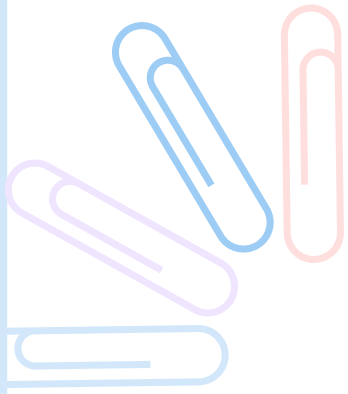


# Getting Started: Core Values



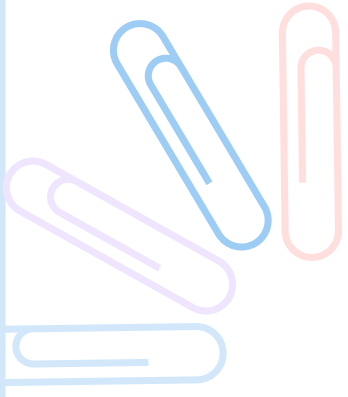
A self-help workbook by

[ndhelp.co.uk](https://ndhelp.co.uk) 



# Contents

About	3
Exploring my values	4
Core Values	5
Core Values Example	6
Ranking my values	7
Values Compass	8
Turning Values into Actions	9
Changing Behaviour	10
5 Steps for Change	11
Writing My Goal	12
Tracking Progress	13



# About

Making changes to support our wellbeing can feel overwhelming, especially when the world has not always made space for our needs. Even when we know something would help, actually shifting our habits and mindset can bring up emotions like fear, frustration, or guilt.

Values can guide us in making these changes. When we align our choices with what we care about, we can start to build more rich, full and meaningful lives.

*(If you already know the changes you want to make in line with your values and are looking for more practical guidance, you can skip to Page 10 – Changing Behaviour)*

**We recommend starting with this workbook to make changes in line with your values, and aid you in your journey of accommodating and advocating for yourself.**

# Exploring my Values

As neurodivergent people, we experience the world differently. These differences bring strengths like unique perspectives and special interests.



Sometimes, our differences cause challenges. We might tire easily or struggle looking after our basic needs, leading to coping strategies such as avoidance, abusing substances or withdrawing from social situations.

Values are a **life direction** (like an internal compass) that point to what we find most important. By reminding ourselves of values, we can start to shift our focus from avoidance of pain and symptoms to engagement with life.



## Example Values

Authenticity	Adventure	Self-care	
Spirituality	Family	Compassion	Self-growth
Honesty	Respect	Education	Independence
Freedom	Acceptance	Community	

# My Core Values

## Values vs Goals

Society tells us that to be happy, we have to achieve goals like getting in shape, buying a house, or going on holiday. But how long does this happiness last before you're chasing the next goal, and the next?



If you feel constantly exhausted working towards one goal after another, then it may be worth asking yourself: are you living your life in line with goals or values?

## Core Values

### Ask Yourself:

Who do I want to be?

What do I believe in?

What gives my life meaning and purpose?

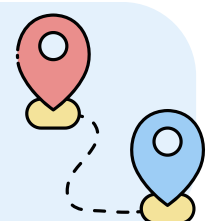
How do I want to behave each day?

How do I want to treat myself, others, and the world around me?



### Remember, values are not:

A destination or a goal that has an end-point. Values are about how you are living your life right now.



# Core Values: Example

Acting in alignment with values does not always feel good in the moment, but can help to live more meaningfully in the long-term.

## Fatima's Core Values



### Family

Fatima prioritises time with her family and does her best to be present, even when she is tired after work.



### Education

Fatima finds joy in learning and chooses to read books over watching most film or television programs.



### Spirituality

Fatima wakes up early to pray because it brings a sense of peace and connection to her..

## Tip: Check in

Take a moment to check in with yourself — What really matters to you? As you read through this workbook, what comes to your mind as important? It's easy to internalize what others expect or what we feel we should aim for. Think about what genuinely matters to *you*.

