Goal Setting

What is Goal Setting?

Setting goals is essentially the process of creating a plan, or roadmap, for where your chapter can go in the next month, semester, or school year. As you work to lay the foundation of your Active Minds chapter at your school, take the time to think strategically about the things you want your chapter to accomplish and construct a plan on how you will get there.

As a developing chapter you are in the unique position of being able to chart the future of a brand-new student organization. What do you want your leadership structure to look like? What types of partnerships do you want to establish with groups, departments, or other entities on campus? What do you want your first big event to be on campus? All of these goals can provide you with a game plan on where to go and how to successfully establish a strong presence on campus.

The bottom line is that goal setting must be a collaborative process. If you don't involve everyone in the goal setting process people will have no reason to be invested in carrying out the tasks that will accomplish your goals. Make sure you hear everyone out, consider every idea and goal, and think carefully about who has to be involved and how.

Why Set Goals?

- Provide direction to your chapter
- Allow you to plan ahead and be prepared
- Provide a basis for recognizing chapter successes and accomplishments
- Motivate chapter members
- Help delegate responsibility within your chapter
- Goal-setting helps make evaluation easier and more fair

Goals should be S.M.A.R.T

Once goals are set, put them through the S.M.A.R.T test – ask yourself if your goals meet each of these criteria:

Specific – Goals should pinpoint specific things.
Measurable – You should be able to know when you reach a goal.
Action-oriented – You should be able to break a goal down into tasks.
Realistic – You should be able to achieve goals.
Timely – You should set timelines and deadlines for goals to be met and stick to them!

Goal Setting Process

Things to keep in mind:

- Goal setting is an ongoing process. Your goals now, in your developing stages, will be different for the goals your chapter sets this time next year. Think about both long-term and more short-term goals.

- Goals should be set as a group with the entire chapter leadership. Make sure everyone's ideas are represented and that you have consensus on goals and action steps. This is crucial to ensure commitment and motivation for achieving goals. If your members disagree with the direction (and goals) you have set for the chapter, they have little incentive to complete the tasks that they need to get the goal accomplished.

Before you begin:

- Schedule a special meeting specifically for the goal-setting exercise. Make sure you allow plenty of time to get through the following goal setting exercise and take breaks if necessary.
- Don't forget to reserve space and have all the materials you need (large chart paper, markers, food, etc.)
- Goal setting should be a fun and exciting process! Make sure to get people pumped up about creating the road map you will all take as a chapter together. To kick things off, start with an icebreaker or short team-building activity.

Steps to Effective Goal Setting

These are the simple steps you and your chapter can take to come up with your goals for the school year or semester ahead:

1. **Brainstorm.**

Create a list of potential ideas of what the chapter would like to achieve.

- Appoint a note taker and a moderator from the group to lead the brainstorming session.
- It may be helpful to break the brainstorming down into categories (e.g. membership, programs/events, meetings) and set a time limit for each category to make sure everything gets discussed in a timely manner.
- Start by asking what the group would like to see your chapter accomplish on campus. Ideas can turn into goals, so allow people to say whatever comes to mind. No idea is too big, small, or silly to make the list.
- Every member should take part in the brainstorming to make sure all perspectives are included. This is important for chapter morale and cohesion.

2. Prioritize.

Now that you have a long list of goals, you must narrow it down to those you will adopt for your chapter – this is the hard part!

- Remind your chapter of the Active Minds mission. Your chapter's goals should reflect this mission, which is to:
    - Increase students' awareness of mental health issues
    - Provide information about resources regarding mental health and mental illness
    - Encourage students to seek help as soon as it's needed
    - Serve as liaison between students and the mental health community

- Have each member rank their top few goals and share why they chose them.
- As a group, rate goals in order of importance.
- Remind everyone that goals must be realistic and achievable – look back to the S.M.A.R.T. test
- It is crucial that all members take part in this step to feel ownership and responsibility over the final goals.

3. Develop an Action Plan.

After you've agreed on the goals you are adopting for your chapter, come up with the steps you need to take in order to reach this goal. Some goals may only require a few steps, and some will have several – but be as specific as you can. Under each step, think about what tasks you need to complete in order to accomplish that step.

Things to think about as you create your Action Plan:

- What are the steps you must take to accomplish your goal?
- What are your resources, in terms of people, money and materials, to help you accomplish each step?
- Who is responsible for completing the tasks under each step?
- What should the deadline be for accomplishing each step?
- What will the outcome of accomplishing each step be?

4. **Evaluate.**

Evaluation is crucial in figuring out whether chapter goals have been met. Evaluation also allows your chapter to re-visit your original goals to see if they still reflect the direction in which the chapter wants to move. If reaching the goals you originally set has proven challenging, evaluation is also a time to recognize the obstacles that have gotten in the way and revise the action plan as necessary. See the *Evaluation Guide* for more on how to evaluate your chapter goals.

Example Action Plan:

Goal: To increase chapter membership by 6 people

Steps:

1. Figure out where your chapter currently stands on membership

Task: Define chapter membership and expectations

Task: Determine how many active members there currently are

2. Create and implement an outreach campaign for gaining new members

Task: Design outreach campaign materials like posters and flyers

Task: Schedule and plan a meeting for new chapter members so the date/time/location can go on the posters/flyers

Task: Have chapter members hang up posters/flyers in dorms, academic halls, student union, etc.

Task: Write editorial for school's newspaper announcing your student group and what you do on campus

3. Participate in school's involvement fair

Task: Register to participate as a student org at the fair

Task: Prepare materials for your table – flyers, candy, bookmarks, etc.

Task: Have members sign up to run the Active Minds table throughout the fair

4. Hold a new members meeting

Task: Reserve space, buy food, and plan activities for the meeting

Task: Follow up with individuals who signed up at the involvement fair and invite them to the meeting

Task: Make sure members of your executive board or other student leaders can be at the meeting to welcome new members

Breaking down the tasks				
Task	***Deadline***	***Resources for completing task***	***Who***	***Outcome***
1. Define chapter membership and expectations	May 10	Membership guide, Chapter Coordinator at national office	Jordan	A written description of what it means to be a member of Active Minds
2. Determine how many active members there are currently	May 20	Description of what "active" membership means	Jordan	A roster of current active chapter members; the number of new members needed to reach goal
3. Design outreach campaign materials	Sept. 1	Design expertise and software (Silas has contacts in Graphic Design dept.)	Silas (summer project)	An eye-catching, cohesive poster series to be displayed around campus aimed to recruit new members and invite them to the new members meeting
4. Schedule and plan a meeting for new chapter members	Sept. 1	Student Activities Office, meeting planning guide	Kate	A meeting date/time will be set and organized to welcome new members to the chapter
5. Implement outreach campaign	Sept. 10	Manpower, the campus newspaper, campus communications office	Silas and chapter members	Canvassed res. halls, academic buildings, & student union; an editorial in campus newspaper; a feature on school news website
6. Participate in school's involvement fair	Sept. 20	Student Activities Office, tabling materials	Bryan	An active presence at a highly attended school-wide function; a list of students interested in joining Active Minds
7. Follow-up with individuals who expressed interest at involvement fair	Sept. 22	List of students interested in joining	Bryan	Each student interested in Active Minds will have been contacted personally and invited to our first meeting
8. Hold a new chapter members meeting	Oct. 1	Meeting planning guide	Kate	New members will be welcomed and oriented to Active Minds; evaluation of this goal will happen in a meeting of the student executive board directly following this meeting

Adapted from the University of Florida Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Team and the University of Kentucky Office of Student Activities, Leadership & Involvement.