



TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

for

FSWs and SUPERVISORS

U·A·L·R

School of Social Work

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY SERVICE WORKERS AND SUPERVISORS

TRAINER GUIDE

Competencies

- 102-15** The worker understands the importance of concise, summarized, and timely assessment and case plan information in the family case record.
- 312-1** The worker can plan, organize, and manage the work load, set priorities and perform the activities in a manner that makes the best use of existing resources and time.
- 537-1** The supervisor can plan, organize and manage multiple priorities and can perform activities in a manner which makes the best use of existing resources and time.

COA Standards

- ❖ **G7.**
- ❖ **G7.3.01**

Objectives: Participants will

- Understand how organizational systems can promote timely and accurate casework documentation.
- Identify areas for personal improvement through use of an inventory tool.
- Review time management techniques and targets those specific to individual needs.
- Develop a personal time management plan.

Materials

- Whiteboard or flipchart set up for each small group (markers, easel, pad, tape)
- Handout 1, Number Game
- Handout 2, Time Management: Tips for FSWs
- Handout 3, Tickle Me CHRIS
- Handout 4, Casework Notebook
- Participant Manual

I. INTRODUCTION (10 MIN.)

1. Introduce yourself and take care of housekeeping duties such as:
 - a. distributing the attendance sheets,
 - b. reminding participants to turn off pagers and cell phones,
 - c. making sure participants know the location of bathrooms, smoking areas, and vending machines,
 - d. distribute the Participant Manual, and
 - e. any other issues that might arise.
2. Introduce the topic of Time Management by asking the group this question: *"Why are good time management skills important for Family Service Workers?"*
 - a. Record participant answers on the flipchart.
 - b. Tell them that the primary goal of this training is to learn several time management techniques, and identify at least one that they can begin using today. Hopefully, by implementing some new techniques, they will be able to get more done in less time, and have more time to work effectively with the families they serve.
3. Refer participants to **page 1, "Agenda and Objectives"**, in the Participant Manual. Review the agenda and competency and supporting objectives with the group.

II. AWARENESS (30 min.)

1. Tell participants to turn to **page 2 in the Participant Manual, "The Number Game."**
 - a. Tell them that each person has 1 minute to connect the numbers on this page in chronological order, from #1-#60.
 - b. Time the group for 60 seconds and then survey the group to see how far they got. *Who got the most right? How far did he or she get?*
2. Next, tell them that you are going to show them a system that will enable them to go faster and be more efficient in their efforts to connect the numbers.
 - a. Distribute **Handout 1, The Number Game**.
 - b. While holding up this page so the group can see, fold the paper into four sections, first vertically, next horizontally.
 - c. Instruct the participants to follow along and fold their papers with you.
 - d. Point out to participants that all of the odd numbers are on the left side of the page, while the even numbers are on the right side of the page. Also, point out that numbers 1-6 are clustered on the top half of the paper, while numbers 7-12 fill the bottom half; numbers 13-18 are clustered in the top half of the paper, and numbers 19-24 are located on the bottom half of the paper, etc.

TRAINER NOTE: The next exercise has a small group component. Consider moving participants into the small groups before starting the exercise.

3. Tell participants that they will be doing this exercise a second time and instruct them to use the paper they folded to connect the numbers.
 - a. Give them 60 more seconds to complete the task.
 - b. Were they able to connect more numbers on the second try? Why?
 - c. Conclude this exercise by emphasizing the following point: **Having organized systems in place greatly enhances productivity!**
4. Instruct participants to turn to page 3, "Time Waster's Inventory."
 - a. Allow approximately five minutes for individuals to complete this inventory.
 - b. Instruct them to rank order their top five (5) time wasters.
 - c. After participants have completed the inventory, have participants in smaller groups share the results of their inventories.
 - d. Ask each group to appoint a recorder to write down the group's responses. Circle or check those responses that were common to two or more group members.
 - e. Then, as a large group, generate a list of 5-7 "time wasters" to focus on for today's training.
 - f. Post this list in the training room for all to see and make sure that all of the areas are addressed by the conclusion of the training.

III. TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT (30 min.)

1. Using the same small groups as the previous exercise, assign each small group one (or two depending on the topic) time waster(s) listed on the posted flipchart.
 - a. Instruct the small groups to brainstorm ways to better manage time as it relates to their topic(s).
 - b. Have the groups elect one person to be the spokesperson and one person to be the recorder for their group.
 - c. Tell groups to review pages 4-7, "68 Time Management Techniques" for additional suggestions that might apply to their topic(s).
2. After 15 minutes, have each small group share their time management strategies with the group at large. If there are any supervisors present, have them share tools they use to help their workers manage time more effectively.
3. Distribute **Handout #2**, "Time Management: Tips for DCFS Workers" and **Handout #3**, Tickle Me CHRIS. Handout 2 suggests ways for workers to use technology to improve time management.

- a. Ask the group, “What are some of the most important things you do that have to be done in certain time frames?”
 - b. Hopefully, workers will mention things like case plans within 30 days of opening a case, notice for staffings, court reports, etc
 - c. CHRIS can be used as a tool to help organize these tasks. Direct workers to **Handout 3** and ask if anyone ever uses this function.
 - d. See if participants can share other helpful suggestions that are not on Handout #2.
4. Introduce the idea of a casework notebook and pass out the sample casework notebook (see Trainer Resource section for sample materials.) Pass out **Handout #4, Casework Notebook: Tips for DCFS Workers.** Emphasize that these are suggestions only and are not required by DCFS. Workers should feel free to add to or delete from the suggestions on this handout. **Trainer may want to consider putting a sample together to show the class.**

IV. CONCLUSION (10 min.)

1. Review the posted list of “Time Wasters” to see if all have been addressed in the training.
2. Have participants pick **one** thing they learned today in the training that will be helpful for their jobs. Refer participants to **page 8 in their Participant Manuals entitled “One Thing I will Do Today To Be A Better Time Manager is...”** Instruct participants to fill in the blank area of this page with their plan for better time management. Have them think about where they might post this sheet to remind them to be better time managers.
3. Refer the group back to the quote on **page 1 of their Participant Manual:** “You can’t manage time, but you can manage your behavior.” Why not begin today? Invite them to make a plan and to follow through with this plan.
4. Pass out the training evaluations. Make sure all participants have signed the attendance sheets, and completed the training evaluations. Distribute continuing education certificates, if available.
5. Remind participants of future continuing education offerings through MidSOUTH if you have not already done so.



TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES for **FSWs and SUPERVISORS**

Participant Manual

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AGENDA

- I. INTRODUCTION**
- II. AWARENESS EXERCISE**
 - A. The Number Game
 - B. Time Management Inventory – Prioritizing Work
- III. TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT**
 - A. 68 Time Management Techniques
 - B. Small Group Exercise – Generating Job Specific Solutions
 - C. Handouts and Tools
- IV. CONCLUSION**
 - A. Developing a Personal Action Plan for Change

CLASS OBJECTIVES: participants will

- Understand how organizational systems can promote timely and accurate casework documentation.
- Identify areas for personal improvement through use of an inventory tool.
- Review time management techniques and targets those specific to individual needs.

“You can’t manage time, but you *CAN* manage your own behavior! Why not begin today?”

THE NUMBER GAME



TIME WASTERS INVENTORY

Adapted from MacKenzie, A. *Time for success: A goal-getter's strategy*. McGraw-Hill, 1989

- ___ Attempting too much; resistance to choosing; refusing to accept help or ask for help or delegate when legitimate and appropriate.
- ___ Crisis management, arising from failure to plan for what could go wrong.
- ___ Lack of objectives, priorities; lack of daily priorities so you don't know what to do first, second, etc.
- ___ Computer (games, personal email, IM).
- ___ Meetings (both scheduled and unscheduled).
- ___ Telephone interruptions.
- ___ Clutter (mental and physical); personal disorganization.
- ___ Lack of self-discipline in staying with a project until you get it done.
- ___ Inability to say "no" to requests.
- ___ Procrastination, indecision.
- ___ Perfectionism or getting bogged down in details.
- ___ Leaving tasks unfinished.
- ___ Waiting time, e.g., court, appointments, etc.
- ___ Time estimates which are unrealistically low.
- ___ Visitors dropping in without appointments.
- ___ Involvement in routine and detail that should be delegated to others.
- ___ Correcting other's mistakes.
- ___ Doing the easy rather than the important.

