

**Unit 3, Session 1****Goal Setting, the Basics**

Rationale	Setting goals, planning ahead, and knowing how to make choices are internal developmental assets. Participants who are able to describe or display these skills are more likely to engage in positive, constructive behaviors and avoid negative, destructive behaviors.
Target Audience	Out-of-school participants who have completed at least secondary education.
Facilitator Expertise	Construction Industry Class leaders and local counterparts who have been trained in how to use and adapt the Life Skills and Leadership Manual.
Time	120 minutes
Pre-requisites	Units 1 and 2 of Life Skills and Leadership Manual
Version	Nov – 2014

<b>Facilitator preparation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubber bands for the Motivation activity should be large or oversized if possible. Regular rubber bands are fine. Avoid very small ones. If you do not have access to rubber bands, elastic for sewing into clothes is an alternative. If you cannot find these supplies for all participants, you can demonstrate the activity in front of the group with one of the following alternative materials: elastic cut from a pair of sweat pants; bungee cord (may be dangerous if it flies from your hand!); elastic exercise band; band cut from a bicycle inner tube.</li> <li>• Prepare “My Dream” stick figure flip chart.</li> <li>• Prepare a personal timeline on flip chart paper to demonstrate how to do the activity “High Points, Low Points” in the Activity section. (Flipchart 3: Sample Personal Timeline)</li> </ul>
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**Materials:**

<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubber bands or loops of elastic, one for each participant</li> <li>• Flip chart paper for participants</li> <li>• Markers or crayons</li> <li>• Collage supplies (magazine pictures, glue or tape)</li> </ul>
<b>Prepared flip charts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart 1: Making Decisions (from Unit 2, Session 3)</li> <li>• Flip chart 2: My Dream</li> <li>• Flip chart 3: Sample Personal Timeline</li> </ul>
<b>Handouts</b>	(None)
<b>Trainer materials</b>	(None)

**Learning Objectives:**

1. After a guided visualization, participants will define their personal vision or dream of their future, including what that future looks like in three years and as an adult.
2. After thinking about their own life choices, participants will reflect critically on past experiences and articulate at least one example of how those experiences affect future progress toward one's dream.

**Instructional Sequence****Motivation (15 minutes)****Materials:**

- Rubber bands or elastic loops, one for each participant (See Materials section for alternative suggestions if rubber bands are not available)

**Reality Stretch**

Participants make a connection between their current reality and their hopes for the future.

Ask participants to stand or sit in a circle and give a rubber band or elastic loop to each person.

Demonstrate with your own rubber band as you say:

**“I’ve given each of you a rubber band. Please loop it between your hands and stretch your hands apart one above the other. Hold your hands there for a few moments.”**

Wait 30 to 40 seconds, and then ask:

**“The longer you hold one hand above the other, what do you notice? (Possible responses: My arms are getting tired. My hands are sore. The rubber band is tight.)**

**“Now, please try it again, one hand above the other, but this time stretch your hands as far apart as you can without breaking the rubber band. Again, hold it there for a while and tell me what you feel. (Possible response: There’s a lot of tension. The rubber band is cutting into my skin.)**

**“When we feel that tension, there’s a desire to relieve it, right? Do you want to bring your hands together? Do you want to make it easier?”**

**“I’d like you to stretch your rubber band one more time, but this time, imagine that your lower hand is your life today. Imagine also that your upper hand represents the things that make you happy. This could be spending time with your friends, playing sports, reading a good book, making or building something you choose, having a boyfriend or girlfriend, or anything else.**

**“Now when you raise your ‘happiness’ hand above your ‘today’ hand and you feel that tight stretch, what can you do to ease the tension?” (Possible responses: Raise the “today hand.” Lower the “happiness hand.”)**

Invite participants to share their observations about the connections between their lives today and the lives they would like to have in the future. You can ask some of the questions below, and then fill in with any thoughts from the list that aren’t brought up by the participants.

**“If one way of relieving the tension between your life today and what makes you happy is to lower your ‘happiness’ hand, what might that represent? (Possible responses: Choosing different things that make you happy. Having fewer things that make you happy. Being happy less often.)**

**Another way to reduce the tension is to raise your ‘today’ hand. What might that represent in real life? (Possible responses: Changing something today to make your happiness more possible tomorrow. Knowing what makes you happy can inspire you to change things today.)**

**Sometimes your hands were further apart and there was more pull, tightness, or stress between your ‘today’ and ‘happiness’ hands. What might this represent in a person’s life? (Possible responses: Too little tightness is like being uninterested, unconcerned, or not caring. Too much tightness is like being frustrated that you’ll never have what you want. Having the right amount of pull and tightness creates inspiration and movement toward happiness.)**

### Summary

Summarize by saying:

**“In order to be happy in the future, you need to be clear about what you want, but also clear about what your life is like right now. Today we are going to be talking about the importance of having goals to guide our path to the future and you’ll have a chance to think about some of your own goals.”**

### Information (30 minutes)

Materials: (None)

### What’s Your Dream?

Participants identify some of the elements they would like to have in their lives as adults.

Try to gain a sense of where participants are in terms of their comfort with ambiguity and their willingness to predict or influence the future.

**Note: Various cultures have different understandings about the future. Some believe the future is pre-determined, in the hands of God, or that an individual’s life is a matter of fate. Others, like most people in the United States, believe that individuals can influence their own future by the actions they take now. The Motivation activity focused on what makes a person “happy” is a way to save the conversation about the future for this Information section. Use the following discussion and conversation as a way to learn about cultural perceptions of the future in your host community. In addition, you can invite participants to consider your perspective, as a U.S. citizen, about the future. They don’t have to agree with you but you can express your desire that they at least consider your view and take from this activity whatever is appropriate and helpful for them.**

Ask:

**“How much do you think about the future?”**

**“Would you say that the future is in the hands of God (or a matter of fate)? “ Can a person influence what their life will be like in the future?”**

**“What role does ‘luck’ play in determining what happens in your life?”**

Invite people to consider what it would be like if they could influence their future.

Say:

**“In some cultures, people believe they can influence the future. For example, in the United States, most people believe they can make their life happier by working hard, learning to be a better person, or communicating better with other people.**

**“Today, I’d like you to think about what you would like for your future. Even if this seems like a foreign idea, perhaps you can at least think about what makes you happy. It will be like stretching the rubber band. We’ll create just a bit of pressure between your ‘today’ hand and your ‘happy’ hand (or your future) and see what new ideas we can come up with about the future.”**

**Note: It is possible that some participants will have difficulty with this activity if they begin thinking about a future that seems impossible for them. Be prepared that strong emotions may surface and be expressed through moodiness or even crying. If this happens, acknowledge the significance of the activity without drawing attention to specific individuals. Say something like,**

**“This activity might have made some of you feel sad, angry, or frustrated. I would be happy to talk to anyone individually after the session if they would like. For now, it’s important to realize that our emotions help us identify what is most important to us. If you have strong feelings after this activity, try to understand why you feel that way. Use your feelings to figure out what is most important to you. Perhaps then you can figure out a way to get (or do) what really matters to you. The other activities we have planned today will help you do just that.”**

**You can also introduce a stretch break or send participants out of the learning space for five minutes of fresh air while you remain available to anyone who wishes to talk to you.**

Begin the visualization by asking people to get comfortable.

Say:

**“Please sit comfortably in your chair or on the floor. Close your eyes. Take three deep breaths and let the air out slowly ...**

(Pause after each group of sentences to allow time for the participants to visualize.)

