Instead of Resolutions, Set some new Goals!

Setting goals helps trigger new behaviors, helps guide your focus and helps you sustain that momentum in life. Goals also help align your focus and promote a sense of self-mastery. In the end, you can't manage what you don't measure and you can't improve upon something that you don't properly manage. Setting goals not only motivates us, but can also improve our mental health and our level of personal and professional success.
WE ARE NOT SPECIAL - WE ARE JUST LIKE YOU

I have a problem with the words "special needs". These words only exist so that people don't have to say the word "disability." It allows non-disabled people, to avoid describing people, generally children, as having a disability — because they view disability as something bad. But disability is not inherently bad. It's a natural part of being human. Saying "special needs" when you mean "disability" denigrates part of a person’s identity. People think saying special needs helps with low self-esteem, and may stop bullying. The fact is one in four Americans has a disability, and everyone who lives long enough will develop one. Normalizing disability, like being left handed, is the best way to move forward. Disability is a neutral, factual word that does not need to be replaced by anything. After all, who among us really wants to ride the "special" bus.

"At times, being bipolar can be an all-consuming challenge, requiring a lot of stamina and even more courage, so if you're living with this illness and functioning at all, it's something to be proud of, not ashamed of. They should issue medals along with the steady stream of medication."
— Carrie Fisher, true heroine for rebelling against the stigma of bipolar disorder and other mental health conditions.
COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOU!

JANUARY 2023

Jan 6th - Stroke Support Group
Rehabilitation Hospital, Post Falls, ID

Jan 9th - Mental Health Mondays Peer Group
DAC Office, Lewiston, ID

Jan 23rd - Mental Health Monday
Hybrid event in Spokane, WA

Jan 25th - Autism Caregivers Support Group
Greenapple Offices, Lewiston, ID

Jan 26th - Autism in the Wild Training
Asotin Fire Station, Clarkston WA

Jan 28th - Spokane's Lunar New Year Celebration
Spokane Convention Center, WA

For registration and details of events visit
www.dacnw.org/events/

Operation Advocacy
February 20th-21st
11am - 4pm
First Presbyterian Church
Boise State Capitol
Boise, ID
DAC NW - COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

One of DAC NW's consumers, Josh Nick was tasked with some community service. He decided to involve his daughter Kyra to gather items for the homeless in the Lewiston area. DAC NW office served as a drop off for this project. It wasn't long before our back room was filled with items for the homeless. They collected warm clothing, snacks, personal supplies and other essentials. They even collected backpacks to hold the items. P1FCU also donated blankets.

Josh wanted to include his daughter in this project to give her a sense of how important it is to help others. Everyone knows that doing community service helps the community.

But did you know there are positive benefits for the person who volunteers? This is a great way to make new friends and contacts with a common interest. Strengthening these relationships can offer benefits in the future.

By involving your family, your children learn first hand how good it feels to help other people and animals and enact change. Volunteering combats depression, and boosts self-confidence and self-esteem.

People with disabilities can be great volunteers. Look for opportunities in your community that match your interests and abilities.

YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE!
LINC -OPERATION ADVOCACY

Our current goal at LINC is to develop a network of advocates state wide to create change over time. We want to help people gain power in this process; an experienced advocate brings along a new peer for future training. This is how we build an advocacy movement.

We are planning on having a group of disability activists at the state capitol in Boise on February 20th-21st to meet with representatives on issues that are important to us.

On day one, we will meet at the First Presbyterian Church in Boise. You can meet with your fellow advocates and practice sharing your story, develop your "elevator speech", learn how to make an appointment with your representative, how to write, e-mail, or call your elected official, and work through some roll playing interviews so you feel prepared. We will also take a quick tour of the state capitol. Then we will take our stories to the capitol on the following day, which is Fred Riggers Disability Awareness Day.

What issue is most pressing for you? Is it the direct care workers crisis we are experiencing right now? Is it affordable, accessible housing? Access to employment? You decide what and how to tell your story, and you can work with some great people to learn how to be effective.

Who should participate? Any Idahoan with a disability who uses home and community-based services, direct care workers, unpaid caregivers, family and friends of consumers, and direct care workers. If you are impacted by the direct care workforce shortage, this is the action for you! Register for the event and let us know what accommodations you might need. We will call or email you to confirm and gather a bit more information. This will help us better plan for the event and make sure we have supports for participants. We also have a limited number of advocacy spots, so the earlier you register, the better.

Join this statewide network of advocates and make lasting change!

EMPOWERING INDEPENDENCE
MENTAL HEALTH MONDAY IS BACK!

Mental health conditions are increasing worldwide with anxiety and depression being the top two conditions. According to the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year and 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. Youth are also affected with 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experiencing a mental health disorder each year. Fifty percent of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and seventy-five percent by age 24. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14.

