The Importance of Setting Priorities

As a working adult, you have to juggle multiple responsibilities, including meeting deadlines, arranging childcare, strengthening your relationship with your spouse and taking care of your personal need for leisure and relaxation. Some people breeze through many busy days as if they had a strong, steady wind in their sails. Others feel hopelessly caught in swirling eddies of confusion.

To be successful managing multiple work and family demands, you must identify your long-term goals and objectives: then you can set daily priorities.

Make a “to-do” list of the five most important tasks for the next day. Consider your most pressing work, family and personal time commitments. On busy days, you may need to compromise. If your sales report is due the next day, you may have to send your daughter to her scout meeting with store-bought instead of homemade cookies. Don’t forget to schedule leisure time for yourself and private time with your spouse and children.

Setting Priorities:

First, list everything you need to do. Next, prioritize the items on your list. After you’ve listed your tasks, use the ABC method to determine your priorities. As you assign a priority to each item, ask yourself:

- Why am I doing this?
- How does this relate to my goals and objectives?
- How urgent is this task?
- Can anyone else do it?

A. “Must-Do” Items
These essential items often include crucial deadlines, opportunities for success or promotion, management directives or customer requests.

B. “Should-Do” Items
These are items of medium value which do not have critical deadlines. These tasks may contribute to improved performance, but they usually can be postponed temporarily, if necessary.

C. “Nice-to-Do” Items
These items could be eliminated, postponed or scheduled for slower periods.
Items on your A, B and C lists may shift positions over time. Deadlines come and go and important new projects land on your desk. It’s important to review your priority list weekly to reflect the changing demands on your time.

For additional assistance contact your E⁴ Health program: LifeScope, LifeChoice or LifeLync.

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