New Year’s Resolution and Stages of Change

Introduction

Miranda
Welcome to "What's up!: Wellness from the third floor". This podcast is provided by the Wellness & Health Action Team, also known as WHAT, from Portland State University's Center for Student Health and Counseling, or SHAC. We're located in suite 340 on the third floor of the University Center Building on campus. Our purpose with this podcast is to discuss a variety of health related topics in a way that will be accessible for our non traditional campus. My name is Miranda and my pronouns are she/her

Quinn
My name is Quinn, my pronouns are he/him and I'll be doing editing and behind the scenes work this year.

Julie
And my name is Julie and my pronouns are she/her. We're all members of the Wellness & Health Action Team and we'll be the hosts of this podcast. Let's get into it!

Soothing jazz music fades out

Julie 00:00
Hi, good morning, Miranda. How are you doing?

Miranda 00:02
I'm doing great. How are you doing?

Julie 00:04
I am doing awesome. So welcome back to another episode of What's up. So what are we going to be talking about today?

Miranda 00:12
Yeah. So Happy New Year, everybody listening, if you are listening right when we published, we are going to be talking about New Year's resolutions and up that alley, we'll be talking about SMART goals and stages of change and sort of the psychology behind change making and New Year's resolutions.

Julie 00:31

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Although as Miranda has mentioned, this focuses on the New Year resolution aspect. But this is kind of applicable to all types of goals. It does definitely new year resolutions, or any of the at the beginning of the year goals. But this can apply to all different types of goals throughout the year throughout our lives. So let's get into it.

Miranda 00:56
Yeah, so on the topic of New Year's resolutions, about half of Americans make these resolutions, but only 8% actually achieve them. And part of this is because the majority of folks have a really difficult time changing their habits, lose motivation during the process and have negative discouraging thoughts and procrastinate, I know I do all of those things.

Julie 01:20
I do the same. And I will also admit that I am in definitely not one of the 8% that actually achieves it.

Miranda 01:28
I try not to make New Year's resolutions, because I know I won't achieve them. But yeah,

Julie 01:34
I think you can make goals throughout the year, it doesn't have to be new year resolutions

Miranda 01:37
goal at any time. Exactly.

Julie 01:39
And speaking of making goals, and how to kind of if you are making these goals, not using new year resolution, but goals in general, how to kind of stick with it. And our first tip is or suggestion is to use SMART goals. So Miranda and I will just kind of go through. If some of y'all already heard or know about smart goals, that's good. But we're just gonna go over it real quick. So first is specific. So make your goals specific and narrow and narrow for more effective planning. So think of who like for yourself, what what you're going to do, where, where it's going to be done, and why. So by making it specific, we can know exactly what we are achieving, or what we're going for.

Miranda 02:24
Yeah. And in case you haven't heard of SMART goals, so it's like an acronym. And so it's Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed. And so then the S is specific, the M is for measurable. So we want to make goals that define what evidence will prove you're making progress and reevaluate when necessary. So these can be metrics or data. For example, if you're wanting to start running, you can measure your distance or your time and see how you've achieved your goals. But if you don't have a way to measure them, then it's really hard to see if you're actually achieving your goals,

Julie 03:02
especially when it comes to numbers, you can compare and contrast and identify those progress as you go. So having those metrics, they're very helpful.

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Miranda 03:14
It's also important to note that when it comes to measuring goals and progress, it's a very personal thing. And your progress is going to look different than anybody else's. So like say you are running like you don't have to compare your progress and your distance and time to other peoples because you're you're different people with different situations.

Julie 03:34
Yeah that's a really good point. Make up your goals. But make sure that you're not comparing those goals with other people. Because as Miranda mentioned, it is your goal. And whatever you achieve that's your success, so don't compare it with others. Umm moving on to our next letter A stands for achievable and attainable. So make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goals within a certain timeline and within your scope, making sure that these goals are achievable. And they're not like something that you can not like possibly achieve, which Hey, you can achieve anything but make sure it is within like your limit and your ability to like achieve that

Miranda 04:16
right and especially if you are I know a lot of new year's resolutions focus around health, it's so important to like talk to your primary care physician if you're going to like make a significant change in your health practices.

