



LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 1: Importance of Free and Leisure Time

Leisure can be healthy, or unhealthy, based on a person's choices. It also can be engaging or uninteresting and even boring. What a person does or does not do in their free time matters! Students will discuss why and how they can begin to take responsibility for their actions in order to take charge of their leisure time experiences and activities so that they can have more satisfying free time.

Student Goals

1. To begin to understand the importance of doing healthy things during leisure time in daily life.
2. To understand the difference between free time and leisure time.
3. To analyze the kinds of free time activities they do and the benefits they get from their participation.
4. To instill a sense of responsibility for leisure activity choices.

Students will Think About

1. How is what I do in free time different from what I do in leisure time?
2. Why is leisure time important?
3. What do I do in my leisure time?

Subtopics

1. Comparing terms: free time and leisure time
2. Exploring time spent and activities done in free and leisure time

Activity

1. Exploring My Free Time Worksheet

Materials

- [TW teacher manual pages 9-13](#)
- Learning Lifelong Leisure Skills (Transparency 1, Teacher Manual)
- [TimeWise Student Workbook](#) page 4 (Exploring My Free Time), but leaving column 5 blank for the time being
- Post-it notes

Supplemental Materials

- You may wish to use the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 24), <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
 - Live Your Why (LYW) website: <https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/liveyourwhy/middlehighschoolactivityworksheets/>
 - Article: Teens and Play- What it looks like- benefits and how parents (and educators) can support kids-<https://www.parents.com/teens-and-play-what-it-looks-like-benefits-and-how-parents-can-support-their-kids-6890227>
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Subtopic 1: Comparing Terms--Free and Leisure Time

The main purpose for introducing this concept is to focus on how leisure can be healthy and provide benefits, and be enjoyable, satisfying, and often meaningful. Free time is often associated with being bored, having nothing to do, or having to do chores or other obligations.

Example Conversation Starters

- What was the favorite thing you did over the summer (or weekend, or another time period that makes sense) and why was it your favorite?
- How did you feel when you were doing your favorite activity?
- How do you feel when you are doing something you don't really like to do?

Think about how much free time you had over the summer (or weekend, or...). These Live TimeWise sessions are going to help us all think about what we do in our free or leisure time. What do we mean by free time? By leisure time?

- What exactly is free time? What about leisure time?
- How do you feel during your free time and leisure time?
- Is free time always enjoyable? satisfying?

Suggestions for Questions and Comments Regarding Comparing Terms (use overhead slide if desired)

When a person doesn't have to do something like school, homework, or chores, they have free time, which is an opportunity to choose something to do that they enjoy and that balances out other obligations!

But sometimes that is a challenge because someone may not know what to do. So, maybe they sleep, eat, look at screens, or just hang out and do nothing. On the other hand, people can use that free time in ways that are fun, exciting, creative, physically active, and social; as well they can learn skills or knowledge or help others. There are many benefits to be gained through healthy use of free time, which will be discussed in the next session. The difference between free and leisure time is a nuanced discussion

because both free time and leisure time can be associated with either positive or negative emotions and outcomes.

As seen in the slide, there is an overlap between the two, and often people use the words interchangeably, as we sometimes do.

Most people believe that leisure is not only how one spends time, but is a state of mind that comes from a person freely choosing to do what give them pleasure, fun, and/or satisfaction.

A lot of people think leisure means you're relaxing and doing nothing. And of course, there is nothing wrong with that! We all need to have time to relax and do nothing. That can be an important way to relieve stress. But having nothing to do is also related to being bored and thinking that nothing is interesting, or it is "stupid" and you don't like it.

The important point regarding leisure is that leisure is most enjoyable and satisfying if you are doing something (or nothing but relaxing) because you **CHOSE** to do it and you are not doing it because you have to or you are doing it to please someone else.



Subtopic 2: Exploring My Free Time

Example Conversation Starters

How much free time do you think you have during the day or during the week? (Middle school students typically have 5 ½ to 6 hours a day of free or leisure time.)

Which would you rather do, and why?

- Play soccer with a friend, read alone, or watch TV?
- Play with a pet, do a craft or hobby, or swim at the pool?
- Play computer games, visit your grandparents, or walk in the woods?
- If you had 2 hours a day to do anything you wanted to do, what would you do?
- If you had a whole day to do anything you wanted, what would you do?

Activity 1: Exploring My Free Time Worksheet

Exploring My Free Time

Directions: In column 1 list things you do with your free time after school and on weekends. In column 2 indicate how much time you spend at each activity. In column 3 put a + if you like the activity or a - if you dislike the activity. In column 4 put a * by the activities you consider leisure activities. Don't complete column 5 until your teacher tells you to.

1	2	3	4	5	Benefits
Activities I do on a regular basis	Time I spend at this activity 1 2 3 4 5 A little Some A lot	Like + Dislike -	Leisure activities		
					Physical: Good for my body, healthy.
					Social: Time with friends, family or new people.
					Mental: Challenging myself intellectually.
					Future: Working toward goals—school and career.
					Psychological: Feeling good about myself, stress release.
					Spiritual: In touch with my beliefs, gives my life meaning.
					Natural: Appreciating nature, animals and the environment.
					Creative: Building, drawing, writing or creating something.
					Community: Helping people, animals, the community or the environment.

The purpose of this worksheet is to give the students a tool to help them more critically think about how they spend their time.

Have students complete columns 1 through 4 on the “Exploring My Free Time” worksheet (p. 4 in the Student Book). Have them follow the directions to complete columns 1 and 2 for the activities you do on a typical day (what you do most days of the week or your “regular” activities and then for your favorite activities. (I.e., Tell them to leave column 3 blank for now.)

For example, ask for the reasons they engage in the activities they listed. Which activities do they like the best. **Collect the worksheet to be used in a later discussion (which, depending on timing could be in this session or a later session).**

Possible Discussion Questions Using “Exploring My Free Time Worksheet”

Think about how you spend your time based on the worksheet.

- What activities do you spend the most time on?
- What are the activities they like the most?
- Which of the activities do they consider leisure?
- Do you have enough free time or leisure time in your life? Too little? Too much?
- Is leisure time always positive? Can there be negative activities in leisure time?
Provide examples (e.g., vandalism, substance abuse).

Summarize and Next Session

As you are beginning to learn, how we spend our time is very important in many ways. Of course the focus of these topics is on making sure you spend your free time in ways that are positive and give you good feelings...that is, spending free time in ways that give you pleasure, satisfaction, stress release, and so on is called leisure, or leisure time. We will continue discussing these things as we move forward.

Now that we have had a chance to learn about the different activities that we all like to do, it is also important to recognize the **benefits** that we get from the activities we participate in. We will discuss this in the next session and fill out column 5.



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Session 2: Benefits Associated with Healthy Leisure Time Use

There are many benefits associated with leisure activities. This session encourages students to identify what benefits they get and what they might need or want more of.

