



# Building My Future (BMF)

# The Use of **Goals** in BMF Practice

BMF Practice Bulletin #2



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## Foreword

# The Building My Future (BMF) Learning Series

This bulletin is part of our ongoing commitment to learning and sharing good practice. The full BMF Learning Series is as follows:

### ➤ The BMF Practice Handbook

This handbook is intended for professionals working with children and young people with additional needs. It is written as a practical guide for those who are curious about the approach or interested in integrating elements from the BMF approach into existing systems.

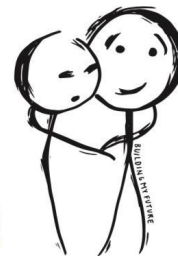
### ➤ BMF Practice Bulletins

1. The importance of co-production with parents/carers and young people, in the development of the BMF model
2. The Use of **Goals** in BMF Practice
3. Professional reflection and recommendations on the BMF model and implications for future practice
4. The BMF Team 'Journey' in our commitment to continue to learn about and implement strategies to dismantle racism.

### ➤ BMF Videos

- A. Introduction to Building My Future (BMF)
- B. Hidden Disability. A video devised and produced by young people and the BMF Youth workers.

Ealing  
Building  
My Future  
Programme



### ➤ BMF Podcasts

- A. to explore the experiences of parents/carers within the system, relationships and different ways to collaborate, with the child at the centre of the process.
- B. exploring the intersection of SEND and Racism, it's impact and exploring ways we can address these issues, both strategically and operationally.
- C. BMF team reflection on journey and recommendations regarding anti-racism

### ➤ External Evaluation of BMF



### **BMF Library can be accessed here:**

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/services-children/building-my-future-bmf-programme>



Watch the Introduction to BMF video here:

[https://youtu.be/3JThz\\_ybehA](https://youtu.be/3JThz_ybehA)

# Introduction

## Building My Future (BMF) Programme

Targeted support for children and young people with complex needs

Between 2018-21, with support from the DfE's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, Ealing Council developed and piloted a new programme, co-produced with parents/carers and young people, designed to address a growing need around supporting young people with additional needs who are at risk of school and social exclusion.

### What is it?

Building My Future (BMF) is a responsive, multi-agency, multi-professional service, designed to support children and young people, parents/carers and schools/colleges where there may be difficulties accessing the curriculum or in attendance, due to complex additional needs.

We support children and young people who are at risk of exclusion or withdrawal from society to stay in or return to participation and meaningful activity.

### The BMF anti-racism statement

'The BMF Team is resolved to explicitly and publicly affirm our identity as an anti-racist service and team. Our anti-racism commitment is reflected in the life and culture of the team, through our programmes and practices as we continue to learn about and implement strategies to dismantle racism.'





# **What do we mean by Goal Setting?**

# Introduction to Goal-setting

A goal can be defined as a clear expression of a person's hopes and expectations, and an indicator of where they may wish to go in their life.

Conversations around values, hopes for the future, worries and concerns can help to empower young people and their families to identify and focus on the changes that are most important to them.

The experience of being heard and listened to has been acknowledged as important for enabling clients to engage with a service, and explore those areas which they may wish to focus on.

The act of empowering the young person via the process of shared decision making may be just as important as achieving a particular goal.

*'A good outcome is that the young person and family have had a good experience of having their views and wishes heard.'* (Law, 2018).

Goals are widely used as a tool to represent the young person's hopes and wishes across different practitioner settings.

Building My Future (BMF) has developed this document to record and share the team's learning points gathered in the course of introducing and implementing goals in our practice.

# Introduction to Goal-setting

Goals can be used to explore hopes and aims that a service user would like to work towards over the course of a piece of intervention work within any change-focused setting.