Julie 04:30
Yeah, and those drastic changes specially to your diet can play a significant role when it comes to your health. So make sure you're making these plans of making them safely and going back and having a discussion and consult with your doctor and I don't know health care professionals

Miranda 04:50
definitely. So our next letters are for relevant so your goals should be relevant. They should align with your values and your long term objectives Knowing your goals are for the long run, make them easier to fulfill. And especially if they're aligned with your values, you're more likely to continue and incorporate your goals into your everyday life.

Julie 05:14
Yes, and moving to our last letter time. So set a realistic ambitious end date for tasks, prioritization and motivation. Having a completion date holds you accountable. And knowing that timeline, it makes it easier when you are planning these goals. And that time can vary depending on what the goal is, like what Miranda has mentioned. For example, if it's a diet, make sure that it's like, I don't know, a couple months kind of deal and not a week that you're just going to make these drastic changes. So make sure that it is relevant, or it makes sense to your goal.

Miranda 05:51
Exactly. And yeah, like Julie said, there's long and short term goals. So maybe a short term goal is to go running one time, and you can complete it, that's gonna happen, maybe a long ways out, maybe a

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short race out depending on where you are in that journey. But you can set milestones. So for example, finishing off a term or finishing a year of college can sort of help with that progression towards that long term goal of graduating college.

Julie 06:20
Yeah, knowing that the difference or it's applicable for both long term and short term and making sure that it makes sense. And a fundamental principle in psychology is if you can measure it, you can change it so that everything we've mentioned, refers to that kind of like measurement. So making sure that it aligns with your goals can help you change, I don't know whatever you want to change in life. So speaking of SMART goals, that was our first tip, using SMART goals, when you are trying to set up some kind of New Year resolution. The next is having patience, we can't emphasize enough on the importance of having patience, setting realistic goals and acknowledging that progress is never linear, and that some may not see progress right away, which will be discouraging at times and like, you're likely going to give up because you don't see that progress right away. However, knowing that results will eventually come just keep pushing it. And that just know that if you have set your mind on it, and that you're working hard, it's going to happen. So making sure that you're having patience and not being too hard on yourself.

Miranda 07:26
Yeah, I think this is sort of where like, maybe like a vision board or some sort of really understanding like how your goals fit in with your values and with your lifestyle, if progress is never going to come overnight, whatever goal you're trying to reach. And so keeping your like eye on the prize, so to speak. Yeah, that can be really useful as well.

Julie 07:52
And then moving on to our next tip as well is let your support system know your goals. So your support system can vary. It can be your family, your friends, or anyone around you that is a support to you. So by verbally saying it to them will allow you to acknowledge your goals and let other people know about it, and that they can support and motivate you as you work on your goals. For me, I personally kind of like doing that I kind of like to tell my friends because they might have similar goals. So y'all can work together to achieve those goals.

Miranda 08:25
Yeah, I have a friend who recently went back to school, and he posted on Facebook about it and got so many messages from other people who had also been considering going back to college, but hadn't quite taken that step. And so now, they have this whole community of people who are. So they're our next tip is to put things on your schedule and make them your priority. It's so easy to say Oh, I don't have the time to do this. I never have time to do that. And so if we get to choose how we spend our time, so you use that this is a Google Calendar fan, oh my god. This one, we put that goal into your Google Calendar. Maybe you want to cook dinner every night, instead of eating out put it put it into your calendar from 5:30 to six o'clock or your cooking and scheduling that time that way your scheduled time to clean your kitchen or schedule time to like work on saving money or going to the gym, whatever goal it is because if you if you schedule the time in then you're more likely to actually

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Julie 09:27
we didn't do something we're like, we're not just going to do it all it's like all or nothing kind of deal, however, is really important for us to remember that it's better to do something even something little than nothing. For example, like if one was to have like a midnight snack just because they had an unhealthy dinner or like a week of just unhealthy eating. And then it keeps on repeating and it's like kind of like a cycle, which kind of gets us out of it when we're trying to fulfill our goals and all.

