

Planning for the Future

A useful exercise once the person has started to recover, s/he is asked to look six to twelve months into the future and to identify a goal they would like to achieve. A problem-solving strategy can then be used to identify broad and specific actions needed to achieve the objective.

Consider the following example:

Goal:

To return to work as a retail assistant within six months.

Concerns:

- ❖ Continuing to take medication may make returning to work difficult, due to feeling sedated, having the shakiness, feeling embarrassed, being fearful of making mistakes, and time-keeping issues
- ❖ Concern about employer's attitude towards my wish to return to work

Options (examples):

- ❖ Consider a change of medication (to atypical such as quetiapine) – but this would mean carefully weighing up the risks of changing medication
- ❖ Review medication on fortnightly basis
- ❖ Reduce the dose of medication
- ❖ Change the timing of the dose, to taking the medication late at night
- ❖ Self-monitor the frequency, severity and duration of side-effects, any coping strategies that are used / tried and any achievements
- ❖ Gradually structure the day-time activity from now, in preparation for returning to work in six-months time

It is always more helpful to make a written record of what was discussed, which can be given to the person to refer back to – *an example of a simple record sheet is shown on the following page.*

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What is your goal? Try to be very clear and specific.	
When is it to be achieved?	
What may stop you from achieving your goal? What are your concerns?	
What options or actions might help you to achieve your goal? What has been helpful in the past that might help you now to achieve your goal?	
What will you do now? Try to be very specific about your actions – for example: what & when?	