

Topic 04 - My 4 Steps

A strategy for moving towards important goals
and effectively tackling challenges along the way

April 2017

My 4 Steps



What sort of challenges can the My 4 Steps exercise help with?

I find it hard to engage with a claimant that won't open up.

The claimant isn't thinking about what they're capable of .

The claimant is facing particular types of challenges and I'm not sure how to guide them.

Overview

- Learn about the My 4 Steps exercise. It has been shown to help people maintain their focus and effort in moving towards a goal.
- Learn about the evidence behind the exercise
- Learn to apply it in your own life
- Learn to guide others in using the approach to achieve their goals
- Practise and get feedback

How to effectively reach your goals

- My 4 Steps is different from a lot of other goal-setting or goal-attainment strategies.
- Decades of evidence backs it up as an effective tool.
- This training session is about giving you the skills to be able to coach others (and yourself!) to:
 - Identify important goals
 - Stay focused and keep up the effort to achieve those goals
 - Deal with challenges along the way with effective plans

Achieving goals can be very difficult!



- What is a goal you had that you **didn't** achieve?
- Why was achieving your goal difficult?

Achieving goals can be very difficult!

- What is a goal that you **did** achieve?
- What helped you to achieve your goal?



Some possible answers...

Problems or challenges

- Fear of not being able to do it, feeling daunted
- Too busy, can't find the time
- Getting distracted by something else

Things that helped

- Reminding myself of why I want to achieve the goal
- Asking a friend for help
- Forcing myself to get rid of distractions for example closing email or Facebook

External vs. internal obstacles

External obstacles

- Obstacles that are part of our environment or surroundings and that are not always easy or possible to control
- For example access to things like a training course that's close enough, transport, IT facilities, money

Internal obstacles

- Obstacles that are due to our personal beliefs, attitudes, feelings or habits
- For example feeling scared or daunted or nervous, not being organised, feeling lazy, playing down importance of goal.

Claimants might have external and internal obstacles



Work Coaches will use another exercise (**Action Plan**) to help with external by providing information about useful actions, provision, etc.

Work Coaches will use **My 4 Steps** to help with internal obstacles during the HWC.

The 4 Steps are...

- **Want** – what is the thing you want to achieve?
- **Outcome** – what's the best thing that would come from achieving that Want?
- **Obstacle** – A difficulty or problem you might face trying to achieve your Want
- **Plan** – How are you going to deal with that Obstacle when it comes up?

Step 1...

WANT

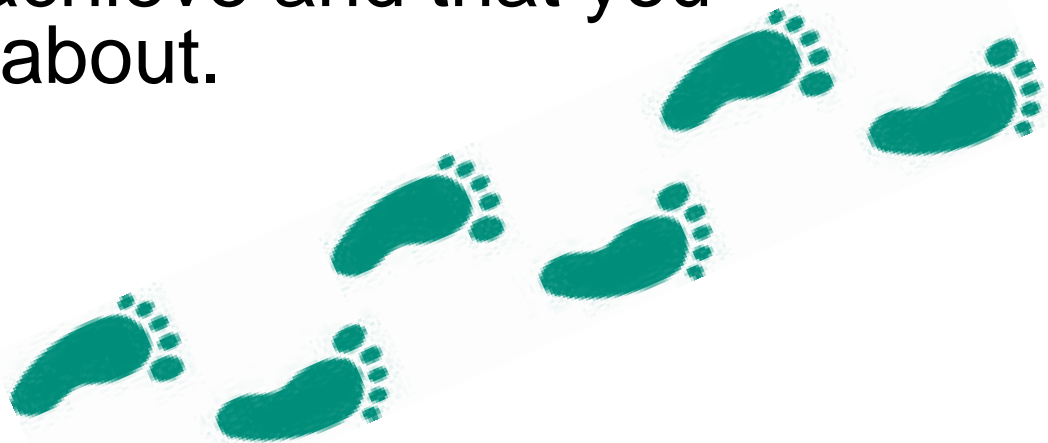
What is the thing you want to achieve?



Step 1...

Anyone want to share a possible
Want they have?

It has to be something that you
genuinely want to achieve and that you
care about.



Step 2...

OUTCOME

What is the best possible thing that would come from achieving your Want?



Step 2...

Visualise it!

Take time to imagine how it would feel to have achieved that Want.



Visualising

- helps people to remember why their Want matters to them
- is an effective way of keeping people motivated



Step 2...

Anyone want to share their Want
and their Outcome?



Step 3...

OBSTACLE

What is a challenge or difficulty that will probably come up while you're trying to achieve your Want?



Reminder: in My 4 Steps, the Obstacle should be an internal one.