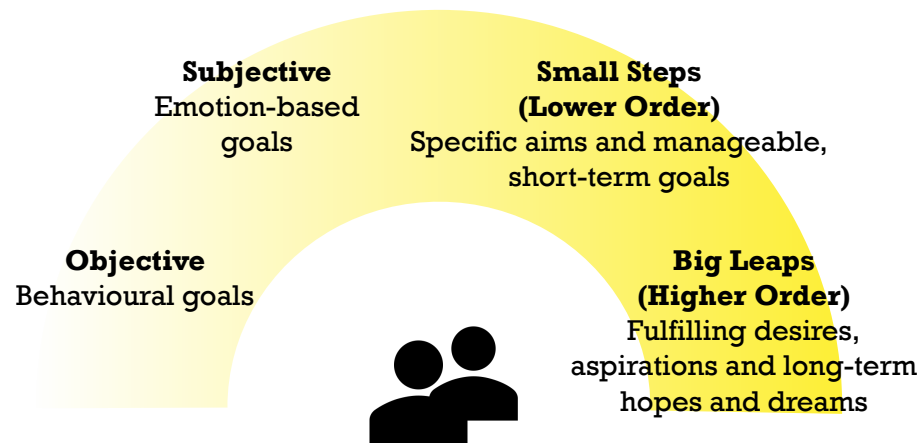
An example of a goal-setting tool is the Goal Based Outcomes (GBO) model which initially grew out of work with children, young people and families in a mental health and emotional wellbeing context (Cooper & Law, 2018).

<https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/goal-based-outcomes/>

## How can goal-setting be used in practice?

Goals can be developed through conversation or, more formally, using rating sheets to frame next steps

There are many different kinds of goals which might be explored:



# Goal-setting in practice

## Some questions which can be useful when setting goals include:



- 'How might you know that this work is helpful?'
- 'What would you like to get out of the next 10 minutes/1 session/3 months/6 months?'
- 'Can you think of anything you might like to be different at school, at home or with friends? What would that difference look like?'



## Where, when and how can goals be used?

- Goals are widely used, in a variety of different ways, by different disciplines including: Psychology; Speech and Language Therapy; and Occupational Therapy. Goals can be easily adapted to suit individual working practices.
- Goals are typically set at the beginning of a piece of work in order to help guide focus and to promote and amplify the voice of the client. They can be rated using a scale of 0-10 in order to represent how achievable the goal feels to the young person (Law, 2018).
- Regular reviews and check-ins throughout a piece of work allow the practitioner to ask the young person how they are experiencing their journey towards their goal so this may inform next steps.





# Reasons for using goal-setting

## Why may goal-setting be offered?

- In order to promote collaborative, person-centred working, where the client feels a sense of agency and involvement in decisions.
- Young people referred to a service such as BMF may not have had positive experiences of authority figures teaching/sharing new information with them in the past. The goal-setting process can help a young person feel that they are at the centre of decision-making rather than having an 'expert' make decisions for them. This can reduce the risk of alienating the young person and help to build a positive therapeutic alliance (Law, 2018).
- When clients are struggling to see a way forward, goals can help ease feelings of 'stuckness' and assist a young person to think about useful steps towards an ultimate destination or hope.
- Goals can also help to measure change and evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken within a service.



# Goal-setting viewed as a Journey

## Goals can offer:

- Flexibility in times of 'stuckness'
- Greater focus in those moments when a young person might be feeling overwhelmed

Any piece of work with goals may involve a process of exploration which travels from dreaming through planning and finally towards actualising the goal. The journey may be complex and nuanced and each step along the pathway can be valued (Cooper & Law, 2018).

Using the process of goal-setting to help think about and record client wishes may in itself be the most important outcome, over and above the actualisation of the goal identified.

Goal-setting might offer a young person a first opportunity to state what it is that they really want.

The process of working through and reviewing the journey of a goal maintains the young person at the centre of a piece of work and amplifies their voice by exploring their own views, values and what is important to them.

## Key phases in the process



# Goal-setting viewed as a journey

Using shared decision making in goal exploration leads to more collaborative goals, which, in turn, helps frame other shared choices and decisions between practitioner and client (Cooper & Law, 2017)

A key feature of identifying and setting goals is thinking about goals as a process of helping the client to explore questions of identity:

- **Who am I?**
- **What is important to me?**
- **What do I want?**
- **Where do I want to go?**

When thinking about these questions, there may be a series of smaller key goals, in varying areas, that support larger aims and questions.