Student Goals

1. Students will begin to understand the possible types of benefits one can get from healthy leisure.
2. Students will analyze information from the Exploring My Free Time worksheet and identify which benefits they gain from what they do in their leisure.

Students will Think About

1. What benefits do I get from my leisure activities?
2. Which benefits do I need or want more of?

Materials

- TW teacher manual pages 14-18
- Leisure Time Benefits (Transparency 2, Teacher Manual)
- TW student book page 4 (Exploring My Free Time) which has partially been completed, page 5; (My Free Time Profile), pages 6-10 (TW Journal Page)

- Live TimeWise and Live Your Why can be used to support this lesson
- **In preparation for the next session** (see note at the end of this session in case this activity may not work for you):
 - TW teacher manual pages 14-18
 - (My Free Time Profile), pages 6-10 (TW Journal Page)
 - TimeWise Journal Analysis p. 12 (Student Book)

Activities

1. What are the Benefits?
2. Complete the Explore my Free Time worksheet (column 5)
3. Complete the My Free Time Profile worksheet

Benefits of Leisure Activities

Example Conversation Starters

Use these conversation starters as a way for students to start thinking about benefits they get from their activities.

- What would someone learn about you if they saw you engaged in your favorite leisure/free time activity?
- If you were having a bad day, which leisure/free time activity would you want to participate in, and why?
- Would you rather create a piece of art or volunteer at the animal shelter? Why?
- Would you rather hang out with your friends or learn to kayak? Why?

Benefits of Leisure Activities

- What do you think of when you hear the word benefit? What is a benefit? [*A benefit is something that produces good or helpful results or effects or that promotes well-being.*]
- What benefits do you get from being in school? [*learning skills, being with friends*]
- What about from riding a bike? [*transportation, physical activity, fresh air*]

- Does everybody get the same benefit from riding a bike? What about taking a hike in the woods? [*maybe, but different people may get different benefits from the same activity*]

Refer to the Leisure Time Benefits table and discuss briefly what each benefit means. Live TimeWise and Live Your Why can also be used to support this lesson.

Activity 1 (2 choices provided): What are the Benefits?

Not everyone gets the same benefit from the same activity. Someone might play a sport to get stronger (physical) whereas others might play to be with their friends (social). What benefits do you think these teens are getting in the picture. Would there be any negative feelings going on? Why and/or why not?

Take a look at provided picture (or choose another picture). Ask students to discuss the benefits each person might be getting from what they are doing.

Leisure Time Benefits

Transparency
2

Some benefits of healthy leisure activities:

- 
Physical: Good for your body, healthy.
- 
Social: Time spent with friends, family or meeting new people.
- 
Mental: Challenging intellectually, learning something for fun.
- 
Future: Working toward goals—school and career.
- 
Psychological: Feeling good about yourself; coping with life's challenges and stressors.
- 
Spiritual: Being in touch with your beliefs or other things that give life meaning and provide hope or a sense of purpose.
- 
Natural: Appreciating nature, animals and the environment.
- 
Creative: Building, drawing, writing or creating something.
- 
Community: Helping people, animals, the community or the environment.

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And/Or:

Divide students into teams of about 5. Toss a beanbag/ball to a team and they will draw the name of an activity “out of a hat” (or something similar). They will have 30 seconds to talk among themselves and identify as many benefits as they can for that activity. Then they will report to the group the benefits they came up with. That team will toss the beanbag/ball to another group, who will also draw an activity out of the hat. And so on.

Possible activities:

Walking the dog	Playing basketball
Bicycling	Watching a movie
Hiking	Martial arts (karate, etc.)
Playing chess	Playing a musical instrument
Dancing	Doing art work
Texting	Volunteer work
Playing soccer	Going to a museum
Reading	Gardening

Summarize

Live TimeWise activities focus on how to get the most benefits from your leisure time.

There are many possible benefits of healthy leisure activities.

The foundation of healthy leisure is characterized by healthy relationships, social interaction, and creative expression.

These are things that are actively engaging, such as engaging in physically and mentally active pursuits, and fostering connections with people and nature.

Activities that require less active engagement are important but not as important as those where your mind and/or body are actively engaged. Encourage developing a leisure lifestyle that gives students a variety of benefits.

Activities 2 and 3: Completing Exploring My Free Time Worksheet and My Free Time Profile Worksheet

Start by asking students to think about how much time they spend in each activity. What do they spend the most time in? The least time?

Now have students to complete column 5 in the worksheet, thinking about the benefits they get from each specific activity listed in column 1.

Discussion Questions

- *Which activities give you the most benefits?*
- *Were you surprised at what you do and what benefits you get?*
- *How much time do you spend on social media? Is it too much or too little? What benefits do you get?*
- *Does every person need all of the benefits listed?*
- *What benefits don't you get that you "should" or would like to get?*
- *How does someone get all of the benefits? [A variety and balance of activities, which will be discussed in another session]*
- *Does getting a benefit or two from what you do relate to whether or not you like the activity?*

Summarize

Now you have a general idea of how you spend your time, what benefits you get and how you feel when or after you do the activity. You have also thought about whether or not you have enough benefits. For example, maybe there are benefits you are not getting and would like to get. In the next sessions we will discuss getting a variety of benefits and the overall pattern of how we spend our time.

For the next session, ask them to complete the **TimeWise Journal** (pages 6-10 TW student book) and then complete the TW Journal Analysis on page 12 (TW student book). **Bring the completed Journal to the next session.**

Note: the TimeWise journal may not work in your situation. In that case, you may want to do something similar in the following session as a retrospective journal, focusing on a recent weekend and weekday.

Give students these directions for completing the TimeWise Journal:

- Write down what you did during each time slot.
- Why did you do what you did? I had to, I wanted to, I had nothing else to do, I had a purpose, or because of what others might think of me.
- How did you feel? Bored, interested, or some other feeling.

Exploring My Free Time

Directions: In column 1 list things you do with your free time after school and on weekends. In column 2 indicate how much time you spend at each activity. In column 3 put a + if you like the activity or a - if you dislike the activity. In column 4 put a + by the activities you consider leisure activities. Don't complete column 5 until your teacher tells you to.

1	2	3	4	5
Activities I do on a regular basis	Time I spend at this activity 1 2 3 4 5 A little Some A lot	Like + Dislike -	Leisure activities	Benefits
				Physical: Good for my body, healthy.
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				Future: Working toward goals—school and career.
				Psychological: Feeling good about myself, stress release.
				Spiritual: In touch with my beliefs; gives my life meaning.
				Natural: Appreciating nature, animals and the environment.
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				Community: Helping people, animals, the community or the environment.



My Free Time Profile

Directions: Use your answers from *Exploring My Free Time* activity sheet and follow the step-by-step instructions to complete this activity sheet.

Step 1

List the leisure activities you do most often and the number of benefits you get from each activity. Then use your total benefits score to evaluate your leisure time.

