(Caring for Labour Activists – Module 2)

Labour Community Advocate
Training Program[1]

Caring for Labour Activists
Time management

Participant Manual and Handouts

PSAC AFPC
National Capital Region
Région de la capitale nationale

[1] Formerly the Union Counsellor Training Program

Time

The things you spend time on,
and devote quality attention to,
are the things you will improve at
or make progress on.

In contrast, the things you don't spend time
on, or devote quality attention to,
are the things you will not improve at
or make progress on.

Rettig's Time Management Premise

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 2

wo Extremes

Activists Face Hard Choices

Activists have it harder than most other people, since much of what we get asked to do is truly urgent or life-saving. People's jobs can depend on what labour activists do and not helping someone in dire need is obviously not an option. The problem is that you can easily spend your entire life doing urgent things without making progress on other important goals.

What do you do when it's all urgent?

Some activists try to save the world at the cost of their :

- fitness
- health
- happiness

This leads to burnout.

And burnout can find us falling into the Average Canadian Consumerist Lifestyle.

- Work a gruelling job with long hours
- Spend every cent you make on "stuff"
- Spend most of your "non-work" time maintaining that stuff
- Spend whatever money and time you have left over on mindless entertainment

Activists need to consciously keep ourselves
fit, healthy and happy, <u>while</u> we change the world.

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 3

Barriers to Activism

What is happening in these activists' lives that might not support their activist goals?

1. Martha, who lives alone, works two jobs and is the Labour Community Advocate in one of the workplaces. When she comes home, she's tired. She's begun turning on the TV when she walks in the door. It goes off when she goes to bed.

2. Four of the eight current members of the local executive are hoping to retire in the next four years. They don't have time to mentor young activists to fill their role.

3. Francine has been involved in the campaign to increase the minimum wage. She spends every Sunday at the Mall "window shopping".

4. Svetlana is on the night shift and is the shift steward. In order to blow off steam, she heads to the casino at least once a week.

5. Carl is the "go-to" person in his local for information about the collective agreement. His wife has told him she's lonely in their relationship.

6. Gustav has been going to local meetings, but doesn't have the energy to go for drinks after the meeting. He feels out-of-the-loop and wonders if he should drop out.

7. The new collective agreement has been signed and Carol has put aside her usual jogging routine indefinitely to ensure other members of the local are aware of the changes.

8. Tony often has local meetings at his house and feels strongly that it must be completely clean and tidy when others come in. He's feeling less and less like hosting.

9. Hju has discovered his son's video games and spends a couple of hours each night playing them, not always with his son. He used to be involved in the health and safety committee at work.

10. A new joint committee is being set up and the executive has asked Rolando to sit on it, along with the other six committees he currently sits on.

Barriers to Activism - Discussion

What is happening in these activists' lives that might not support their activist goals?

- **Martha, who lives alone, works two jobs and is the Labour Community Advocate in one of the workplaces. When she comes home, she's tired. She's begun turning on the TV when she walks in the door. It goes off when she goes to bed.**

  TV can become what's known as a "soft addiction". It doesn't cause the kind of harm "hard addictions (such as alcohol and drugs) cause, but uses up time. If Martha has it on as "company" and is doing other things, the TV might be fine, but if she's focused on it for the entire evening, she is losing precious time. Martha should explore why she's watching TV and address this. Perhaps she needs support with the issues she's confronting in her Labour Community Advocate role.

- **Four of the eight current members of the local executive are hoping to retire in the next four years. They don't have time to mentor young activists to fill their role.**

  There are a couple of things going on here. First, the four retiring members are not training younger people to take over for them, which could mean they are doing too much and face the risk of burnout. Second, the local is at risk if there are not well-trained, energetic members to take over when these four leave.

- **Francine has been involved in the campaign to increase the minimum wage. She spends every Sunday at the Mall "window shopping".**

  Again, window shopping can be a "soft addiction". If this were an occasional thing Francine did that she found enjoyable and she made a conscious decision to do it, there's likely no problem. But, does this feed into the ACCL, is it a way to avoid taking action on the campaign or is it a sign she is burning out?

- **Svetlana is on the night shift and is the shift steward. In order to blow off steam, she heads to the casino at least once a week.**

  Gambling can be a hard addiction and Svetlana needs to watch what's going on here. Because she's doing it to "blow off steam", she should consider whether she needs support / assistance in her role as shift steward or in her personal life. Is there something else she could do to blow off steam in a healthier way?
- **Carl is the "go-to" person in his local for information about the collective agreement. His wife has told him she's lonely in their relationship.**

If Carl's wife leaves him, he might become unable to do any activist work due to his emotional turmoil or the stress may show up in his ability to function. It's better to take preventative action and for Carl to spend some time addressing the issues in his marriage in order that he can continue being an activist.

