

# MODULE 3: MANAGING TIME

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK  
LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME



nyda

NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.

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Time is what we want most  
and what we use worst.

William Penn

## Module outcomes

By the end of this session, you will:

- Understand why time management is important
- Know how to set goals, plan, and prioritise
- Be able to explain and use the Urgent/Important principle
- Know how to overcome procrastination
- Know how to organise your workspace to make better use of your time

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, everyone is under increasing time pressure. Family, work, school, friends, social media, commuting, volunteering, exercising, and many other activities take up more and more of our time. For us to be able to fit everything into a day and still get enough sleep and rest requires good time management. Time management refers to your ability to use time effectively and productively to ensure that you spend the right amount of time in the areas that you value most. For you to live a happy life you need to know what you spend your time on.

### ACTIVITY 1

#### Task



Here is a brief exercise that you can do to find out if you are spending your time on the people and things that are most important to you.

Take a piece of paper and draw a line in the middle. On the left-hand side list **at least 5** things (people, things, activities) that are important to you. Start with the most important and continue to the least important. Then, on the right-hand side list all the areas that you are spending your time on. Again, start with activity/people/things you spend the most time on. Write down what you notice when you compare those two lists.

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Many of us find that we are unable to spend most of our time on the things that are most important to us. This can lead to unhappiness and frustration. Good time management skills will help you to become more effective in completing your tasks. And as a result, you will have more time available to do the things that you love and that are most important to you. Using your time more wisely will also help you deal better with stress and to achieve important goals.

## 2. Goal setting, prioritising, and planning

Before you decide on what you can do to achieve great time management, let's do a brief self-assessment to determine your current time management skills.

## ACTIVITY 2

### Time Management Self-Assessment

Answer the following questions based on your behaviour on a typical day.  
(0 = never, 1 = seldom, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always).

No.	Question	Answer
1	I make a list of tasks that I want to accomplish each day	
2	I keep everything in its proper place at work	
3	I prioritise the tasks I need to do according to their importance and urgency	
4	I judge myself by the accomplishment of tasks rather than by how busy I have been	
5	I divide large projects into smaller, separate tasks	
6	I start my day by reviewing what I will accomplish in the day (high priority)	
7	I try to do my most important tasks during my most energetic periods of the day	
8	I make some time during each day when I can work uninterrupted	
9	I tackle difficult or unpleasant tasks without procrastinating	
10	I regularly evaluate the use of my time with devices such as a time log	
11	I do something productive whenever I am waiting	
12	I finish at least one thing every day	
13	I schedule some time during the day for personal time alone (for planning, meditation, prayer, exercise)	
14	I can meet deadlines without rushing at the last minute	
15	I avoid distractions and focus on what is important	
16	I plan my activities and priorities for the next day before leaving work	
17	I screen and group my telephone calls to allow for control over telephone interruptions	
18	I have goals for each month	
19	I plan time to relax and be with my friends in my weekly schedule	
20	I use my goals to keep me on track	
21	I have a weekly schedule on which I record fixed commitments such as appointments, time with friends, relaxation time, etc.	
22	I manage my energy well and take regular health breaks throughout the day	
23	I set goals for all my major projects	
24	I avoid spending too much time on unimportant matters	
25	My actions are determined mainly by me, not by circumstances or by other people's priorities	
Total Score		

### Scoring guide:

Add up your total score based on your answers:

68 or higher – good time management skills

50 - 67 – average time management skills

36 - 49 – time management skills need improvement

35 or below – poor time management skills

Now that you have a better idea what your time management currently looks like, let's see what you can do to improve on it.

## 2.1 Goal Setting

Goal setting is one of the most critical skills to master to manage your time effectively. It can be used in all areas of your life such as work, relationships, financial, physical, personal development, or even spiritual. It is a powerful tool that can assist you in motivating and challenging you. We get *long-term* and *short-term* goals. Meaningful *long-term* goals will help you toward achieving your dreams and your life purpose. *Short-term* goals can help you accomplish the tasks you'll need to complete to achieve your long-term goals.

### SMART Goals

One way of setting goals is the SMART way. A SMART goal can be defined as *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely*.



Ask yourself the following questions:

- Specific: *Who, what, when, where, which, and why?*
- Measurable: *How will I know I have reached my goal?*
- Achievable: *Given all my resources and knowledge, can I achieve this goal?*
- Relevant: *Will achieving this goal make me a happier person?*
- Timely: *What is the deadline for my goal?*

### ACTIVITY 3

## Task



Think about a goal that you have in your own life, for example 'getting a job'. How you can use the SMART method to set SMART goals? Use the questions in the above 'Key learnings' to assist you.

