Goal Setting

Goal setting (specific to the individual, and/or specific to the individual's group/community) is a great tool for motivation and accountability.

Ambrosi-Randić and Plavšić (2011) studied the different goal-achievement strategies employed by older adults as compared to younger adults. Baltes and Baltes (as cited in Ambrosi-Randić & Plavšić, 2011, p. 98) proposed a model based on three strategies (SOC): selection (elective or loss-based), optimization, and compensation.

Selection refers to the reality that resources (tangible/intangible) are limited, and those available resources vary per individual (Ambrosi-Randić & Plavšić, 2011). Therefore, an individual must be selective in establishing personal goals and making sure that those goals truly enrich one's life.

Optimization refers to the need to prioritize, allocate, and manage resources that impact goal-pursuit (Ambrosi-Randić & Plavšić, 2011). Examples of resources might be time, current health status, energy levels, money, living situation, and access to or network of outside resources.

Compensation is the need to develop or find compensatory processes in order for a person to maintain a functioning level and to deal with any losses/decline (Ambrosi-Randić & Plavšić, 2011). Compensation might be a back-up plan, or it may involve goal-resetting. Compensation deals with how a person keeps going in the face of negative situations.

Using the SOC system, people have been effectively able to increase subjective well-being, increase positive emotions, and decrease feelings of loneliness--all of which are indicators of positively adjusting to aging (Ambrosi-Randić & Plavšić, 2011).

When helping older adult individuals develop realistic goals, it might be helpful to use the SOC framework as a starting point.

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Reference

Ambrosi-Randić, N., & Plavšić, M. (2011). Strategies for goal-achievement in older people with different levels of well-being. *Studia Psychologica, 53*(1), 97-106.

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