Time Management Techniques

<p>Below is a list of 68 ideas that can be used to improve your time management skills. Check off the appropriate box for each item.</p> <p>(1) I should do this (3) I do this now (2) I could do this (4) Does not apply to me</p>				
Planning and Controlling	Should	Could	Do	N/A
1. Set objectives – long and short term.				
2. Plan your week; how you will achieve your objectives.				
3. Use a to-do list--write all assignments on it.				
4. Prioritize the items on your to-do list. Do the important things rather than urgent things.				
5. Get an early productive start on your top-priority items.				
6. During your best working hours--prime time--only do high-priority items.				
7. Don't spend time performing unproductive activities to avoid or escape job-related anxiety. It doesn't really work.				
8. Throughout the day ask yourself, "Should I be doing this—now?"				
9. Plan before you act.				
10. Plan for recurring crises and plan to eliminate crises.				
11. Make decisions. It is better to make a wrong decision than none at all.				
12. Have a schedule for the day. Don't let your day be planned by the unexpected.				
13. Schedule the next day before you leave work.				
14. Schedule unpleasant or difficult tasks during prime time.				
15. Schedule enough time to do the job right the first time. Don't be too optimistic on the length of time to do a job.				

16. Schedule a quiet hour(s). Only be interrupted by true emergencies. Have someone take a message or ask people to call you back during scheduled unexpected event time.				
17. Establish a quiet time for the entire organization, department, etc. The first hour of the day is usually the best time.				
18. Schedule large blocks of uninterrupted (emergencies only) time for projects, etc. If this doesn't work, hide somewhere.				
19. Break large (long) projects into parts (time periods).				
20. If you don't follow your schedule, ask the priority question: Is the unscheduled event more important than the scheduled event?				
21. Schedule a time for doing similar activities (i.e., make and return calls, write letters, memos).				
22. Keep your schedule flexible—allow ____% of time for unexpected events.				
23. Schedule unexpected event time and answer mail, and do routine things in between events.				
24. Ask people to see/call you during your scheduled unexpected event time only, unless it's an emergency.				
25. If staff members ask to see you—"got a minute?"—tell them you're busy and ask if it can wait until x o'clock (scheduled unexpected time).				
26. Set a schedule time, agenda, and time limit for all visitors, and keep on topic.				
27. Control your time. Cut down on the time controlled by the boss, organization, and your subordinates.				
Organizing				
28. Keep a clean desk.				
29. Rearrange your desk for increased productivity.				
30. All non-work-related or distracting objects should be removed from your desk.				
31. Do one task at a time.				

