

Time Management

Chapter 1 - Introduction to Time Management

It is said that good time management can add two hours to a person's daily life (Tracy, 2007; Panella, 2002). Those hours can mean the difference between having quality of life and feeling strained; more time spent with loved ones including playing with children and helping them with their homework; having time for a hobby such as creating a fabulous garden; extending their education or they could simply relax!

Teaching time management to clients is not just about focusing on matters of organisation or looking at how to squeeze the maximum amount out of each hour of the day. It is also about investigating the psychological and emotional factors in addition to the usual organisational issues. Aspects of why the client is not using their time more efficiently or why they have issues with time can be addressed. You can also work with clients to discover why a client is inefficient with their time and their sense of their time not being well spent.

Time management is also something that dovetails well with other forms of counselling. Someone who is stressed and who needs to find more time to relax will benefit from assistance with time management. Couples who need to spend more time with each other, students under pressure as they approach exams and, of course, busy managers, executives and parents are all likely to benefit from help with time management counselling and coaching.

Basic Principles

There are some recurring principles in time management that are worth considering.

The 80/20 rule

The 80/20 principle is also known as the Pareto principle. It is based on the ideas of an Italian economist called Vilfredo Pareto. Pareto was a French–Italian economist and philosopher who lived between 1848 and 1923. Initially his observations were based largely on the distribution of wealth.

In other words, he saw that 20 per cent of people owned 80 per cent of wealth. The remaining 80 per cent control only 20 per cent of the wealth. Over time it was realized that the same principle could be applied to many areas. In time management this can be applied in a number of ways. One of these is to say that 20 per cent of what you do accounts for 80 per cent of your results (Koch, 1997).

Prime time

In line with the 80/20 rule is the idea of 'Prime Time'. It is found that not only do 20 per cent of your efforts account for 80 per cent of your results, but also that your best efforts occur in 20 per cent of the day.

In other words, most people are found to be somewhat inefficient for 80 per cent of their time. If someone is found to have a time in the day that is more productive than other times, this is when they should carry out their priority work and this is the time of the day they should protect themselves against distractions and diversions.

Don't try to change everything at once

Also following on from the 80/20 principle, it is best to help a client to focus on certain areas of their life, and set tasks that gradually help them to build from one success to another. For example, if a client is simply not sleeping well and their average day is a disaster due to exhaustion, then we know that a very large result can be obtained by working on this one problem.

Similarly, if we go to a client's workplace and observe them spending 5 out of every 15 minutes looking for something, then we know that helping them to reorganize their work area will give them an immediately significant result. From each success we can go on to the next area, rather than adding to their overload by trying to do too much at once.

New habits take time to form

It can take 21 days to learn a new habit (Tracy, 2007). Therefore clients may need coaching, may need to do homework exercises and may need to repeat basics many times before they will really get a grasp on what they need to do.

Tasks take up available time

When clients are attempting tasks they should keep in mind an old truth about time keeping; that a task will tend to fill the time allowed for it. We have all experienced this. If we think that we will stay up all night if necessary to get something done, often that will be the case.

If we think that a chore will be done some time on the weekend, often we are racing to finish it on Sunday night. This is important when setting goals and deadlines. If people give themselves limitations on the time they are willing to allocate to tasks, they can quickly become more efficient.

What are we going to stop doing?

Time is a limited commodity. Management of time is partly looking at what can be done better or more efficiently, but it is of course also going to consist of finding things that should not be done or that no longer need to be done.

Work efficiency and family time

Tracy (2007) makes the important point that what people require of their business and work time is efficiency, whereas family and personal life tends to come down to quantity of time.

Taking a broad look at the problem

If a client wants to manage their time more efficiently, we (as counsellors) have to be able to look at their life broadly and see what may really be going on. As counsellors we might detect some discontentment with life; hidden standards about what people think their life should be or underlying repressed emotions that are making them want to squeeze more out of every moment. People are complex so we have to expect anything. For this reason, this course will focus on a variety of approaches to time management.

Chapter 2 - Client Evaluation

There are many ways to approach the evaluation of the client at the outset of counselling. Listening to what they have to say is a start and asking them about their general daily schedule. You can also ask variations of questions about what they think would be an ideal existence. In other words, questions such as “If your life was ideal right now, what would a typical day be like?”, or “What is it about your life right now that is not ideal?”

A ‘role inventory’ is another way of evaluating a client in relation to time management. These are completed by asking clients what hats and roles they have to carry out in life. Inviting the person to talk through their roles and write them down can be a therapeutic action in itself.

For example, an overworked single mother can see that she is trying to be a bread winner, cook, counsellor, baby sitter, educator, and cleaner. Talking through a client’s specific roles can not only help them sort out some confusion but can also relieve some of their exhaustion. You can also ask the client, “What would be a good result for us to have achieved at the end of this counselling program?”

It is also of interest to know what sort of pattern a person’s day might take. Does it take them ages to get going in the morning? Do they get tired at a particular time of the day? Does their day go off the rails when a particular person or people are in their vicinity? As a person may be somewhat ‘blinkered’ to their own shortcomings, observational reports from relatives and friends may contribute to an overview of a client.

Other than that, an overview of a client’s situation can be obtained by completing questionnaires and tables such as the ones below. These are only given as samples. Modifications could be made to suit a counsellor’s own approach.

CLIENT RESOURCE 1

General Time Management Questionnaire

Please tick the factors that you relate to

Vitality and physical wellbeing

1. It can take me ages to get going in the morning.
2. I am fine for part of the day then I run out of steam.
3. I sometimes stare at a task or item of work and lose track of time.
4. I am a real daydreamer.
5. There is only one time of the day when I am of any use.
6. I don’t sleep well
7. I am frequently ravenously hungry.
8. Sex drive? What’s that?