The 3 leisure activities I do most:

Number of benefits:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Total benefits = _____

Evaluation

8-10 benefits = Great! You have an excellent balance of leisure time activities.

6-7 benefits = Way to go! You have a healthy number of leisure time activities.

4-5 benefits = Good! But look for activities that will give you additional benefits.

0-3 benefits = Seriously consider finding leisure activities that will give you more benefits.

Step 2

Look at column 5 on the *Exploring My Free Time* activity sheet on page 4. Total the number of times you checked each of these benefits.

 Physical _____

 Future _____

 Natural _____

 Social _____

 Psychological _____

 Creative _____

 Mental _____

 Spiritual _____

 Community _____

Step 3

List the benefits you're missing or would like to increase.



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Session 3: Patterns and Motivation in Free and Leisure Time

Students continue to identify daily and weekly time use patterns and to explore leisure activity preferences. They will be introduced to the concept of motivation in order to start thinking about how why they do something in their free time is associated with how they feel.

For this session students will have completed My Free Time Profile and TimeWise Journal Analysis (pages 6-10 and p. 12 Student Book). This session will discuss results from these analyses and focus on the idea of motivation.

If students did not complete the TimeWise Journal, ask them to fill out the journal in the current session as best they can for the past 2 or 3 days and use that to discuss the concepts.

Notes:

- Our research indicates that the topics of motivation and of boredom are two very important concepts for students to learn and grapple with.
- Motivation (and boredom) is a dense and complex topic. We've offered a number of ways you can explore it, or use them all over a period of time.
- There is a related Session 4 that further explores activity interests, motivation, and benefits.
- Also see Additional Possible Discussion Points at the end of this document.

Student Goals

1. To develop a more critical understanding of how they spend their leisure time.
2. Begin to understand the concept of motivation as it relates to how they spend their time.
3. Begin to understand how motivation for an activity is associated with being bored or interested.

Students will Think About

1. What are the five types of motivation?
2. How does why I do an activity have an effect on how I feel about my activities and what I get out of them?

Subtopics

1. How I spend my time and why do I do it?
2. Identifying types of motivation

Materials

- TW teacher manual pages 19-25
- My Free Time Profile, pages 6-10 TW Journal Page
- TimeWise Journal Analysis (p. 12 Student Book)
- Completed TW Journal from previous session or 2-3 day retrospective journal done in class
- Common Motivations (Transparency 3, Teacher Manual)
- Motivation scenarios (Master 2, Teacher Manual)
- Also see Additional Possible Discussion Points at the end of this document

Activities

1. TimeWise Journal Analysis (p.12 Student Book)
2. Identify the Motivation (using scenarios)

TimeWise Journal

Directions: Complete one journal page each day for 4 days. Record everything you do all day long beginning Friday morning and ending Monday night. You don't have to write on every line. If an activity takes longer than 15 minutes, block off how much time it took. (See the Sample below.)

In the "Why" column write the letter that best matches why you did each activity.

H (Had to)—Someone expected you to do the activity.

W (Wanted to)—You did the activity because you wanted to.

N (Nothing else to do)—You were only doing this activity because you had nothing else to do.

P (For a purpose)—You wanted to do the activity to benefit your future or help meet a goal.

O (What others think)—You wanted to do the activity for what others would think of you.

In the "I felt" column, write the letter that best matches how you were feeling while you did the activity.

B (Bored)—You were bored with the activity.

I (Interested)—You were interested in what you were doing.

O (Other)—You experienced a different feeling than bored or interested.

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TimeWise Journal Page

Why?
(H) Had to **(W)** Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do **(P)** For a purpose
(O) What others think

How did you feel?
(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Sample Page

Morning		Afternoon		Evening			
Time	Activity	Why?	I felt	Time	Activity	Why?	I felt
7:00				12:15			
7:15				12:30	school	HP	I
7:30	showered/dressed	HO	O	12:45			
7:45	ate breakfast	W	O	1:00			
8:00	walked to school	H	O	1:15			
8:15				1:30			
8:30	school	HP	I	1:45			
8:45				2:00			
9:00				2:15			
9:15				2:30			
9:30				2:45			
9:45				3:00	walked home	H	O
10:00				3:15			
10:15				3:30	practiced guitar	WP	I
10:30				3:45			
10:45				4:00			
11:00				4:15			
11:15				4:30	walked the dog	HW	I
11:30				4:45			
11:45				5:00			
12:00	ate lunch with friends	WO	I				
				5:15	read magazine	W	I
				5:30			
				5:45			
				6:00	ate dinner	W	O
				6:15			
				6:30	washed dishes	H	B
				6:45	other chores	H	O
				7:00	talked on phone	W	I
				7:15			
				7:30	homework	HP	BI
				7:45			
				8:00			
				8:15			
				8:30			
				8:45			
				9:00	watched TV	N	B
				9:15			
				9:30			
				9:45			
				10:00			

Day of Week Monday

TimeWise Journal Analysis

Directions: Review your *TimeWise Journal Pages* and answer the questions.

How many times did I do things
because I **had to**? _____

How did I **feel** about those activities?

How many times did I do things
because I **wanted to** do them? _____

How did I **feel** about those activities?

How many times did I do things
because I had **nothing else to do**? _____

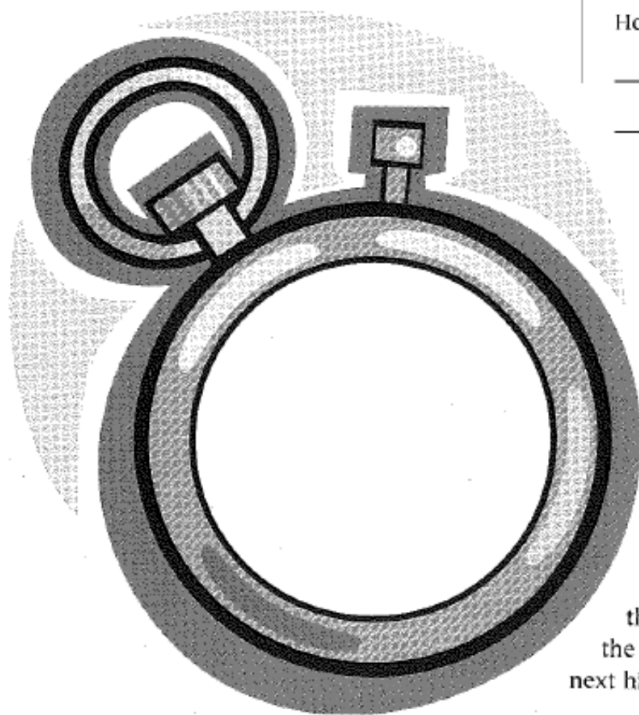
How did I **feel** about those activities?

How many times did I do things
for a purpose (to achieve a goal)? _____

How did I **feel** about those activities?

How many times did I do things
because of **what others might think**? _____

How did I **feel** about those activities?



