



Lifespan Respite Grantee and Partner Learning Collaborative State Lifespan Roles for Implementing the Respite Actions in the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

Meeting Notes
June 6, 2024

[Meeting Recordings and Resources Link](#)

Announcements

Participation in roundtables for the Administration for Community Living (ACL) National Caregiver Support Collaborative (NCSC) has been opened more broadly. Roundtables for Goal 4 & 5 will be held soon so indicate interest in participating by submitting an interest form.

RAISE/Grandparent Councils will hold virtual public meeting on June 13th so watch the council in action. Public access link will go live 5 minutes before the meeting.

Respite Voucher Learning Collaborative is also meeting June 13th with a new format of mentors who are available to address problems and answer questions, and allowing people to join meeting and jump off as needed.

National Strategy Matrix

After having received 15-16 state updates, Jill is pulling together a master of all the additional activities or revised activities that are part of the National Strategy Matrix update so that it can be sent to NASHP for their progress report. ARCH will also be sending the matrix to ACL as part of the report on the National Strategy learning collaborative as it wraps up.

Principle of Leadership: Time Management & Prioritization

Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between different activities. Essentially, the purpose of time management is to enable people to get more, and better, work done in less time - without feeling stressed about it. Time management skills are essential because few, if any, of us ever have enough time to do everything that is asked of us, or that we want to do.

Are you looking to get more work done in your day? Do you want to have a better work-life balance? What would you do with your extra free time if you could get more work done in less time? Is your motivation for improving your time management to:

- Increase productivity?
- Gain better control of your workflow?
- Reduce stress?
- Consistently meet deadlines?

Think of time management as a combination of working productively and prioritizing your time.

If you are good at time management, you feel confident about 1) completing assigned tasks within an allocated time period (without stressing over the deadlines). 2) you can provide accurate estimates of how much time you need to complete something and 3) you can accurately follow through with your commitments.

Haste often adds stress to your day and undermines your performance. Improving time management skills makes you less anxious about not making enough progress and being late getting things done. Being late is the number one reason for stress. Time management staves off your obsession with the ticking clock and prompts you to focus more on your performance. The most important question you can ask with respect to time management is: What is the best use of my time right now?

Different time management strategies are often assessed from the perspective of outcomes — will this help us do X faster? We forget to investigate what makes us unproductive in the first place.

Major Stumbling Blocks are:

- Perfectionism
- Procrastination
- Distractions
- Interruptions
- Pressure
- Feeling Overwhelmed

We all procrastinate because our brains naturally resist complex and overwhelming tasks. When we don't know how to approach a task, we naturally tend to flee and postpone doing it. The "I'll get to it later" mantra has led to the downfall of many. After too many "laters," the work piles up so high that any task seems insurmountable. The "cure" to procrastination is learning to get better with task prioritization.

A task may be too unpleasant to face, or too difficult, or very tedious or boring, or there simply may be so many other more interesting things to pull your attention away that you struggle to keep on track. In the modern, always-on world, distractions are everywhere. In most cases, it's the lack of deep focus that erodes our ability to get anything accomplished. Time Management also includes Attention Management.

Everyone gets distracted. Whether it's email, social media, co-workers, kids, or random thoughts, countless things can derail your progress. While you can't control all of them, it is vital to make a dedicated effort to limit the number of things that can distract you. One study found that it took up to 20 minutes to return to work after a single distraction. It also takes time and mental energy to switch between different tasks.

Know what to do to minimize the interruptions you face during your day. There are phone calls, information requests, questions from employees, and a whole host of events that crop up unexpectedly. Some do need to be dealt with immediately, but others need to be managed. This is how efficiency in the workplace and team building go together. A coworker asking for a quick hand with something can interrupt a person's workflow just as much

as an email notification can. Cut down on the number of requests you receive by proactively giving teammates status updates on:

- Task progress
- When you plan to complete a project
- Any delays or blockers that come up

Instead of constantly responding to requests, you can keep doing your work productively and efficiently.

It's tough to say no. We don't want to disappoint our bosses, our coworkers or ourselves. However, overloading ourselves with work is a prime example of working harder, not smarter. At some point, it is time to put down the work and call it a full day. You are only human, and humans need sleep and rest. When you're exhausted, you won't be able to perform as well as you would if you were fully rested. So, make sure you take time to decompress and get the rest your body needs.