Psychological factors

1. I tend to put off doing things.
2. There are things that I am afraid of doing.
3. There are things that I definitely avoid doing.
4. I keep getting in my own way.
5. I waste my time when I know I shouldn’t.
6. I go over and over things trying to get them right.
7. I don’t know where I am going in life. I wake up and think “It’s just another day”.
8. I could be regarded as a person under stress.

Self - Organisation

1. I seem to go off in all sorts of directions at once.
2. I forget things that I am supposed to do.
3. I am frustrated by how little I get done in a day.
4. I am often looking for things I have mislaid.
5. There aren't enough hours in the day.
6. People give me something when they want it done.
7. Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans.
8. I am not very good at filing things away. I rarely see the colour of my desk.

People

1. I wish I could say "No" to people.
2. People seem to want to talk to me all the time.
3. Nobody seems to want to do anything to help me.
4. People drive me crazy.
5. A little bit of help would go a long way.
6. I currently have conflicts with people that are absorbing my attention.
7. I tend to do the work of other people.
8. When everyone is home I start to get a headache.
9. Interruptions are the bane of my existence.

CLIENT RESOURCE 2 **General Overview of Life Domains**

	A lot of my time is taken up by... (please tick)	More time is needed and wanted for ... (please tick)
Exercise and Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self development and education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spouse/partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spiritual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CLIENT RESOURCE 3

Time Log

It can be helpful when assessing a client to have them fill out some version of a time log/journal for one to two weeks. Clients are required to capture their activities in half hourly increments. If their day tends to run on till 10pm or later; the log should reflect this. Have clients include a record of the quality of their sleep the night before as well as their meals. Initially they may complain that this is another task in their day. However, in the long run it will be beneficial to them being successful throughout the counselling program.

DAY OF THE WEEK: Wednesday		DATE: 17/11/07	
TIME	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS	PRIORITY
7.00am	<i>Slept okay. Breakfast-Toast and jam, coffee</i>	<i>Kids very disruptive. They didn't sleep well.</i>	<i>Medium</i>
7.30am	<i>Kids to school then work</i>	<i>Car battery still playing up</i>	<i>High – don't want to be late!</i>
8.00am	<i>Meeting at O'Briens</i>	<i>Colin late again, meeting delayed.</i>	<i>High- meeting important</i>
8.30am	<i>Looked for Harrison file</i>	<i>File had been misfiled by Anthea.</i>	<i>Medium</i>
9.00am	<i>Harrison file work.</i>	<i>Going slow, didn't understand what he wanted. Tried to ask Jane but she was not in office. Feeling very sluggish.</i>	<i>Medium</i>
9.30 am ↓ ↓ ↓ ETC.	<i>Call from Global Market Inc.</i>	<i>Jim Jennings trying to sell me something again. Tired, feel like want to sleep.</i>	<i>Low</i>

Chapter 3 - Wellbeing and Vitality

Something to keep in mind with time management is that people seeking help in regards to this area may be approaching a point of overload. We might expect in such cases that clients may be physically run down and/or may be heading towards or suffering from mental burnout. Therefore, in our counselling role, we should resist the temptation to rush in and start addressing major issues with the client.

We should first be satisfied that they have the necessary energy and vitality to cope with the addition to their life of challenging counselling sessions, behavioural modification and whatever else is needed to optimize their use of time. What is more, someone who is feeling fatigued and low in energy is hardly likely to be working efficiently.

If someone says they lack time in their life, just how long does it take them to carry out certain tasks? Would they get more done if they were keeping to a healthier diet? Have they eaten well over the last 24 hours? Would they be thinking more clearly if they were getting better sleep? In many cases making better use of time may need to begin with getting into a better physical and mental state.

There are some simple steps we can take as counsellors in guiding a client towards better energy and vitality. These steps involve minor adjustments to diet, exercise routines and sleep. Referring a client for a general medical check up is a must if there are any signs of physical difficulties or depression. However, within the framework of counselling there are some very simple things that can be done to boost people to higher levels of efficiency.

Keep in mind that as your client is filling in a Time Log system, you can start to see patterns regarding their sleep and their diet. How did they sleep? What did they eat? How did that day go? Are there any particular people around when energy is low?

Diet for Energy

Helping a client to be more productive can initially be as simple as guiding them towards having a good breakfast. The reason for this has a lot to do with a person's blood sugar levels.

When people get up in the morning their blood sugar levels are usually good, but they decline rapidly with the morning's activity. Most people don't feel like eating and many try to get by with a cup of coffee or some cereal and toast. This sort of meal, even if supplemented with orange juice and bacon, is high in carbohydrate and causes sugar levels to peak rapidly but about an hour later they drop dramatically.

The effect is even worse if a person eats food high in sugar such as jam, doughnuts or sweet pancakes. This peak followed by the drop in blood sugar causes feelings of fatigue and irritability and makes concentration difficult. People who eat protein in their breakfast, such as eggs or fortified milk (milk with skim milk powder or protein powder added) elevate their blood sugar to a good level and it stays consistently high throughout the morning.

Studies have shown that no matter what a person eats after having no breakfast or a high carbohydrate breakfast, they are susceptible to fatigue and irritability for the rest of the day. It is now generally accepted that people should eat breakfast (with protein) to be able to function for a full day (Davis, 1976; Eades & Eades, 2000; Holford, 2005; Wills, 2000).