My Motivation Pattern

Create a pie chart inside the stop watch that shows how much time you spend doing things for each reason (had to, wanted to, had nothing else to do, for a purpose or because of what others might think).

The biggest piece of the pie should go to the reason that has the highest number, the next biggest piece of the pie goes to the next highest number, and so on.

Subtopic 1: How I Spend My Time and Why Do I Do It?

Example Conversation Starters

- What is the main motivation for eating?
- What about using social media? You might have several different reasons for using social media. What are they?

Recognizing patterns in how we spend our time is helpful to understanding how we sometimes feel positive and sometimes unhappy about what we do in free time.

Patterns give us some ideas of what types of changes we can make to have better, more satisfying and healthy free time.

Every person has different reasons (motivations) for doing things. We will talk about motivations in more detail in the next session because there are often multiple reasons for doing something. For now we will keep it simple and just talk about the main reason we do things.

Just like benefits, not everyone does the same activity for the same reason (or get the same benefits).

Activity 1: Complete TimeWise Journal Analysis (page 12 in student book).

Discussion Questions:

- Were you surprised at how you spend your time and why?
- What about how you felt during the activity? Were you more bored or more interested in what you were doing?
- What is the relationship between motivation and feelings in an activity?
- How do you feel about the amount of free time and leisure time you have during the day or week?
- How many times did you do something because you had to? Wanted to? Had nothing else to do?
- Think about how often you typically do something because you have to. How do you generally feel about that?

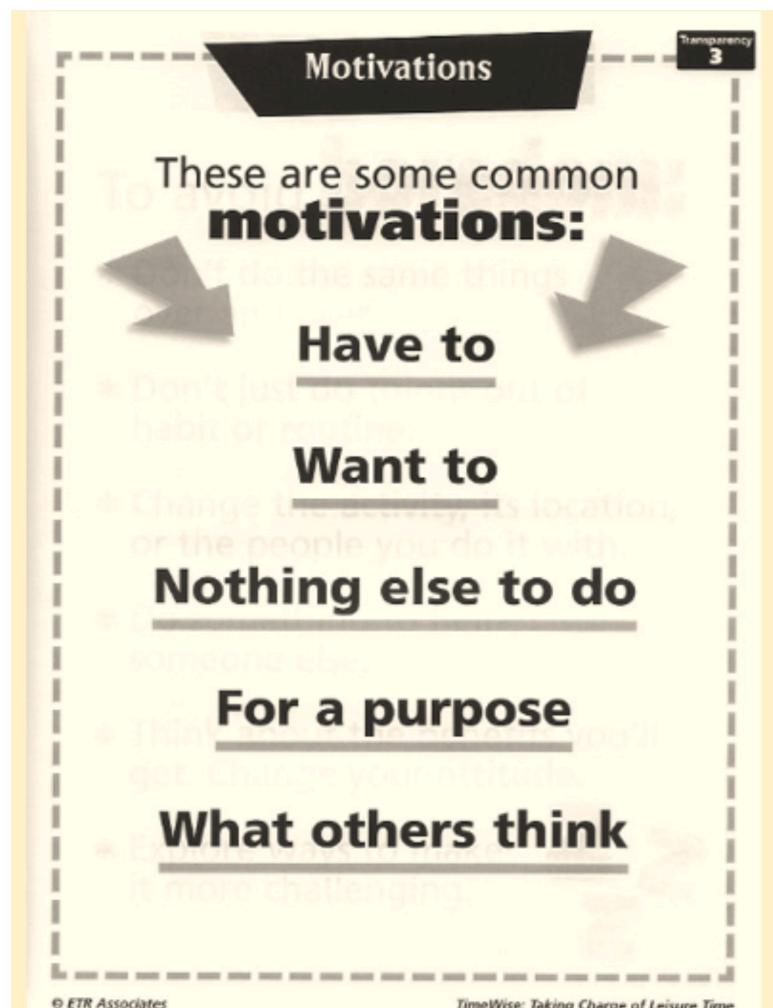
Subtopic 2: Identifying Types of Motivation

Example Conversation Starters

- What is the relationship between motivation and feelings in an activity?
- How about when you are the one who chooses what you do? How does that affect how you feel?
- When is it a good thing when you have to do something that you didn't choose? How do you think the community or even your family would function if you could always do just what you wanted to?

Motivation refers to why you do what you do. Every person has different motivations for doing things and not everyone does the same activity for the same reason. Just like different people get different benefits from doing the same activity.

You've already been introduced to the five common motivations. Use a form of Transparency 3, Common Motivations.



Activity 2: Identifying the Motivation

Ask for volunteers to read one of the following motivation scenarios. Ask students to identify the motivation associated with each scenario. Use the following discussion ideas to discuss each scenario

Motivation Scenarios

Master 2

Directions: Copy and cut apart the scenarios. Distribute to students and have them read the scenario aloud and decide which type of motivation is happening.

My mom said I had to clean up my room if I wanted to go to the park.

My dad loves basketball, and he wants me to be the best. I practice 2 hours every day.

I'm really excited about seeing the movie with my friend this weekend.

This evening I set aside an hour to finish the book I'm reading. It's really good and it's hard to put it down.

When I came home from school it was cold outside, so I just watched TV, even though there was nothing on.

My friends and I hung out at the mall today even though we knew it would be boring.

No, I can't come over today because I'm going to practice my flute for the recital on Sunday.

I'm working on a painting for the art show at school.

My friend challenged me to do a back flip on my roller blades. Everyone was watching—I didn't want to look like a wimp.

A lot of my friends are on the football team. I don't really like sports but I want to be with my friends and be cool like the football players.

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TimeWise: Taking Charge of Leisure Time

Let's dig a little further. [Note: The "academic or theoretical" terms are also included, more for your benefit than the students.]

Suggested talking points (see also material at the end of these bulleted points):

- Sometimes we do things because we have to do them...that is, we are told that we must. This type of motivation is called **"Have To or Extrinsic Motivation."** It happens when parents or coaches or teachers or other adults make you do something. If your parents made you play the drums, for example, and you really didn't want to, you would have the "I have to" type of motivation. In this case you don't get as many benefits as you could. But, sometimes, this type of motivation is important because it can get you involved in something you would have never tried, and you end up really loving it.
- Sometimes we do things completely because we want to. We can think of this type of motivation as **"Want To or Intrinsic Motivation."** You do things just for you. Sometimes, this also means doing things because it gives you a lot of pleasure to do something for someone else, or your community. You don't do it for any other reason except you WANT TO. You don't expect anything in return.
- This kind of motivation happens when you just don't know what to do, there is nothing else to do, and you don't really care. This type of motivation is called **"Nothing Else to Do or Amotivation"**. This happens to us all, but if it happens too often to you, it is not very good. The "nothing else to do" motivation can lead to unhealthy things like using drugs and alcohol. It can make you very unhappy because you are just bored and miserable all the time.
- Sometimes we do things because we know they will be good for us. We choose to do them, but we do the activities for a purpose...not just because we love to do them. This kind of reason is called **"For a Purpose or Identified Motivation."** These are activities that we choose to do, and the activities lead to something. For example, when you practice for a sport, you are practicing so that you will be good in the game on Saturday or so that you will make the high school team and maybe someday get a sports scholarship. Other examples include: practicing your flute for the recital next weekend, doing your chores so that you will become more responsible, and studying for a test so that you will do well in the class.
- Sometimes we do things that makes us look good and it impresses other people. Another reason we might do something is because we want to create an image of ourselves so that people will think about us in a certain way. This type of motivation is called **"What Others Will Think or Introjected Motivation"**. When we are motivated to look good, we don't choose the activity because we want to do it but more so because of some **type of pressure**. We could also be doing

something because the media (TV, radio, magazines) make it look exciting and glamorous. For example:

