

Topic 8: Monitoring and enabling capacity to change

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) case study based exercise for social workers

Methods

Suitable for a small group discussion as part of a facilitated workshop.

Learning Outcome

To practise using Goal Attainment Scaling to set meaningful and measurable goals.

Time Required

40 minutes for discussion plus 20 minutes for feedback

Process

The approach set out in the briefing [Monitoring and enabling capacity to change](#) includes the use of Goal Attainment Scaling as part of a four stage process for assessing capacity to change (Harnett 2007). A worked example of the GAS template is included to give a sense of how this might work in practice.

Give each group a hand-out of the case study for Rosie, as well as a copy of the activity.

Ask each group to appoint someone to feedback their ideas.

Activity brief

Using the Rosie case study, fill in the GAS template to set meaningful and measurable goals, which will support the care plan and provide evidence on Lena's capacity to make the changes required to keep Rosie safe if she is to return to her care.

- Who will you involve in setting these goals?
- How will you monitor the arrangements and what is a suitable timescale for achieving the goals outlined?
- How can the child's social worker and supervising social worker work together – and with Lena – to support Andrea in keeping Rosie safe and setting and maintaining boundaries around contact and behaviour generally?
- What specific emotional support needs might Lena have? How can these be explored sensitively?
- What will be the next steps if a) goals are reached b) goals are not reached?

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Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) worked example

Adapted from an example from Barlow, J. (2012) [Presentation at Home or Away: Making difficult decisions in the child protection system Partnership Conference] 22 February.

Level of expected outcome	Goal one: The sitting room is clean and safe	Goal two: Tom reduces his drinking and gets more involved in basic care	Goal three: Zara accepts help with the morning routine and her depression that underlies the difficulties
Review date			
Much more than expected	The room is cosy and has been re-painted. The furniture is clean. The floor is clear. There are toys and books. The clean washing is put away regularly. There is no smell.	Tom does not drink alcohol and goes to all his appointments. He spends more time playing with the children. Tom helps the children get dressed and washed and have their breakfast, then washes up. He can give them money for the tuck shop at least twice a week. The kids look smart and clean.	Zara sorts out Mae in the mornings, makes sure everyone has their school bags and makes the beds. She takes them to school on time every day. Zara works with her counsellor to sort out her depression and takes her medication regularly. The kids have everything they need for school.
More than expected	There is no smoking in the room, there are some toys the sides are clear and clean.	Tom is sober most of the time. He goes to his appointments regularly. He finds other ways to relax. Tom gets breakfast, washes up and puts the clothes out the night before. The kids have proper school uniform and Sam looks clean, with no nappy rash.	Zara goes to counselling and takes her medication. She gets out of bed in the morning, helps kids get dressed and sorts out Mae. Zara takes the kids to school three days a week and has them ready for Judy the rest of the time.

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Most likely outcome	The floor is clear, the furniture is clean, the dog is kept out of the room, there are no matches, lighters, ashtrays or cigarettes in the children's reach	Tom is sober around the children and goes to his Mum's if he gets drunk. He turns up to most of his appointments at the alcohol service. He spends less than £5 per week on alcohol. He does not shout from his bed in the mornings when the children are messing about and sometimes gets the breakfast. Tom changes nappies.	Zara takes her medication regularly and attends an assessment appointment with the counsellor. She gets the kids ready with Judy's help. They go to school every day and are usually on time.
Less than expected outcome	Some of the clutter has been cleared, any dog's mess is cleared up straight away.	Tom sometimes drinks around the children. He misses some of his appointments. He spends the family money on drink. He stays in bed in the morning and is sometimes grumpy and hungover. The kids turn up for school looking scruffy or dirty.	Zara misses her first appointment and forgets her medication. She stays in bed most of the day. The children's school attendance is below 80%. They are often late.
Much less than expected	Floor is cluttered, stale food on the furniture, dog mess is left on carpet, ashtrays, matches, cigs and lighters are left in kids's reach.	Tom is drunk whilst caring for the children. He misses most of his appointments. The family runs out of money. The kids are in their PJs most of the day. Tom gets angry in the mornings because he is hungover. Sam is left in dirty nappies.	Zara does not take her medication or go for counselling. She spends most of the day in bed. The kids go to school late or not at all. Zara does not let Judy in.

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Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) blank example

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Level of expected outcome	Goal one:	Goal two:	Goal three:
Review date			
Much more than expected			
More than expected			
Most likely outcome			
Less than expected outcome			
Much less than expected			