Many people drink coffee or tea as a starter for the day. The caffeine in these drinks artificially allows the body's levels of adrenaline and dopamine to rise. Adrenaline is a 'heart starter' and dopamine promotes a sense of well being and alertness. However, because caffeine has artificially stimulated this result, the body's natural regulation is interfered with and caffeine is needed to continually keep the body stimulated.

In other words, coffee and tea drinkers become addicted to caffeine. Over time, this may lead to a higher tendency towards apathy, depression and exhaustion. After only a few weeks of using caffeine, people must either continually boost the levels to get the same result. However, people usually start to lapse into the phase of fatigue and poor concentration. The solution is to stop drinking these sorts of drinks and to allow three or four weeks for the body to readjust. The feelings of fatigue and heaviness will pass (Holford, 2005).

Exercise

The aim is to get people into a higher optimum state resulting in a better use of their time. That way their use of time will also be more optimal. Difficulties concentrating and general lethargy do not constitute a good basis for working on time management. Exercise contributes to this higher state of optimum.

When helping a client establish a program that incorporates exercise, it is important to remember that any sort of exercise may be beneficial to the client as long as it is within the capabilities of the individual. Please remember that such advice should only be given in conjunction with other health professionals.

As a counsellor you may find your role to be more that of a motivator, to get people sufficiently focused on their goals that they are willing to make some changes in their lifestyle.

Mental Fatigue and Burnout

When working with a client it should become clear if they are overdoing things. They can then be counselled towards simple remedies such as:

- Taking regular breaks at work. Rather than work at something for an hour, they might try working for 45 minutes and then replenishing themselves with 15 minutes of stretching or fresh air. People often get caught in a pattern of slogging away trying to produce resulting in draining themselves of their energy and never feeling any rewards. These small breaks can be considered rewards as part of a behavioural management system, whereby production is then rewarded by a break.
- Scheduling family time and down time. Too many people treat such things as though they are of secondary importance. However, such activities should be included in a time management plan as with anything else.
- Take a walk. This is a walk not where they continue to think about things, but rather a walk where they focus their attention on what is going on around them. This also expands the mental zone around someone who may have spent several hours of the day fixated on a computer screen or a task that was immediately in front of them. In fact, you can break someone's cycle of introspection by asking them to notice things in the environment such as "Look around here and notice something you haven't noticed before". This can be extremely refreshing for some people.

Sleep

People who are stressed and overloaded usually need more sleep; it is ironic however that their sleep is affected because they are stressed and overloaded. A number of factors can be investigated to help improve sleep (Holford, 2005; Mattlin, 1979):

1. Keep to a regular schedule of going to bed.
2. Establish a ritual for going to bed. This might involve reading to children, putting pets to bed, drinking milk, checking the doors and other rudimentary actions. They all help to start to signal to the consciousness that it will soon be time to switch off.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Keep caffeine levels low.
5. If hungry, eat a light and easily digested meal. Cereal or toast is recommended. Anything heavy will require too much effort in the digestive system, thereby keeping the person awake.
6. Have a definite cut off point for the working day, and allow some time before going to bed to wind down. Stretching, yoga, reading, meditating or sex are activities recommended in this time period. Television and the internet are not recommended.
7. Keep a journal and write down the events of the day. This is a way of getting the day out of one's head. A few minutes of reviewing the day, perhaps an hour before retiring can be helpful. Clients should be advised to keep it light and not get into too much analysis of what has happened in the day. If they really want to start looking into things, they might try restating the day expressed in positives or writing down what they have learned from the day that is useful.

8. Don't get into a routine of using sleeping pills or alcohol. They may be effective in a crisis but their usefulness will wear off in a couple of weeks, leaving a situation that is worse than it was before.
9. Have a comfortable bed. Many people overlook this, as they become accustomed to what they are sleeping on and they don't realize there is anything wrong. It pays to try different beds until they find one they feel comfortable with.
10. Cool bedrooms are associated with successful sleep. Overheating tends to lead to people waking up.
11. Keep noise and light to a minimum. People who think they sleep successfully through intermittent noises such as trucks and trains going past may have their cycle of deep sleep interrupted, even if they are not fully waking up.
12. If you can't sleep, get out of bed and do something simple. Part of the theory behind this is that lying awake in bed is 'conditioning' someone to associate their bed with being awake. Reading or watching something dull on TV may help, as may stretching or light exercise. This may not work for everyone; the key is to find what works for each client.
13. Warm milk before bed. Studies demonstrate that the tryptophan in the milk acts as a natural tranquilizer when heated. Tryptophan is also found in eggs, chicken, nuts and seeds. Tryptophan is also sold as a supplement but may only be possible from a doctor.
14. Ensuring the client is not deficient of melatonin. Melatonin is a natural part of the brain's bio-chemistry, produced in the pineal gland. It helps to regulate sleep and is largely responsible for helping us to stay asleep. People who wake up in the morning and are not able to get back to sleep may be deficient in melatonin. It is available in supplement form in health stores and chemists and can give immediate help to people who are having sleep problems (although should only be taken as directed by a health professional).
15. Natural remedies. Natural therapists can be asked for assistance with other natural remedies such as herbal remedies and teas.

As well as the fifteen aspects discussed there are a number of factors that can cause low energy and vitality. The following factors are part of an energy program developed by Cabot (1997):

1. Consume anti-oxidants and essential fatty acids to help look after one's cellular level
2. Boost the immune system
3. Cleanse the liver to optimize its function
4. Correct hormonal imbalances
5. Handle any exposure to toxic chemicals
6. Correct inappropriately prescribed drugs

From this information it becomes even more apparent that counsellors should not hesitate to liaise with medical and health professionals should they suspect a client is struggling with low energy levels. As a counsellor you might be able to help a client rediscover their own successful strategies for sleeping well and keeping their energy levels high, strategies that for some reason have fallen out of place.