You don't have to do everything yourself. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is delegate specific tasks to other people who can do them faster or better. If you don't have anyone that can help share your burden, it might be time to outsource some of the work.

Polling Question 1 Results: When it comes to implementing National Strategy activities, what is the greatest time management struggle for you?

- 1) Goal Setting/Planning – 19%
- 2) Prioritization – 6%
- 3) Managing Interruptions – 50%
- 4) Procrastination – 0%
- 5) Scheduling Time for it – 25%
- 6) Too Many Pressures – 0%

To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what exactly needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, time will be lost in the confusion of conflicting priorities. Without a process for prioritizing tasks at work, what you initially set out to accomplish seems to get pushed to the side. People tend to neglect goal setting because it requires time and effort. What they fail to consider is that a little time and effort put in now saves an enormous amount of time, effort and frustration in the future.

The easiest way to start planning your workday is by making a to-do list of all the things you want and need to do. At the beginning of your workday, take 15-minutes to do the following:

- Dump all your tasks in a list
- Break down each task into smaller sub-steps
- Organize them & systematically note when each task should be done, and the dependencies between tasks
- Reflect & Re-prioritize some of the tasks and set a realistic daily schedule.
- Engage & get down to business!

The problem with many of these lists is they are just a collection of things that need to get done. There is no rhyme or reason to the list and, because of this, the work they do is just as unstructured. To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks. This way you won't get caught scrambling to get something critical done as the deadline approaches.

Assess each task for its urgency (how soon it needs to be done) and its importance (the impact of its completion on your goals or projects). When prioritizing tasks on your to-do list, there are many different approaches:

1. Pick out your most important three items to accomplish and get started.
2. Sort your tasks into three tiers of importance: high, medium, or low.
3. Rank every item on your list on a scale of 1-10, and then order them accordingly.

One of the most common reasons people don't manage their time well on large projects is that they feel overwhelmed. When you feel overwhelmed, you may want to procrastinate and work on other things instead. To overcome this feeling, break large projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.

A chunk of time is defined as a focused work activity. It can be self-contained (like emptying your inbox), a slice of a larger project (maybe completing the first draft of a document), or a collection of small, unrelated tasks. Your key here is to make these chunks focused, uninterrupted blocks of time.

You can also utilize the efficiency of not switching tasks by batching your time (responding to multiple emails for example). If you have a set of similar projects, try to do them at the same time. While it may feel like you are tackling more things on your to-do list by multi-tasking, many studies show that multitasking makes you less productive. The mental energy required to switch between tasks creates a lag that could be avoided by focusing on one project at a time.

When you have many things on your to-do list, it can become challenging to see the bigger picture. That's why it's a critical time management strategy to make a conscious effort to step back and look at what's coming ahead in the next few weeks or months. Looking at the future pipeline can help you prepare for upcoming projects and ensure that you're not overloading your plate with future projects.

Make sure commitment to your vision gets scheduled and given the same weight in your life as any other important appointment. Block out some amount of time every week so other demands don't knock your priorities off. Do something to move priorities forward – use persistence & consistency rather than speed.

Polling Question 2 Results: Consider the following statement: I set aside time for planning and scheduling...?

- 1) Not at All – 0%
- 2) Rarely – 19%
- 3) Sometimes – 38%
- 4) Often – 19%
- 5) Very Often – 25%

Setting a timer trains your attention and prevents you from working till exhaustion. Breaks are important for our mental wellbeing since repetitive chores and work drudgery cast a negative toll on our ability to stay focused and productive

- Pick your task
- Set a timer for 25 minutes
- Try to get as much done as possible before the timer buzzes
- Take a five min break
- Do another 25-min work sprint
- Then Schedule a longer downtime (25-30 mins) after several of these rounds

As you chip away at the project in bite-sized chunks, you'll make progress and improve your overall time management. Breaks in between chunks are needed to relax and refresh.

"Eat the Frog" by identifying one challenging task (the frog) and completing that task first thing in the morning (eating it). This is the task you dislike doing the most but it's important to complete. To avoid procrastination, do it first and the rest of the tasks ahead of you will look easier in comparison.

