you are caring for to offer some respite while you spend time exercising. After that, the next goal may be deciding just how often you are planning to exercise and seeing if that feels realistic with your schedule. And finally, you put all of those smaller more achievable steps together to reach that larger goal you set for yourself. When we break down goals into smaller, more achievable tasks, we are more likely to succeed.

When we accomplish those smaller tasks or goals along the way, those successes feel good and can give us more motivation. I encourage you to think about what goals or wishes you have for this year ahead. Are they things that you HAVE to get done? Are they things you WANT to get done? What has been stopping you from working towards those goals?

When we take time to analyze what the barriers might be, we can often come up with solutions. Sometimes the hardest part is simply naming those goals or wishes and then figuring out where to start. If you are feeling stuck, talk to a trusted friend or relative about what you are hoping to achieve. Maybe take some time together to brainstorm ideas of how to set up small steps to work toward your goal and what the barriers to those goals might be. Sometimes sharing your goals and ideas with someone else can help you find the support and accountability you need as well.

It's important to remember to keep your goals realistic for where you are in life as a caregiver and to keep your smaller tasks achievable. If you are looking for some evidence-based classes that can help you continue working on goal-setting for yourself, I encourage you to search for a Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes can be found by using the Juniper website, which is a program of Trellis, our local Area Agency on Aging, at [Juniper health promotion classes - Trellis](#).

Another evidence-based strategy that can help with goal-setting is WOOP (which stands for Wish > Outcome > Obstacle > Plan). Lyngblomsten Community Services is hosting two class tracks for WOOP Groups later this spring. The first virtual information session will happen in March, with another following in April; find more information and all group dates on our website by [clicking here](#).