The basic message is that with a client in better shape mentally and physically, they will be more able to move on to the next phase, which is to look at the psychological factors of time management.

Chapter 4 - Psychological Factors in Time Management

The key work you (as counsellor) will do with clients in time management will relate to psychological and cognitive factors. Morgenstern (2005) describes psychological factors behind time wasting.

1. Lack of clearly defined goals.
2. The enjoyment of being disorganized and being able to keep 'rescuing' the situation.
3. Fear of failure, or fear of success.
4. Fear of having spare time, perhaps due to the person being uncomfortable in their own space.
5. Attraction to the role of being 'father', 'mother' or 'caretaker' to everyone else's problems, therefore adding to workload.
6. Fear of completion.
7. Perfectionism and/or fear of criticism.
8. The idea that being organised and structured stifles creativity and spontaneity.

Some clients may be demotivated through false or dysfunctional beliefs. Some clients may be resisting any attempt to impose management on their lives because of past experiences with authority figures and the perception that they are trying to 'control' them.

A counsellor can approach these sorts of issues with any array of tools at their disposal; positive self talk, mental rehearsal and visualization, acting the part, modelling, and being one's own teacher. However, the following have been linked to a good time management counselling program:

1. Clarification of values, goals, purposes and objectives so that clients are energized and motivated to be able to work through obstacles and ignore distractions while they pursue what it is that they wish to attain.
2. Alignment and prioritization of activities.
3. Examination of false or dysfunctional beliefs, and ideas and considerations about time or life management that are blocking the individual.
4. Assumption of responsibility for managing one's life and time correctly.
5. Relaxation, meditation and mental rehearsal exercises to help the person to cope with stress.

Personal Congruence

Time management is largely a question of efficiency. The efficiency of a person is largely a factor of their 'congruence'; or the extent to which the person has their values, goals and activities in alignment (Tracy, 2004). Someone who is internally out of alignment is someone who is going to be prone to stress and easily distracted when following a given course of action. When someone is distracted and unable to progress, they can take a long time finding the motivation and resuming the course of action.

Asking clients where they want to have more time in their life leads to an examination of their values. Often a client will present with an imbalance in their life. A client involved in work or business may be seeking to have more personal or family time. Parents may be looking to have more personal time or time to develop a career.

Looking at the domains of life (as was suggested in the section on evaluation) is one way to start to clarify values. To review, the main domains of life are Health, Personal Learning and Education, Work, Career development, Relaxation, Sleep, Spouse/partner, Family, Children, Community, and Spiritual Life. Which of these domains have importance in the person's life? Which are currently neglected?

Robbins (1992) states that “moving toward values” leads to positives in a person’s life and “moving away from values” is associated with pain. There are values seen as positive that predominate with people including Love, Success, Freedom, Intimacy, Security, Adventure, Power, Passion, Comfort, and Health.

Of the values that are seen to be negative, the common ones are Rejection, Anger, Frustration, Loneliness, Depression, Failure, Humiliation, and Guilt. Using these domains and lists of values as the basis for discussions with a client can be very informative. It is important to note that values at different stages of the lifespan may change.

Overall, working with clients to become more congruent with their values is a step in helping them manage their time.

Goals and Motivation

Addressing the motivation of a client is relevant to time management. Panella (2002) found that using time management techniques without any motivational help, 80 to 90 percent went back to their old time wasting behaviours within one month. The will to improve must be there if any results are to be achieved.

Time management is an area where clients need to maintain motivation to get through the barriers and obstacles they encounter. The best way to motivate someone is to clarify, revive and reinvigorate their goals. There are many ways of doing this.

A recent innovation in this area is the “Passion Test” (Attwood & Attwood, 2007) which examines a person’s ideals and what he or she is passionate about. The test follows five steps:

1. Invite the client to consider what would give them a life of joy, passion and fulfilment.
2. Invite them to imagine this “ideal” life and complete the question, “When my life is ideal, I am...” Answers generally include things that they are doing, being or having and should result in a list of approximately ten or more items.
3. This list can then be culled to the five things that a client is most passionate at that time.
4. The most important item is then compared to all other items in the list and replaced if something more important is encountered.
5. The most important item from the first run through is circled; the remaining items are then culled in the same way.

This test helps clients gain clarity and insight about what their passions are.

Another way of creating goals is to incorporate the following questions (Kovess, 1997):

1. What would you do if you had ten million dollars in the bank?
2. What do you hate in the world? What makes you angry?
3. What part of your present work is most enjoyable?
4. What part of your work comes most easily to you?

Talking a client through their ideals in the life domains listed above and getting them to visualize their ideal life will also lead to an expression of goals.

Setting Objectives

Goals should not remain vague however motivated a person may be towards them. Goals should be prioritized and objectives set in order to achieve the goals. When are they going to achieve these things? What is the deadline?

As mentioned earlier, tasks tend to take up the available or allotted time. Better to set tough targets and push for them. This will increase efficiency and raise a person's morale, because attainment of goals will seem more real and less distant.

Taking Responsibility

One key aim of the counsellor should be working with a client to assume responsibility for their own part in managing time in their lives. Many people assume that their use of time is largely outside of their control. Stack (2004) found that reasons given for inefficient use of time consisted of things such as unimportant meetings, dealing with emergencies, understaffing, interruptions, and unnecessary incoming emails.