# Goal-setting within Building My Future

The Building My Future emphasis on strengths-based, person-centred practices, which advocate for the voice of the young person, and helps the building of a 'goal consensus' between practitioner and client.

This in turn promotes positive working relationships and, ultimately, facilitates improved outcomes (Tyron & Winograd, 2011).









Goal-setting aligns with the core values of the multidisciplinary, multi-agency Building my Future (BMF) team initiative of listening to and amplifying the voice of the child, young person and system who are accessing the service.

- Goal-setting can straddle the disciplines and is therefore positive for multidisciplinary and multi-agency working.
- Goals can offer a means of aligning different processes and enables an exploration of how these different approaches may improve individual wellbeing.
- Regular opportunities to review goals can assist in tracking how the work is progressing.

# Thematic goal-setting within BMF

Since goal setting has been introduced, the BMF team have established a range of types of goals with clients. Many of these overlap with one other and support the concept of goals as a process of identifying, evaluating, exploring and reviewing the needs of the client.

Some of the themes identified whilst working with client goals within BMF include:

	<b>School placement support and stability</b>		<b>Network understanding and communication</b>		<b>Social and emotional wellbeing</b>
Client Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To identify and transition to a suitable education setting</li><li>• To remain in current school setting</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To enhance understanding of needs within school and strategies to support</li><li>• To support a wider understanding of Autism Spectrum Condition</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To learn ways of expressing emotions without displaying behaviour that challenges</li><li>• To reduce experiences of anxiety related to attending school</li></ul>
	<b>Academic achievement</b>		<b>Independence</b>		<b>Social skills</b>
Client Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To improve skills in English and maths</li><li>• To do more writing at school</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To access an apprenticeship</li><li>• To think about choosing a future career</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To socialise safely with a peer group</li><li>• To increase understanding and awareness of personal space for the self and others</li></ul>

## Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) practitioners have been using goal-setting within BMF

Within BMF, the team has been on their own journey towards the use of goal setting. We have used team discussions, case examples, roleplay and feedback surveys to support the consideration of goals.

In reviewing the use of goals within BMF, some of our practitioners have shared the ways in which they have felt supported to use goals.

“

*‘Having frameworks and examples of goal setting from others.’*

*‘Knowing that, if I’m unsure, there is someone in the BMF team to ask.’*

*‘I find it helpful to set manageable goals, which reach up to higher-order dreams and wishes.’*

”



# The challenges of using goals within BMF

The young person may not be in the right place, in that moment, to think about what it is that they want.

Our practitioners share some of the challenges they have faced:

“

*‘Sometimes, setting goals with a Young Person who might feel stuck or disempowered can be difficult.’*

*‘When it feels as though a client is not progressing, it can be demotivating for parents and clients.’*

*‘Due to the potential time restrictions of BMF, it’s been difficult to always implement goal setting, knowing that you may not exactly ‘finish’ the work.’*

*‘Short pieces of work, rather than longer, ongoing cases, can make it difficult to identify goals.’*

*‘A young person may not be in the right frame of mind to consider setting goals.’*

”



## Power and positivity through goal-setting within BMF

Many members of the BMF team have found the challenge of thinking about goals helpful in their work.

*'It has offered an opportunity to truly listen to the voice of the young person.'*

*'It is helpful to use goals to give power back to the client/young person.'*

*'Goals are really helpful to provide focus for working with children, young people and their schools and families.'*

*'Goals ensure that the work is client-centered and can be tracked and monitored over time.'*

BMF team members also found setting goals has positively impacted their work by:

*'Providing a focussed, client-centered approach to monitoring progress over time.'*

*'Employing goal setting has helped to clearly structure BMF work and to set clear parameters for the work.'*

Has the use of goals added value to BMF working practices?

*'It has offered a good route to shared MDT goal-setting, which benefits the young person, through the lens of different practitioners.'*

*'It has ensured there are clear, achievable targets.'*

*'It has added value to the wider work of BMF because the team now focuses even more on outcome and the value added by the work.'*



## Who might benefit from the use of goal-setting?



### Aisha's story

This is a fictional case study which shows the way in which BMF might use goals with a young person.