Miranda 09:57
I feel like it's really hard with sort of But like influencer culture of these people who seem to have be achieving it all, and nobody's actually doing that, and maybe some, maybe you're trying to work out more, and you see all these people who are working out for what's that like, like, most people cannot do that. And that's okay. And so trying to compare yourself to like other people's goals and other people's routines is, it's really hard. And maybe you don't have time to do an hour and a half of exercise a day. That's a lot of time to dedicate. But maybe you can go for a five minute walk with your dog or something very simple. And that is just as good. And it's so important to take baby steps to

Julie 10:37
Yeah, and as students, for example, we want and I mean, all of us, right, we want to spend half an hour to an hour or however long we want to in the gym. But on some days, we have to understand that we have more things to do than others. So kind of just fitting in that 10-15 minute walk outdoors, that's really good. And that is something that is kind of putting you towards accomplishing your goals. And so it's really important for us to celebrate the small accomplishments, since it will push for positive mentality, which is not only good for your goals, and your accomplishments but is good for like the mind, you know, the mental health and that knowing that you're doing something good for yourself, and that you're slowly working on it is, serves as a great form of motivation.

Miranda 11:24
Definitely and, and maybe like planning out how you're going to celebrate small accomplishments is another really good method for achieving your goals. So say your goal is to write a paper, you can say well, okay, once I write this paper, there's movie in the theater I've been really wanting to go see. So once this paper is turned in, I get to go see the movie, or something simple, or I get I get to cook a nice dinner with my partner, something like that.

Julie 11:48
Yeah, those little incentives are very, very helpful. Um, and this is more of like encouragement, I guess. But resiliency is essential when it comes to creating our goals. So try not to see relapse or temporary failure as a total meltdown. Because it can become an excuse, you know, when it comes to giving up. So that's when we kind of talk about having that myth, that fix and the growth mindset. So knowing that, as humans, we make mistake, we're not perfect. So sometimes we come into a dead end, but knowing that you can always turn around and continue on with your goals, your path, it's perfectly fine. It's just normal. Just having that resiliency is very important.

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Miranda 12:33
Yeah, definitely. And if you take anything away from this episode, it's the achieving our goals, our New Year's resolutions, whatever, whatever goal you're trying to achieve. It's it's not about willpower, you cannot will something into completion, as great as that would be. Achieving goals is about developing proper skills and strategies along with patience and resiliency, and changing your life, little by little in order to achieve those goals. So next, we're going to talk about the stages of change model, which is a psychological theory behind how we make changes in our lives. Mm hmm.

Julie 13:12
Yes, speaking about changes. Now we're looking in kind of that, like, what we're gonna say the psychological part of it. So we all if y'all are not familiar with the stages of stages of change models, so there are five stages to pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. So as you progress through the stages, it is helpful to reevaluate your progress.

Miranda 13:37
Yeah, you might go through several stages in a short period of time, or it might take a really long time to get through one stage. And that's different for everybody and there's no right or wrong way to approach it. The stages also they're not, it's not linear and change making ever is it's okay to fall back to a previous stage or jump around between these stages. You don't have to do them in order. And looking deeper into the stages. One thing I think we want to know a lot of this model is originally like used for like overcoming addiction, however, it can be applied to any change making in your life as well.

Julie 14:15
Oh, yeah, for sure these stages can be applied to any aspects or facets of life. So it is pretty helpful to know the stages. So starting with stage one, which is the pre-contemplation stage. So during this stage, not many acknowledge that there is a problem or behavior that needs to be changed. So one can be interested or not interested in any kind of help and tend to like defend their current habits because they're in or they're practicing that habit at the moment.

Miranda 14:47
Yeah, in this stage in pre-contemplation people don't want to change and they might be defensive of others trying to pressure them to change and if you're in a pre-contemplation stage, some of the things you can do evaluate your current behavior. Think about what you want in your goals in life, and is your current behavior working towards those goals. This can involve self exploration, meditation verbalization, of any potential risk your behavior might cause.

Julie 15:16
Yeah, those are all really good techniques. And that that's gonna, we're gonna mention that throughout the stages as we talk about them, how it looks like and techniques that y'all can use when you're trying to kind of like overcome that stage. Um, so stage two contemplation. So contemplation is acknowledging that there is a problem, but not yet ready to be changed. And one can debate if they want to change or having enough confidence to change. So people are weighing the pros and cons,

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you know, like you're comparing you're like, Oh, what if kind of situation, and they're kind of modifying their behavior as they kind of go through this stage, and come in identifying what they can get out of it?

