

## TIME TIPS

This session provides Explorers with guidelines to help set and establish priorities.

### CATEGORY

- Life Skills
- Time Management

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the need to prioritize tasks.
- Determine priorities among their daily tasks.
- Identify ways to handle tasks.

### SUPPLIES

- Large glass or clear plastic jar
- Medium-sized rocks or golf balls
- Small pebbles or marbles
- Sand or small beads
- **Paired Comparison Analysis** chart—download from [http://omniskills.com/downloads/cpsdox/pairedcomparison\\_worksheet.pdf](http://omniskills.com/downloads/cpsdox/pairedcomparison_worksheet.pdf) and make a copy for each participant
- Pen or pencil for each participant
- Whiteboard or flip chart and markers

**ADVISOR NOTE:** Text in italics should be read aloud to participants. As you engage your post in activities each week, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership, and Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Activity 1

#### Setting Priorities

#### Big Rocks in a Jar (adapted from Stephen R. Covey)

Show participants an empty jar. Say: *This jar represents your time.*

Add medium-sized rocks to the jar until it cannot hold any more. Say: *These rocks are the goals and commitments that are important to you. If you believe this jar is full, stand up.*

Now add pebbles to the jar. Say: *The pebbles represent things that you want to do, but don't need to do. These things matter to you, but not as much as your goals and commitments. Notice that there is room for them in the jar because they fill in the gaps around the rocks. If you believe this jar is full, stand up.*

Next add sand until the jar appears to be full. Say: *This sand represents the small, much less important but still time-consuming activities that you do during a day.*

Ask: *What is the point of this demonstration?* Participants may say that no matter how full your schedule is, you can always fit more into it. However, this answer is incorrect.

Say: *The real moral of this activity is that you can make time for your big rocks, but only if you put them into the schedule first and then fit everything else around and between them. It may be easier to pour the smaller things into the jar, but if they fill too much of the jar, there will be less room for your big rocks.*

Ask: *So what things will fill your jar through the rest of this day?*

## **Activity 2**

### **Paired Comparison Analysis**

Say: *The jar activity was a very visual example of how managing your time effectively is all about options. Each of you has a list of things you need to do, want to do, or can do. The real trick is prioritizing everything you do and then managing your time in such a way that everything will be completed in a timely manner.*

Hand out the Paired Comparison Analysis chart. Say: *I want you to think about what tomorrow looks like for you. What things will you need to do? What places will you need to go? What obligations will you have to yourself and to others? Write down eight things on this chart that you can do between the time you go home today and the time you leave the house tomorrow.*

Participants will use the chart to determine a score for each of their eight options. The grid on the chart should give them a “priority score” that makes it very easy to understand what needs to be done first. Initiate a discussion about how their choices can prepare them for tomorrow.

Encourage participants to apply the Paired Comparison technique to some of their projects on their own and evaluate how it helps them accomplish their tasks.

## **Activity 3**

### **Getting Organized**

Share this interesting fact: *According to the Missouri Business Development Program, time management experts say that we spend about seven hours per week just looking for things or being distracted by clutter.*

*Whenever you feel overwhelmed by too many things to do and too little time in which to do them, sit down, take a deep breath, and list all those tasks you need to accomplish. There are three basic ways to handle a task: act on it, delegate it, or eliminate it.*

Write the word “Act” on the whiteboard or flip chart. Say: *Before you begin your tasks, you should assign priorities to them:*

- A = highest importance and/or urgency
- B = medium importance and/or urgency
- C = lower importance and/or urgency

Say: *If you have more than one A priority, mark them A1, A2, A3, etc. Do the same for your B and C priorities.*

Write the word “Delegate” on the whiteboard or flip chart. Say: *Ask yourself if the task is something you must do personally or if you can delegate this task to someone else who can do the job.*

Write the word “Eliminate” on the whiteboard or flip chart. Say: *Some tasks may not need to be done at all. You should eliminate every activity you possibly can to free up your time. Here are some questions to ask yourself before eliminating a task:*

- *Is this task really needed?*
- *How will it help me?*
- *Will the task be useful when I need to do it again?*
- *Is the task new or unique?*
- *Is it needed for a special project or for keeping important records (e.g., class projects, school records, tax documents and forms)?*
- *What are the consequences if the task isn’t done?*

Share this quote from Brian Tracy, CEO of Brian Tracy International, a training and development company: *Efficiency is doing things the right way. Effectiveness is doing the right things. Your ability to plan and organize your work, in advance, so you are always working on your highest value tasks determines your success as much as any other factor.*

#### **ADVISOR NOTE**

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific focus area.

#### **REFLECTION**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Focusing Questions       | ▪ <i>What did you learn during this process?</i>  |
| Analysis Questions       | ▪ <i>How did your sense of priorities change during this exercise?</i><br>▪ <i>How is a skill like this useful to a leader?</i><br>▪ <i>How might you use this in your daily life and potential career?</i>                 |
| Generalization Questions | ▪ <i>What is the hardest part of ranking your tasks?</i><br>▪ <i>How is prioritizing tasks sometimes an ethical challenge?</i><br>▪ <i>How might you use this in life or in college?</i><br>▪ <i>Why is this important?</i> |