When participants were informed that these were all external factors, participants devised a new list where they named the reasons: interruption of others, seeking out meetings to have a mental break from work, procrastination, creating emergencies, and sending inappropriate emails.

Procrastination

The following should be considered in terms of procrastination:

1. What are the pay offs for procrastination? From a behavioural point of view procrastination may have been reinforced by clients finding other tasks pleasurable rather than the task at hand.
2. Is something being avoided? There may be some fear that is holding a person back. For example, if they complete their assignment and do a good job might they be asked to stand up and talk to their class mates about it?
3. Does your client have an aversion to hard work? Perhaps they have not fully explored the rewards that can come from hard work. The idea of work being "hard" is something that can be broken down into its elements – persistent, energetic, focused, and so on.

A simple remedy can be to think "Just do it"; don't wait for feelings of motivation to arrive. Simply start the task and the intrinsic motivation will be found in the task itself. It has also been suggested that you should reward yourself for completing tasks.

Again, rather than go off on a tangent looking for some reward, the reward may be found in the task itself. Encourage clients to look for things that are interesting in the task or look for more knowledge from the completion of a task. Finally, the simple remedy for an unwanted task is to simply do it and it will go away.

Indecision

Indecision is a time waster as people have to make decisions before they can take decisive action. This can be a fruitful area for a counsellor. Has the client suffered through their past decisions? Is there or was there someone in their life who is/was standing over them and judging them for various things they decided to do? Rubin (1985) states that the following should be considered when trying to decipher indecision.

1. Is the person in tune with their own priorities?
2. Do they have realistic goals and expectations?
3. Are they willing to pay the price that making the decision will involve?
4. Is the person self confident and have good self esteem?
5. Are they unnecessarily afraid of rejection and failure?
6. Is the person willing to recognize that life will always contain imperfections?
7. Are they aware of the influence of their moods?
8. Can the person accept that doubt may linger even after a decision has been made?

Being In the Moment

Clients who are not using their time well may have slipped into a mode of 'rushing' through things resulting in the perpetuation of a number of situations in their life. They may complain that they have to do things over a number of times, or that they have to explain things to people time and time again.

If they were able to slow down, be more 'in the moment', they might complete actions they are attempting to a more satisfactory result. They could also find themselves working at a better pace and expending energy in a more efficient way. In fact, it could be that their perception of time could be changed.

One strategy for overcoming this concern is meditation. They might complain that they really don't have time for such a strategy however it is beneficial to them in the long run to make a small amount of time each day. Meditation generally involves building concentration, deep breathing and positive thinking.

A recommended approach to basic meditation is as follows (Lawrence, 1999):

1. *Sit on a hard backed chair.*
2. *Breathe deeply and evenly.*
3. *Tune in to a particular sense to the exclusion of the other senses.*
4. *Allow thoughts to play themselves out, neither guiding or resisting them, but focusing one's attention as much as possible on the chosen sense.*
5. *Take time to tune into that sense and to fully appreciate it. After a while, choose to stop tuning in to it and resume deep breathing.*
6. *Each time meditation is done, tune in to a different sense.*
7. *When sight is done, open your eyes and take in everything that is in one's field of vision.*
8. *After some practice with senses, allow yourself to tune into emotions and feelings.*
9. *Notice if a feeling or emotion seems to be located in or stemming from some part of the body.*
10. *Focus on the feelings being experienced now, and resist the urge to start thinking about the past or the future.*

Notice anything that changes in relation to the feelings and emotions.

Chapter 5 - Organisational Factors in Time Management

Organising Goals

Having worked with a client on their motivation, it is important that the client take action and implement their new found sense of purpose so they don't lapse back into apathy and inactivity. The first step of helping someone to become more organised is helping them to see how they can start to take actions towards their goals. As shown in Figure 1, this is done by breaking goals down into objectives and then planning out the steps necessary to reach those objectives.



Figure 1: Organizing Goals

Apart from the actual completion of the goals there are two advantages to the counselling process in relation to completing goals:

1. A person who is accomplishing tasks related to their long term goals and ideals increases the level of endorphins in the brain. Endorphins give a sense of well-being and elation. The person receives an intrinsic reward for progressing towards their goals and therefore increases their need to accomplish tasks (Tracy, 2004).
2. Pushing towards goals may bring about an increased awareness of the individual's limitations, doubts, fears and other reactions. With a counsellor on standby ready to help deal with what is coming up, the potential for growth is very high.

Dealing with Everyday Life

Allen (2001) explains that the essence of time management is completing decisions and determining action steps about the things that capture our psychological and physical space. To cope with everyday demands, Allen has suggested a processing sequence of work and tasks:

1. Collect all situations, projects and tasks that need to be done, including those that keep flowing in on a regular basis.
2. Process them and work out what actions need to be taken.
3. Organize the resultant tasks and projects.
4. Review them and look at options for action.
5. Do what has been decided.

Allen's approach can be described as 'from the ground up'. He feels that there are still too many people who cannot, despite all their best intentions, thrive on a goal oriented approach to time management. In fact, he believes that setting lofty goals may impose more need for change on people and therefore more demands on their daily schedule.

Certainly, as counsellors we need to be alert for clients chasing unrealistic goals or clients not being content with what they have. However, goal setting is seen as a forte in counselling for helping drive clients through their barriers and strive towards an end result. Morgenstern (2005) has developed a simple approach to sorting out the things that need to be completed. This is known as the "WADE" formula.

1. Write it down
2. Add it up- estimate how long it will take
3. Decide what to do about these items. This can include the 4 Ds of time management- Delete, Delay, Delegate or Diminish into smaller tasks.
4. Execute the plan of action decided on.