- **Gustav has been going to local meetings, but doesn't have the energy to go for drinks after the meeting. He feels out-of-the-loop and wonders if he should drop out.**

  Different people have different levels of energy. By simply going home and feeling left out, Gustav is putting his involvement at risk. He could talk to the local President and ask if they could have a longer break to socialize. He may not be the only one feeling this way.

- **The new collective agreement has been signed and Carol has put aside her usual jogging routine indefinitely to ensure other members of the local are aware of the changes.**

  The key word here is "indefinitely". Sometimes something happens and you have to put other things on hold. Carol is putting aside her health, in this case, in an open-ended way. She needs to decide how important her health and fitness are to her.

- **Tony often has local meetings at his house and feels strongly that it must be completely clean and tidy when others come in. He's feeling less and less like hosting.**

  Tony's concern with the state of his house is in conflict with his desire to be involved. The key point here is that he feels it must be completely clean and tidy. Is this really necessary?

- **Hju has discovered his son's video games and spends a couple of hours each night playing them, not always with his son. He used to be involved in the health and safety committee at work.**

  Again, this is about making conscious decisions. Playing with his son is probably a good way to connect with him. Playing by himself might be fine if it's for limited periods, however, it could be an unconscious and addictive use of his time. As well, it indicates that his involvement is less than it previously was.

- **A new joint committee is being set up and the executive has asked Rolando to sit on it, along with the other six committees he currently sits on.**

  Activists can be workaholics. If Rolando takes on this new committee and then another and another, it may be hard for him to do things well and he's at risk of burnout.

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 4

Getting to Activism

What doesn't support activism :

- Average Canadian Consumerist Lifestyle (too busy getting and taking care of "stuff")
- "Soft" Addictions (TV, web surfing, video games, email checking, shopping, napping – Do you do it because you enjoy it/ it's important or out of habit, boredom or to escape?)
- "Hard" Addictions (drugs, alcohol, gambling and so on – activists aren't immune!)
- Can't say "no" (while seething with anger and resentment, leads to burnout)
- Loves to say "yes" (not because you want to, but because it makes you feel important or powerful, leads to burnout)
- Too much turmoil (if relationships, living arrangements, income, health are constantly changing and at risk, can't get to activism – What can you control?)
- Workaholism (workaholic activists are too often seen as noble, but can lead to misery and burnout)

What supports activism :

- Being aware of your values (e.g., My family is number one)
- Determining what trade-offs you are willing to make (e.g., Time is more important than fancy possessions)
- Having the necessary information to make the right decisions (e.g., Know the importance of becoming a conscious activist)
- Using the information you have (e.g., Being a conscious activist)
- Being creative in identifying solutions to tough problems (e.g., How to ensure children picked up, dog walked when local meeting is at 4 pm)
- Being an independent thinker (e.g., Doing what you need to do to become a conscious activist)
- Having the courage of your convictions (e.g., Remembering that "No" is a sentence. As long as you have made a thoughtful decision, you don't have to explain it to anyone else.)
- Engaging others to help you (e.g., Families can help with cooking and with activism!)
- Surrounding yourself with supportive people (e.g., The closer they are, the more supportive they should be!)

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 5

Collette's Budget

This document is Collette's first try at her time budget. You'll see she plans to "spend" 116 hours. Each of us, if we sleep 8 hours per day, have 112 waking hours to "spend". How could Collette get the budget under control?

Category or Goal	Task	Hours per week	Notes
ACTIVISM			
Local	Monthly meeting	.5	2 hours per month
H&S Cttee	Ergonomics cttee	1	Meet 2 h each 2 weeks
	Research	2	Reading
	Speaking to members	1.5	Bits and pieces
Total		5.0	
HEALTH AND FITNESS/ SELF-CARE			
Exercise	Jogging	6	With dog
Self-care	Morning grooming and breakfast	5	
	Dinners	5	Week nights
	Evening grooming	3.5	
Household Shopping	Cleaning, shopping, laundry, maintenance	6.5	
Paying bills		.5	
Total		26.5	
RELATIONSHIPS			
Spouse	Date night, plus 1 hour/day	9.5	
Children	Morning	3.5	Weekdays
	Homework	4	Share with spouse
	Playtime	6	
	Bedtime	3.5	Weeknights
Dog	Playing	3	See jogging above

Category or Goal	Task	Hours per week	Notes
Family	Mom	4	Twice a week
Total		33.5	
MONEY/ MATERIAL NEEDS			
Job	Work	40	
	Commute	2.5	
	Work at home	0	
Total		42.5	
WHOLE PERSON			
Music Lessons	Guitar	1	I wish
Practice	Guitar	3.5	I wish
Gardening		4	
Total		8.5	
Total of Totals		116.0	

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 6

Participant's Budget

This is your opportunity to identify the tasks you undertake and would like to undertake each week.