Time is highly elastic. We cannot make more time, but time will stretch to accommodate what we choose to put into it. The key to time management is treating our priorities as the equivalent of a broken water heater. Everything I do, every minute I spend, is my choice. Saying "I don't have time for X, Y, or Z" means it's not a priority for me. It's not a matter of lacking time, it is that I don't want to do it. There may be horrible consequences for making different choices, but we have the power in our lives to fill our time with things that deserve to be there.

Treat something important like a crisis and everything else takes a back seat until it's done. Crisis mode is not where we want to stay all the time, so use this method before they become crises! We make our priorities equivalent to a broken water heater by putting them down in our schedules first. We do this by thinking through our weeks before we are in them.

If you have eight working hours available today, but fifteen hours' worth of tasks on your list. For each task, you ask two questions, "Is this important?" and "Is this urgent?" If it is both:

- Urgent and Important: Do this yourself first thing in the morning.
- Important Not Urgent: Schedule the task for later in the day (or by another due date)
- Urgent Not Important: Delegate this one and/or look for ways to automate it.
- Not Important Not Urgent: Keep this away from your platter for now.

You've just gone from being overwhelmed to having a prioritized task list that focuses on the must-do items of the day.

How do we find time for what matters most? Many of us drastically overestimate our commitments each week, while underestimating the time we have to ourselves. A few practical strategies will help us find more time for what matters to us, so we can "build the lives we want in the time we've got."

Make a three-category priority list: Career, Relationships, Self. There should be something in all three categories. Make a short list of 2-3 items in each. Then look over the whole of next week and see where you can plan them in. Find time for what matters most to you.

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	I Important deadlines Crises Pressing important meetings Emergencies Last minute preparations	II Relationship building Personal development Employee training Exercise and health Prevention and planning
Not important	III Some emails and phone calls Many interruptions Some popular activities Some meetings	IV Trivia Some phone calls Excessive TV Time wasters

There's a warning that comes with these quadrants. As Stephen R. Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, explains from his study and research, people use their time based on the importance and urgency of the task and can defeat their progress on any priorities they may have, despite the hectic pace of their activity.

How many of you know you spend considerable time in "Crisis Mode?" How do you get out of that pattern? Spend more time in Quadrant 2! If something is both Urgent and Important – Do it right now! But fight the tendency to slide from an exhausting day in crisis management into time wasted in Quadrants 3 & 4! Many of those crisis activities could have been prevented and avoided if you had committed to doing more things in Quadrant 2.

Time spent in Quadrant 2 will eventually shrink Quadrant 1 as you spend more time in prevention and preparation. Quadrant 3 & 4 is where you need to learn to say NO – to yourself and others.

The way you spend your time is a result of the way you see your time and the way you really see your priorities. It will be hard to say No to the popular pull of Quadrant 3 or the pleasure of escape in Quadrant 4, if you don't have a bigger YES burning inside.

Much of time management comes down to effective scheduling of your time. When you know what your goals and priorities are, you then need to know how to go about creating a schedule that keeps you on track and protects you from stress.

Breakout Discussions

Questions like these will aim to help us assess our time management and planning skills and our ability to juggle different types of workloads. Your answers can reveal both your foresight and your ability to keep sight of both short-term and long-term objectives.

- 1) How do you handle multitasking? How do you create a balance between work, relationships, and self-interests?
- 2) Can you share an example of a time when you had to meet a tight deadline? How well did you manage time under pressure?
- 3) What aspect of time management is your strength? Which one is your weakness? Is it goal setting, prioritization, scheduling, procrastination, or managing interruptions?
- 4) How would you tell your boss that you have too much work to do?

If we are also family caregivers, we can almost expect to be pulled by interruptions and demands for our time and attention. Family is naturally a top priority but that doesn't mean that we can always drop things to respond. We need to communicate our schedules and commitments, and sometimes we have to say "No" to a request or share it with/delegate it to others. When life events cause big disruptions, everyone must step up to share the load, see where things can be simplified, and be very understanding of the load others are carrying. If working from home, put the household on notice about what's on the schedule to minimize interruptions and demands made during critical times.

As professionals, we have deadlines that seem to all happen at the same time. It is overwhelming, and much of it needs to be done earlier than the deadlines so it can be carried up a chain of command. It can change our personality, making us avoid the office and the disruptions others might bring, or working behind a closed door and missing a vital social outlet that working in an office can be.

