

Elder Companion: Lesson 7—Time Management¹

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Introduction

The [Elder Companion training program](#) is designed to train persons interested in becoming employed by local service providers as sitter/companions for the elderly. The objective of the program is to help participants develop the necessary skills to provide high-quality care including assistance with daily living activities (DLAs), home management services and companionship for the elderly adult.

This training course is preparatory to studying to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA).

For an overview of the training course, see [FCS5246/FY586](#).

In the Elder Companion training program, the following topics are addressed:

- Lesson 1 Roles and Responsibilities
- Lesson 2 Aging
- Lesson 3 Communication
- Lesson 4 Nutrition
- Lesson 5 Home Maintenance and Safety
- Lesson 6 Stress Management
- Lesson 7 Time Management
- Lesson 8 Leisure Activities
- Lesson 9 Getting a Job

In addition to the nine topics that are taught as Lessons 1 through 9 in a classroom setting, training program participants will be required to make a field observation at an elder care facility. An Agent's guide and observation form are provided in Attachment 1. (See training course overview [FCS5246](#).)

Agent's Teaching Guide: Time Management

Part 1: How Do I Spend My Time?

Part 2: Prime Time

Part 3: Making Better Use of My Time

Time: 1 to 1½ Hours

Instructor: County Faculty

Equipment/Supplies: PC/laptop (or alternative method to display slides)/screen, newsprint/markers, PowerPoint slides created from Handouts D and H

Handouts:

Part 1

- Handout A: Time Log Worksheet
- Handout B: Time Analysis Worksheet

Part 2

- Handout C: Energy Graph
- Handout D: Examples of Energy Graphs
- Handout E: Organizing Your Time: Prime Time Scenarios
- Handout F: Making the Most of Your Time

Part 3

- Handout G: "To Do" List
- Handout H: Planning and Time Management Reminders

Objectives (Expected Outcomes):

After this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify how use of time can reflect our goals and priorities.
- Identify time wasters and explain how they affect behavior.
- Identify strategies to make use of time.

Part 1: How Do I Spend My Time? Lesson Plan

Introduction

A day is 24 hours ... 1440 minutes. Time is a resource. Everybody gets the same allotment every day. Some people manage their hours and minutes better. If it is not used wisely, time is lost forever. Time is not storable; it must be used.

DO:

- Distribute *Time Log Worksheet* (Handout A). Ask participants to complete the worksheet with the time and activities for themselves on a typical day. If they do not have a typical day, record what happened yesterday. When they have written in all the times and activities, ask participants to put a value on each activity.
- Give each participant a *Time Analysis Worksheet* (Handout B). Ask them to look at their Time Log and answer the questions about how time is being spent.

REFLECT:

- Was time wasted?
- Was I spending too much time on some activities? Too little on some?
- Was your time being used for your priority goals?
- Is there a balance between work and personal time? Between committed and flexible time?

APPLY:

- Identify segments of time that need to be re-focused or re-managed.
- Track your time by keeping a log. It will help you know where time goes and identify the time wasters.

Handout A (Table 1): Time Log Worksheet
 Complete the time and activities you have done in the last 24 hours.

Handout B: Time Analysis Worksheet

Where am I spending too much time?

Where am I spending the right amount of time?

Where am I spending too little time?

What am I doing that may not need to be done at all?

Where can I make adjustments to save time?

Part 2: Prime Time: Lesson Plan

Introduction

Knowing your “prime time” is essential to effective time management. “Prime time” is that time during the day when you are at your highest energy level. Everyone has a different prime time ... some of us are morning people and others are night owls; most of us are somewhere in between.

DO:

Give each participant an *Energy Graph* (Handout C) and ask them to chart their energy level for a typical day (excluding sleeping time). If they have a hard time thinking about a typical day, their time log might help. Read the directions to the group and show the transparency created from Handout D, *Energy Graph Examples*, to illustrate how they should chart their time. Allow 10–15 minutes for this activity.

Ask for volunteers to share their Energy Graph.

REFLECT:

- What did you learn about your “prime time”?
- Are you a morning person or a “night owl,” or somewhere in between?

DO:

- When you are employed, you do not always have freedom to organize your time according to your “prime time.” Divide the group into morning people and night owls. Give each group the *Organizing Your Time Scenarios* (Handout E). Ask them to identify ways to use their “prime time.” Give each group a piece of newsprint to record their ideas.
- Ask groups to report back their ways to work with work situations.

