

FREE CBT 5:

# You Have to Name It to Tame It

Defining the Problem and Setting Goals

**Generally describe the problem:**

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**Get more specific:**

**Who is usually involved in the problem?**

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**What specifically happens?**

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**When and where does the problem generally happen?**

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**Clarify and define terms in your problem description to make them clear and precise:**

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**Rewrite the Specific Problem**

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## Example

Generally describe the problem:

*My house is a disaster, it's a pig sty!*

Get more specific:

Who is usually involved in the problem?

*Me, my family and my home*

What specifically happens?

*I walk into the laundry room and see the mess. The clothes are all over the place and everything is out of order. I get feeling really angry and overwhelmed because no one but me does the laundry.*

When and where does the problem generally happen?

*This usually happens most at the end of a long work week and usually at the end of the day.*

Clarify and define terms in your problem description to make them clear and precise:

*Disaster – my laundry room is messy*

*Pig sty – same as above*

Rewrite the Specific Problem

*My laundry room is untidy, and I would like it to be more orderly. My family doesn't help me enough with the laundry.*

# Goals

Now that you have clearly defined the problem, write out two or three goals that you'd like to achieve. Make sure that they are S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Related, Time-Sensitive)

Goal 1

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Goal 2

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Goals for the Example:

*Goal 1: To feel less angry and less overwhelmed when I go into my laundry room. I feel these ways at least 3 times a week and I'd like to feel this way once a week, at most. I'd like this change to happen over the next two weeks.*

*Goal 2: To have all of the clothes in the laundry room folded and put away and the washing detergents put away in the cupboard by the end of this coming weekend.*

*Goal 3: To create a rotating schedule with the entire family in which we all take turns doing the laundry and folding the clothes and where everyone puts away their own laundry. This schedule will be created by the end of the week and we will start using it right away.*

## Notice – Challenge - Change

Once we have defined our problem and set our goals, we may need to take some time observing the problem and gathering information about it. In doing this we may notice patterns, common themes, we may notice new information and gain insight into the problem.

State the Problem:

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What do you need to learn about the problem – How often it happens? How intense it is? When it happens? Where it happens? What is going on when it happens? Etc. Create a simple chart to track the information, like in the example below. You may need to adjust the heading to make it more applicable to your problem.

Date	What was going on?	How did I feel?	What did I do?	How did it end?

Notice the information and write it down in your chart for a week or two.

What did you learn about the problem? What are the themes? What are the patterns? Could something change to make it better?

