SUCCESSFUL TIME MANAGEMENT

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LEARNING GOALS

- Understand what successful time management looks like
- Increase self-awareness of how your time is spent at work and at home and identify your ‘time wasters’
- Identify new strategies to trial in your work or personal life that are consistent with your strengths and appropriate for your needs.
- Identify new strategies for enabling self-management and self-reflection for your clients.
WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL TIME MANAGEMENT?

- Time management is the process of organising and planning how to divide your time between specific activities.

- Successful time management enables you to work more efficiently with the time you have; to enable greater productivity, less stress, increased control, greater opportunities and improved professionalism.

- ‘being busy isn’t the same as being effective’
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY THEORY

- Time management is a life skill required for independent living. Maladaptive temporal patterns are a hallmark of many physical and mental health conditions. Being and feeling productive is vital to our self-efficacy and therefore health.

- Time management difficulties can impact negatively across all daily occupations and is therefore core business for OT’s when evaluating and intervening in a client’s functional performance.

- As an OT, time spent and the value placed on particular activities, in the context of self-management and self-reflection is important to consider for all clients. Consider the clients you have prescribed a home exercise program...

- The Assessment of Time Management Skills (ATMS) is a self-reported measure developed in the Mental Health setting by White et al (2013) was “designed to assess awareness and use time management strategies to plan and manage daily life tasks” (White et al, 2013, p215)
START YOUR DAY RIGHT

- Many of the most successful individuals in the world have in common one thing – they rise early. Even if you’re not a ‘morning person’ this is a habit you can form and a skill you can practice.
- Preparation for the day starts the night before – know how many hours you need ideally for optimal function and set a plan
- Allowing enough time for all activities including toddler / traffic / orthoses / hair etc taming!
- Mindfulness / Meditation (great apps include Headspace, Calm, Smiling Mind)
- Nutrition / Exercise
- Calm and focused approach where able
USE MEMORY & ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Internal memory strategies eg focusing, categorise information,
- External memory strategies eg calendars, diaries, timers, writing lists/using notepads,
- Prioritising your tasks for the day and also the full week
- Attacking the most complicated / important / disliked item on your list first
- Designate a place for everything and always put that item back in the same place eg a good filing system for paper based documents and also for electronic based documents. Go paperless wherever possible!
MEMORY & ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Use routine to your advantage, that will organise your time for you!
- Use of time management apps for your phone or tablet such as ‘Task Timer’ “may be an effective way of introducing self-directed time management strategies” (Moorman et al 2015, p2)
- At the end of the day, write yourself a ‘To Do’ list for the next day while it’s fresh in your mind and to assist in the mental separation for the next activity.
USE DISRUPTION AND DISTRACTION STRATEGIES

- Turn off social media and email alerts or notifications
- When interrupted in the workplace, try stating how many minutes (or seconds!) you have right from the start or suggest another time that might work better for both of you
- Try standing when someone comes into your working space as this body language will send a subconscious message
- Try reviewing your computer settings, so it opens in your calendar as opposed to your emails, this will help focus on your day and you won’t be as tempted.
- Reduce background noise wherever able
KNOW YOURSELF...

- When do you work best?
  - what time of day, what kind of environment, noise levels, temperature, distractions, sitting or standing etc etc

- How can you use this to your advantage?

- Are you putting something off? Try giving yourself 10mins to work on it and see what happens, chances are you will probably keep working on it but 10mins a day will get the job done eventually!

- Ask for help when you need it...
KNOW YOUR ROLE

- Personal life / home role
  - look at the responsibilities objectively and consider the best person, best time of the day/week for these tasks, consider delegation as appropriate
  - clarify with your partner / housemate / family
  - consider writing task lists for a central place in the home

- Work role
  - clarify your positions’ role but also your responsibility within a particular task or project or meeting, to ensure you have clear understanding so as not to waste time
  - consider increasing delegation as appropriate
**Know your role**

- **Therapist Role for your patient or client**
  - understand their occupational roles and the importance they place on them, not just their activities, ie mother role and all it encompasses vs ability to change a nappy.
  - continually check in with your patient to ensure you remain client centred and working towards something they place a high value upon and hence motivation.
HAVE A PLAN — SET ‘SMART’ GOALS

- S – specific
- M – measurable
- A – achievable
- R – relevant
- T – time-based

- Break down larger objectives into smaller measurable tasks, keeping you on track. Being able to achieve success will breed more success and motivation.
- Always formulate goals positively. Timelines and deadlines need to be realistic, otherwise it’s a waste of time and effort!
- It might help to ask yourself the what/where/how/when/who/why questions
- Eg Within the next hour I will have sent these 10 emails outlining my plan for this project. By the end of the day I will have completed this powerpoint presentation so that I can send this out to my team members by 4pm.
PRIORITISE

- Commit to the ‘bang for buck’ or high pay off tasks and activities
- Learn to say no or at least ‘not now’
- Be realistic and continually review your role if need be
- Try to look at the big picture, eg don’t waste time on the small things, if you continue to focus on the big objectives it will maintain your motivation
- Pick your battles, decide what it is important to you eg you might not be fussed if the floors are dirty or only prepare for a meeting 5 mins before.
PRIORITISATION FRAMES OF REFERENCE

- Consider Covey’s model of ‘Effective Habits’ (1989) whereby the success is determined by the overlapping of ‘knowledge’, ‘skills’ and ‘desire’. Which is very similar to Kielhofner’s Model of Human Occupation (1995) which considers individual motivation/values, habits, the environment and biomechanical / cognitive skills to be required for successful occupations.

- Covey’s Time Management matrix (1989) is also worthy of contemplation. He simplified tasks into Important (Urgent and Non-Urgent) and Not Important (Urgent and Non-Urgent) categories in order to assist prioritisation.
Mental & Physical Health Check!

- Ensure you schedule in non-work, non-housework activities!
- Leisure - reward yourself after a ‘big push or deadline or achievement’ with a relaxation activity
- Meals – schedule them in if you have to! Professionals are more likely to eat healthy meals in a routine based workplace
- Exercise & sleep
- Socialising
- Stop being a perfectionist... Unhelpful thinking styles eg catastrophising (eg blow things out of proportion), personalisation (eg taking responsibility for external events), ‘shoulding and musting’ (“I should... Or I must do...”) can lead to mental ill health. Employ your self-awareness and self-reflection strategies!
The quality improvement cycle frameworks are appropriate for everyday activities for you and your client too! We often do this for our clients but not ourselves...

- **Plan**
  - look at your time objectively, set goals

- **Do**
  - put your action plan into place, try strategies

- **Review**
  - objectively return to your goals and strategies, re-set goals and plan

Encourage your clients to continually do this in their lives, self-management and self-reflection are important life skills!
STRUCTURED SELF REFLECTION

- Consider your working days, look objectively at your diary.

- Consider your non-working days, look objectively at how you spend your day.

- When are you most productive? Why?

- When are you least productive? Why? Distractions??
STRUCTURED SELF REFLECTION

- What strategies are YOU using now? What are you keen to trial?
  For Work? Home?

- What strategies are you keen to try with your CLIENTS?

- What do you value the most in your life?

- What has this seminar got you thinking about??
REFERENCES & FURTHER READING


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