# Ranking My Values

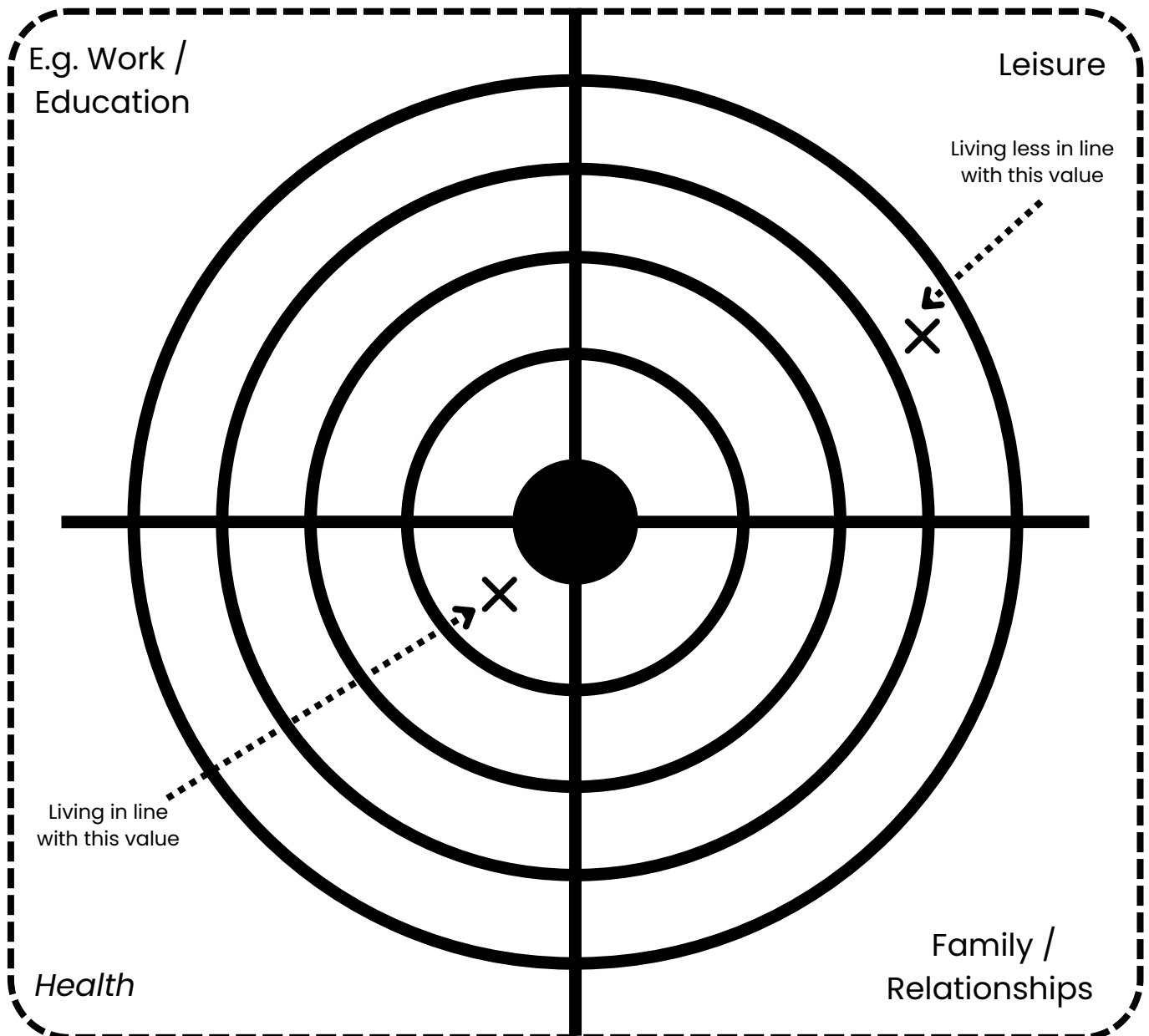
Let's explore what values are most important to you. Below are some examples — try ranking them from 1 (less important) to 10 (most important). Feel free to add your own!



Core Values	Importance (1-10)
Personal Development	
Family	
Friendships	
Spirituality	
Education	
Career	
Mental Health	
Physical Health	

# Values Compass

Where do you stand today in your values? Take a moment to think about values identified on the last page. Write the top four of these in each quarter of the bullseye. Then, mark an X on the bullseye for each area — closer to the centre means you are living in line with that value, while further out means you are acting inconsistently with that value in your daily life.



## Tip: The Life Compass

Who do I want to be? What personal strengths and qualities do I want to develop? What is important to me? What actions do I want to take? How do I ideally wish to conduct myself? Take a look at your answers. What do they reveal about: a) What truly matters to you? b) What areas of your life you may be neglecting?



# Turning Values Into Actions

Now, let's look at how we can turn values into actions. This activity will help us to start setting goals and identify what values-based living looks like for you.

Value	Potential actions in line with this value:
<i>Eg, Mental Health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Exploring what sensory accommodations you can make for yourself</i></li> <li>• <i>Balancing your energy</i></li> <li>• <i>Reaching out for support from services</i></li> </ul>

# Changing Behaviour

As neurodivergent individuals, we may have a lot of awareness into ourselves. We might not need someone to tell us what is wrong, but what to do.