The following diagram represents the idea of processing tasks (Allen, 2001).

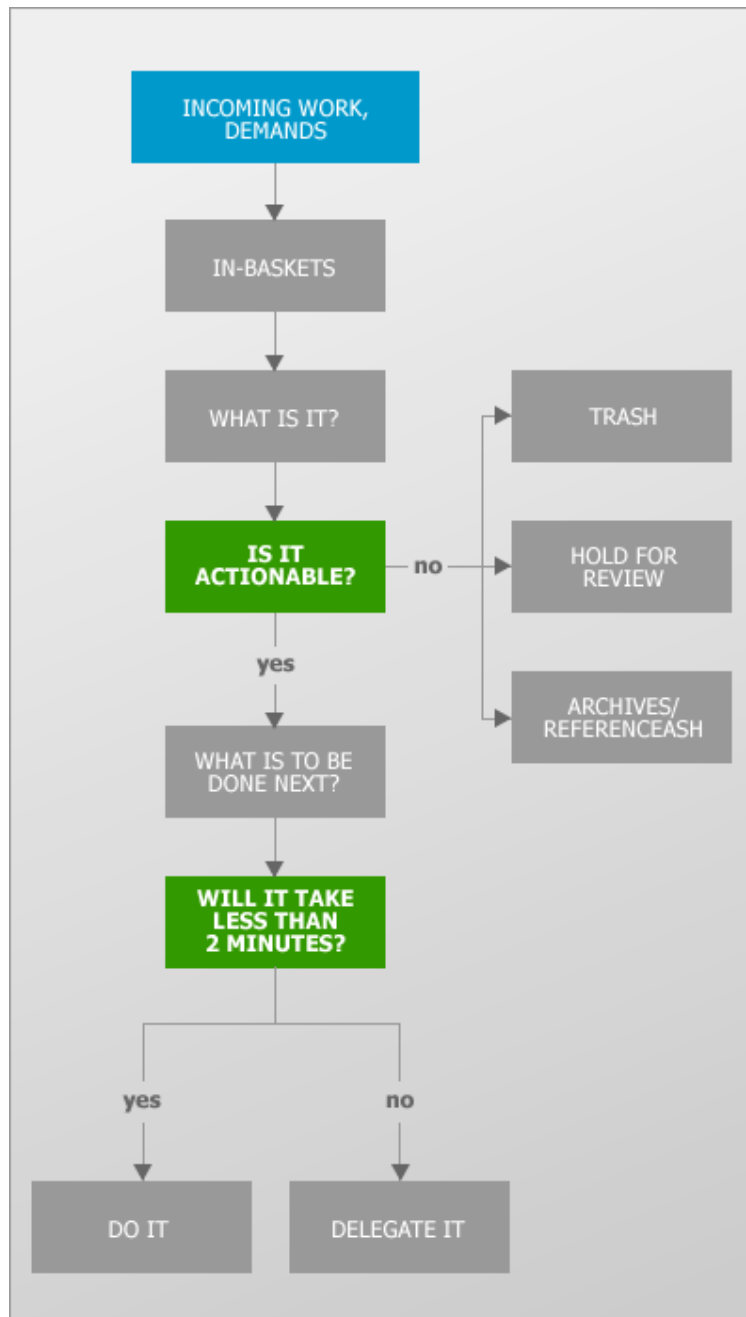


Figure 2: Processing of Work Flow

It may help a client to visualize how they process their incoming work. This system incorporates the 4 Ds of time management- Delete, Delay, Delegate or Diminish into smaller tasks. The Diminish stage is where something is seen to require more than two minutes to complete and is added to a “Plans and Projects” stage where it is broken down into manageable steps.

Sorting out tasks with constant reference to goals and ideals is a key to time management from a counselling perspective. There are perhaps various ways of going about this. An approach (The Life Organisation Exercise is suggested below.

Life Organisation Exercise

1. Have your client sit with their written goals and objectives handy.
2. Invite your client to complete an inventory of all their unfinished actions/tasks. Have them write down everything they can think of. Write one item for every two or three lines on a page; in other words have them leave space to add notes.
3. Invite your client to get together at home and in the office all the physical things that need doing.
4. Work with them to assess what time these actions will take and incorporate this in their lists. While completing this task they can be grouping items into categories. For example: home, office, children, car, etc.
5. Invite your client to compare this list against their goals and see if the time they will take is justified. They might also see whether or not the actions are justified at all.
6. Apply the four Ds: Delete, Delay, Delegate or Diminish into smaller tasks.
7. The tasks that maintain priority should be allocated places in the diary or calendar system used by the client.

Don't be surprised if a client starts to go through some fatigue and/or emotions while completing an exercise such as this. Note that your presence with them while they do this exercise is one of the reasons it will work as it will help them work through some mental barriers as they confront a whole mass of incomplete, unfinished business in their life.

Some clients may try to 'escape' the exercise. They will come up with various things that demand their attention, and reasons why they can't sit down and get through it. Without being unkind, guide your client through to completion of this or a similar exercise.

Please note: This is a suggested routine; you may have a variation of this and the client may prefer to sketch plans using diagrams and colour. The important thing is to get the person through what they might not otherwise get through so that they start to get on top of the barriers to personal organisation.