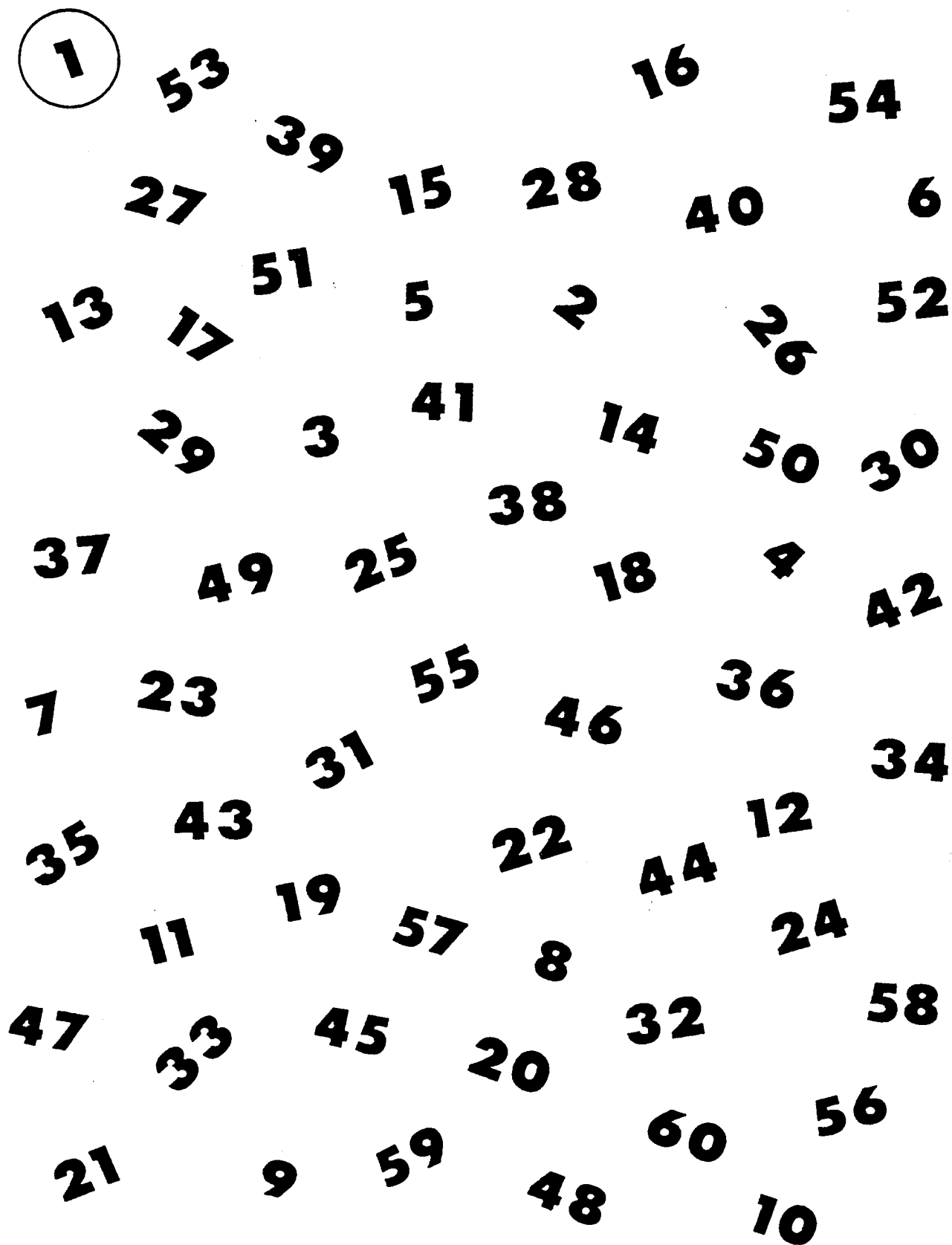
32. With paperwork, make a decision at once. Don't read it again later and decide.				
33. Keep files well arranged and labeled.				
34. Have an active and inactive file section.				
35. If you file an item, put a destruction date on it.				
36. Call rather than write, when appropriate.				
37. Have someone else (delegate) write letters, memos, etc.				
38. Dictate rather than write letters, memos, etc.				
39. Use form letters and/or form paragraphs.				
40. Answer letters (memos) on the letter itself.				
41. Have someone read things for you and summarize them for you.				
42. Divide reading requirements with others and share summaries.				
43. Have calls screened to be sure the right person handles them.				
44. Plan before calling. Have an agenda and all necessary information ready—take notes on agenda.				
45. Ask people to call you back during your scheduled time (unexpected). Ask when is the best time to call them.				
46. Have a specific objective/purpose for every meeting.				
47. For meetings, invite only the necessary participants and keep them only for as long as they are needed.				
48. Always have an agenda for a meeting and stick to it. Start and end as scheduled.				
49. Conclude each meeting with a summary, and get a commitment on who will do what by when.				
50. Call rather than visit, if possible.				
51. Set objectives for travel. List everyone you will meet with. Send (call) them agendas and have a file folder for each with all necessary data for your meeting.				
52. Combine and/or modify activities to save time.				

Leadership and Staffing				
53. Set clear objectives for subordinates with accountability—give them feedback, evaluate results often.				
54. Use your subordinates' time well. Do you make subordinates wait idly for decisions, instructions, materials, or in meetings?				
55. Communicate well. Do you wait for a convenient time rather than interrupt your subordinates and waste their time?				
56. Train your subordinates. Don't do their work for them.				
57. Delegate activities in which you personally do not need to be involved.				
58. Delegate non-management functions.				
59. Set deadlines when delegating.				
60. Set deadlines that are earlier than the actual deadline.				
61. Use the input of your staff. Don't reinvent the wheel.				
62. Teach time management skills to your subordinates.				
63. Don't procrastinate; do it.				
64. Don't be a perfectionist—define "acceptable" and stop there.				
65. Learn to stay calm. Getting emotional only causes more problems.				
66. Reduce socializing without causing antisocialism.				
67. Identify your time wasters and work to minimize them.				
68. If there are other ideas you have that are not listed above, add them here.				