- We feel we should (sometimes my friends do what I want to, so I should do what they want to now).
- We feel guilty if we don't do it (my friend's or my mom's feelings would be hurt if I didn't go shopping with her).
- We think our friends won't like us if we don't do the activity (if I don't play basketball with my friends, they'll think I'm really boring).
- We want to create an image of ourselves so that other people think of us in a certain way (my friends will think I'm really cool if I do it).
- For What Other Will Think is a tricky kind of motivation. When do you think this might be a good form of motivation? [When friends, family, valued adults encourage us to do something that we don't think we would be good at or are afraid to try.]

Summarize

So far you've been analyzing how you spend your free time, what benefits you get from it, and your motivation for doing various activities. These are all complex issues and they all affect each other.

One of the main reasons of these sessions is to help you think about why you do what you do in your free time, what changes you might want to make, and think about how your motivation affects how you feel. As you learn more, you may want to start taking more responsibility for your own actions and activities.

Taking more and more responsibility for the decisions you make in your leisure time will contribute to your health and well-being, as well as help you avoid getting into risky situations. We'll discuss that more in later sessions.

Additional Possible Discussion Points

- ***What would it be like if you always did things in your free time because you had to?***

How would that feel? People value their free time because it is the time in the day when they can choose to do things they like to do, either alone or with their friends and family. However, free choice comes with responsibility. Think about what it would be like if everything you did was “for me.” How do you think your friends and family would feel about you?

Debriefing Points: It is selfish and not responsible if you always do things only because you want to. For one thing, we live in families and have obligations to parents and siblings. And, developing and keeping friends means that you can’t always do what you want to. We also have obligations to our community. So, our connections with other people mean that we have to compromise and sometimes there are some things that we have to do.

But, the more you can do things because they connect with your beliefs and values and you enjoy them, the more benefits you will get from your leisure time. These leisure activities will also help you keep up your interest so things don’t get boring.

- ***What would it be like if you did everything because of what others would think of you?***

Debriefing Points: Doing things just to please other people, like your friends, or doing things to create an image of yourself to be popular, can get you into a lot of trouble. Therefore your leisure time can become very stressful and create dilemmas for you.

The “for what others think” motivation is complicated because there can be some real problems associated with this type of motivation. If we spend a lot of time always doing what our friends want to do, we may not be taking very good care of ourselves and being honest about what we really want to do and value. Being worried about what people think can make it hard to really enjoy and get the most out of your leisure time.

Many times, young people think that they are making their own decisions and choosing to do things like smoke cigarettes, take drugs and drink alcohol. But if they would really analyze why they are doing those things, they would see that they are motivated by wanting to impress or please their friends, or become popular with another group of friends.

There are a lot of ways to spend your leisure time to please your friends and to create an image of yourself that are healthy, and we'll be talking about those next week. Remember, if we are doing things with a purpose or because we want to, we often find that we tend to be more interested in what we are doing and we get more benefits.

- ***Now think about what it would be like to feel “not very interested” all of the time in your leisure? How do you think people would feel?***

Debriefing Points: Unfortunately, many people feel “disinterested” during a lot of their free and leisure time. If that is the case, we need to think seriously about our reasons and that feeling of being disinterested. The feeling of disinterest should be a signal that you are not getting the most out of your free time.

Final Summary Statement: Being unmotivated, feeling disinterested, or doing things to please your friends can be a pathway to making very unhealthy choices. Remember, unhealthy choices can result from how you are feeling, whether it is bored, stressed or anxious about fitting in. When we talk with students about smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs, they often say they do it because they are bored or want to fit in with their friends. Always ask yourself – why am I doing this? It is a good way to check in on your motivations.



A Program of the Lamoille Family Center

LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 4: Beating Boredom and Interest Development

If someone is bored or not interested in what they are doing, they are not getting much, if anything, out of the experience. That is especially a problem when you are bored in leisure, because leisure time is supposed to be a good experience, whether it is fun, enjoyable, relaxing, stimulating, and/or meaningful.

Being frequently bored in leisure can lead to sitting around too much, too much screen time, too little physical activity, overeating, using drugs and alcohol, or causing property damage.

Student Goals

1. Identify and understand aspects of boredom and interest.
2. Understand unhealthy consequences of boredom.
3. Learn ways to turn a boring situation into something interesting.

Students will Think About

1. What makes something boring?
2. What makes something interesting?
3. How to develop new interests.
4. How can they change a boring situation into an interesting situation?

Subtopics

1. Understanding concepts of boring and interesting
2. Developing new interests

Activity

1. Experiencing boredom
2. What Makes Something Boring or Interesting?

Materials

- Avoiding Boredom and Becoming Interested (Transparencies 4-5, Teacher Manual)
- TW student book page 17 (What Makes Something Boring or Interesting), page 18 (New Interest Inventory), page 19 (Narrowing it Down),
- TW Teacher Manual pages 31-39

Subtopic 1: Understanding concepts of boring and interesting

Having a high level of interest in an activity helps you get more healthy benefits. It is important to have interests because that gives you something meaningful and worthwhile to do in your free time, and helps you avoid unhealthy things such as sitting around too much, overeating, using drugs and alcohol, and just getting into trouble. Many studies have shown that kids who are bored tend to use more drugs and alcohol and do more vandalism than kids who are not bored. That is why we want to help you learn how to avoid boredom and develop your interests.

Boredom can also be seen as a sign that you need to change what you are doing. People who are more motivated by knowing what they like to do or doing things for a purpose (as opposed to always waiting for someone else to guide them) are more likely to be able find ways to make a situation more interesting or change what they are doing.

Activity 1: Experiencing Boredom

Have students put away everything, including cell phones, pencils, paper, books, etc. Have them sit still with their own thoughts for xx minutes (10 if you have the time).

- How would you describe this experience?
- What did you think about?
- Was anyone relaxed?
- Was anyone stressed?

Discuss

Recall that in your TimeWise journals you indicated times when you were bored and when you were interested in what you were doing.