External obstacles

- Obstacles that are part of our environment or surroundings and that are not always easy or possible to control
- For example access to things like a training course that's close enough, transport, IT facilities, money

Internal obstacles

- Obstacles that are due to our personal beliefs, attitudes, feelings or habits
- For example feeling scared or daunted or nervous, not being organised, feeling lazy, playing down importance of goal.

Step 3...

It can be hard
to find the true
Obstacle!



Step 3...

When trying to find the
real Obstacle, keep asking:

Is that the real Obstacle? Or is there
something behind it?



Step 3...

Visualise it!

Take time to imagine your Obstacle.



Step 3...

Anyone want to share their Want and a likely Obstacle they think they'll come up against?



Step 4...

PLAN

The thing that you will do when the obstacle comes up that will help you overcome your Obstacle.



Step 4...



Obstacle:

Feel bored and lonely when cooking at home.

Plan:

Listen to an entertaining podcast while I cook and eat.

Obstacle + Plan

Obstacle:

Feel bored and lonely
when cooking at home.

Plan:

Listen to an entertaining
podcast while I cook and
eat.

If I feel bored and lonely
when cooking at home,
then I will listen to an
entertaining podcast while I
cook and eat.

My 4 Steps - WANT



I want to cut down on
the amount of alcohol I
drink.

Write down your Want:

Cut down amount of alcohol I drink.

My 4 Steps - OUTCOME



I'd definitely feel
healthier, and also
really good about
myself.
Very positive.

Write down your Outcome:

Feel healthier and good about myself.

My 4 Steps - OBSTACLE



When I go to a restaurant with friends, I just automatically order a glass of wine because that's what everyone else does. That will probably happen this Friday when I meet up with some friends at our local pub.

Write down your Obstacle:

I feel pressured to order alcohol.

My 4 Steps - PLAN



On Friday evening
when I'm about to
order, I'll just order a
lemonade instead.

Write down your Plan:

I will order a lemonade instead.

OBSTACLE:

Write down your Obstacle:

I feel pressured to order alcohol.

PLAN:

Write down your Plan:

I will order a lemonade instead.

If I feel pressured to order alcohol
then I will order a lemonade instead.

OBSTACLE + PLAN =

If I feel pressured to order alcohol
then I will order a lemonade instead.



This is your “if-then” statement

My 4 Steps:

1. WANT
2. OUTCOME
3. OBSTACLE
4. PLAN

Then use **OBSTACLE + PLAN** to come up with an “if-then statement” which you rehearse

Remember...

- Do the steps in order: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- However, it's ok to go back and revise a step and then work through in order again

Want: *To complete physio exercises in the evening.*

Outcome: *I would feel stronger and happier.*

Obstacle: *I feel a twinge and worry I'm hurting myself.*

Plan: *I'll remind myself not to worry, to go more slowly.*

What is the if-then statement here?

Want: *To volunteer for charity shop work*

Outcome: *I would feel motivated and proud.*

Obstacle: *I feel daunted by the application process.*

Plan: *I'll call my friend and ask for help.*

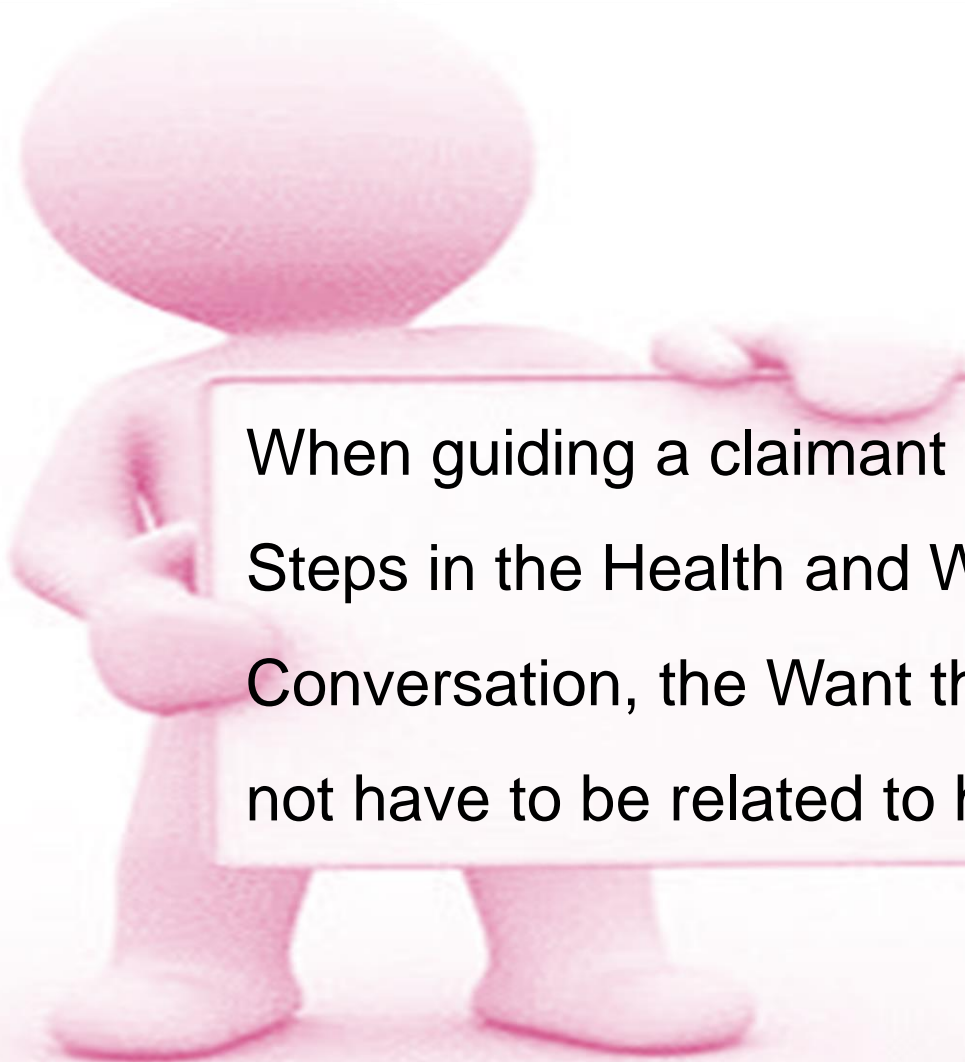
What is the if-then statement here?

Why is My 4 Steps so effective?

- **Want + Outcome** = identifying meaningful goals.
- **Want + Outcome** = maintaining motivation.
- **Obstacle** = identifying a specific type of challenge that plays a huge role in holding us back from achieving goals.
- **Obstacle + Plan** = clear, practical steps to deal with obstacles and to stay on track for achieving their Want.


Can you think of a time when someone you know would have found this approach helpful?

How can My 4 Steps help claimants?



When guiding a claimant through My 4 Steps in the Health and Work Conversation, the Want they choose does not have to be related to health or work.


Question:



What if doing My 4 Steps with a claimant unearths a serious or sensitive issue?

Remain sensitive to whether the claimant is struggling with such an issue.

Use your professional judgement to decide whether to continue with My 4 Steps, or whether the issue needs more urgent attention or needs to be dealt with in a different way (e.g. a referral).



The evidence behind My 4 Steps

Evidence – physical activity



Men who had been taught My 4 Steps were 38% more active than a comparison group of men who hadn't been taught My 4 Steps.

Evidence - depression

People with mild to moderate depression

79% of people who **used the 4-step exercise** achieved their goal

vs.

32% of people who **didn't use the 4-step exercise** achieved their goal



Evidence – diabetes management



Evidence – chronic back pain

After 3 months, people who used 4 Steps had better physical capacity on a number of tests, for example they could do 50% more lifts during a lifting task.

People who didn't use the 4 steps didn't change in terms of their capacity.



Evidence – chronic back pain

My 4 Steps helped to overcome [internal obstacles](#) such as:

- Thinking the pain during exercise would be too strong
- Not feeling like there was enough time to do their exercises
- Feeling too tired to exercise.



What else has My 4 Steps helped with?

Pain management

Improving physical
activity levels in
people who have
had a stroke

Sleep problems

Reducing
social anxiety

Reducing smoking

Reducing stress

Reducing alcohol
consumption

What else has My 4 Steps helped with?

Time management

Seeking help
when it's needed

Decision making

Providing help
and support
to others

Improving quality of
relationships

Coping with stress

Completing things on
time

How does it feel to go through the My 4 Steps exercise?

Time for you to have a go



Remember...

- Your Want must be something that is personally important and valued
- Do the 4 steps in order.
- Choose answers to the 4 steps that you think are genuinely important or helpful.
- You don't have to be perfect.



Practising My 4 Steps - Part 1

Choose a Want that you could like to achieve in the next 4 weeks

Previous examples have included doing more exercise, getting enough sleep each night, doing enough preparation for a challenging bike ride, doing physical therapy regularly, signing up for first-aid training.



How did it go?

What parts were easy to fill out?

What parts were harder?



