

From Tick-Box and Clunky Goals to Meaningful Direction-Creative, Relational and Practical Approaches to Goal Setting with Children, Young People, Families and Adults

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Module Overview

“Goal setting” is an important part of many professional roles across children’s homes, social care, education, therapy, criminal justice, health, and so many more. Yet in practice it can sometimes feel awkward, overly bureaucratic, or reduced to a tick-box exercise. Practitioners are often asked to translate complex human experiences, hopes and challenges into clear plans, targets, and measurable outcomes.

Across many services, there is increasing emphasis on documentation, monitoring progress, evidencing outcomes and demonstrating impact. Plans, reports, targets and reviews have become a central part of professional practice. While these systems serve important purposes, they can sometimes lead goal setting to feel disconnected or misaligned from the relational work at the heart of supporting children, young people, families, and adults.

Yet they are important and needed. Sometimes they are missing, unclear, vague, transactional, and more. So, we need to find ways to make sure we understand their helpfulness and the why for doing them, and that they are being done in as optimal meaningful and clear way as possible

Many practitioners recognise the gap that can emerge between goals written in plans and the everyday realities of people’s lives. Goals can sometimes become overly technical, vague or system-driven, rather than meaningful, motivating and grounded in what matters most to the people we support.

This engaging and practical online module invites people to rethink goal setting. Rather than focusing solely on rigid targets or abstract plans, the session explores how goals can become meaningful conversations about direction, hopes, strengths, and next steps.

Through creative tools, metaphors and practical strategies, we will explore how to make goal setting more relational, collaborative, engaging and achievable. Whilst also making sure they are clear, transparent, and not too vague or wide.

The module will offer a wide range of questions, visual tools and creative activities that can be used with children, young people, parents, families and adults across different settings.

When done well, goal setting can become far more than paperwork- it can become a powerful conversation about direction, hope, and possibility.

What the Module Will Cover

Participants will briefly explore (this is a spotlight not a deep dive):

- Why goal setting can sometimes feel clunky, awkward or uncomfortable in practice.
- The emotional and relational dimensions of goal conversations.
- The risks and limitations of tick-box goals and overly technical plans.
- Why meaningful direction and shared goals remain crucial within systems and multidisciplinary work.
- Ways to make goals more clear, collaborative, and achievable.
- The session will also introduce creative and practical approaches and questions to exploring goals.

Aims and Objectives of the Module

This module aims to help practitioners:

- Develop a more relational and meaningful approach to goal setting.
- Move beyond tick-box targets towards direction, hope and possibility.
- Balance organisational requirements with human-centred practice.
- Increase confidence in having collaborative goal conversations.
- Understand why goal setting can sometimes feel difficult, clunky or disconnected from practice.
- Recognise the importance of direction, hope and shared purpose within goal setting.
- Use a range of creative and practical activities, metaphors and tools to explore goals and next steps.
- Apply practical strategies to make goal conversations engaging, accessible and meaningful

Who This Module Is For

This module is designed for practitioners who work with children, young people, families or adults in roles where goal setting, planning and progress monitoring form part of professional practice.

It may be particularly relevant for:

- Children's home staff and residential workers.
- Social workers and family support practitioners.
- Therapists and counsellors.
- Teachers and pastoral staff.
- Youth workers and mentors.
- Health and wellbeing professionals.

And anyone who is needing to integrate and identify goals in their work.

How much is the module? How can I pay and what is included?

The course is priced at £19.99 which includes 1.5 hours of video material by award winning psychologist, Dr Karen Treisman. The slides, communication cards and 2 additional handouts. Access for 1 year. Payment takes just a few minutes and is made on the platform via PayPal or stripe using a card. This means direct debit or credit card can be used. For groups of over 10, an invoice payment can be arranged. Teams or organisations can make bulk orders and can receive a discount (this includes being able to roll out to all employees or play at team meetings/ conferences etc. You are welcome to contact karen@safehandstheminkingminds.co.uk to discuss numbers and prices.

What is the learning method and how accessible is it? Do I need to watch it all in one go?

Nope absolutely not. It is presented in bite size segments ranging from 5 minutes to 15 minutes. This is purposely done to allow for people to dip in and dip out and to watch it in whichever way suits their learning style and the situation in which they are in. It is also intended that people pause, practice the exercises, reflect on them, discuss, and so forth. People may want to revisit and repeat them as well. This is also done in smaller sections to optimise people's engagement, concentration, and attention; and to encourage people to move around, take brain breaks, practice the regulating activities etc. There is also a video clip near the beginning of the module about different ways of optimising and absorbing the material.

Do you offer consultations or advice for teams or individuals about this topic?

Absolutely, depending on our capacity and availability, we offer one-to-one or team spaces to discuss the nuts and bolts of your specific situation. We also offer FAQ or thinking spaces for those to reflect and embed learning after engaging in the module. Please email karen@safehandstheminkingminds.co.uk

We also are hoping to work on lots of projects together and are so motivated by what is most useful- so please do pop us wish list, requests, and suggestions.

Why does some of the footage not seem studio ready? What is the platform like that I will use?

Please note these modules are being created in a real and down-to-earth way. Every effort has been made to make them useful and interesting, but like this topic, it is real world and flexible. They are intentionally raw and unedited.

The platform is thinkific. It was selected as it is easy-to-use and accessible. Feedback on previous modules has been very positive. They also have a great customer support and online trouble-shooting support if needed. Please when using the platform ensure that you input your details correctly and keep them somewhere safe. This includes selecting an email address you can access from home and work.