Aisha is a 13-year-old girl with an ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) diagnosis who is struggling to attend secondary school.

Aisha would like to attend school and ultimately to study at the university of her choice. However, Aisha is uncomfortable at school and shares that she finds the environment very noisy and overwhelming.

She often feels that she is not understood or fully heard by her teachers, her parents or her peers and she worries what people think of her.

This feeling of not being understood results in regular misunderstandings with her peers and leads to Aisha feeling isolated and alone.

Through working with BMF, Aisha is supported in establishing some goals which are intended to support her return to school. Occupational Therapy develop goals which relate to working on reducing feeling of sensory overwhelm in the classroom: ‘

**‘I want to be able to remain in a maths lesson without feeling the need to leave’.**

Clinical Psychology help Aisha establish goals relating to reducing feelings of anxiety and also helping to reduce her feelings of social isolation:

**‘I want to be able to start a conversation with a peer at school’.**

Educational Psychology develop goals which amplify Aisha's needs so that her teachers can better understand them and to help her feel more understood in the classroom:

**‘I want to identify with my teacher some strategies that I find helpful in school’.**

The school Connexions Workers help Aisha set goals around next educational steps:

**‘I want to explore what I might need to do to get to university’.**

The Social Work team help Aisha set goals around communicating more clearly with her parents:

**‘I want to be better able to know how to tell my parents if something has happened at school’.**

In combining these goals, Aisha's journey towards returning to school is supported and her dream of attending the university of her choices moves a little closer.

# The parent/carer and young person response to goal-setting within BMF

## The young person response

*'BMF helped me to achieve the goal of finding a new life in a different school.'*

*'Working on the goal of reducing my anxiety has helped me to feel that I'm not the only one who gets anxiety and to understand what is going on for me.'*

*'Having a main goal and breaking this down into smaller sub-goals was helpful to identify areas where I needed more support and to work step-by-step to achieve these ... BMF helped me to get support in areas where I don't think I would have managed to work towards the goals on my own.'*

*'You know the goals are there but sometimes you can forget them on your own. So it was useful when BMF and other services involved could remind me and help me to stay on track.'*

*'Some of the main goals have been achieved through working with BMF. Now I've done those, getting into work is my next one.'*

*'After working on the goal of reducing my anxiety, I don't really overthink as much. The overthinking causes my panic. Less overthinking means less panic.'*

## The parent/carer response

*'BMF took an approach that was centered around objectives that would bring positive changes in my child's life.'*

*'Goals were a helpful process and, after a time, the work helped my child to achieve those goals.'*

## Conclusion

The use of goals in Building my Future is an ongoing process of reflection, evaluation and adaptation.

We have learnt the importance of flexibility in practice and that goal-setting should be presented as an offer.

Goal-setting may not be helpful in every situation or for every practitioner or client.

However, BMF have found that goal-setting may valuably offer a vital means of encouraging the amplification of the voice of the client and consequently their individual wishes, hopes and aims.



# Acknowledgements and references

This bulletin has been put together by the BMF Psychology team: Assistant Clinical Psychologist Heather Mithen; Counselling Psychologist Catharine Hunt; Clinical Psychologist Sonya Khan; and Clinical Psychologist Michele Mckenner.

There are many renowned practitioners who have demonstrated how to use goals in a positive way when working with clients across a variety of settings and whose work we have drawn on when developing this bulletin.

We have been particularly inspired and guided by the work of Professor Mick Cooper and Dr Duncan Law in our team practice and we would like to acknowledge their extraordinary work in the field of goal setting in clinical practice

## Here are some useful resources which helped BMF think about goals.

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- The Health Foundation (2014). *Using Shared Decision Making to Improve Work of CAMHS*. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC4oTFQfZMA>
- Tyron, G.S., Winograd, G. (2011). Goal Consensus and Clinical Outcomes. *Psychotherapy*, 48(1), 50-57.

### Useful Websites:

- <https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/goal-based-outcomes/>