You are not alone!
Millions of people across the country are affected by mental illness each year and they work, create, go to school, play sports, laugh, cry, have relationships, take care of their kids, see movies, listen to music, and go about their life every day. Mental illness affects all nationalities, ethnicities, race, gender, and all belief systems.

There is support available!
Mental Health Monday is for youth and adults to meet in a safe space once a month to share struggles, to find support, to find resources, and to feel heard.

Mental health matters!
Taking those first steps in finding support can be confusing and difficult. INDEy is here to help! Join us for Mental Health Monday where peers help peers as they navigate towards improving their mental health and learn how to live with mental illness. Mental Health Monday resumes on January 23rd, 2023 and will be available the 4th Monday of each month!
For more information on how to get help, contact us at:
Website - https://dacnw.org/contact/index/
Phone - (509) 606-4639

Working for Independence, Equity, and Justice!
The Idaho Access Project is participating in this year's Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge to support our work in 2023. The focus will be on changing the way residential subdivisions are designed, built and marketed in Idaho to create more inclusive neighborhoods.

The three essential features for visitability are: 1. One entrance with zero steps 2. 32 inches or more of clear passage space through interior doors, including bathrooms 3. At least a half bathroom on the main floor usable by someone in a wheelchair.

Some initiatives include reinforcement in walls next to toilets for future installation of grab bars and light switches and electrical outlets within comfortable reach for all.

The relevant visitability factor is having a high number of visitable houses built, not a high number of features within a house.

Visitability is a movement started by Eleanor Smith and her Atlanta-based organization, Concrete Change, in 1987, and refers to an affordable, sustainable, and inclusive design approach for integrating a few core accessibility features as routine construction practice into all newly built homes. Visitability focuses on laws and policies, not merely education or voluntary initiatives. Because the cost of visitability in new construction is virtually zero, desirable laws do not have to have added financial benefits from the public sector for developers, such as tax cuts or other resources.

Single family homes comprise over 70% of the nation's housing stock and are typically not covered under federal laws. (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Fair Housing Act of 1988). As the visitability movement moves forward, old and young disability advocates, design and planning professionals, homebuilders, and homebuyers must become engaged in the movement to increase adoption.
People with disabilities can find emotional support on social media, it can help them feel connected in society. But what are they looking for in a platform? Accessibility!

This is obvious, but social media interfaces need to be easily accessible for any disability. Whether that’s limited fine motor movement, or sensory disabilities it requires ease of access, minimal typing, and access to tools for rendering content in alternative formats like text to voice or photo descriptions. Pop ups can interfere with screen readers. Platforms like Twitter should always strike a careful balance between offering lots of choices and sophisticated content, and overwhelming users with cool features that are too hard to learn and adapt..

They (and everyone else) need credible information, not rumors and conspiracy theories. And a huge plus is safety. Being free from bullying or harassment. Free speech environments with little or no moderation can easily devolve into places where few disabled people will want to spend time.

CAB (currently able bodied) people need to reflect on how they post about disabilities. From offensive terminology, to disability porn, these conversations can hurt a person with a disability both personally and for the community at large, who often love to play into the "isn't it inspirational" themed content.

Becoming more accessible is a challenge for both existing social media platforms and any that are currently being designed.
An epic fail means "a notable, obvious, and usually public failure." Though perhaps well intentioned, these fails can embarrass, isolate, and even endanger people with disabilities. We work to remove barriers so people with disabilities can live more independently in their own communities.
SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

Harnessing the Power of Advocacy

When you have the right tools, it's easier to remain independent in your own home. But how do you get access to those tools? ADVOCATE! One of our most important rights is the ability of individuals to participate in our government. By working together, standing up for an ideal or act that will improve your life and those of others, we start a ripple of hope. Let's work together to harness the power of grassroots advocacy.

By unifying voices in in-home services we can influence change to ensure access to high quality care at home for every American who needs it. Don't wait for celebrities to do it!

As our nation's aging population grows, more Americans will require care and services to assist in their daily lives, so home-based care must come to center stage.

Let's work together to bring home health care to the forefront of the conversation, not just with those who require it but also to those unacquainted with it. Advocacy is often characterized as scary, time-consuming, or something only people with experience should do. But who knows better what you need than you? Contact your local CIL and learn some advocacy tips. Join in local, state and national groups who are working for the same goal. Learn how to tell your story, write a letter campaign, and conduct in-person visits with your elected official - they work for YOU! Advocacy is all about the little things. Each small contribution is a step towards strengthening impact. Join us!

SERVICES YOU CONTROL!
IDAHO SILC - CALEB'S SUCCESS STORY

The Idaho State Independent Living Council (SILC) and CILs often partner with other organizations and state agencies working to improve the lives of people with disabilities. The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) helps individuals with disabilities to be successful in employment. Here is an example of how IDVR helped Caleb.