When you indicated you were bored, how would you describe those experiences. Ask for students to provide specific examples if they can remember.

If you want to learn how to not be bored, however, first you need to figure out what makes something boring or interesting to you.

What makes something boring? What makes something interesting?

Sometimes it is hard to tell, isn't it? Because sometimes the same activity can be boring and sometimes it can be interesting.

Activity 2: What Makes Something Boring or Interesting?

Using the worksheet "What Makes Something Boring or Interesting" (below) or on another sheet of paper, have students interview a partner and list 3 activities the partner found boring (in their journals) or other activities they find boring and 3 activities they found interesting. Beside each activity indicate why they found the activities boring or interesting.

What Makes Something Boring or Interesting?

Directions: Interview a partner to find out 3 activities he or she found boring and why, and 3 activities he or she found interesting and why. Then, with your same partner, brainstorm a list of ways to avoid becoming bored and a list of ways to become more interested in things.

What makes something boring?

- It's the same thing over and over.
- You don't know what else to do.
- Nothing ever changes.
- It's too easy and there's no challenge.
- It's easy to keep doing the same things and hard to be motivated to do something else.
- You're waiting for something or someone.



My **partner's**
boring activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What made these activities
boring?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



My **partner's**
interesting activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What made these activities
interesting?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes something interesting?

- You really like to do it.
- You feel good about yourself when you do it.
- It's fun.
- There's the right amount of challenge (not too hard, not too easy).
- It matches your personality and helps you express who you are.



Ways to avoid becoming
bored:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Ways to become more
interested in things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write the following on the board or on an overhead (or whatever works for you). These are things that people have identified as common reasons things are boring or interesting.

Boring

- It's the same thing over and over.
- Nothing ever changes.
- It is too easy and there are no challenges.
- It is easier to keep doing the same thing and it is harder to be motivated to do something else.
- You don't know what else to do.

Interesting

- You really like to do it.
- You feel good about yourself when you do it.
- It's fun.
- There is the right amount of challenge...it's not too easy and not too hard.
- It matches your personality and helps you express who you are.

Think about how you tell if you are going to become bored? What are the signs? It is important to tune in to your feelings and recognize when you might becoming bored so that you can escape boredom and turn the situation into something better and maybe even interesting.

Show and discuss the following two overheads (Transparencies 4 and 5).

Avoiding Boredom

To avoid **boredom:**

- * Don't do the same things over and over.
- * Don't just do things out of habit or routine.
- * Change the activity, its location, or the people you do it with.
- * Do something to help someone else.
- * Think about the benefits you'll get. Change your attitude.
- * Explore ways to make it more challenging.



Becoming Interested

Transparency
5

To become interested in things:

- * Try something new.
- * Plan for positive experiences.
- * Keep working to improve at things you're already good at.
- * Learn a new skill.
- * Practice to get better.
- * Remind yourself of the benefits of your activities.
- * Increase your knowledge:
 - Find someone who can teach you more.
 - Read about your activity in a magazine or on the Internet.
- * Join a group of people with similar interests.
- * Stick with it.

Subtopic 2: Developing New Interests

Many of us, including myself, would like to find new interests and activities to make our lives more well-rounded or because we feel we are lacking something in our lives. In a previous session you did the Tic-Tac-Toe activity and learned about some of the interests of your classmates. This next activity will hopefully give you some ideas about new activities or interests you could work on.

As you consider which interests you might want to develop, consider the following:

- What are you good at?
- What do you want to be better at?
- What do you want to learn?
- What do you want to contribute to your family, your community, the world?

Activity 3: Leisure Interest Inventory

Have students look over a list of various types of recreational/leisure/sport activities. Options for finding interest inventories: Live Your Why website, TimeWise student book page 18 (some modification may be needed to update the list and make it more appropriate for the community you are in, perhaps add crochet, ice hockey, field hockey, lacrosse, kayaking, knitting, overnight camp, roller derby, roller skating, rugby, sports camp, surfing, skiing, snowboarding, Tai Chi, yoga, Zumba...etc.), and these documents (links).

This may be an opportunity to weave in a discussion of benefits, motivations, obstacles, stereotypes, etc.

Use the Narrowing It Down form from the student manual, p. 19 to have a discussion on why they might choose certain activities to be interested in. Have students consider:

New Interest Inventory

Directions: Place a checkmark beside the activities you might be interested in trying.



- _____ *Aerobics*
- _____ *Art*
- _____ *Ballet*
- _____ *Riding a bike*
- _____ *Baseball*
- _____ *Basketball*
- _____ *Bowling*
- _____ *Camping*
- _____ *Cheerleading*
- _____ *Using a computer*
- _____ *Taking a class*
- _____ *Canoeing*
- _____ *Cooking*
- _____ *Dance*
- _____ *Diving*
- _____ *Drawing*
- _____ *Fishing*
- _____ *4-H*
- _____ *Gymnastics*
- _____ *Gardening*
- _____ *Hiking*
- _____ *Hockey*

- _____ *Hunting*
- _____ *Inline skating*
- _____ *Juggling*
- _____ *Karate*
- _____ *Learning to type*
- _____ *Watching a movie*
- _____ *Building a model*
- _____ *Painting*
- _____ *Photography*
- _____ *Playing an instrument*
- _____ *Pottery*
- _____ *Reading a book*
- _____ *Riding a horse*
- _____ *Rock climbing*
- _____ *Roller hockey*

- _____ *Running in a race*
- _____ *Singing/Chorus*
- _____ *Soccer*
- _____ *Sewing*
- _____ *Softball*
- _____ *Swimming*
- _____ *Theater*
- _____ *Tennis*
- _____ *Tae Kwon Do*
- _____ *Video games*
- _____ *Volunteering*
- _____ *Volleyball*
- _____ *Weaving*
- _____ *Walking*
- _____ *Writing a story*

Other new interests?



Narrowing It Down

Activities

Directions: On the 5 lines across the top, list the 5 activities you chose from the *New Interest Inventory*. For each of those activities, circle the possible benefits. Choose the one activity that is "doable" in your community and that you would most like to try and write it inside the circle.

	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits	Benefits
Physical	Physical	Physical	Physical	Physical	Physical
Social	Social	Social	Social	Social	Social
Mental	Mental	Mental	Mental	Mental	Mental
Future	Future	Future	Future	Future	Future
Psychological	Psychological	Psychological	Psychological	Psychological	Psychological
Spiritual	Spiritual	Spiritual	Spiritual	Spiritual	Spiritual
Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural
Creative	Creative	Creative	Creative	Creative	Creative
Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community

Summarize

We've discussed how feeling bored is a sign that you need to change the situation to make it less boring, and hopefully more interesting. You've also learned ways to recognize when you might be getting bored, or more bored. In that case you are encouraged to restructure the situation, if you can, to make it more interesting.

Changing a boring situation into an interesting, or at least not-so-boring situation, **requires effort** on your part. It just doesn't happen by itself. You have the responsibility for taking charge of your experiences.