Category or Goal	Task	Hours per week	Notes
ACTIVISM			
Total			
HEALTH AND FITNESS/ SELF-CARE			
Total			
RELATIONSHIPS			

Category or Goal	Task	Hours per week	Notes
Total			
MONEY/ MATERIAL NEEDS			
Total			
WHOLE PERSON			
Total			
Total of Totals			

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 7

Collette's Weekly Schedule

This is Collette's first draft at scheduling the things she's budgeted. Note she "found" extra time for her activism and still maintained a well-rounded, healthy life.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Sunday</th><th>Monday</th><th>Tuesday</th><th>Wednesday</th><th>Thursday</th><th>Friday</th><th>Saturday</th></tr>
<tr><td>6:30 am</td><td></td><td colspan="5" rowspan="3">Morning grooming and breakfast with kids</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7:00 am</td><td rowspan="3">Jog with dog</td><td rowspan="3">Jog with dog</td></tr>
<tr><td>7:30 am</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:00 am</td><td rowspan="2">Morning grooming & breakfast</td><td colspan="5">Commute and begin work</td><td rowspan="2">Morning grooming & breakfast</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:30 am</td><td colspan="5" rowspan="9">Work</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:00 am</td><td rowspan="2">Play with kids</td><td rowspan="2">Play with kids</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:30 am</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:00 am</td><td rowspan="4">Gardening</td><td rowspan="9">Cleaning, shopping, laundry, maintenance, lunch</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:30 am</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:00 am</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:30 am</td></tr>
<tr><td>12:00 pm</td><td rowspan="4">Visit mom for lunch</td><td colspan="5">Lunch and research for H&S Cttee/speak to members</td></tr>
<tr><td>12:30 pm</td><td colspan="5" rowspan="8">Work</td></tr>
<tr><td>1:00 pm</td></tr>
<tr><td>1:30 pm</td></tr>
<tr><td>2:00 pm</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2:30 pm</td><td rowspan="2">Practice Guitar</td></tr>
<tr><td>3:00 pm</td></tr>
<tr><td>3:30 pm</td><td rowspan="3">ACTIVISM</td></tr>
<tr><td>4:00 pm</td></tr>
<tr><td>4:30 pm</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>5:00 pm</td><td rowspan="4">Local meeting or H&S meeting or commute and dinner</td><td colspan="4">Commute and Dinner</td><td rowspan="5">Date Night</td></tr>
<tr><td>5:30 pm</td><td rowspan="4">TIME WITH FAMILY</td></tr>
<tr><td>6:00 pm</td><td colspan="4">Jog with dog</td></tr>
<tr><td>6:30 pm</td><td></td><td></td><td>Practice guitar</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7:00 pm</td><td colspan="5">Homework and playing with kids</td></tr>
<tr><td>7:30 pm</td><td></td><td>Practice Guitar</td><td>Guitar Lesson</td><td>Practice Guitar</td><td>Visit Mom</td><td>Practice guitar</td></tr>
</table>

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 pm		ACTIVISM		ACTIVISM			
8:30 pm							
9:00 pm		Bedtime for kids		Bedtime for kids		Bedtime for kids	Bedtime for kids
9:30 pm							
10:00 pm	Evening grooming and bed by 10:30 pm						

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 8

Participant's Weekly Schedule

This is your opportunity to practice scheduling the tasks you identified in Document 6, "Participant's Budget".

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

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Collette's Time Tracking Form

Note: Collette fills this in as the week passes. Today is Wednesday, so she knows what she's been able to do thus far. She keeps track in 15 minute allotments.