Caleb applied for IDVR services in February 2021 as a youth with the goal to obtain his first employment position. He identified a specific local business in town that he had a strong interest in working for as their business aligned with his personal interests. He and his VR Counselor then worked together to write a resume and practice how to approach the employer to express his interest in working for their business. Caleb then reached out to Yellowstone Gem World and was able to speak with the owners who indicated they did not have an opening at the business of interest, but their overarching business, Idaho Bling Bling, had a need for assistance with remodeling the Roxie Theater Building. He was offered employment as a maintenance and repair helper which he gladly accepted. In addition to his work revitalizing the space at the Roxie Theater, Caleb also assists their subsidiary business Yellowstone Gem World with transporting and setting up the displays of the rock and mineral merchandise for trade shows.

The VR Counselors provided him with support to understand various aspects that came with his first employment position including assisting him with completing Benefits Planning to ensure he understand the impact of work and his earnings on his SSI benefits. Caleb’s commitment, passion, and work ethic has allowed him to continue to expand his duties and responsibilities, such as assisting with the trade shows, and is looking forward to learning additional new skills.

If you, or someone you know, has a disability and is looking for assistance to obtain or maintain employment, please visit the IDVR website to learn more.

PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR ALL IDAHOANS
Amanda Creamer created CLOUDS as a personal photo project - a collection containing 134 pages of images of clouds that she photographed over the past 9 years. Seeing and capturing clouds with her camera became one way to cope with severe, life-long mental health struggles.

Growing up, Bryce Evans dealt with depression and anxiety. He founded The One Project which teaches about using photography for mental health. He knows humans are hard wired for connections. The One Project has evolved into a mental health community that uses photography to reconnect with your intuition and develop healthy habits that are free of stigma, judgement, fear and negative narratives.

"Your mental health often shifts you towards negative thought patterns. But photography opens you up to positive perspectives and healing," says Evans. The entire process of photography—from choosing a subject matter to discovering new angles to manipulating light—requires absolute focus. This very process of observing, by nature, is a meditative task that draws you into a peaceful state. In this sense, photography isn’t just like mindfulness, it is mindfulness.

TIPS:
1. Carefully choose what you want to photograph, thoughtfully decide what you want to focus on and what you will leave out of the frame.
2. Change up your subject matter. Change the location, time of day, even different kinds of photography - black and white or play with the color. Try long landscape shots and macro-photography.
3. Use photography as a form of self expression. Try to capture images that reflect your current emotions. Or look for something that is the exact opposite of your current emotional state.

You can read more here: https://theoneproject.co/therapeutic-photography/
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

CURSUM ACCESSIBLE STROLLER
Designed by Cindy Sjoblom a designer from Sweden, the Cursum is the best stroller ever invented for wheelchair-users. What this stroller does is snap to the wheelchair, allowing the parent to push and still propel the stroller. It’s quite a novel idea, unfortunately it's still a concept design, however if you know someone who is handy, this very well could be made at home.

ELASTIC TIE SHOE LACES
Difficult to tie your toddlers shoes? Turn any pair of lace-up shoes into slip on sneakers. Lock Laces, originally designed for triathletes to decrease transition time, are a great gift for seniors suffering from arthritis or other disabilities, autistic children, runners of all ages, and casual users! One size fits all (kids and adults), quick to install, and easy to use. Each pair is suitable for lacing up one pair of shoes. Available in 13 different colors.
Starting at $9.99 from www.Amazon.com

STUFF TO MAKE LIFE EASIER
The Jon Gordon Companies have plenty of inspiring programs for school, sports or work. Check out his list of 21 tips for a positive new year. These tips help develop resilience, mental toughness, grit and provides strategies to overcome negativity, and lead to positive change in your life.

Are you making a resolution in the new year? Warning: More than half of all resolutions fail, but this year, they don't have to be yours. The New York Times Smarter Living article shows you how to identify the right resolution to improve your life, create a plan on how to reach it, and become part of the small group of people that successfully achieve their goal.

Enlist a friend with a similar goal to share tips and solidarity — and to make a potential chore a social event. Especially if your goal is to get more exercise or meet people. By breaking down your resolution into mini-goals, and making those more fun to complete can go a long way to finding success. VOX has a great article on how to break down your goals.

Whether you want to read more or spend less, reduce your weight or increase your steps, apps can help you turn your New Year’s resolutions into lasting habits. To get started, head to the App Store if you’re an iPhone user or the Google Play store if you have an Android to download the apps that match your goals. And remember, persistence is key. Experts say it takes at least three weeks and as long as three months to make a new habit stick.

GOT A MINUTE? CHECK THEM OUT!
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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