**“Imagine it is three years from now. After completing this training program, you have gone on to do many things that you had not expected before. You are very happy with your life now. Take a moment to feel what it is like to be that happy ...**

**“Think for a moment about your mind and what you have learned. What intellectual abilities do you have now that you’ve always wanted to have? Maybe you are good at writing, or mathematics, or reading, or drawing ...**

**“Think about your social life. What friends do you have? What kind of relationship do you have with your parents, caregivers, and other family members? Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? What is that relationship like? ...**

**“Next, think about your emotions. Are you happy? Do you feel confident? Are you able to deal with difficulties and setbacks? ...**

**“Imagine what you are like physically. Are you strong and healthy? Do you have the food, shelter, and clothing you need? ...**

**“What is your spiritual life like? Do you have hope during difficult situations? What is your relationship to God (or a higher power)? Are you worried about your death or the future? ... ”**

Leave an extra-long moment of silence after this last prompt so that participants can better refocus on the class setting.

Gently say:

**“I’d like you to slowly open your eyes and take three deep breaths. Then just sit quietly for a moment so you can think to yourself about your ideas for the future.”**

Gather some general thoughts from participants with these discussion questions.

Say:

**“After doing this activity, some people feel like they actually traveled to a different place. Your ideas about the future are very special and they belong to you. You don’t have to share anything specific if you don’t wish to, but I would like to hear some of your general ideas.”**

**Note: Among the discussion questions, those in BOLD are the most important.**

**How easy or difficult was it to think about your future three years from now?**

**Which was most exciting to think about — your intellectual, social, emotional, physical, or spiritual happiness?**

**How far did you “stretch the rubber band?”**

**Was there a big difference between how you see yourself now and how you might be in the future?**

**To what extent did you limit yourself by thinking only about what you thought might be possible?**

**How would your visualization be different if there were no limits on what you could become? How was this activity similar to other creativity activities we have done?**

### Summary

Summarize by saying:

**“This kind of visualization is a chance to get an idea of what some of your hopes and dreams for the future might be. When you have a clear idea of what you want for the future, it creates a positive pressure, like we learned with the rubber band, which pulls us toward the future that we desire.”**

**Practice (30 minutes)****Materials:**

- Flip chart paper
- Markers or crayons
- Collage supplies (magazine pictures, glue or tape)
- Flip chart 1: Making Decisions (from Unit 2, Session 3)
- Flip chart 2: My Dream

**What's Your Dream? (Continued)**

Participants further refine their personal vision.

**Note: This activity makes reference to “Whole Body Decisions” in Unit 2, Session 3, (Flipchart 1: Making Decisions). You can reuse some of the flip charts from that session here.**

Show Flip chart 1 and describe the activity.

Say:

**“The more clear you can be about what you might like to have in your future, the more you may see things you can do now to help you achieve what you want.”**

**“You probably remember that we used a human figure and various parts of the body to figure out how to make decisions. We referred to decisions based on our Head (logic), Heart (emotions), Hands (social), and Hopes (goals). There is a similarity between how we make decisions and how we plan for our future. The decisions we make every day can help us get closer to what we want for our future.**

Distribute a sheet of flip chart paper and markers to each participant.

Show Flip chart 2 and say:

**“Today we are going to use another human figure to think about the future you just visualized. We’ll use some of the same references to the body. We’ll add ‘Physical’ today and substitute ‘Spiritual’ for ‘Hopes.’**

**“Please begin by drawing a very large stick figure in the middle of your paper. Then label different parts of it with signs for ‘Intellectual, Social, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual.’**

Point to Flip chart 2 and note the different areas for “Three Years from Now” and “As an Adult.”



Say:

**“Please use any words or pictures that you wish to describe the future you visualized. Notice that my poster has space for ‘Three Years from Now’ and ‘As an Adult.’ For now, just fill in the section of your poster for ‘Three Years from Now.’”**

Give participants at least 10 minutes to work. Move among them, showing interest and answering questions. When most people have completed the near future vision of their posters, ask participants to choose a partner with whom they feel comfortable. Ask participants to share their posters with their partners.

