**Goal Setting and Aspiration Building**
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**Introduction**
Goals are what you strive to achieve, want to accomplish or want to make happen. Goals give direction and focus to action. Aspirations embrace a series of short, intermediate, and long-term goals which enable an individual (or a group) to reach an ambition, aim, or the end purpose of a venture.

**Component Elements**
- Goals and aspirations provide a sense of direction and catalyst for motivation.
- Goals enable an individual to focus on efforts that give short-run satisfactions and are significant in the long-run.
- "Reasonable" goals are: readily understandable, realistic, attainable, measurable, and specific. They have time for achievement.
- Goals enable an individual to experience a sense of accomplishment when a task is completed.
- Through goal setting, an individual can define his or her own destiny and build for the future by focusing and directing his or her own energy.
- Goal setting outcomes include an increased sense of hope, positive self-esteem and an overall sense of purpose.
- Well-understood personal, cultural, and social values are needed to help individuals define and prioritize their goals.
- The combination of goals and values serve as the basis for decision making and a road map for individual achievements.
- Flexibility is important in order to meet the challenge of change.

**Summary Statement**
What is valued by individuals differs across time, across cultures, and according to socioeconomic status. Since values are the foundation of goals, we can expect differing goal expectations depending upon an individual's cultural background, age, social class, and economic status.

Instrumental goals (a means to an end) and life-style aspirations are of central importance as an adolescent develops a personal identity. In different cultures, the value placed on life-style goals (e.g. getting money) goes beyond satisfaction with reaching the goal (e.g. having money means you can buy things). The value placed on life-style goals also reflects the individual's status within the community (e.g. a person with money has power within the family and/or community). It is essential that people who develop, present and evaluate programs understand how the potential audience - youth and adult - wants to be viewed by others.

**References**

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