

## TIME MANAGEMENT IN THE CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT

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### Personal & Professional Development ...



### Learning Objectives for this Session:

- By the end of this session we will have
  - Introduced the concept of time management
  - Explored some common issues in respect of time management
  - Looked at some simple strategies for optimizing time management
  - Considered how influencing our students time management will impact on our own ..

### Where did the idea that we need to look at time management come from?

- "Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."  
(H. Jackson Brown)
- "The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."  
(Michael Altshuler)
- "A wise person does at once, what a fool does at last. Both do the same thing; only at different times."  
(Baltasar Gracian)

### Challenges of Clinical Teaching:

- **Time Pressures**
- Competing demands – clinical, administrative,
- Often opportunistic – makes planning more difficult
- Increasing numbers of students
- Fewer patients, shorter stays, refusals
- Under-resourced (training)
- Environment not "teaching friendly"
- Rewards and recognition for teaching is poor <sup>1</sup>

### ... Looking at Time Management,

- Psychological Barriers
- We often feel resistance to external judgments of our personality or habits. It is much easier to accept a change if we discover things for ourselves, if the judgment is our own.

### .... Personal Development,

- **Time Management** ....Skills
- Stress Management.... Skills
- Project Management ...Skills
- Communication Skills
- Conflict resolution ...Skills
- Assertiveness Skills
- Team Working
- Change Management ...Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Negotiation Skills
- Customer Care Skills
- Leadership Skills
- **Teaching Skills**

- **Skill** consists in the ability to bring about some end result with maximum certainty and minimum outlay of energy, or time and energy (**Guthrie, 1972**)

- Do you have the skills necessary to succeed in today's work place? Good communication, time management and writing skills are essential. One must also be assertive and organized. Public speaking skills and computer literacy may also be necessary..... (**teaching skill ..**)

Time Management is probably the number one tool for managing stress at its sources....

- On the one hand, good time management is a critical element of effective stress management.
- Time management is probably the number one tool for managing stress at its sources.
- If you get organized, plan ahead, stop procrastinating, clarify your priorities, and delegate effectively you are much less likely to be overwhelmed by the pre-deadline stress.

... Stress Management is an essential component of Effective Time Management.

- On the other hand, stress management is an essential component of effective time management.
- Many people cannot completely avoid the sources of their stress, and an overwhelming stress can block their ability to think and perform.
- In such situations stress management techniques, including relaxation techniques, can be critical for getting unstuck and staying effective.

### Typical Time Problems,

- Task
  - Work piling up
  - Trying to do too much at once
  - Getting involved in too much detail
  - Postponing unpleasant tasks
  - Insufficient time to think
- People
  - Constant interruptions from callers
  - Constant telephone interruptions
  - Too much time spent in conversation
  - **Students**

## Typical Time Problems,

- Paperwork
  - Too much incoming paper
  - Too many letters / notes to write
  - Paperwork piling up
  - Lost papers
- Meetings
  - Too much time spent in (inefficient) meetings
- Travelling
  - Too much time spent on travel <sup>2</sup>

## Typical Time Wasters,

- The drop in visitor
- Telephones
- Paperwork – reading and reports (e mail)
- Paperwork – letters and memos
- Travel
- Meetings
- Ineffective communication
- Procrastination
- Ineffective delegation
- The cluttered desk
- Personal dis-organization
- Lack of self-discipline

Activity...List the 5 major time wasters that you experience in a typical week at work, which wastes the most time? ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Know how you spend your time

- Keep a time log during some time interval, like a week, and then analyze it to see where your time goes. For example, what percentage of time you spend on *urgent* and on *important* activities, what people you devote most time to. You are likely to be surprised, and you will see much better if you could use more time management tips.