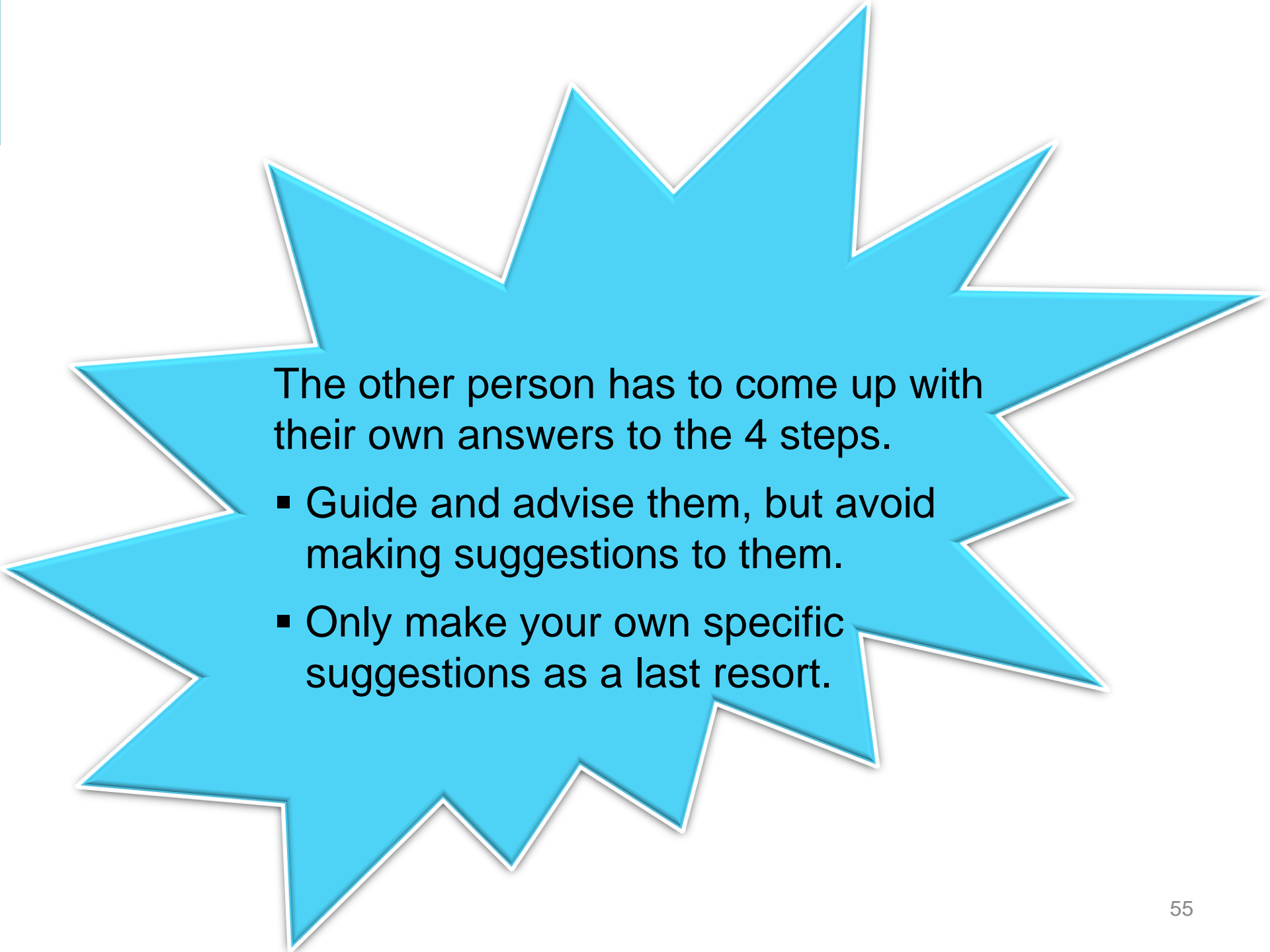
How did it go?

Let's work through some
people's 4 steps...

Coaching others through My 4 Steps



One key thing to remember...



The other person has to come up with their own answers to the 4 steps.

- Guide and advise them, but avoid making suggestions to them.
- Only make your own specific suggestions as a last resort.

Practising My 4 Steps - Part 2

Practise with another person:

1. Form pairs.
2. Choose who is the **coach** and who is the **volunteer**.
3. The **coach** uses the My 4 Steps form in **the Work Coach Booklet** to guide the volunteer through the 4 steps.
4. The **volunteer** should use the **Claimant Booklet** and write down their answers to each step.



How did it go?

Let's work through
some examples from
your practice round ...

Practising My 4 Steps - Part 3

Practise with another person:

1. Form pairs (it must be with a different person than last time).
2. Choose who is the **Work Coach** and who is the **claimant**.
3. The **Work Coach** uses the My 4 Steps form in **the Work Coach Booklet** to guide the claimant through the 4 steps.
4. The **claimant** should use the **Claimant Booklet** and write down their answers to each step.



Discussion/question time

