

From Goals to Goal Attainment

I found the study by Cobb, Stone, Anonsen, and Klein (2013) similar to how many people like to set "New Year's Resolutions"--goals to start a new year with. I think about how many of those goals are never fully realized. It seems in some ways, writing down goals is the easy part; the difficult part is finding that "special something" (e.g. social support, motivation, necessity, medical diagnosis, etc.) that is personally relevant to an individual so that he/she follows-through to transform the goals into sustainable, actionable steps.

Communication, especially direct communication, and social support greatly factor into the success of goal setting and attainment. Deal and Shields (2015) examined the influence of the student therapist on injured athletes (student therapist-athlete relationship and the psychological skills used) during the athlete's rehabilitation period. Deal and Shields's (2015) interpretive, qualitative, cross-sectional, retrospect study involved interviewing varsity athletes (n=3) who had been injured earlier in the season and the senior student athletic therapists (n=2) who worked with the athletes.

During the interviews, the athletes often mentioned not only the valuable professional services the student-therapists provided, but also the social support and psychological support in goal setting and imagery (Deal & Shields, 2015). The social and psychological support helped athletes adhere to their treatment plan and stay motivated (Deal & Shields, 2015). The student-therapists also noted the "closeness" and communication (open dialog about injury and rehabilitation) between themselves and the athletes; both groups had better appreciation for each other's support (Deal & Shields, 2015). The limitations of the study were the small size/demographic, the qualitative nature, and it was a "snapshot" in time.

Goal setting is an important step, but not the only step in goal attainment.

References

Cobb, L. E., Stone, W. J., Anonsen, L. J., & Klein, D. A. (2013). The influence of goal setting on exercise adherence. *Journal of Health Education, 31*(5), 277-281.
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