



MANAGING A WORKLOAD

Activity: Perfect Timing

'Perfect timing' consists of a set of twenty-four different activities which a student might have to fit into a working week. The student and practice educator each construct a diary for the week ahead, incorporating the twenty-four activities. They discuss the criteria they used to manage the time. .

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to look at the ways in which students organise their work within the working week. A set of demands and constraints which mirror the student's work on the placement is used to discover the principles which can be used to manage a workload.

Method

This activity can be completed by a practice educator and student together or by a small group of practice educators and students . It achieves particularly good results with one practice educator and two or three students . Give the students a set of 'Perfect Timing' cards (either photocopy the table and cut out the cards, or create your own tailor-made set). Before the practice tutorial, you and the student separately should organise the same set of demands (the twenty-four activity cards) into a manageable working week (allow 20 minutes). At the practice tutorial, or in the small group, compare your 'diaries' for the forthcoming week, discussing the reasons for your decisions. The exercise can be made more or less difficult by the number of activities you put into the pack. You can upset careful planning by producing rogue cards (unexpected activities) *after* the diary has been organised (about 30 - 60 minutes).

Variations

'Perfect timing' is an activity best tailored to your particular setting, so use this generic one as an exemplar. You can prepare for this before the student's placement begins by making a note on separate cards of different demands made on your time. If the



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student's work takes them outside the office, find a map of the area with bus routes if needed. The amount of time taken to complete visits to locations outside the office can vary considerably according to the means of transport available to your student - car , cycle , bus , train or even walking! Other factors to be taken into account might include the distance from the office to the car park and the time needed to park a car in a busy area. Towards the end of the placement, you might wish to make a new set of 'Perfect Timing' cards (or encourage the student to do so) and repeat the exercise as completed earlier in the placement. Students can be asked to consider how their organisation of time on the placement has been influenced by their experiences of the agency. Are there any changes they would like to make in the way they manage time and workload?

Arrange the activities into a diary for a working week

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| ONE HOUR LUNCH EACH DAY Mon - Fri 1 hour Anywhere | VISIT TO ASSESS ELDERLY PERSON FOR RESPITE CARE Est: 45 mins <i>Brick Street</i> | COURT REPORT ON JUVENILE OFFENDER Written by Tuesday Est: 2 hours <i>Office</i> | COURT APPEARANCE Some time during Friday morning Est: unknown |
| TEAM MEETING Wednesday weekly 9.30 - 10.30 <i>Office</i> | 5 OUTGOING TELEPHONE CALLS Est: 30 mins <i>Office</i> | WORKING PARTY ON COMMUNITY CARE Wednesday fortnight 2.00-3.00 <i>Central Office</i> | VISIT SINGLE PARENT - FINANCIAL PROBLEMS Est: 1 hour <i>Slinn Street</i> |
| 10 INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS Est 1 hour <i>Office</i> | VISIT ELDERLY MAN WANTING COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION Est: 45 mins <i>Conduit Road</i> | DISCUSS TEENAGE MOTHERS GROUP WITH HEALTH VISITOR Est: 1 hour, <i>Clinic</i> | 5 OUTGOING TELEPHONE CALLS (including re-dials) Est: 30 mins <i>Office</i> |
| REVIEW CHILD IN FOSTER CARE Tuesday 2.00 - 3.00 <i>Hill Lane</i> | PRACTICE MEETING WITH LOCAL HEALTH CARE STAFF Friday, weekly 1.30-2.00 <i>Clinic</i> | VISIT CONFUSED ELDERLY WOMAN, SEE DAUGHTER Est: 1 hour <i>Hands Road</i> | MEET WITH MOTHER, CHILD, STAFF AT NURSERY Est: 1 hour <i>Beet Street</i> |



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| <p>2 CASE NOTES, 3 LETTERS, 2 EMAILS</p> <p>Est: 1 hour <i>Office</i></p> | <p>5 INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS</p> <p>Est: 30 mins <i>Office</i></p> | <p>2 CASE NOTES, 3 LETTERS, 2 EMAILS</p> <p>Est: 1 hours <i>Office</i></p> | <p>SUPERVISION WITH PRACTICE EDUCATOR</p> <p>Thursday weekly 9.30 - 11 <i>Office</i></p> |
| <p>VISIT FAMILY EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS</p> <p>Est: 1 hour (eve) <i>Elkmore Road</i></p> | <p>CASE DISCUSSION WITH PART TIME OT</p> <p>Tues, Wed or Thurs Est: 30 mins <i>Clinic</i></p> | <p>STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP</p> <p>Friday 1.00 - 2.00 (usually Thursdays fortnightly) <i>Central Office</i></p> | <p>DAY DUTY</p> <p>Wednesday 9.00 - 12.00 <i>Office</i></p> |