## ...time log,

- Time
- Activities
- Scheduled
- Interrupted
- Urgent
- People (involved)

## Prioritising,

- "time is a paradox, we never seem to have enough time, yet we have all the time there is, no matter how much we do, there are always alternatives for spending time ... focus on the most important things first, realizing that there is always enough time for the really essential matters"



## Pareto's Law...

- the 80-20 Rule. 80 percent of the reward comes from 20 percent of the effort.
- The trick to prioritizing is to isolate and identify that valuable 20 percent.
- Once identified, prioritize time to concentrate your work on those items with the greatest reward.
- Prioritize by **color**, **number** or **letter** — whichever method makes the most sense to you.
- Flagging items with a deadline is another idea to help stick to priorities.

Activity ... a simple way of PRIORITISING is to make a list of the tasks to be completed and give them a score, 1- most important, 2-, 3-,

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
- Some criteria for prioritizing...
    - Closeness of deadline
    - Level of resources involved
    - Customer involvement / satisfaction
    - Potential impact / benefit
    - Cost / consequences of non-completion

and /or -

ABCD rating of your priorities.

## Terms of Time

- Short – days, weeks
- Short / Medium – weeks, months
- Medium – months, a few years
- Medium / Long – a few years, 5 or more years
- Long – 5 years or more

## The Important / Urgent grid,

### Important Activities

*Importance implies some assessment of the benefits of completing a task against the loss if the task is not finished*

### Urgent Activities

*Urgency relates to the length of time before the task must be completed.*

- “doing the *right thing* is more important than doing things right.”
- Doing the right thing is *effectiveness*; doing things right is *efficiency*.
- Focus first on *effectiveness* (identifying what is the right thing to do), then concentrate on *efficiency* (doing it right).<sup>3</sup>

## Top Tip...

Priorities are not static and need to be reassessed frequently

## The Important / Urgent Grid

	Urgent	Non Urgent
Important	A	B
Not Important	C	D

## Procrastination

- is putting off the things that you should be doing now.
  - Waiting for the right mood
  - Waiting for the right time
  - Lack of clear goals
  - Underestimating the difficulty of the tasks
  - Underestimating the time required to complete the tasks
  - Unclear standards for the task outcomes
  - Feeling as the tasks are imposed on you from outside
  - Too ambiguous tasks
- Associated with
  - Underdeveloped decision making skills
  - Fear of failure or fear of success
  - Perfectionism

## Myths About Time Management

- **Myth:** My life is completely controlled by external events.
- **Fact:** You can have some control over many aspects of your life, but *you* and *you alone* are responsible for initiating that control. Learn to recognize what you can and can't control before making your choices. Anticipate the future and clarify the external demands that must be faced. From there, it is easier to determine what can be done, and within what time frame, despite the demands.

## Myths About Time Management

- **Myth:** I should meet everyone's expectations.
- **Fact:** The needs and demands of others may be inappropriate for you and your lifestyle. They may be poorly timed, highly questionable, or simply unattainable. They may be of a different priority than your own. By trying to meet the expectations of others, you may be shortchanging yourself and your needs. First become clear about what your needs are and then you consider what others expect of you.

## Myths About Time Management

- **Myth:** I should have no limits.
- **Fact:** We all have limits . . . failure to acknowledge this may cause you to become perfectionistic in your expectations.

Perfectionists are especially prone to procrastination because the perfection they demand is impossible.

## Proactive or Reactive?

- **Pro-activity** is about
  - Planning, anticipation, forecasting, preventing
- **Reactivity** is about
  - Responding, surprise, fire-fighting, crisis management
- Being **Proactive** requires time for
  - Exploration, planning, communication, designing preventive measures.
- Being **Reactive** for too much of the time invites pressure ...and thus creates stress

### Scott's Time Traps...<sup>4</sup>

- Urgencies, crises, panics
- Fire fighting is fun
- Post adrenaline dip
- Fire fighters get promoted
- Comfortable, familiar, easy tasks
- Immediate reward

### Further approaches to time management

- Use your biological rhythms to your advantage.
- Optimize your work environment.
- Safeguard blocks of work time.
- Communicate clearly.
- Arrange your work area. Sort out your desk clutter!
- Close your door.
- Find and use a special space.
- Unplug your phone ... rack your bleep.