If you are **almost always bored** in your leisure time, this will most likely lead to long-term boredom, where nothing is ever interesting to you. This might be a sign that you don't have enough activities that you enjoy, or it could be a sign you have too many.

Another way to avoid boredom is to develop a number of interests that you can do when you don't have anything else to do. If you find an activity you are really interested in, you'll **stick with the activity** longer. You'll be motivated because you want to do it for yourself, or because you're doing it for a purpose. This will help you avoid long-term boredom. When you stick with an activity over time, you get more benefits out of the activity. You learn more and you become more competent. You get to meet more interesting people. (Tell a personal story as an example.)

In the next session we will discuss these ideas further in terms of the need for you to have a variety of activities, a balance of types of activities, and a variety and balance of the people you do activities with.



You are in charge! Take responsibility!

Restructure your situation!

Develop new interests!



LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 5: Shared Leisure Interests...Who Has Similar Interests as I Do?

This sessions gives students an opportunity to interact with other students in terms of their interests, motivations, and perceived benefits. This session is essentially activity based.

Student Goals

1. To identify other students who have similar interests or who have interests they might want to learn more about.
2. Continue to explore how different types of motivation affect feelings and attitudes.

Students will Think About

1. Who has similar interests as I do, or who has an interest that I would like to learn more about.
2. How does why I do an activity have an effect on how I feel about my activities and what I get out of them?

Subtopics

1. Learning about others' activity interests, motivations, and benefits.

Materials

- Tic-Tac-Toe Activity (pg. 13 Student Book)

- TW Teacher Manual pages 26-27

Activity

1. Tic-Tac-Toe Activity (pg. 13 Student Book)

Activity Tic-Tac-Toe

Directions: In each square, write an activity you'd like to try. When your teacher tells you to, find a person who has done each of these activities and ask him/her:

- Why he/she does or did the activity (motivation).
- What benefits he/she gets or got from the activity.

Write the person's motivation (M) and benefits (B) in the square for that activity. Your goal is to fill in 3 squares in a row!

Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____
Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____
Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____	Activity: _____ M _____ B _____

Subtopic 1: How Do Other Students Spend Their Time and Why

Example Conversation Starters

- What do you think other students do in their leisure time?
- What is the most popular leisure activity of students in your grade?
- Why do you think your friends do with they do in their leisure time?
- Do you think students in this school/community would like to know more about different leisure activities?

Activity 1: Tic-Tac-Toe (page 13 in student book).

1. On the first line of each square on the Tic-Tac-Toe sheet, students are to write down activities that they have never tried but would like to. These should be realistic choices that they may actually be able to do. If the students cannot think of 9 new activities, they can list things they already do.
2. Once everyone has completed the first line of each square, the students will circulate around the room to try to find others in the room who have done the activities they have listed.
3. Once they have found someone who has done an activity on their sheet, they are to ask that person (a) what his/her motivations were for doing it, and (b) how he/she felt/feels about doing the activity. The students should write these down on their sheet in the appropriate square on the appropriate lines (M = motivations; B = Benefits).
4. Rule: When telling someone why they do something, the students have to use one of the 5 motivations talked about in the lesson (put on board or overhead).
5. Optional: The students can also ask the person they find about how someone feels about engaging in the activity listed in the square.
6. The objective is to fill in three squares in a Tic-Tac-Toe (3 in a row, straight or diagonally).

Discuss and Summarize

- Were you able to find others who had done the activities you want to do?
- Do you think you would do the activities for the same reasons as others?

- Do you think you or other people might get the same benefits from the activities as the other people?
- What other benefits might you get?
- Would you feel the same or differently about the activities as the people you talked to?

It's important to think about how we feel when doing different activities. This is true because, for example, if you are doing an activity for the first time, you might feel frustrated. And feeling frustrated might result in poor performance or not wanting to do the activity ever again.

Our feelings tend to be more positive when we are doing activities because we want to. And if you feel more positive, you are likely to have a better experience, to get more benefits from the activity, and to want to do the activity again.



LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 6: Roadblocks to Participation in Desired Activities

Students will learn how to make an action plan to participate in desired activities. This lesson also helps students identify potential constraints that might get in the way of engaging in desired leisure interests and whether they are real barriers or whether there are ways to overcome the perceived constraints.

Student Goals

1. Learning a method (flowchart) for planning an activity.
2. Identifying types of roadblocks that get in the way of pursuing or continuing a desired activity.
3. Understanding how attitudes and stereotypes are types of roadblocks.
4. Determining if the roadblocks are real or perceived.
5. Developing strategies for overcoming roadblocks.

Students will Think About

1. What kinds of things get in the way of participating in a desired activity.
2. Attitudes and stereotypes that may be affecting them.
3. How they can overcome things that get in the way, or whether the roadblocks are real.

Subtopics

1. Flowchart for planning for new leisure interests
2. Stereotypes and attitudes that get in the way of participating in a desired activity
3. Identifying roadblocks to participating in a desired activity and deciding whether the roadblocks can be overcome

Activity

1. Warm-up activity regarding stereotypes and attitudes
2. Discussion of stereotypes and attitudes that may inhibit participation in desired activities.
3. Complete Identifying Roadblocks Worksheet and Discuss Real and Perceived Roadblocks

Materials

- TW teacher manual pages 38 & 39 (to debrief Master 4, Attitude and Stereotypes Statements), 41 - 44 (to debrief Identifying Roadblocks activity from TW workbook page 21), Planning Flowchart (Transparency 6)
- TW student book page 21 (Identifying Roadblocks)

Subtopic 1: Planning For New Leisure Interests

In the last session you identified a number of new activities that you might be interested in trying. The purpose of developing new leisure interests is to avoid boredom and find fun, healthy, and meaningful things to do in your free time. Leisure activities you can stick with over time bring you a lot of benefits.

Show them (and hand out?) the planning flowchart. Discuss each step of the flowchart. We will be coming back to the Planning Flowchart in another session.

Planning Flowchart

Choose activities
that interest you.



Assess the activity. Is it
possible to do and how?

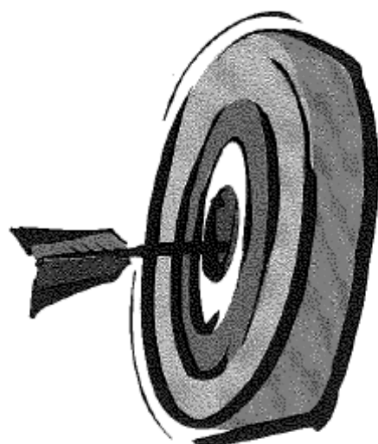
Identify what might
get in the way and
how to overcome
any roadblocks.

Identify resources—
supplies, places and
people.

**Match interests with resources
to support your effort.**

Set a goal and make
an **Action Plan.**

Where? When? With whom?
How will I get there?
Materials? Time? Cost?



