

CONVERSATION GUIDE: ACTIVITIES FOR STAFF MEETINGS AND IN-SERVICE TRAININGS

Reaching for the Stars: Goal-Setting with Survivors of Domestic Violence

In many of our programs, working with survivors to set goals has become commonplace practice. The idea of having and meeting goals is something we often talk about and organize our work around. When we work with survivors to set goals, that process can either be a mechanical one—intended to fulfill program and funder requirements—or it can be the foundation of a meaningful conversation about dreams, wishes, resources, strategies, timetables, and supports. The “Reach for the Stars” framework and graphic can be used in multiple ways to rethink goal-setting, both at the program level and with individual survivors.

Additional Resources:

- *Building a Reflective Frame* webinar recording, available by request.

Materials:

- Copies of the “Reach for the Stars” graphic (attached)
- Paper and pens for all staff to write notes and reflections. If part of long-term training, staff can use notebooks to keep all of their reflections.

Activity #1: Reaching for the stars together

Suggested Time: 5-30 minutes (and ongoing)

This reflection activity can be done alone, in pairs, or as part of a staff meeting. It can be a conversation or a written reflection.

Say: When we work hand-in-hand with survivors, we turn the idea of egalitarian and empowering services from slogan to reality. We want to be sure that we are working with survivors as partners, identifying and reaching for “stars” that are meaningful to them.

Instructions:

1. Using the “Reach for the Stars” graphic, think about a couple of the survivors you work with. Reflect on the following questions:
 - a. How does it feel to work on goals together? Does it feel like jumping hurdles, pulling that person along, or reaching for something together?
 - b. If you were to “reach for the stars” with that person, how would it change your work with them?

Activity #2: Writing our own stars

Suggested Time: Ongoing

No one else can tell us what we should dream or what we should wish for. Each of us should be entitled to *write on our own stars*. Asking the survivors you are working with about their “stars” can help to open up a conversation about dreams and wishes and can help move the conversation beyond short-term goal setting.

Instructions:

1. Show the Reach for the Stars graphic to a survivor you are working with.
Ask:
 - a. What are your stars (dreams, hopes, wishes)?
 - b. What would it take to reach them? (In other words, are there additional or intermediary stars on the way?)
 - c. How can I help you reach your stars? To help your children reach their stars?
2. Some people like to make a collage of their wishes and dreams, or to write, draw, or collage on the stars graphic itself.

Activity #3: Staff and programs have stars too

Suggested Time: Ongoing

Not only do we help survivors reach for their stars, we can use this graphic to think about our dreams and hopes as individual staff members, as teams, and as programs. Some of our stars may be of the “keeping the doors open” variety. Others might be “to respect every survivor’s needs” or “to ensure that staff feel that their work is valued.”

In staff meetings or in individual supervision, we can use this stars graphic to structure our conversations about goals, plans, and strategies for ourselves and for our program. If you are a supervisor, do you know what your staff’s dreams or plans are? How do you help them get there?

If you’ve used **this conversation guide** in your work, we would love to hear from you! Let us know: How did you use it? What worked well? What can we revise / improve? What did you learn? What suggestions would you have for other people who want to use this idea in their work?

Send us your feedback at info@nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org.



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