- Work with deadlines
- Delegation
- Set goals
- Say "No" !!
- The danger of perfectionism

### What is Planning and why you need to Plan? ...

- **Planning** is one of the most important project management and time management techniques.
- **Planning** is preparing a sequence of action steps to achieve some specific goal.
- If you do it effectively, you can reduce much of the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal.

### "Failing to Plan is in effect, Planning to Fail..."<sup>5</sup>

- A plan is like a map. When following a plan, you can always see how much you have progressed towards your project goal and how far you are from your destination.
- Knowing where you are is essential for making good decisions on where to go or what to do next.

### Decision Making Skills ...

- selecting one course of action from several possible alternatives. Decision making skills are also a key component of time management skills.
  - The difficult part is to pick one solution
  - Where the positive outcome can outweigh possible losses.
  - Avoiding decisions often seems easier.
  - Yet, making your own decisions and accepting the consequences is the only way to stay in control of your time, your success, and your life



Ringman

"OK, all those in favour of delegating decision-making, shrug your shoulders"

- Delegating is one of the most talked about, yet underutilized time management tips.
- Delegating effectively is an important time management skill that does two things.
- First it frees up your time for more important tasks.
- Second, when delegating is done well, it develops the skills and potential of the people you work with.

### Time Management Conflicts in Clinical Placement Sites ...



### Time Management and Clinical Teaching ...

- Most clinical teaching takes place in the context of a busy practice, with time at a premium.
- Block out time to accommodate teaching

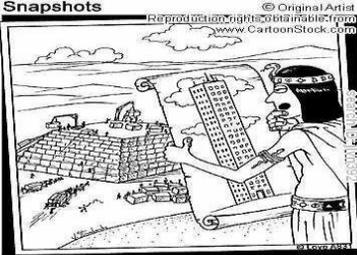


### Clinical Placement Block = "Project"

- A project is generally is a one-off piece of work with a fixed time frame.
- 4 / 5 / 6 week blocks.
- What "value" do you place on your role as PE?
- Make conscious decisions about realistic time allocation to teaching.
- Some degree of preparation / planning for teaching is usually essential even in very familiar territory.

### Planning for Placement ... Foundations

...



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"I knew we didn't have enough blocks for this thing."

### Students ...

- As students are learning, most things will take longer to do than they would a qualified practitioner.
- Student caseloads are adjusted to account for this, particularly during early placements
- It is important for students to learn to prioritise with multiple needs in mind.

## Adult Learning ...

- Teachers may not feel at ease using a method that places responsibility upon the student.
- Students may not be happy with a method that makes them take responsibility for their own progress.
- Delegating (responsibility for learning) effectively can build the skills of the people around you

## Myth: Learning by Osmosis

- Your student does not automatically learn what he or she needs to know when observing you working with clients.

## Teaching ...

- “Administrator” or “Facilitator” of learning



## Learning episodes ...

- Time Manage for “Learning Episodes”

## Be explicit with your students about the competing demands for your time

- I can committ ... to my Practice Educator priorities today ...
- I have a busy clinic this afternoon, it is not a good teaching / learning environment for you at the moment ... in week 5 I will bring you to the clinic ... you will have a foundation then that will allow you to participate ...
- Set times / timetables ... then “teach when you have committed to teaching” ...

## Strategies ...

- **Necessary skills**
- Necessary planning
- Clear objectives
- Realistic timeframes
- Necessary communication
- Delegation
- Timetables



### To summarise ...

- An overview of Time Management / Time Management Strategies ...
- The Clinical Environment ...
- During Clinical Placement ...

### Questions ????????



“Teaching on the run tips” – series from MJA (2004) ... & a few resources in your pack ..

- Planning a teaching episode
- Teaching with patients
- Teaching a skill
- Determining competence
- Effective use of questions
- Assessment and appraisal
- Giving feedback
- Preventing problems