## **Why is it so hard to adopt new coping strategies?**

Research suggest there's a few criteria that need to be met before someone can change their behaviour.



### **Capability**

- Do you have the knowledge and capability to start?
- Are you in the right place, physically and emotionally, to make this change?



### **Opportunity**

- Do you have the time and resources?
- Can you realistically prioritise it?



### **Motivation**

- Do you want to make this change?
- Do you know why it matters to you?



Without capability, opportunity and motivation, it can be difficult to make goals or change behaviour (for example, introducing new coping strategies).

## **Tip: Start small**

Now may not be the right time for a life-changing goal and that's okay. Change happens when we have the capacity for it, and that's different for everyone. Consider: If you're overwhelmed, would a smaller step feel more manageable?

# 5 Steps for Change

Hopefully, you now have a clearer sense of whether this is the right time to start making changes. The next step is choosing a focus. Let's explore what the evidence suggests about making goals.

01

**Be as specific as possible.** What, specifically, would I like to do? It can help to start generally then narrow a focus. For example, if I want to feel less anxious, *when* or *where* would I like to feel less anxious?

02

**Align with core values.** What are the values underlying my goal? If a goal conflicts with my values or needs, it may feel forced and be difficult to find motivation for.

03

**Consider Capability, Opportunity and Motivation.** Ask myself, is this goal realistic for me right now? If not, what is the smallest step I could take now?

04

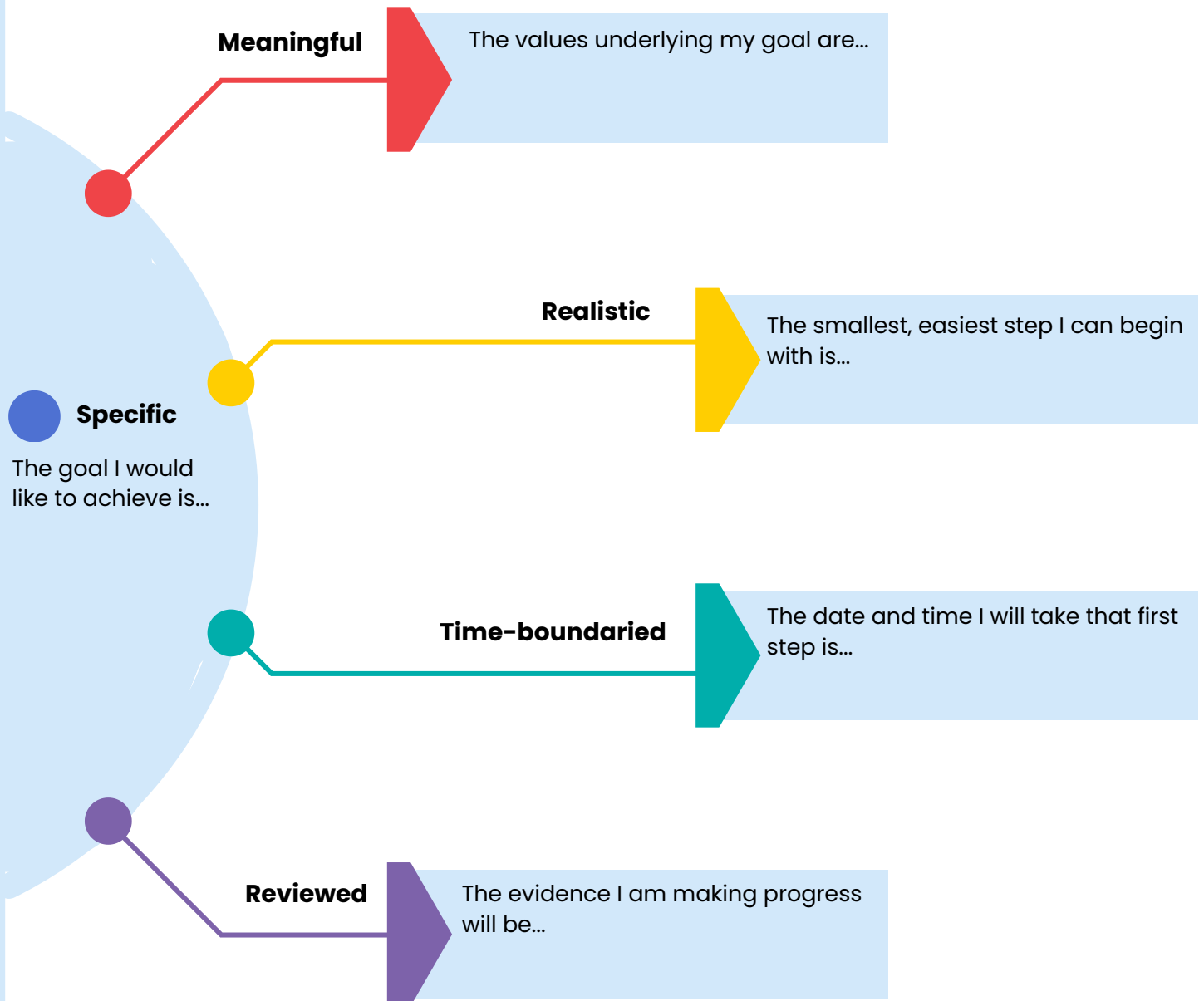
**Set a timeframe.** A time-bound goal has a gentle timeframe with a day and time. If things take longer than planned, that's okay too. Progress isn't always linear.

