

Soft Skills—Time Management—Participant Handout



Time is many things to many people: It is measured, it is limited, it is unique, it is perishable, it is money, and managing it is the key to finding satisfaction and enjoying life!

It is important to develop time management skills so you can get more done with less stress; you can be more successful; you will be less likely to miss out on important activities in your life; can keep you from being fired, and can keep you from stealing (time is money!)

A great way to see if you are wasting time is to track your activities in relation to the time you spend on each one. On paper, write down all the activities you do in a day and the amount of time you spent on each activity. At the end of the day, look critically at the list you made and see if you are wasting time. Knowing where your time goes is a good start to learning to manage your time.

Most of us have some time wasters in our life: TV, phone or computer use, unexpected visitors, too many errands, looking for lost items due to clutter. Do you have any of these in your life?

When you are wasting time, you are giving up time that could be used for other activities. Many people say they “don’t have time for...” things like reading, cooking nutritious meals, exercise, volunteering. Yet, they may find the time in their day if they were not wasting time.

The things you spend time on should reflect your values...those things you hold dear and are very important to you.

Determine whether an activity is Urgent or Important, Not Urgent or Not Important. Urgent and important things need to be done first. Important but not urgent activities should be done next. Urgent but not important activities done third, and Not urgent and not important activities done last, or not at all.

Prioritizing is a way of listing your activities in order of importance and taking care of the most important activity first.

Some tips to get things done are: Have a “due date” that you will be finished by. Break big jobs down into smaller steps that can be done one at a time, if needed. Use tools like “to do lists”, calendars, clocks with timers, an alarm on your clock or phone, notes hung on your bathroom mirror, and allowing extra time for mailings.

Some times it is unavoidable to be late. If you are coming in late to a meeting, come in as quietly and unobtrusively as possible. You don’t want to interrupt the flow of a meeting that has already started and get people off the topic. If you are late for a personal appointment, call and let the person who is waiting for you know so they don’t worry, leave, or wait an unreasonable amount of time.