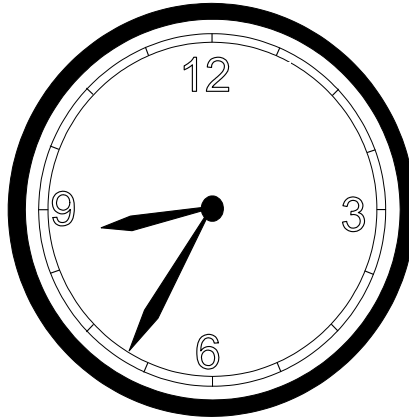


VALUING OUR TIME



GOALS:

- To identify values which influence how we structure our time.
- To set goals based on our plans for the future.

RATIONALE:

While the topic of 'time' is often discussed in terms of time management techniques, we don't often stop to think about what time means to us personally and in our culture. Our values are reflected in how we spend our time. In this lesson, participants will reflect on the influence that values and cultural messages have on how we structure time for our lives. In addition, they will review some time management strategies and set some goals in relation to their hopes for the future.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flipchart, markers, a clock; for each participant *Quotes on Time*, pencils, copies of *Reverie* and *To Do List* worksheets.

METHOD:

Warm up 1: More Time

Pass around a clock and ask participants to complete the sentence, "If I had more time on my hands I would . . ."

Warm up 2: Time -- What does it mean to me?

Ask participants to recall expressions, common metaphors or homilies related to time, that they may have heard from families, school and their culture. (See *Quotes on Time* for some examples to get started.) After a few minutes, ask participants to call out the expression and flipchart responses.

Questions to consider:

- In what ways are these expressions meaningful to you?
- How are you influenced by cultural messages about the way in which time should be spent?
- How do you deal with conflicts between the 'should' messages about how to spend time versus what you would rather be doing?

Exercise 1: Fantasy

Note: The purpose of this exercise is to help participants get into a non-critical frame of mind before identifying some of their dreams for the future. They will be asked to visualize a future event in order to identify the steps that need to be taken, from this point on, in order to realize their dreams.

Fantasy

Instruct the participants:

This exercise will be an open-ended fantasy which will take about 7 minutes. The primary purpose of the exercise is to take a few minutes to relax and open your mind with a minimal amount of interference from your critical left brain. I will first get you to relax, then help you to visualize a scene in the future and finally, give you five minutes of uninterrupted, unstructured time. I will tell you when five minutes is up. When it is over, you may if you want, turn to the person beside you to discuss anything that came up for you.

Take a moment, close your eyes, and relax your body. Focus on your breathing. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, consciously trying to slow down your breathing. Take a deep breath and blow it out. Relax. Do this one more time and relax.

Picture an open box with a key to lock it. Identify the thoughts that are floating around. Acknowledge each one and assure them you will return to them when necessary at a later date. For now, they are to be tucked away in the box while you think about a time in the future. Place each thought in the box one by one. Now close the lid and turn the key. Take another deep breath and blow it out through your mouth and relax.

Imagine you are now 80 years old sitting comfortably overlooking one of your favourite scenes: a body of water, a family or cultural event,

an open field, orchard or meadow, or city street. You are pain-free, relaxed, and very peaceful. You drift off for five minutes. Looking back, you review some special moments and/or significant events in your life.

Pause for 5 minutes.

Tell the group when five minutes is up and encourage them to turn to a neighbour to discuss anything they wish about the exercise including whether or not it worked for them. The following questions might be posted on flipchart paper to consider while talking to their neighbour.

- As the 80 year old person, were you satisfied with your life? What did you like about it?
- What do you still need to do?
- Did the exercise stimulate you to develop a plan or set some concrete goals?

When they are ready to move on, instruct participants to fill out the worksheet entitled *Reverie*.

Questions to consider:

- If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you regret not having yet done?
- How might you weave the regrets (your hopes and plans) into your life starting now?

Theory: See Theory Box *Time/Life Management Strategies*

Exercise 3: To Do List

Hand out *To Do List* to participants. Encourage them to develop some goals and record them at the top of the worksheet. Underneath they will test a number of small 'bite-size' steps they can take immediately to begin working on their goals.

Note: The purpose of this exercise is to practice a time management technique, of a *To Do List*, as a way to get started on goal setting. This exercise can either be done in the group or as homework.

Closer:

Ask each participant to make a contract with the group to set aside time for a meaningful activity for the next day. They complete the following sentence:
"Tomorrow, I will make time for . . ."

EVALUATION:

REFERENCES:

Douglas, Merrill and Baker, Larry. *The New Time Management*. Audio Tape. Chicago: Nightengale Conant, 1983.

Lakein, Alan. *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*. New York: Signet, 1973.

Simpson, John. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*. London: Oxford University Press, 1982.

YWCA. "Time Management." In *Discovering Life Skills, Volume 3*. YWCA of Greater Toronto, 2nd edition, 1996.

THEORY BOX

TIME/LIFE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Negotiate for uninterrupted time in advance.
- Assert yourself; know how to say no.
- Carry around a calendar.
- Colour code different types of activities (e.g. priorities in bright yellow).
- Do daily To Do lists.
- Tackle priorities first.
- Break down tasks into small steps and establish deadlines.
- Set long and short term goals (including the dates for review).
- Review and refine goals once a month.
- Read with highlighter pen for quick review later.
- Learn how to skim read.
- Handle papers no more than twice.
- Put important but not urgent reading in a place designated for later review.
- Give up total responsibility, delegate appropriately.
- Reward yourself at the end of completed tasks.
- Organize clothes, relevant papers the night before a hectic day.

THEORY BOX (Continued)

- Take reading along when visiting doctors or travelling.
- Group activities (e.g. phone everyone at once).
- Visualize doing your best, just as you fall asleep.
- Mentally review what you'll be doing in the day as you are waking up.
- Check periodically that your activities are balanced for optimal mental, physical and spiritual well-being.
- Finish jobs completely so you can bring closure to them.
- Do something everyday consistent with your lifestyle goals and fantasies.
- Avoid procrastinating; do something on a major project each day rather than nothing at all.
- Take stock periodically of how you are using time because it is the most precious resource you have.

QUOTES ON TIME

Some of these expressions may be introduced to the group by the coach once the participants have listed their own.

Time is money

Time flies (Tempus fugit)

No rest for the wicked

Idle hands

Chipping away of time

Hourglass

Many hands make light work

Task expands to fill the time

Don't waste time

A stitch in time saves nine

Time held me green and dying/As I stand in my chains like the sea (Dylan Thomas)

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans (John Lennon)

There is no time like the present

Time will tell

Time and tide wait for no man

It is not time but the way that a person relates to it that causes stress

MY TO DO LIST

Long and Short-term goals:

DATE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Bite-size steps:

Prioritize
(1,2,3,4)

Check

1. _____ done _____
2. _____ done _____
3. _____ done _____
4. _____ done _____
5. _____ done _____
6. _____ done _____
7. _____ done _____
8. _____ done _____
9. _____ done _____
10. _____ done _____
11. _____ done _____
12. _____ done _____