Time Management Tips & Tricks
“Procrastination”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P785j15Tzk
What is time management?

“Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities.”

Good Time Management

- Being busy does not equal being effective
- Focus on results, not activities
- Good time management enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time
Good Time Management

- Busyness
  - Scattered Energy Expense
    - Hit or Miss
- Effectiveness
  - Focused Energy Expense
    - Hit the Bullseye
Is Multitasking Effective?

“Multitasking, as most people understand it, is a myth that has been promulgated by the "technological-industrial complex" to make overly scheduled and stressed-out people feel productive and efficient.”

Is Multitasking Effective?

- Multitasking can only be done when
  - One of the tasks is automatic, requiring no thought; and
  - Both tasks involve different centers of the brain

Is Multitasking Effective?

- A Stanford University study looked at two groups of people: those who said they multitask frequently, and those who said they don’t.

- Which group do you think was more effective at the tasks they were given?
Is Multitasking Effective?

- The group who claimed to be frequent multitaskers “made more mistakes, could remember fewer items, and took longer to complete a variety of focusing tasks analogous to multitasking than those self-rated as infrequent multitaskers.”

Multitasking ≠ Effectiveness
Objectives

- Gain knowledge of key time management strategies
- Understand basic organization strategies
- Acquire new skills to help you prioritize your work
- Learn how to minimize distractions and manage disruptions
- Pick up some procrastination-busting strategies
Effective Time Management Strategies
Find Your Peak Performance Zone

- Take note of your alertness and energy levels over the work week
- Become aware of what times of the day you feel more alert, focused, and energized
- Plan to complete more complex, cognitive-heavy tasks during that time
Find Your Peak Performance Zone

- According to Dr. Steve Kay, University of South California, most people perform at their peak during mid to late morning, especially when doing work that requires high levels of cognition.

- As you might expect, performance slumps right after lunch through about 2:00 PM.

- Some find that they rebound in the late afternoon, and “get back in a groove.”

Time-Chunking (Task-Chunking)

- Chunking involves both
  - Splitting larger tasks into smaller blocks of time
  - Bundling smaller tasks into one larger block of time
  - Time may be chunked in different sizes (ten minutes to 1 hour, for example)
  - Focus on one chunk at a time
Time-Chunking

- Three critical rules
  - Each chunk of work has a “natural and logical start and finish”
  - Work on a chunk is not to be interrupted
  - Take mini-breaks in between chunks to refocus so you are ready to move to the next chunk

To-Do Lists

- List all of the tasks you need to complete for the day/week
- Rank by priority
  - Deadlined items first
  - Items of importance
  - Non-urgent tasks last
- Work from the top down
To-Do Lists

- May be hand-written on paper
- May be created using software
  - Microsoft Word Table
  - Microsoft Excel
  - Microsoft Outlook Task Feature
  - Demonstration
Organization Strategies
Organizing Your E-Mail

- E-mail can be one of the biggest time-eaters
- Strategy #1 – Block time for reading and responding to e-mails
  - We are all tempted to immediately stop what we are doing and read an e-mail when we see those pop-up notifications
    - This breaks your focus, causing you to not only lose the time in reading and/or responding the e-mail, but time spent trying to recollect your thoughts
  - Choose strategic times during the day to check your e-mail, such as starting of work, right after lunch, and late afternoon
Organizing Your E-Mail

Strategy #2 – Create Outlook Folders to organize your e-mail

Suggested Folders

- **Inbox** – Keep high-priority e-mails here that you need to act on, and once you have acted on it, move it out of your Inbox.
- **Saved** – A general storage folder in which to move all of the e-mails you have already acted on.
- **Awaiting Response** – This folder will keep the e-mails you send for which you need to track to ensure you receive a response (from your Sent folder), or e-mails from others that you replied to, but for which you are now awaiting a response.
- **Follow-Up** – For those e-mails you want to revisit later but don’t have time right now.
Organizing Your E-Mail

- **Strategy #3 – Utilize Outlook Organizational Features**
  - **Quick Steps** – Some are pre-populated, but you can create custom ones
  - **Rules** – If this, then that type of features that can keep clutter down (automatic replies, calendar invitation responses, etc.)
  - **Categorize** – Lets you assign color codes to help sort out your e-mail (you create the categories)
  - **Follow-Up (Flag)** – This lets you flag an e-mail and assign a start and due date for response (like Task)
  - **Filter E-Mail** – This feature gives you options to filter e-mails to quickly find what you are looking for
  - **Search** – You can choose keyword, to, from, folder – all sorts of options to help you find what you are looking for
Prioritizing Tasks

- Now
- Later
Allen’s Input Processing Tool

Eisenhower Principle of Prioritization

In a 1954 speech to the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was quoting Dr. J. Roscoe Miller, president of Northwestern University, said: "I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent." This "Eisenhower Principle" is said to be how he organized his workload and priorities.

Eisenhower Principle of Prioritization

- **Important** activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.

- **Urgent** activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else's goals. They are often the ones we concentrate on and they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.

Eisenhower Principle of Prioritization

- **Important** activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.
- **Urgent** activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else's goals. They are often the ones we concentrate on and they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.

Examples?

Eisenhower Principle of Prioritization

Dealing with Distractions & Disruptions
Schedule Routine Distractions

- Assign a time to read and respond to e-mails/texts
- Block off time to listen to and return voicemails
- Build in down-time, and use a timer and alarm to hold yourself accountable
Manage Interruptions

- Create a “Do Not Disturb” zone
  - Close the door
  - Put up a sign
  - Turn off phone ringer
  - Turn off e-mail notifications
- Ask the individual to either catch you later, or e-mail you so you can respond at a later time
Procrastination Busters
Procrastination Busters

#1 Recognize that you have a problem. Indicators:

- Filling your day with low priority tasks
- Reading e-mails several times without starting work on them or deciding what you’re going to do with them
- Sitting down to start a high-priority task, and almost immediately going off to get a cup of coffee
- Leaving an item on your To Do list for a long time, even though you know it's important
- Regularly saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks already on your list
- Waiting for the “right mood” or the “right time” to tackle the important task at hand
Procrastination Busters

#2 Understand why you are procrastinating

- Is it boring or unpleasant?
- Is it because you are overwhelmed with the size or difficulty of the task?
- Is it because you are disorganized and don’t know where to begin?
Procrastination Busters

#3 Develop a rewards system to motivate yourself for boring or unpleasant tasks

- Example: “If I write up this Comprehensive Assessment case note right now, I will go for that piece of chocolate when I finish.”
- Example: “If I return this voicemail, I will allow myself a few extra minutes break afterwards.”
- Can you think of any other examples?
Procrastination Busters

#4 Utilize task-chunking if you are feeling overwhelmed

- How does one eat an elephant? One bite at a time
- Set small achievable goals for yourself, and attain them one at a time
Procrastination Busters

#5 If you just don’t know where to begin, write down a list of tasks and make a plan

- Think about the logical (or chronological steps) and write them in order
- Cross each step off as you complete it

Summary

- Learned some key time management strategies
- Basic organization strategies
- New skills to help you prioritize your work
- Learned how to minimize distractions and manage disruptions
- Picked up some procrastination-busting strategies
Wrap-Up

To wrap up this session, pick a partner and tell them one strategy that you learned today that you are going to put into practice.
Steve Upchurch

Training and Professional Development Manager
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Steve.Upchurch@fssa.IN.gov
(765) 667-3460