Miranda 16:01
Definitely. And so you might be waiting, long term benefits versus short term costs. This stage is one of those stages, that is different for everybody. It can last a couple days, a couple of weeks, or it can last a lifetime. Some people never leave this stage, they're always thinking about making a change, but they never quite do. And so what some of the ways you can move through this stage evaluating the pros and cons of behavioral change, maybe you ask a professional to weigh in on the pros and cons. For example, maybe you're wanting to make a change to your diet, you talk to your primary care physician or a doctor or a nutritionist and talk to them and see, well, what did they think what are some of the pros and cons of you can also identify and promote new positive outcome expectations.

Julie 16:53
Mm hmm um, so after contemplation stage is stage three, which is the preparation. So for preparation during being in the stage one is getting ready to change. So this is when you've kind of like you've finished contemplating, you've identified the pros and the cons. And now you're like, Okay, I'm going to execute the plan, I am ready to make that change. And that people have made a commitment to that change. And normally, during this phase, many or this stage, many may go through the research phase, people are gathering information, and that if you are gathering information, make sure your information is from reputable sources, since it can serve as a huge influence to your decisions and to your planning.

Miranda 17:40
Definitely. And this stage preparation is so so so important. A lot of people, when they're trying to make changes, they skip this stage, they move directly from contemplation, wanting to change to action, actively making that change. And this usually doesn't work, it can cause a regression because you haven't adequately researched or accepted what it's actually going to take to make the change. And this is especially true with new year's resolutions. People decide New Year's Eve comes around, maybe they're they're feeling bad about their life, because it's a whole nother year, it's gonna be 2022 or something, and they just decide to make the change. And then they expect that clock turns midnight, the change will be made. And that is so so difficult. And it might work for a couple of people. But most people like you have to prepare, and you have to understand what it's going to take to make a change. Otherwise you could burnout or lack of success.

Julie 18:36
Yeah, and I think the preparation stage is probably one of arguably one of the most important stage in this stages of change. Because this is when you get to know yourself a lot and what you need to be what the bandwidth is in order for you to achieve it. Because many of us we did not do enough research. We don't educate ourselves enough that when we actually go on about our plan, we're not prepped for like, the outcomes of it. And so that serves us like it's very discouraging, you know, to be like, Oh, I didn't expect that. So I'm just gonna give up definitely. So preparation is extremely important when you are trying to create change. I'm moving on to our fourth stage, which is the action stage. So

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during this stage, there will be change in behaviors. People are motivated to change their behavior and actively involved in taking steps to change their behavior by using a variety of different techniques.

Miranda 19:34
Yeah, and this stage usually lasts about six months. And that's sort of how long it takes for your mind and your body to really adapt to a change. And just like that change just becomes a part of your life after about six months depending on what it is. And people in this stage are really often open to receiving help and seeking support from others. Maybe they're they're trying to learn more out what their goal and maybe they're trying to exercise they're trying to learn more and more and more. So just because preparation is the information gathering doesn't mean you have to stop information gathering once you move into the action stage.

Julie 20:13
Mm hmm. Yeah. And that I actually just like that kind of face where you're testing things out. So it's good to like, take small steps as you're going.

Miranda 20:25
Yeah, some of the techniques to move through this stage, focusing on restructuring your cues and your social support, bolstering self efficacy for dealing with obstacles, and combating feelings of loss and remembering your long term benefits. So taking action is hard. And whatever change you're trying to make, it's, it's gonna, it's going to be difficult. And you might feel sort of a feeling of loss for the lifestyle you had before, whatever that might be. And so remembering why you're making the changes you're doing is so important.

Julie 20:58
Yep. And moving on to our last and final stage is stage five, which is the maintenance. So during the stages, like you've prepped, you've made the change. And here's just the maintaining part of it. So you're maintaining the behavior change, people are avoiding temptation and maintaining the status quo, they tend to remind themselves of progress they've made and acquire new skills to make the change, which is, which is very important. When we are accomplishing these goals. It is important to be patient with yourself and recognize that it often takes a while to let go of certain behavior patterns. So during the maintenance, some people even this is the final stage, some people still fall out of it, like we've mentioned, you can fall out and re enter into any of these stages. But during this stage, we're kind of like finding that balance already. And you're kind of like familiar with the routine, and then you change.

Miranda 21:55
Yeah, um, some of the techniques for this stage are planning for follow up support, reinforcing those internal rewards and thinking about coping with, quote, unquote, relapse if you did fall back into another stage.