*One Thing I Will Do Today To Be A More
Effective Time Manager is...*



THE NUMBER GAME



TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR DCFS WORKERS

1. Deadlines

- A. A month in advance, plot out all home visits, visitations, court hearings, and other appointments. Use your Outlook calendar, a day planner or the ticklers in CHRIS. Put in reminders prior to due dates for required documents; e.g., if the court date is on the 31st, write “complete court report for ____ case” on the date it is due.
- B. Remember the important dates:
 - Case plans are due 30 days after opening a case. **(Procedure IV-A)**
 - Court reports are due to OCC fifteen working days prior to a hearing. **(Procedure VI-F1)**
 - Foster care cases case plans must be updated every 3 months. **(Procedure IV-A1)**
 - The initial staffing is due 30 days after the case is open. **(Procedure IV-B1)**

2. Documentation

- A. Don't let it get ahead of you.
- B. Key all contacts weekly into CHRIS.
- C. Use a casework notebook to document phone contacts, home visits, visits with children in foster care. Write down enough information to jog your memory so that you can then transfer the information into CHRIS.
- D. Use waiting time – such as at court – to catch up on documentation.
- E. If you have a computer at home, save templates onto a disk so that you can complete documentation at home if you need to. You can create a document in MS Word, email it to yourself and cut and paste into CHRIS fields.

3. E-Mail

- A. Once you read your mail, **do** something with it. Don't store it in your In Box because it has a size limit. Create folders for different categories of mail. Consider setting up another account (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc) for personal mail so that it does not clutter your In Box.
- B. **DO READ** your mail. You are responsible for knowing about any agency business, policy update, training announcement, etc. that is communicated through e-mail.

4. Other??????

HANDOUT 3

TICKLE ME CHRIS

CHRIS has many ticklers built into the system. A “tickler” is just a reminder for you that some task must be done. (It tickles your memory.)

To get to your system-generated ticklers:

- Log on to CHRIS

Workload > Case Name > Show > Select Ticklers button from the top tool bar

HINT: *It looks like a stop light*

- CHRIS defaults to the “Overdue” ticklers. (You really hope this section is blank when you look at it!)
- You can also look at ticklers by Upcoming, by Name, by Date Range, by the Nature of the tickler (such as court dates) or All.
- Here are some of the things that CHRIS will automatically remind you about:
 - Initial staffing
 - Placement plan
 - Court reports
 - Initial treatment plan
 - Court hearings (if you update the court screens)
 - Risk assessment

To **create** a new tickler

- Log on to CHRIS

Workload > Case Name > Select tickler button from top tool bar

- Click “New” button
- Use this function to set up ticklers for things you need to do that CHRIS does not automatically generate a tickler for; i.e., the family Strengths and Needs Assessment

CASEWORK NOTEBOOK TIPS FOR DCFS WORKERS

Suggestions for Organization

- Prepare a 3-ring binder divided by cases. Include extra paper for notes and documentation.
- Include emergency phone numbers, extra forms (Medi-Alert, Pub 052, Consent for Release of information, for example).
- For each case, include a copy of the face sheet from the hard copy file with demographic information.
- Include a copy of the case plan or at least the part related to services.
- Consider using aids provided in new staff training – A Guide to Being on Call; Assessment Timelines and Checklists; and Foster Care Timelines.

Travel Related

- Area map
- Blank TR-1 (to document mileage)

Frequently Used Numbers

- DHS County Office listings
- Foster home numbers
- Emergency shelter number
- Battered Women's shelter number
- Local police department numbers
- Counseling agency numbers
- Hospital emergency room number
- Juvenile intake officer's number
- On-call numbers

Others

- "To Do" list
- Calendar (for year-at-a-glance)
- Zipper pouch with extra pens