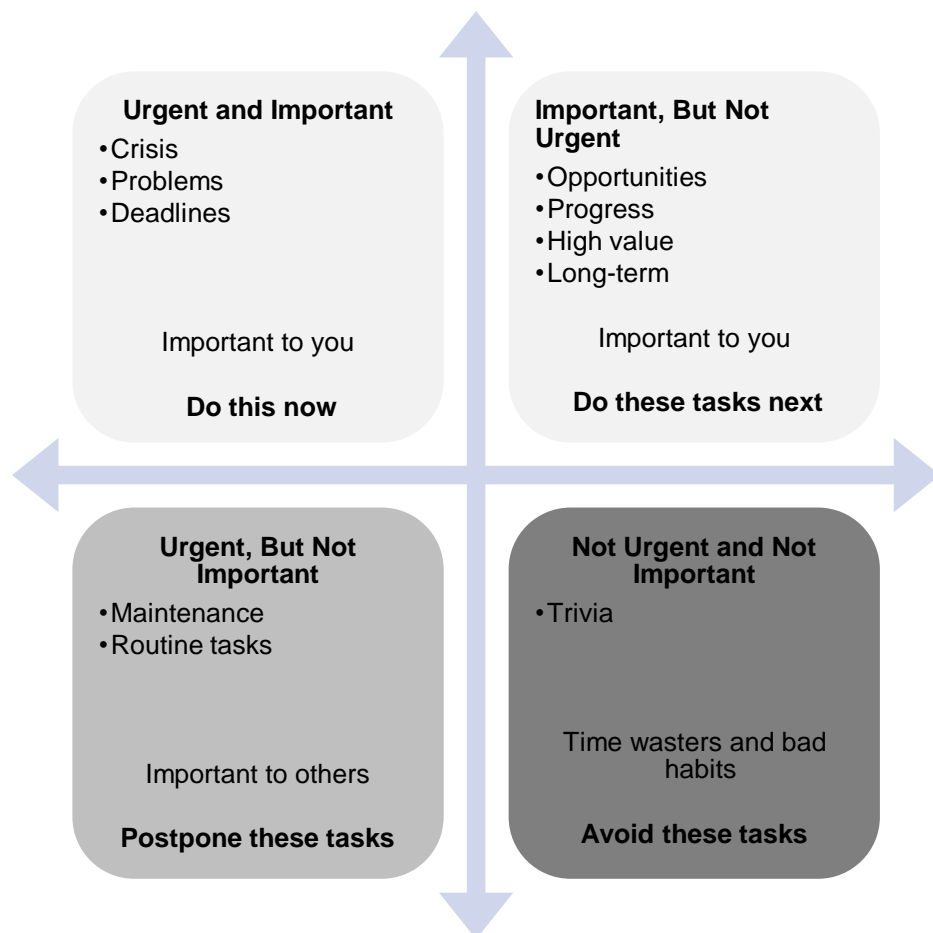
Goal:			
Step	SMART	Description	Criteria met?
1	Specific		
2	Measurable		
3	Achievable		
4	Relevant		
5	Timely		

Complete the table above and discuss your SMART goal with the person next to you.  
Decide if your goal meets all 5 criteria.

### 2.2. Prioritising

Time management is about more than just managing our time. It is also about setting priorities and taking charge. Prioritising is the ability to make the best, most effective use of your time, resources, and your abilities. This may mean that you need to change some habits or activities that cause you to waste time. The **Eisenhower Urgent/Important Matrix** can help you organise your tasks based on your priorities.

## Eisenhower Matrix



If you commit to this approach of planning your days, you will see that you are able to achieve more in less time. Instead of finishing things in a mad rush to meet deadlines, each day will be organised and become more productive. You will also find that you spend less time on activities that are of little or no value. And because you have a clear vision for dealing with competing priorities, you will experience less stress in your life, which will allow you to become even more focused and productive.

## ACTIVITY 4

### Task



Take some time to think about all the tasks that you need to do in **ONE DAY** and complete your personal matrix:

1. Urgent and Important	2. Important but Not Urgent
3. Urgent but Not Important	4. Not Urgent and Not Important

Discuss your matrix with the person next to you.  
Be prepared to share your insights with the group.

### 2.3 Planning

Once you have set and prioritised your goals, the next important step is planning.



### Key Learning

#### How to plan well

- Break down goal into smaller sections and action steps.
- Use a daily planner or diary to keep track.
- Write down what needs to be done each day.
- Identify how much time you have available.
- Use the Urgent/Important matrix.
- Use the Chunk, Block, Tackle technique.
- Add emergency time for unexpected events.



Some larger goals/projects need to be broken down into more manageable sections to be able to accomplish them. A good way of doing this is the following technique:

- **Chunk:** Use a separate notebook and break large goals or projects into specific chunks or actions that can be completed in less than 15 minutes. Prioritise each chunk in order of importance. Use A (most important), B (important) and C (least important) to label all the chunks related to your project. Highlight the 3 most important tasks (A).
- **Block:** Instead of working on your entire goal/project, block out set times in your diary to complete specific chunks during that time. Start with the top 3 that you highlighted.
- **Tackle:** Now tackle each specific task, focusing only on this task rather than the project. Once completed, you will feel a sense of accomplishment from making progress on your larger goal/project.