Say:

**“At this point I would like you to talk about your poster with your partner. Make sure you use good listening skills when your partner talks about her or his poster. What are some listening skills that you might use?” (Possible answers: Encourage; Describe the person’s feelings; Clarify, Ask questions; Summarize)**

After about five minutes, say:

**“Together, help each other complete the last part of your poster, the ‘As an Adult’ part, which is further into the future. Try to help your partner think about how he or she might change and grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually as she or he becomes an adult. Add whatever words or pictures to your posters that will help show these changes.”**

When posters are completed, ask participants to share their posters with the whole group. Ask each class leader to hold her or his poster up while her or his partner describes some of the most important features of the person’s future.

**Note: You can make this reporting optional if some people prefer not to share, or if time is not adequate. Try to talk to these participants at a later time to give them a chance to share one-on-one with you.**

**Note: The presentation of posters is an assessment of Learning Objective 1.**

## Summary

Conclude the activity by saying:

**“Notice that there is a similarity between these posters about your future and the poster about using Head, Heart, Hands, and Hopes for making decisions. In many ways, it is the decisions we make now that will influence how our dreams will evolve in the future. We’ll talk next about how events in our past might have influenced our present, and in later session activities we’ll discuss all the small steps that help us move into the future.”**

**Application (30 minutes)****Materials:**

- Flip chart paper, sheets of paper, markers or crayons
- Flip chart 3: Sample Personal Timeline

**High Points, Low Points**

Participants describe how the past events in a person's life inform but do not necessarily predetermine their future.

Invite participants to consider the events and choices in their own lives.

Say:

**“Remember that we have talked about how to use creative thinking to identify more options in solving a problem. We learned about this when I told you about the participants in Chicago who tried to get rid of abandoned cars in their neighborhood.”**

**“Today, I'd like you to think about the events in your own past. Then we'll use some of those creativity techniques to help you see how whatever has happened in your past can influence the goals or dreams you work toward and who you become in the future.”**

Distribute flip chart paper and markers or crayons. Alternatively, participants can use regular paper; perhaps the back sides of previously used papers.

Say:

**“Please draw a straight, horizontal line across the center of your paper. On one end of the line write the year you were born and write the word ‘Today’ at the opposite end of the line. At the top of the page, write the words ‘Good Things’ and at the bottom write the word ‘Challenges.’**

**Note: Cultures that read from right to left will likely write their birth date on the right. Use a vertical line for cultures that read from top to bottom of the page and designate either right or left side for “Good Things” and “Challenges.”**

Demonstrate how to make a personal timeline by drawing on Flip chart 3: Sample Personal Timeline

As you say:

**“I’d like you to make a timeline or graph of what your life has been like up to now. It will show the high, positive, and happy points, as well as the low, negative, and sad points. Assume that the horizontal line means everything is OK, nothing special is happening, and life is going along normally. Then make some dots above the line for things that happened that were good or made you happy and make dots below the line for things that happened to you that were difficult, unfortunate, or made you sad.**

- Using Flip chart 3, say

**“For example, when I was about 13 (name something that happened to you, such as a family move, first boyfriend or girlfriend, academic achievement, etc.) I felt (name your feeling good or bad), so to represent that event in my life, I’ll put a dot here.**

**“Then, when I was 17 (Name something that happened to you) I felt (name your feeling and make a dot, high or low, to indicate that this event happened after the first).**

**“Similarly, I’d like you to think of the some of the events in your life, recall how you felt at the time, and place a dot either above the line or below it. The further your dots are from the center line, the better or worse you felt about the event. You can include as much detail about your life as you wish and as many events as you would like. Just keep the events in order by time and show how extreme your feelings were about them by how far they are from the center line.”**

Encourage people to complete their timelines by connecting the dots in order, from their birth year to today. Participants can choose whether to leave their timeline as it is, to label the high and low points, or to illustrate it in any way they wish.