If you've been in crisis mode for months, it's overwhelming to juggle everything that is due right now and so easy to procrastinate when you don't know what to do. Discussions with co-workers and supervisors may help to clear or delay some things. Delegation might work, but it can also backfire. Learn to create more realistic timelines for work completion going forward.

There are staff turnovers, and delegated tasks often get returned uncompleted. Training a new person takes dedicated time and supervision, with constant interruptions to help be there for them.

As a supervisor and during the hiring process, hold discussions with the team members about when they work best. This seems to help with time management and productivity. They know when others are working or not available, and they must be flexible in getting responses from

others who don't have the same work schedule. That's the expectation, as part of the work culture. Ultimately, use delegation, set boundaries, and let staff members do what works best for them.

If working in a collaborative office, if there's a task with a tight timeline, talk it through with colleagues. A quick conversation, write something down, gather some information, see if it makes sense to others, figure out how to proceed. It is easy to be overwhelmed but you're rarely alone. Others can help you get started. Using a SBAR (Situation-Background-Analysis-Recommendation) process can help frame it. What's the situation? What's the background (in short, quick brief)? What's your analysis at the current moment? Then, what is your recommendation? Try to gather thoughts in that framework, send it to colleagues or boss, have others help determine a suggested action. This creates a pause before fully jumping in and makes sure time isn't wasted when another direction is decided upon.

Getting up early or working late helps individuals find quiet, focused work time. Sleep is better when you're not worried about uncompleted work. If that generates a bunch of emails late at night, indicate it's not urgent but a process of getting everything ready for picking up the next day. Keep to an 8-hour rule because it can be easy to start working and forget to take breaks and stop at a full day. Managing under pressure means it must be done, but not without breaks.

Calendars are invaluable, even physical ones, where you can capture all the appointments and commitments you've made. Making a list of what needs to be done during the next week on the Friday before helps make sure they get done. Checking them off is satisfying. A daily list of priorities, right on your work desk, keeps those items front and center. When a task gets added to the pile and you want to get right on it, check your calendar for what's already there so you won't miss a commitment you've already made. Do your calendar review the night before so it's not pressing on your mind what all is happening the next day.

Look at the week's schedule and find the patterns. On days filled with meetings, fit in short tasks in between. Block out time on other days/times for focused effort. Spending a block of time on a task may not complete it but progress will be made. Take a break and then go back to the task or start work on another one that also needs some forward movement.

With a schedule and list of priorities, you know what you want to do but be prepared to have a fire to put out, an unexpected demand, and the need to re-prioritize tasks again and again.

It can be a struggle to prioritize, especially after taking on more than is manageable - thinking "I can do it" - only to be now obligated and wondering "Why did I say I could do it?" As leaders in social services, we may jump in and put more on our plate when it's the worst decision because others are now depending on us. It is more of a kindness to say no - realizing that we are the wrong person to take something extra on at the time.

As you step back and look at priorities, ask “what can be done?” – maybe ask for more time or pull in more staff to work on it. When a lot of things are not getting done, you need to come together as a group and figure it out. The “hard charging, pushing it” approach may work for the short term, but balancing work and life is much more important. It’s great to have a boss who asks, “Is this too much?” and gives reassurance that there’s an option to say no.

Guest Presentation

Lisa Schneider, Executive Director, Respite Care Association of Wisconsin. She shared her perspectives on time management from her experiences as a leader in Lifespan Respite work, her personal realities as a caregiver, and what she coaches others to do.

As a family caregiver with a full-time job, Lisa recognizes that she has a diverse set of roles that she may have to step into at any given moment. If something goes wrong, she is usually the one who gets to fix it. As the HR manager, the IT guru, the Administrator, or Executive Director, she’s the overall problem-solver so she has to prepare for the unexpected – especially when it comes to her family. Lisa does feel like she thrives under pressure, because it helps her stay focused and prioritize better. However, family comes first, so she sets the expectation with her team that if she needs to drop everything, they are there to help manage things.

Unforeseen demands never come at a good time. If her family needs her, she must devise a strategy for the urgent matters on her plate. Having a dependable team to back her up is indispensable. A medical crisis with her father turned into an unexpected stay of 30 days. It’s her habit to carry her computer with her, so she called a team meeting, informed everyone about what’s going on, discussed what’s on her plate, and delegated what items the team can take on for her.