Julie 22:10
So what are the connections between the Stages of Change, which we just discussed about and one's ability to maintain their goals or New Year's resolution. So as folks who are working through the new

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year resolutions, or equals, they will experience the stages of change. So you'll go through this, like, even if you wouldn't like notice, or like explicitly writing of the stages of change, you are actually going through it.

Miranda 22:37
And it's important to be mindful of your process of change. And knowing where you are in the stages can help you clearly identify what you need to help you move along. And maybe it'll explain what what some of your actions or thoughts are driven by.

Julie 22:56
So by knowing the process and understanding where you are in it will help clearly identify what we need to help us move along. So this explains some of our actions and thoughts that we have so like we said, understanding and knowing yourself, being mindful of what you are doing is very important when it comes to accomplishing these goals.

Miranda 23:15
Definitely. And understanding that stages of change, it's a cycle, it's okay, if you stop, it's okay, if you reenter, it's okay, if you fall back, whatever you're doing, it's okay. Because you're, you're human, and I don't want to say mistakes, but you make, you're never gonna be able to achieve the ideal that you have in your mind. And that's okay.

Julie 23:38
And do not feel the pressure of having to have a New Year's resolution because as we said, and as we emphasize throughout this episode, some for some new year resolutions aren't real. And for me personally, I make goals throughout the year. And that's how I see growth and how I get to know myself um, it because it just doesn't happen like what Miranda said. So as the clock strikes 12, that's like, oh, my gosh, I mean, hold you, person. And so don't feel the pressure just because everyone else around the world is doing or making some kind of new year resolution. You don't have to, like make one at that time. And it comes down to like knowing yourself and knowing what you need to change as a person.

Miranda 24:17
Absolutely. And thinking back if you're listening in another point in the year maybe I know a lot of times people will think oh, well I'll just I'll just wait till New Year's to make that change. And you don't have to do that you can make a change at any point at any time. It's up to you and you You're in charge of your own life and so you can decide to do that whenever you want. I think we also want to emphasize that resolutions and goals should improve your well being there's no purpose for somebody to do it just because everything everybody else is or you don't enjoy something so maybe like cutting out eating fast food if you It's not hurting you. If you're not like if it's not harmful for you, just because everybody else is trying to doesn't mean you have to maybe something you really enjoy. Or maybe watching television is something that you really enjoy, and it doesn't harm your life. That's it. You don't have to change it if you don't want to.

Julie 25:17

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Yeah, and these goals, as we've mentioned, even cleaning your resolution, they don't have to be like drastic change, right? Like these little changes, I don't know, like just going to bed at a certain time. Yeah, like if that can improve your overall well being, hey, that's something that you should celebrate about. That's a great achievement. So as we mentioned throughout this episode, or just in general, whenever we talk about goals and changes that you want to implement in life, make sure that you're mindful of your mind, your body and your soul as you make these changes. Be kind to yourself and be graceful as you work on your goals. It's really important to give yourself that space and be forgiving, be resilient and be patient.

Miranda 25:59
Absolutely. Well. Happy New Year, Julie and Happy New Year to our listeners, wherever you are. We hope you have a wonderful 2022

Julie 26:09
Yes, yes, yes, yes. All right. Thank you so much, Miranda. I really appreciate you.

Miranda 26:14
Bye, Julie.

Soothing jazz music fades out

Outro

Julie

We hope you enjoyed this week's episode of the WHAT's Up Podcast! We'll catch up with you next week. We at SHAC are fully committed to the physical and emotional health and wellness of PSU students. Please call ahead to use our health services for flu shots, free COVID testing, or general appointments at (503) 725-2800. Counselling services are still available via telehealth, and you can schedule your appointments by calling that same number at (503) 725-2800. If you're looking for more health and wellness resources, you can check out our online health magazine that gets sent to your pbx.edu email every Wednesday, or you can download the Campus Well app. Also feel free to check out the Virtual Mind Spa Experience to rest, relax, and rejuvenate wherever you have internet access. We will be including resource links in the episode description, as well as the link to the episode transcript. If you have any questions about health, wellness, SHAC, or anything we discussed in this podcast, please fill out the Google Form in the episode description. Thanks for listening and take care. We'll see you next week on WHAT's Up: wellness from the third floor.

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