Cross off the items as you complete them. Items that you did not complete need to be carried over to the next page/day.

It is important that you add some emergency time for possible interruptions and unexpected events. Avoid taking on more that you can handle. Also, make sure that you plan enough time for your family, friends, and personal goals. Remember, although work is an important aspect in your life, it is only one aspect.

### 3. Overcoming procrastination quickly and easily

Procrastination is a bad habit that many of us fall into. It means delaying a task (or even several tasks) that should be a priority. However, your ability to select your most important task, and then to start on that task and get it done both quickly and well, will probably have the greatest positive impact on your life.

#### Eisenhower Matrix

## ACTIVITY 5

### Task



**Think of a situation where you procrastinated on a task that you had to do. Describe what happened and what the consequences were for you.**

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Prepare to share your experience with the group.

Here are some strategies you can try to get going with those tough tasks:



### Key Learning

#### Strategies to overcome procrastination

- Have clear deadlines: *Write them down, tell others.*
- Delete it: *Do I really need to do it? What are the consequences of doing it?*
- Delegate it: *Can someone else do it?*
- Do it now: *Postponing it will create stress.*
- Ask for advice: *Ask others, who have more experience.*
- Obey the 15-minute rule: *Remember the chunking method.*
- Promise yourself a reward: *It feels good and provides motivation.*

#### 4. Organise your workspace to make better use of your time

In order to effectively manage your time and to be productive each day, you must create an appropriate environment. By eliminating clutter, setting up an effective filing system, gathering essential tools, and managing your workflow, you will be well on your way to creating an effective workspace.



##### Key Learning

##### How to organise your workspace

- Use the following three basic kinds of files:
  - Working files: *Materials you use frequently, which need to be close at hand*
  - Reference files: *Information needed only occasionally*
  - Archival files: *Materials seldom retrieved but that must be kept*
- Declutter your laptop/computer:
  - Delete all folders, pictures, emails, and software you no longer need
  - Follow the above system for all non-paper-based material as well

#### 5. Homework

##### Personal Reflection



**Once you have completed this course, decide which of your learnings you want to implement in your life. Make a note in your workbook and start working on these. Come back to it in 2 - 3 months' time and complete the self-assessment again.**

What changes have you noticed? Which tools have you implemented? How do you feel now? How has your life improved? What else can you do to improve your time management even more?

## 6. My Action Plan

### Personal Reflection



**Please take a moment to reflect on the value of this life skills module that you have completed now. Also think how you are going to apply what you have learnt to develop yourself as best as you can.**

1. What was interesting and new to you in this module?

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2. What was the most valuable insight that you had today?

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3. How can you use what you discovered today?

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4. What will you do differently from now on as a result of what you learned today?

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5. What is the first step you will take?

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6. What are some of the obstacles you may encounter?

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7. What will be the best way to deal with them?

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8. How will you know that you have successfully applied your new knowledge and skills?

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**GOOD LUCK WITH THIS!**

## 7. Recommended resources

Ball, B., 2014. *Time of your life: Tackle wasters and use your energy to full effect*. Available as free e-book on [bookboon.com](http://bookboon.com).

Covey, S. R. 1994. *The seven habits of highly effective people. Powerful lessons in personal change*. Simon & Schuster: London, Great Britain. Book summary available at <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/habits-of-highly-effective-people-summary>

Trapani, G., 2010. Work smart: How to write a to-do-list. Video available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=fjjKuoeYP5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=fjjKuoeYP5A)

vanDusen, P. 2018. Time Management – Top 10 tips and tricks that work. Video available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FsEr8owBOc>

Taylor, H. 2012. Time to be productive. Develop your time management skills. Available as free e-book on [bookboon.com](http://bookboon.com)

Vanderkam, L., 2016. Time Management TEDTalk 2K16. Online resource available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2NNliDGOoQ>



Better three hours too soon  
than one minute too late.

William Shakespeare

## Did you know?

We have many more modules that were specifically designed to help you develop those skills that are essential to function effectively in life and in the workplace. Ask your facilitator about the following modules:

1. Who am I?
2. Building my brand
3. Managing time
4. Be more resilient
5. Creative problem solving and decision making
6. Building interpersonal relationships
7. Effective communication
8. Dealing with conflict
9. Understanding the world of work
10. My personal development plan

For e-Learning and other resources, visit  
[www.nyda.gov.za](http://www.nyda.gov.za)

You cannot teach a man anything.  
You can only help him discover it  
within himself.

Galileo