REFLECT:

- Can people on different time clocks work together?
- What are some ways to make it happen?

Handout C (Table 2): Energy Graph

Handout D: Examples of Energy Graphs

	Morning					Afternoon					Evening								
Your energy level at this hour :	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Very high						X	X	X	X	X									
High		X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X					
Medium	X														X	X			
Low																	X	X	X

Figure 1. Example #1. Is this a morning person, a “night owl,” or somewhere in between?

	Morning					Afternoon					Evening								
Your energy level at this hour :	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Very high								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
High																		X	
Medium			X	X	X	X													X
Low	X	X																	

Figure 2. Example #2. Is this a “night owl,” a morning person, or somewhere in between?

Handout E: Organizing Your Time

Sue has been employed to work six hours a day with Mrs. Jones. The daily agreement with Mrs. Jones’ family has Sue preparing lunch, helping with correspondence, helping Mrs. Jones read the newspaper, sanitizing the bathrooms, straightening the house, taking Mrs. Jones for a walk, and being sure her medication is taken.

Situation A

Sue is a morning person and prefers to work from 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Mrs. Jones likes late night television and doesn’t want to stir until 9:30 a.m. or so.

Situation B

Sue is a night owl and prefers to work from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mrs. Jones is up early and likes to have everything finished before lunch.

How can they work together to keep all parties happy and get the work done?

Handout F: Making The Most of Your Time

Schedule Time to Make Time

Once goals are identified, time management becomes a process of allocating time to important tasks. Effective time planning means scheduling tasks throughout the year, month, week, and day.

Thursday, May 22	Friday, May 23
10:00 am - 11:00 am Clean living room	10:00 am - 10:15 am Make grocery list
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Clean refrigerator & stove	10:20 am - 2:30 pm Cleaners
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm Change bed linens	Grocery store Post office
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Prepare dinner	3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Prepare dinner

Figure 3. Sample Time Planning Sheet.

Prime Time

- Know your “prime time”—that time during the day when you’re at your highest energy level. Success at scheduling results from finding the best time to accomplish each task.
- Each one’s graph is different. Some are morning people; others are night owls; some are in between. When you have a choice, use “prime time” for jobs requiring the most concentration and time. Save routine tasks for lower energy times. During high energy periods reduce or eliminate interruptions.
- Take a break before your down period begins; you’ll maintain a higher energy level that way. Relaxation exercises, proper diet, and improved physical fitness also help.
- External “prime time” must also be considered—the times when resources, usually people, are available to you. Plan your daily schedule to utilize the time when the clients are available, stores are open, and friends are near their phones.

Part 3: Making Better Use of My Time: Lesson Plan

Planning is crucial to successful management of time and getting the job done. The secret to planning is a list of work that needs to be done in a timely manner. Some tasks must be performed on a daily basis while others are done on a weekly basis. Using a Planning Sheet helps identify the tasks, set a priority and feel accomplishment when the tasks are completed.

DO:

- “To Do” List
- Give each participant a copy of Handout G, the “To Do” List, and ask them to list the activities they recorded on their time log. Then assign a priority to each activity. Tell them to place a check by the tasks that were completed as opposed to the tasks yet to be done, and to write “yes” in the priority column if it is a priority job.
- Ask them to share the high priority activities.
- Ask them to share the completed activities.

- Show a slide created from Handout H, *Planning and Time Management Reminders*. Distribute the handout and go over the list with the class.

REFLECT:

- Were the high priority activities completed?
- Were there low priority activities that took your time?
- Would making the “To Do” list ahead help you accomplish your priorities?

APPLY:

- Why will time management be important in your work as an Elder Companion?
- How does using a “To Do” list help you manage your time?

Handout G (Table 3): To Do List: Planning Sheet

Handout H: Planning and Time Management Reminders

1. Develop a “To Do” list.
2. Set priorities.
3. Allow time for interruptions.
4. Use “prime time” for jobs that require high energy and concentration.
5. Work smarter, not harder... find ways to shorten tasks.
6. Set aside time for yourself (10 minutes per day adds up to more than 60 hours per year).
7. Limit time spent on the low priority tasks.
8. Keep a time log.
9. Combine trips and/or similar tasks. If you have errands to run, several letters to write, or calls to make, it takes less time to do similar activities when your mindset and materials are ready.
10. Check off completed tasks. This helps you visualize what you have accomplished.
11. Eliminate unimportant tasks/time wasters.
12. Reward yourself.

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