IF-THEN PLANNING

Implementation intentions specify when, where, and how a desired behaviour will be enacted. They boost the chances of successful behaviour change.

"If I find myself in ................. (situation), then I will perform ................. (goal-directed response)."

If-then planning can be used to:

1. **Identify situations that can be used to overcome usual habits**
   - Example: "I want to eat healthily.
   - "If I am invited to an event with unhealthy food, then I will make sure to eat beforehand."
   - Example: "I want to quit smoking.
   - "If I am going out with my friends who smoke, then I will pick a non-smoking venue."

2. **Identify situations that could cue new behaviours**
   - Example: "I need to remember to take my prescription medication twice a day.
   - "If I have finished brushing my teeth, then I will take my medication."
   - Example: "I want to improve my relationships.
   - "If I am eating my lunch, then I will call my sister to check in."

3. **Shield a goal from unhelpful thoughts or emotions**
   - Example: "I want to stay motivated to achieve my goal.
   - "If I feel that change will be too hard, then I will review my list of reasons for changing."
   - Example: "I want to overcome my anxiety about exercising after knee surgery.
   - "If I am feeling anxious, then I will take a few minutes to control my breathing before doing some gentle exercises."
YOUR TURN!

Create an if-then plan for a behaviour that you would like to change. Try to think of multiple situations that could cue your goal-oriented behaviour(s).

**IF-THEN PLAN 1**

**IF**

**THEN**

**IF-THEN PLAN 2**

**IF**

**THEN**

**IF-THEN PLAN 3**

**IF**

**THEN**

**IF-THEN PLAN 4**

**IF**

**THEN**

References


Resource prepared by Amy Lee and Associate Professor Michelle Jongenelis.