

WHAT IT IS

William Glasser, the founder of reality therapy, talks about the importance of creating plans and goals for a student in a manner that ensures success in his books *Counseling with Choice Theory: The New Reality Therapy* and *Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry*. He offers a system based on wants, direction and doing, evaluation, and planning (WDEP). As plans are created with the student, they should be built upon the SAMIC, meaning they should be simple, attainable, measurable, immediate, controlled by the planner, consistently practiced, and committed to. We can create goals that are too distant or great ideas, but the student isn't on board. They may be too vague or it may be challenging to determine if they are progressing or not.

WHO TO USE IT WITH

Students who feel overwhelmed and lost with their next steps in tackling a significant problem. This could be related to a major change or to developing a new approach to tackle an ongoing issue, such as reducing drinking, finding a relationship, or developing better study habits. The WDEP part of this approach helps the student identify what they want, while the SAMIC is useful to ensure the plan being built is well constructed, flexible, and designed for success.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How do your current behaviors line up with supporting the goals you are trying to achieve? Consider an example of wanting to lose weight but not exercising or reducing unhealthy eating.
2. Where have previous plans failed to achieve the desired goal? What obstacles have gotten in the way of ensuring the behaviors are congruent (or lined up) with achieving the desired goal?

TEACHING INSIGHTS

The four-step approach to planning involves these areas:

- W = exploring the student's "wants" and needs. Our task here with the student is to help them identify what they are looking for regarding their desires and the direction they want to head in.
- D = assessing the "direction" and "doing" related to their goals. We help them understand what they are currently doing and the direction these behaviors are taking them.
- E = conducting an "evaluation" of the student's behavior. Is the behavior bringing them closer to their wants?
- P = "Planning" and commitment to help the student formulate realistic plans and carry them out.

The SAMIC approach

- Simple: plans are broken into small, easy pieces
- Attainable: plans are realistic and can be accomplished
- Measurable: plans can be assessed and evaluated to determine progress
- Immediate: short-term goals that occur soon and can be observed
- Controlled by the planner: ensuring adjustments can be made if problems occur
- Consistently practiced: repeated until habits form
- Committed to: buy-in and investment from the person looking to change their behavior