Other Organizing Principles for Time Management

Clients who are more organized towards the achievement of their goals are likely to be more responsive to attempts to help them organize their daily activities. Once this is completed, a multitude of ideas and systems can be employed to better organize the use of time. Some of the common principles and ideas for organising principles for time management are discussed:

Systems and Checklists

Some aspects of life are repetitive, such as getting ready in the morning for the days activities. It is beneficial to develop a system for these activities such as using a checklist that can be referred to. Leaving a house in the morning is one of those notorious occasions that slow people down; they have to stop and think if they have forgotten anything and often lose time going back into the house.

Prepare For Tomorrow, Today

Trying to plan a day on that day is prone to failure as the day's activities take over and the plan is never finished. This leads to a never ending cycle of a person reacting to each day's events and never asserting planning control.

Dealing with Overload

The overloaded client may require specific help to reorganize their life. The first step is to invite them to identify all the roles they carry out in their life and write them down. Gradually they will mentally separate out the different roles after which they can start to sort and prioritize them.

They will also start to see why they have allowed themselves to become overloaded and start to mentally delegate some of their roles to others. Of course, all other time saving ideas are relevant to someone who is overloaded.

One commonly successful strategy with overloaded clients is to get them to use one planner for their whole life, rather than run separate diaries for work and personal life. This helps them to get their activities aligned and optimize their time. Also, teaching clients how to gradually organize their way out of the work is beneficial rather than teaching them how to reorganise their overloaded life.

As mentioned earlier, counsellors should be on the lookout for people who are caught up in some sort of martyrdom or who somehow receive payoffs from doing more than their share, such as dealing with a sense of guilt for some other inadequacy. Also, the 'workaholic' may be addressed in this section that may need to focus on balance in their life and possibly deal with things they may be avoiding in their personal life.

Travel time

As so much time in life is spent travelling, it makes sense that people could make better use of this time. Drivers could use this time listening to educative CDs. Commuters on public transport can read and write. These are valuable sections of time and because travel is so frequent, several hours of valuable activity can be added to the week.

Again, some may feel that they are already strained with the amount they are trying to fit into the week; however someone who is back in tune with their goals and purposes in life is going to be that much more motivated to utilise their time more efficiently.

Procrastination from an Organisational Viewpoint

The idea of breaking goals into objectives, then plans, then further breaking those plans down into smaller activities, is one way of working with procrastination. Once someone can see that a series of tasks are quite simple and doable, they will not only get on with them but there will be a corresponding rise in morale as they realize that they are progressing towards important, long-term goals.

Clutter

Much is made in time management training of the need to sort out a client's 'clutter'. The trick is to decide whether tasks or roles are absorbing a person's attention or is the 'clutter' avoidance from major things that should be addressed.

Diaries and Planners

There are many types of diaries and planners out there; however it is recommended that a diary with a ring binder is used so that it can be added to as the need arises. One way of setting this out is to have one section of the binder the 'daily planner' and another section for goals, objectives and general plans so that the client can easily cross reference their daily activities with their long term goals. Electronic organizers are highly recommended for this same reason as they can hold a lot of information allowing the client to revisit and add to their long-term goals. Many also contain useful alarms and automatic reminders.

Following is a recommended format for the standard daily diary page, allowing for 'what not to do' lists and also a report on the day from a time management perspective. It is suggested that people write a general list of things to do as well as a list of things against time. Once the time appointments are completed; the general 'to do' list can then be attempted. Planning a day the day before, and also planning from a general weekly or even monthly 'to do' list, allows for grouping similar activities together and thereby saving time.

GENERAL THINGS TO DO TODAY	TODAY BY TIME
	7am Exercise / breakfast
Call mechanic re battery / also get quote on tyres	
Check bank account / pay gas bill	8am
Check Spanish course in yellow pages	
Phone Steve Hodgson / Amanda MacKenzie	9am Smithfield Press meeting
Get watch fixed	
Send "Magic Ages" manuscript	10am
	11am Phoenix Press meeting
	12 noon
	1pm Meet Tammy, lunch; ask her for Indian publisher no.
THINGS NOT TO DO TODAY	2pm
Chat with Colin	3pm
Check football results / surf net	
Go to the Pink Elephant for lunch	4pm
Ask Bill about his health	
Stay up late	5pm Drop off Smegson file to Andy
	6pm
TODAY'S PRODUCTS / ACHIEVEMENTS Got the contact number for Bombay International Press, can send them some manuscripts! Phoenix meeting very promising. See them again next month.	
TIME WASTERS / DISTRACTIONS Had to take Tammy to Paddington- much of afternoon wasted! Didn't have good breakfast; tired in afternoon.	

Chapter 6 - Time Management and People

Apart of working on time management with clients is addressing whether the people around them hinder or are helpful to the process of time management. Both of these types of people play a part in determining how much time we get to spend with the people we really want to be with. A week or two of keeping a time log should provide an account of how much time is being taken up by which people, and in what sort of circumstances.

Disrupters

Disrupters are those people that have their own time management issues, may not be following a strong purpose in their life, or are caught up in patterns of procrastination. Time wasters at work may not really understand their job or may know that they are not very good at it. People may also just be caught up in what they feel are the 'rewards' of time wasting.

Note that your client may have trouble breaking free from a 'Cult of Time Wasting' and may have to go against the group ethic if they start to maximize the use of their time. This will be particularly obvious in a workplace where it has become standard practice to take it easy. It may even show up in the home, where insisting on doing things in the evening rather than sitting in front of the television 'with the family', may cause some consternation.

The remedy in any case is for your client to keep their goals and objectives in mind, and to assert themselves and what they know to be important. However, the client may not have the self-esteem to assert him or her self. Therefore, working with clients to develop self-esteem follows four keys (Fensterheim & Baer, 1987):

1. Being oriented to life, knowing what one wants and pursuing it actively.
2. Acting in accordance with one's values and in a way that maintains one's self respect.
3. Being able to communicate with others openly and honestly.
4. Feeling able to reveal oneself and aspects of one's character and personality.