		Day of the Week	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
		Wake Up	9am	9am	6:30 am	7:00 am				
Category or Goal	**Task**	**Hours per week**								
ACTIVISM										
Local	Monthly meeting	.5			2					
H&S Cttee	Ergonomics cttee	1								
	Research	2		1		.25				
	Speaking to members	1.5			.25					
Total		5.0								
HEALTH AND FITNESS/ SELF-CARE										
Exercise	Jogging	6	1							
Self-care	Morning grooming and breakfast	5	1	1	1	1				
	Dinners	5	1		1					
	Evening grooming	3.5	.5	.5	.5					
Household Shopping	Cleaning, shopping, laundry, maintenance	6.5		2						
Paying bills		.5								
Total		26.5								

		Day of the Week	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
		Wake Up	9am	9am	6:30 am	7:00 am				
Category or Goal	**Task**	**Hours per week**								
RELATIONSHIPS										
Spouse	Date night, plus 1 hour/day	9.5	4		1					
Children	Morning	3.5	.5	.5	.5					
	Homework	4		1	.5	.5				
	Playtime	6	1							
	Bedtime	3.5		.5	.5	.5				
Dog	Playing	3			.25					
Family	Mom	4		2						
Total		33.5								
MONEY/ MATERIAL NEEDS										
Job	Work	40			8	8				
	Commute	2.5			.5	.5				
	Work at home	0								
Total		42.5								
WHOLE PERSON										
Music Lessons	Guitar	1								
Practice	Guitar	3.5								
Gardening		4		4						
Total		8.5								
Total of Totals		116.0								

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 10

Participant's Time Tracking Form

	Day of the Week		Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
	Wake Up									
Category or Goal	**Task**	**Hours per week**								
ACTIVISM										
Total										
HEALTH AND FITNESS/ SELF-CARE										
Total										

	Day of the Week		Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
	Wake Up									
Category or Goal	**Task**	**Hours per week**								
RELATIONSHIPS										
Total										
MONEY/ MATERIAL NEEDS										
Total										

		Day of the Week	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
		Wake Up								
Category or Goal	**Task**	**Hours per week**								
WHOLE PERSON										
Total										
Total of Totals										

Time Management Tips

1. **Learn to Discard**
   Label things “important” or “not important”. Discard the unimportant things when you have to make choices. Ask yourself: Is it better to occasionally discard something “sort of” important than to spend your whole life doing stuff you don’t really need to do?

2. **Learn to Delegate**
   Don’t fall into these traps:
   - It’s easier for me to just do the thing myself.
   - No one can do as good a job as I can.
   - It will take less time to do it myself than to explain to some else how to do it.
   - I don’t have the time to delegate.

   Delegate whenever you can, to as many people as you can and remember to help out others who are trying to delegate – when you can.

3. **Say “no”**
   If you can’t or don’t want to actually say the word, try to:
   - Postpone – I can’t do that now, maybe next month.
   - Swap – I’m really busy right now, but if you could help me with my project, I could help you with yours.
   - Delegate – You know, I would love to help you out, but kind of work really isn’t my strong point. Have you asked Susan? She’s really good at it.
   - Punt – I can’t do the whole project for you, but I’d be happy to make a few calls.

4. **Remember that “no” is a sentence**
   You don’t have to justify your response.

5. **Strive first for effectiveness; then efficiency**
   Focus on doing the right things and doing them well, and when you are confident you are doing them well, then focus on doing things quickly.

6. **Develop an intolerance of wasting time**
   Once you’ve figured out what is important to you, focus on doing these things. Aggressively discard the things that pull you away from what you want to be doing.

7. **Defend your schedule against “time thieves” and “time nibblers”**
   Watch out for people and activities that “just take a bit of time”. Remember that 15 minutes is a long time!

8. **Make sure technology works with, not against, you**
   Make sure your computer and the other technology you use does what you need it to do. If you're spending your time making it work – spend some time getting something that does work.

9. **Manage your personal time as well as your activist time**
   Burned out activists do not save the world. Make sure you are spending your personal time in a way that keeps you healthy, fit and happy.

10. **Organize your physical environments**
    Just like your technology should contribute to what you want to do, make sure your physical environments do the same (e.g., your local office). Can you find things? Is it well lit? Is it comfortable and efficient?

11. **Make decisions**
    Gather the information you need and make your decision. Dithering is a major time waster.

12. **Don't let others stop you from managing your time.**
    You'll know you're doing your time management correctly when you start annoying or disappointing people. Some people might engage in behaviour to make you stop. Stay focused on the priorities you have chosen.

Session 3LCAskills-3, Document 12

Session Evaluation

1. Session name:

2. Facilitator's name:

3. Was the material provided clear?

4. Was the material provided useful?

5. Were the discussions helpful?

6. Were the discussions on topic?

7. Did the facilitator help the group move through the material?

8. Overall, how would you rate this session?

_____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Needs improvement Okay Excellent!

Comments: