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What is the Good Lives Model?

The Good Lives Model recognizes that all human beings have similar goals in life, and that offending relates to attempts to meet these life goals. However, offending as a means to achieve life goals results in harm to other people, as well as problems in life. The Good Lives Model helps people understand the relationship between their life goals and offending, and how to achieve life goals and live a satisfying life without harming others.

Common life goals

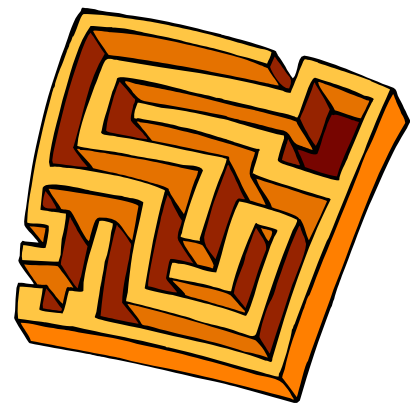
Everyone’s idea of what makes up a good life is different, however there is a set of life goals that are common to most people. The importance that people place on each goal helps define what matters most in their lives. These goals include:

- Health and physical safety
- Relationships and friendships
- Peace of mind
- Happiness/pleasure
- Being good at what we do – either in work, hobbies, or both
- Learning and having knowledge in areas that interest us
- Independence (i.e., being in control of our lives)
- Having meaning in life
- Being part of a group
- Creativity

As human beings, we all seek some or all of these goals in our lives. But sometimes, we encounter problems in our attempts to achieve these goals.

Problems experiencing our good life

Seeking out life goals can be like finding our way through a maze – sometimes we encounter dead ends and challenges. Instead of trying to navigate our way through the maze it can be tempting to take short-cuts to get what we want – including using drugs, doing crime, and being violent. While these short-cuts might give us some immediate satisfaction – they also give us many long-term negatives that take us farther away from our goals and our good life. For example, someone who is having relationship problems might turn to violence in a desperate attempt (i.e., a short-cut) to hold onto a relationship. That moment might bring a very brief sense of satisfaction, however the long-term consequences – for the offender and the victim – are far from satisfying.



How can the Good Lives Model help me or someone I care about?

The more short-cuts we take, the more lost in the maze we become. Psychologists, social workers, probation officers and others can help people to navigate their way through the maze by addressing some of the problems that led them to take short-cuts. Likewise, friends and family can help by showing their loved ones other ways to get what is important in their lives that do not cause harm to others and that do not lead to problems in their lives. The Good Lives Model helps people identify what they want their life to look like – and how to get there without hurting others.