

**CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT**  
**DEBORAH Goal Setting Model**  
Version 1.1



1-833-845-WELL (9355) Ext 390  
supporthouse.ca  
centreinfo@supporthouse.ca

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Hopkins, E., & Sheedy, C. (2021). DEBORAH Goal Setting Model. Support House: Centre for Innovation in Peer Support.

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## Acknowledgements

<b>Authors</b>
<b>Ethan Hopkins</b> , Peer Integration & Systems Support, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support <b>Clare Sheedy</b> , Supervisor, Peer Support Services, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
<b>Content Advisor</b>
<b>Alyssa Gremmen</b> , Peer Integration & Systems Lead, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
<b>Content Reviewers</b>
<b>Richard Adair</b> , Manager, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support <b>Betty-Lou Kristy</b> , Director, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
<b>Branding Coordinator</b>
<b>Lisa McVey</b> , Communications & Marketing Coordinator, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support

**If you have questions about this resource, please contact**  
[centreinfo@supporthouse.ca](mailto:centreinfo@supporthouse.ca) | [www.supporthouse.ca](http://www.supporthouse.ca)

# The DEBORAH Goal Setting Model

The DEBORAH Goal Setting Model was created by Ethan Hopkins & Clare Sheedy at the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (2021).

The DEBORAH Goal Setting Model was created to assist person-directed, holistic, and supportive goal setting. By beginning the process with the self-determination of a goal the person identifies as meaningful to them, the model ensures the goal is person-directed and in alignment with the *Values of Peer Support*.

This person-directed approach is further complimented by alignment with recovery principles; meaning, “living a meaningful and purposeful life, as defined by the person” and empowerment, “having control over life, focusing on strengths, and taking personal responsibility” as outlined in the CHIME recovery framework (Leamy et al., 2011).

Where other tools and models are incredibly effective in business & corporate settings that are focused on accountability and evaluation, the DEBORAH Goal Setting Model is focused on holistic personhood. Traditional goal setting models can present outcomes as pass or fail, when people feel they have “failed”, or been unsuccessful in their goals it can result in feelings of shame, guilt, or detriment to their self-worth. In the pursuit of cultivating wellness, the process of goal setting should be as supportive as the goal set. Understanding the adaptability of goals reminds us that it is not pass or fail, but rather a change in direction. The other advantage to this model is that it can be used for goals that do not have quantitative measures. For example, if someone says, “I want to feel more connected to nature.” Traditional goal setting models would have this goal shift to sound something like, “I will spend one hour hiking in nature each day over the next week.” What that modified goal fails to recognize is that spending an hour a day hiking does not ensure someone will feel connected to nature.

The model is intentionally structured to address that people have unique expertise as well as barriers, while remaining strength-based and supportive of resiliency. Established barriers are followed up with taking stock of the resources and options that are available to the person internally and externally to support them in navigating the goal attainment process. Through self-assessing expertise, barriers, resources, and options people increase their understanding of their own needs and strengths. This understanding allows them to better communicate needs and strengths to others, who can then be of more support to this process.

After self-evaluating the multiple factors included in pursuit of a goal it may be of support to divide large, complex goals into smaller contributing goals. For example, a goal such as “achieve wellness” may be the overarching goal with contributing goals that identify the areas in our lives that we would like to increase wellness.

The creators’ hope for those who use the DEBORAH Model is that they feel empowered as unique people with expertise, to use their gifts and the supports available to them in order to achieve the goals that are meaningful to them.

## **DETERMINE**

- What is something you want for your life?
- What are the steps involved in the pursuit of this goal?

## **EXPERTISE**

- What gifts, skills or expertise have you developed that will support this goal?

## **BARRIERS**

- Is there anything you may encounter that might get in the way?

## **OPTIONS**

- What options do you have available to support yourself through this process?
- How will you support yourself if things are not going the way you thought they would?

## **RESOURCES**

- What resources (people, places, or things) do you have available to support your goal?

## **ADAPTABILITY**

- It is okay to decide you no longer want to achieve this goal.
- It is okay to take longer than you expected.
- It is okay to change your goal.

## **HONOUR**

- Can you take a moment to be proud of yourself and reflect on this journey?
- When you have achieved your goal how can you honour the hard work that you have put in?

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO EXPLORE**

### **Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's**

### **Provincial Systems Virtual Learning Centre & Resource Hub for Peer Supporters & Organizations**

Support House's Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's full programming is offered through our Virtual Learning Centre & Resource Hub which supports the most current, best practices in Peer Support.

Through our Virtual Learning Centre, we offer trainings, consultation, our Peer Professional Development Webinar Series, and provincial communities of practice. Our Resource Hub is home to our educational toolkits, documents and videos. These offerings support the practice and implementation of Peer Support within Ontario.

#### **Products on our Resource Hub:**

- ***Guiding Standards of Peer Support*** (from Mental Health Commission of Canada, Peer Support Canada & Centre for Innovation in Peer Support)
- ***CHIME Recovery Process*** infographic

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## References

Leamy, M., Bird, V., Boutillier, C., Williams, J., & Slade, M. (2011). *Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: Systematic review and narrative synthesis*. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199(6), 445-452.  
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