



Unit: Time Management
Skill 8: Personal Scheduling and Planning
Activity B: Personal Planning

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion

Leadership Skills:

Understanding more about personal planning systems and how they might work for you

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Blank calendar pages
- Pens or pencils to write

Do Ahead:
Source:

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BACKGROUND:

Now that we've talked about what it means to keep track of our time (activity 20), let's explore some of the planning systems that exist to help you manage your time effectively.

First, what is a planning system? It is simply a method for how to organize information to keep track of your tasks and help you stay focused on the most important priorities. Some of the well-known systems include Franklin-Covey, Priority Manager, and PDA's (personal digital assistants, such as a Blackberry). What do all these systems do? Organize information and help you focus your priorities.

Let's look at some of these systems. (Show a page from F-C and PM, and a display from a Blackberry – see handouts). Do any of them do the task of managing your time for you? While the Blackberry can beep to remind you about your next appointment, even the PDA approach is only as good as the information that is put into it. No matter how fancy the planning system, they are all just tools. You as the user have to be the one to input information – and then use it.

What simple planning methods can you start to do right now? One approach is the ABC method of ranking your to-do list. Break your tasks down into manageable steps and focus on one at a time. If a task is critical to your goals for today, then it gets marked as an "A," while less urgent but still important tasks are marked with a "B." Things that would be nice to do if you have time left are labeled as "C," and could be moved to another day if necessary.

Once you have ranked your tasks, tackle the "A's" first, and then move on to the "B's." If new tasks come up, assess the new tasks against your priorities for the day – don't let the newest tasks take priority just because it's new. (See also Activity 22 – Time wasters and how to avoid them.)

WHAT TO DO:

This activity may be done small groups of 3-5 people or by individuals. Ask students to brainstorm a list of typical daily tasks and responsibilities, and then identify the key to-do items. Now have them prioritize the list using the ABC approach.

Add a couple new tasks to be done. Remind them to assess these new tasks against the priorities they have already established. Do these new tasks take precedence? Or can they be designated as "C's" and be done another day?

Skill 8: Scheduling

Activity B: Personal Planning

Notes:

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What made a task an A, B or C? Was it easy to decide?
- Did you find yourself with too many A's and B's? What other filters can you place on tasks before they are designated as top priorities?
- Do you find you have C's that keep getting bumped day after day, until the point where they become A's or B's?
- If you address all the day's A's and B's, can you build in time for long-term projects?

Apply:

- Do you plan on a daily basis? Why or why not?
- How do you know whether something is a priority?
- What role do other people have in terms of influencing your priorities? (Quote – "A crisis on your part does not necessitate an emergency on my part." What does this mean?)
- Do you know people who are very good at planning? What can you learn from them?
- What do you want to change about your own planning strategies to become more effective?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Ask students to research various planning systems (like Franklin-Covey, Priority Manager, etc.). Are there similarities or differences among the systems? Which do they think looks like the most usable system?

Resources And Web Links:

www.mindtools.com

www.time-management-guide.com