Having worked to align a client's goals, values and activities and develop their sense of personal congruence, much will have been done to improve their self esteem. Someone who still cannot assert themselves in situations where their time is being wasted may need more assistance to fine tune their sense of integrity, or they may need a course in communication skills. Both of these areas can be covered by the counsellor.

Delegation

Anyone managing a factory, office, home or any group situation will have tussled with delegation. The next eight points may be used when working with clients to delegate tasks to better manage their time (Le Boeuf, 1985; Moss, 2001):

1. When first delegating a task make eye contact with the other person. This helps to get the message across.
2. Having explained the task/activity verbally, it pays to make sure the requests are written down and understood. One way of doing this is to have the other person read the request and then check for understanding (ie. ask them questions). If the person does not understand some of the terminology involved, make sure they get this cleared up as anything not understood or misunderstood will lead to complications later. Having a written explanation of the task or activity saves time as the person carrying out these functions can re-read rather than the need for repeating explanations.

3. If you don't want to write down what you are requesting, at least get the person to say back to you what it is they are expected to do.
4. Orient people towards the final product. There is a difference between "I want you to clean the bathroom" and "I want the bathroom to be clean and shiny and fit for royalty to come and visit". The first request asks for the activity to be completed to no particular quality. The likely result is a grudging twenty minutes of poor cleaning. The second request asks for something specific which will call upon the person to apply effort and initiative. This is further enhanced if rewards are offered for a satisfactory product.
5. Praise the person at the start of the task, tell them you know they can do it and praise them when it is successfully completed. If it is not successfully completed, praise them for making the effort, ask them if they had problems with it and jointly discuss how it might be improved next time.
6. If you really want to offload the task, don't interfere with this person as they try to do it. Bypassing them tells them that you are not really relinquishing your ownership of the task, and they will end up leaving it to you.
7. Allow the person to make mistakes. In the long run you will come out on top in terms of time and you will make the people around you feel more useful and productive, thereby boosting your self esteem.
8. If you get the reward system right, such as awarding points for tasks done and having monthly prizes and recognition, you may end up with people coming to you looking for more things to do.

Tracy (2007) advises to watch for 'reverse delegation'. 'Reverse delegation' is where those people we have given tasks to come back to us for a solution to the problem.

Meetings

Meetings are notorious for time wasting especially as they are not used to their full potential. Meetings can be used not only to relay important information to others; they can also be used as a way of building teams and aligning people to a common purpose. Time is lost when someone has to keep handling people because of their behaviour which is either non-productive or which is actually in opposition to the rest of the group.

The keys to running a successful meeting are as follows (Caunt, 2006; Moss, 2001):

1. Be organised. Know what is to be covered in the meeting and distribute this agenda to the people who will be there in advance. If anyone needs to leave the meeting early, keep this in mind and have them speak early on. These steps help to avoid the need for repeat meetings.
2. If necessary allocate everyone a specific amount of time for speaking.
3. Set a time of day when the majority of people you need to be there can be there.
4. Protect the prime time of others. For most people at work this will mean having a meeting in the afternoon. Family meetings should be held at times when people are feeling alert and not tired. Meetings shouldn't be seen as a punishment.
5. Have two distinct types of meetings. One should be for management and administration matters. Another type of meeting is for people to broach issues that are of concern to them. This second type of meeting is usually only needed once every month or every second month.
6. If meetings are regular, training on how to run a meeting is helpful for anyone managing a meeting as well as the participants.

Children

Parents face their own challenges in regards to time. Some guidelines may be offered to parents in relation to time management:

A key approach with children is behavioural management. Children are not always inclined to reason and trying to negotiate with reactivity and irrationality can be one of the most time consuming activities of all. It is best to listen, acknowledge what has been said, then to gently insist on and enforce what is needed.

A 'rewards and penalties' system can work wonders. Some parents keep a board on the fridge and on a weekly basis tally up points for good and bad actions. The end score is used to decide on whether rewards are given or privileges are taken away. The key to the whole thing is logic and consistency and it is more effective if the system has been talked through in a family meeting before being instated.

1. Parents should ensure there is 'family time' each day. This should be a time that everyone looks forward to. If it is becoming something of a chore, as a counsellor you may need to examine other issues that could be impacting on the family. For example, family members may be tired or feel that their own needs are being ignored.

Having times that are dedicated to the family might seem to eat into the week significantly. However, this time is important for children to feel wanted and acknowledged and are more likely to keep themselves busy at other times. Also, this can also lessen the time spent handling arguments and tantrums.

2. Children really do thrive on feeling that they can contribute and delegating tasks to them is something that should be done thoughtfully and with patience. This can boost a child's morale and self esteem.
3. A behavioural management system should be in place such as when getting ready for school in the morning, being on time for meals and other areas where children can slow the day down.
4. Parents should speak in a calm, normal voice with eye contact when giving instructions. That way there is 'somewhere to go' when there is a need to change the tone of voice to indicate displeasure. Parents who start off with an angry, escalated tone have nowhere to go, the children become desensitized demoralized because they start to think that their parents are always mad at them.
5. Some parents have found success with turning off everything electronic in the house if children's behaviour escalates. Some parents tell their children to read and draw or make things, while others are sent out to play. Often, the children immediately calm down and lose themselves in their new activities.

Parenting is a major part of some people's lives and should be addressed in the time management process.

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