**Note: Encourage participants by reassuring them that they do not have to tell anyone what the high and low points of their lives have been. The purpose, as will become clear in the discussion, is to help participants see that the actions and events of their lives have a cumulative effect on their development. But events of the past do not predict our future path. Also, be alert for the trauma inherent in the lives of refugees, displaced people, the homeless, and others. Be prepared to have such individuals make a timeline of their communities or country so they do not need to reveal personal hardships.**

Help participants derive meaning from their personal timeline by sharing highlights of your own timeline on Flip chart 3: Sample Personal Timeline. Highlight some of the events of your life and describe how they led you to major decisions or to fulfill your dream. For example, you might show the events of your life that eventually led you to become a Construction Industry Class leader. Ask participants to choose a partner they feel comfortable talking with about their timeline. Ask the following discussion questions one at a time, pausing for about two minutes between each so the pairs can have a conversation:

**Note: Emphasize that people do not need to share details of events. You are only interested in what they can learn about themselves by thinking about their past.**

**Note: Among the discussion questions, those in BOLD are the most important.**

**Of the high and low points on your timeline, which are the result of things you could control (choices you made) and which were things you could not control (choices others made, natural disasters, etc.).**

**Some people are able to identify one or two highly significant events that have shaped who they are. Others can see that they have been influenced in their growth by many smaller events that have been added together. Which is true for you?**

**What is an event – perhaps a smaller one – that has influenced you more than you expected?**

**Looking at some of your “Challenges” below the center line, which of these events actually ended up being good because they helped you move closer to something you wanted?**

**What is an event – good or bad – that you cannot yet tell if its long-term effect will be good?**

**What is something you have learned about yourself by looking at your past in this way?**

**With all the events in your life so far, what has kept you strong, who has helped you, and how have you been able to deal with the tough times?**

**Note: Step 5 of “High Points, Low Points” is an assessment of Learning Objective 2, as the facilitator moves among the group and listens to the participants**

## **Summary**

Summarize by saying:

**“What has happened to us in our past is now part of our history and cannot be changed. What matters is what we will do with our own history. Do we let it slow us down? Does it inspire us? Does it teach us something useful that helps us move forward? We are going to look next at our future and hopefully this look at the past will give us some new ideas for the future.”**

Assessment (15 minutes)

Materials: (None)

### Back to Back; Face to Face

Participants summarize what they have learned about making goals.

Ask each participant to find a partner who is about her or his same height and stand back to back. (If the number of participants is odd, the leader can pair up with one participant.)

Say:

**“I’d like to get a quick idea of how helpful this activity was for you. I’ll ask you a question. While your back is to your partner, you can think about your answer. When I say, ‘Face to face,’ turn around and take a few moments to briefly share your answer with your partner. Make sure both you and your partner have a chance to share. Ready? Here is your first question: ‘What is one goal or thing you would like to accomplish in the next three years?’”**

**Note: Be watchful of participants as they are speaking to their partners. You will want to ensure that participants give a thorough answer but they should also be brief. This is meant to be a quick recap of the main points of the day rather than a time for long discussions.**

Pause a moment so participants can think, then say, “Face to face.”

After about 1 ½ minutes, say:

**“Please turn back to back for your next question: ‘What is one goal or thing you want to accomplish when you are an adult?’”**

Pause a moment so participants can think, then say, “Face to face.”

After another 1 ½ minutes, say:

**“Please turn back to back for your next question: ‘What is one way your past has influenced who you are today?’”**

Pause a moment so participants can think, then say, “Face to face.”

After 1 ½ minutes, say:

**“Please turn back to back for your next question: ‘Thinking about your timeline, what is one thing that has kept you strong in the past?’”**

Pause a moment so participants can think, then say, “Face to face.”

After 1 ½ minutes, ask participants to stop.

**Note: “Back to Back; Front to Front” serves as an assessment of Learning Objectives 1 and 2.**

### **Summary**

Conclude by saying:

**“We have talked about how important it is to know what makes you happy. Using a rubber band, we learned that comparing how things are now with how we’d like them to be creates a tension that can pull us toward our goal. We spent time visualizing our dreams for the future and we learned that we can have different goals for ourselves, depending upon whether we are considering the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, or spiritual side of who we are. And we made individualized timelines to think about how our past has some influence over our future but our past does not determine our future. In our next session we’ll spend more time learning how to make goals and plans for the future.”**