05

**Review.** How will I know when I've made progress or met my goal? How will I act differently? How will I treat others or myself differently? What actions will I have taken to improve my life?

# Writing Down My Goal

Using your core values and the 5 Steps for change we have covered so far, have a go at writing down your own goal in the space below.



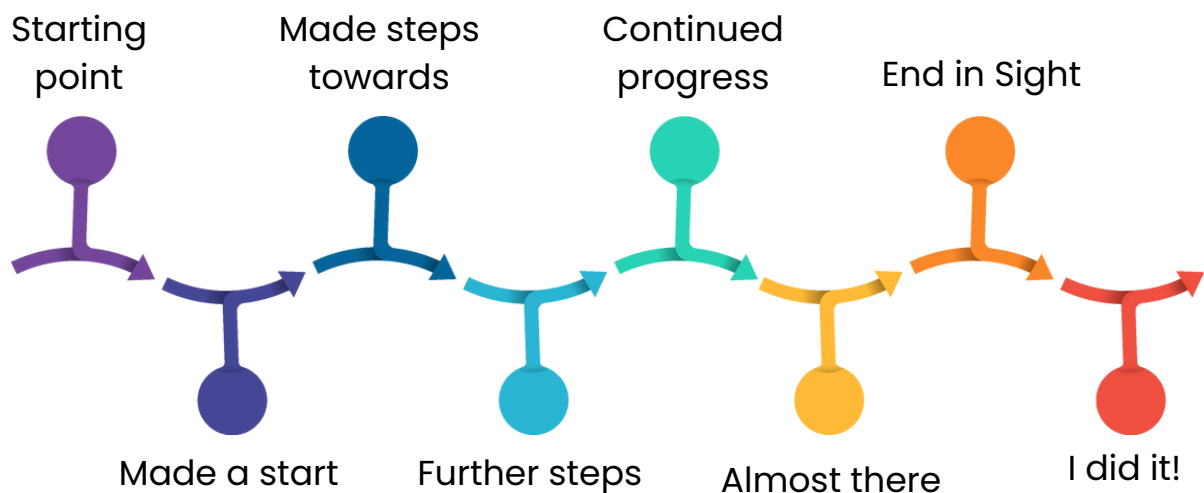
## Tip: Write it Down

Writing your goals makes you more likely to complete them. Research shows written goals help organise thoughts, provide a visual reminder and increase commitment by making the goal feel more real.

# Progress Record

It's important to check in on your goals regularly and see how things are going. Use this sheet to keep track of progress.

## Goal progress this week



Have you made any progress towards meeting your goal this week?

Are there any challenges or barriers you've identified when trying to complete your goals?

Have your needs or priorities shifted since you set your goal?

# References

Doran, G. T.: (1981). "There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives". *Management Review*, Vol. 70, Issue 11, pp. 35-36.

Harris, R. (2008). *The happiness trap: How to stop struggling and start living*. Trumpeter Books.

Morisano, D., Hirsh, J. B., Peterson, J. B., Pihl, R. O., & Shore, B. M. (2010). Setting, elaborating, and reflecting on personal goals improves academic performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(2), 255-264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018478>

Michie, S., van Stralen, M.M. & West, R. The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Sci* 6, 42 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42>

Twohig, M. P., & Crosby J. M. (2008). Values clarification. In W. T. O'Donohue & J. E. Fisher (Eds.), *Cognitive behavior therapy: Applying empirically supported techniques in your practice* (2nd ed., pp. 583-588). Wiley & Sons.

Vyskocilova, J., Prasko, J., Ociskova, M., Sedlackova, Z., & Mozny, P. (2015). Values and values work in cognitive behavioral therapy. *Activitas Nervosa Superior Rediviva*, 57(1-2), 40-48.

**Informed by approaches from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**

## Found this helpful?

For more free evidence-based workbooks, visit  
**ndhelp.co.uk**

Remember: your needs are, and always have been, valid.