If her daughter’s scheduled daytime activities are cancelled, Lisa is likely to have constant interruptions. If she’s working on her computer, her daughter will close the laptop mid-task. If Lisa doesn’t monitor her closely enough, she’ll keep herself busy by creating a mess – adding to Lisa’s workload. Lisa often works into the night to use the quiet moments while her daughter sleeps to tackle work. Lisa can sleep better if she can avoid the anxiety of work piling up. Being adaptable in these situations helps maintain her composure instead of feeling frustrated and angry.

Tools that Lisa uses include Microsoft Outlook where she can schedule meetings, projects, deadlines, and reminders. She blocks out times for project work or times held open while waiting for Doodle Poll results, shares calendar with her staff so her availability can be seen, flags emails for follow up, and plugs in family items like doctors’ appointments, important dates and times for family responsibilities. She color-codes them so they stand out and she can avoid double-booking those times with a work commitment.

She also uses a wonderful tool called Trello where she and her staff can manage projects and collaborate with team members. The Trello board has a number of columns for items that need to be reported on or discussed – effectively becoming the agenda for her weekly staff meetings. This includes things that are not completed, on-going, or need follow up. Upcoming conferences are listed so that team members can say what their role will be, and information on booked flights and lodging reservations can be added – details that can be lost in missed communication. This conference tracker can also be seen by accounting staff and the documents added give them a heads-up about what costs are looking like before claims for reimbursement are submitted. Trello also holds cards labeled for their grants, progress reports, grant application deadlines, and who is assigned to the tasks. A lot of information can be plugged in, time can be tracked, and progress made recorded. Completed items are retained and a “parking lot” for ideas or future endeavors can be saved. Every staff member can access this information at any time. Trello is a free application.

Lisa also loves Teams in the Microsoft bundle and feels it integrates people, content, and tools to be more productive. Communication tools like chat, call, video call, or Teams meetings provide options in a one-stop shop that also allows access to Zoom, Trello, Outlook Calendar, One Drive, and the server.

Lisa recommends the following techniques she uses to manage time:

- Look at the calendar before the upcoming week so that you can start diving in first thing Monday morning.
- Print out materials the night before next day’s key meetings so they are ready at hand.
- Divide work by importance – which ones need immediate attention or could be done later or eliminated.
- Break big tasks into smaller steps that can be done immediately; delegate tasks for the specific skill set of staff.
- Be proactive, not reactive, by assigning tasks and breaking tasks down smaller at the front end.
- Take care of administrative tasks ahead of time, especially routine tasks, so they don’t crowd in during big project timelines.
- Don’t let yourself spiral with distractions and uncertainty – shut off notifications, seek help and ask for clarification, talk through it to get others’ perspectives, and avoid time wasted in going in different directions by getting focused.

Our team manages priorities and time sensitive projects by:

- Holding weekly meetings to collectively go through processes and policies that can be improved and streamlined.
- Have an annual retreat to establish the work plan for the year, planning around new projects, program expansion, and where to discontinue and reallocate resources.
- Reviewing data on how programs impact caregivers, where improvements are needed, and how a process can be streamlined.
- Collectively work to maximize resources, both human and fiscal, and make sure no one is overwhelmed.

Next Steps

Next Meeting Topic. The learning collaborative will meet next on **July 11, 2024** where we will discuss **negotiation**. Kathy Mayfield Smith, South Carolina Respite Coalition, has agreed to be our guest presenter, to share her insight and strategies in finding acceptable solutions to shared problems. Successful negotiators control the process and come away with a result they're satisfied with – whether or not they've made compromises along the way. For our National Strategy goals, activities, and projects to be successful, negotiating everyone's role, the strategies employed, targets sought, and our deadlines for success all need to be agreed on, ideally to everyone's satisfaction.

Inviting Partners to Join the LC. If you have partners who are working with you on implementation of National Strategy goals that you would like to invite to participate in this learning collaborative, you may send [Jill Kagan](#) the names and email addresses of one or two key partners so that they can receive an invitation to join us in upcoming meetings. This is not an open invitation to all who you may be working with, but to a select few who you think would benefit from joining you in this learning collaborative.

Revised LC Meeting Schedule. Details on the framework, and the revised schedule for future meetings of the learning collaborative, are [available here](#). To view recordings and materials from previous meetings, please visit the [National Strategy LC webpage](#).

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