

Intro: You are listening to Supporting Supporters, a ChangetoChill podcast. This is a free mental well-being resource offered by Allina Health. My name is Tonya Freeman. I'm a licensed psychologist and regional lead psychologist with Allina Health.

These podcast episodes are aimed with the goal of providing quick, tangible resources and information from Allina Health mental health providers on a range of mental health topics relevant to day to day lives of the listener. We invite you to join us in any way you please, whether you sit back and kick your feet up, or as you engage in movement, your daily commute, or as you prepare for your day. However you choose to join us, we welcome you and we honor your time.

Episode: My name is Sarah Paper and I'm a Licensed Psychologist with Allina Health. I work primarily with children and adolescents. Most, maybe all, of us are in the ongoing process of bettering ourselves. I believe the best way to do that is by starting small and celebrating each success.

In a different podcast you may have heard me, or maybe you're going to listen to me talk about cognitive distortion. Some of those distortions lead us to hinder our own growth. If we engage in some of that all or nothing thinking, we might believe we have to exercise five days a week, an hour each day in order to be physically fit. If we don't have the time to do that, we choose not to. When instead we could take a small step and develop a range, we could say "I am going to work out 2-3 times a day for at least 15 minutes". If we do that and celebrate that it's going to feel good. It's going to make us feel positive about ourselves, which will lead to better decisions. It helps us to think positively so we can see more of the desired behavior we want from ourselves. To do this, we must also limit the "yeah, but's". Let's say I exercised for 20 minutes twice last week, and I tell myself "Wow, that was good I was able to work out twice last week" if that yeah but came in and I began to say "Yeah, but that's not enough" "Yeah, but I could have done more", it would take away the positive feeling. The reinforcer is going to get me to do more of it.

If we set goals for ourselves that are attainable, we will feel better when we achieve them. That doesn't mean expect little from yourself, it means you must notice the begging on change to allow those to grow. If I want to have better relationships with my coworkers, I might set a goal of complimenting one person every day, which will have a ripple effect. If I celebrate that progress, I will be able to do more of it. This also works with other people, like catching kids doing things right. We might be really good at noticing when kids are misbehaving, noticing when they don't turn in their homework, noticing when they're talking to their friends and not listening. That sort of thinking keeps us focused on the negative and tells our brain to focus on the negative things. If we can start by noticing the positive behaviors that other people are doing too, we can also reinforce those and force those to grow, and improve, and strengthen. If you find yourself with a kid who may not always do things the way you want them to, catch them doing it right. Comment, compliment, celebrate, maybe even call home. Challenge yourself to once a week (If you're not already doing it) have a day where you only do positive calls home if possible. Or try to make 3 calls home a day that are positive, or each week. Set that manageable goal so you don't talk yourself out of doing the things that you want to do. This probably sounds very basic, but it is the first step towards feeling better and doing better.

I think it's really important to track our progress. A lot of us make to-do lists and then get down on ourselves when we don't achieve them. I like to think of doing a "Done" list. Every time you do something that you wanted to do, write it down and put it on a calendar or brag about it on social media. We can't wait for other people to give us the positive feedback we want for ourselves, but we can start by giving it to ourselves. This also models this behavior for other people.

I hope you found this podcast helpful. One little catchy phrase I like to say is “When we have to sweat the big stuff, it is really important to celebrate the small stuff”. Good luck, have fun celebrating and I hope you find a lot of small steps and progress that you are making and finding big or small ways to celebrate those.

Thanks, have a wonderful day.

Outro: On behalf of Allina Health and Change to Chill, we thank you for taking the time to listen to our podcast. We do hope you enjoyed this episode and we hope that you join us in other episodes covering even more interesting topics with mental health providers. As always, you can find the show notes and any accompanying research and tools at the change to chill website at [www.changetochill.org](http://www.changetochill.org). In health and wellness, take care and see you next time!