Subtopic 2: Stereotypes and Attitudes That Get In The Way of Participating In A Desired Activity

There are a number of things that might prevent a person from being able to pursue something they are interested in learning. We call these obstacles or roadblocks. For example, think about going to Disney World. Let's brainstorm what roadblocks might get in the way of going to Disney?

Activity 1: Warm-up activity regarding stereotypes and attitudes

Sometimes, when choosing a new activity we would like to learn, we get caught up worrying about all the things that might get in the way of doing the activity.

Next ask students to fill in the following sentence on post it notes:

- I would really like to (try, do) _____ but I can't or won't because _____.
- Put post it notes on the board.

Categorized responses into "time/material" reasons (e.g., transportation, money) and "attitudinal" reasons (e.g., fear of failing or some other reason, would feel uncomfortable for gender/race/poverty etc. reasons).

Some things to consider:

- Be mindful of bias toward wealthier families/families with actively engaged parenting adult(s), especially the third bullet point.
- Be sensitive to students who have limited exposure to activities beyond TV/screens; students who have parenting adult(s) who have limited ability to be involved in parenting (multiple jobs, limited financial situation, substance abuse, mental health limitations, incarceration, shared parenting duties, etc.)
- Be sensitive to students who have limited exposure to activities beyond TV/screens; students who have parenting adult(s) who have limited ability to be involved in parenting (multiple jobs, limited financial situation, substance abuse, mental health limitations, incarceration, shared parenting duties, etc.).

Activity 2: Attitude and Stereotype Roadblocks

Often our own, or other peoples', attitudes or stereotype influence what we think we would like to do or that we can do.

Possible attitudes and stereotypes include:

1. lack of self-confidence
2. feeling that you have to be good at something to enjoy it
3. believing only the popular kids do/play [activity]
4. personal or societal culture, gender or racial/ethnic bias
5. too heavy a reliance on what others would think of you/peer pressure/social norms, social media.

What gets in the way of developing interests or pursuing what you would like to do?



In pairs or individual responses, identify the stereotype or attitude from each of the following 5 statements.

- I won't try out for the soccer team because I won't be very good at it. [Lack of self-confidence, you have to be good at something to enjoy it, only the popular kids play soccer.]

- Ballet sounds like a great class but people would make fun of me if I did it. [What characteristics do you think of, of someone who does ballet? Are these stereotypes? What is the attitude here? Maybe there is a gender bias, or even a culture bias.]
- I really want to try out for the school play but I don't want to go to the auditions myself. I know my friends won't go with me. [Too heavy a reliance on friends, assumption that they won't go, it's not okay to do things alone. Bring in the role of motivation and how motivation can affect one's attitude. E.g., for what others think motivation may turn into an attitude that gets in the way of doing things you might want to do.]
- I'm kind of interested in the chess club but I'm not going to join. [Are there stereotypes about the kinds of kids who join the chess club?]
- I'm going to join in the pick-up basketball games down the street, even though they are all boys and I'm a girl, I enjoy it and don't care what others will think of me. [Positive attitude about feeling free to enjoy herself even if she thinks she will be judged.]

How might you deal with these stereotypes and attitudes?

Attitudes and Stereotypes Can Get in the Way

1. I won't try out for the soccer team because I won't be very good at it.
2. Ballet sounds like a great class but people would make fun of me.
3. I really want to try out for the school play but I don't want to go to the auditions myself. I know my friends won't go with me.
4. I'm kind of interested in the chess club but I'm not going to belong.
5. I'm going to join in the pick-up basketball games down the street, even though they are all boys and I'm a girl. I enjoy it and don't care what others think of me.

Subtopic 3: Identifying Roadblocks to Participating in a Desired Activity

Refer back to the Planning Flowchart. The next step in this planning process, after you have identified an interest you would like to pursue, is to identify the roadblocks you think might prevent you from participating in the activity.

Activity 3: Complete Identifying Roadblocks Worksheet and Discuss Real and Perceived Roadblocks

Have them complete the Identifying Roadblocks table from TimeWise Student Book page 21 (below).

Identifying Roadblocks

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Directions:

- In the first column, list the activity you'd like to explore, plus 2 others from the *Narrowing It Down* activity sheet.
- In the second column, identify roadblocks that might get in the way of your doing each activity.
- In the third column, write some ways to overcome the roadblocks.
- In the last column, write whether the roadblocks you identified are real or perceived.

I would really like to...	But I can't or I won't because...	Ways to overcome the roadblocks	Real or Perceived?

CAUTION

Roadblock Ahead



Sometimes roadblocks can be overcome, perhaps with negotiation. Other times they cannot be overcome. It is important to learn to tell the difference. And sometimes we think a roadblock is real and sometimes a roadblock is just something we think is there, but it really doesn't exist. Some roadblocks just can't be overcome. That is why it is a good idea to have several interests that you would like to pursue.

Think about the following activities that are in the Live Your Why website.

Roadblocks to Leisure Activities: Real or Perceived?

<https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/youth/>

- Plan a hike to Elmore or Buffalo Mountain and Hardwick Trails with friends or family
- Put on a show for family and friends
- Take an art class at River Arts, GRACE or your local library (often free)
- Join a youth group
- Try out a karate class
- Take a bike ride on the Rail Trail
- Create a cartoon
- Go to a program at your local library
- Plan a meal with your family.

Let's choose a few of these and discuss what obstacles might get in the way of pursuing the activity and whether the roadblock can be overcome.

Summarize

We have been discussing how to develop a new interest(s) in order to avoid boredom and get more benefits. Developing new interests often provides us with more variety and balance in what we do. Developing planning and decision making skills is a valuable skill that can be used in all aspects of life!



LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 7: Managing Leisure Time: Variety and Balance

To help you plan your leisure time, and to make sure you are getting the most out of your leisure activities, there are three things you need to consider. Variety, balance, and preparation. We have already discussed the need for planning, which is part of preparation. Today we will talk about the need for variety and balance, and the leisure pyramid.

Student Goals

1. To understand the need for both variety and balance in types of activities they participate in.
2. To understand the need for both variety and balance in the people they participate in activities with.
3. To understand the need to recognize types of activities that generally are healthier than others and the need to incorporate more of the healthier activities in their daily leisure.

Students will Think About

1. How can I incorporate concepts of variety and balance in my planning for leisure activities?
2. Which activities should I try to do more of, and which should I try to do less of?

Subtopics

1. Variety and balance
2. Leisure Pyramid

Activity

1. Activity 1: Planning for Variety and Balance at the Fair
2. Activity 2: Variety and Balance Scenarios

Materials

- TimeWise Teacher Manual (pp. 50-61 to discuss scenarios related to variety and balance)
- Variety and balance scenarios (included)
- Variety & Balance (Transparency 7, Teacher Manual) and related material page 52 teacher manual), Be Prepared (Transparency 8, Teacher Manual)

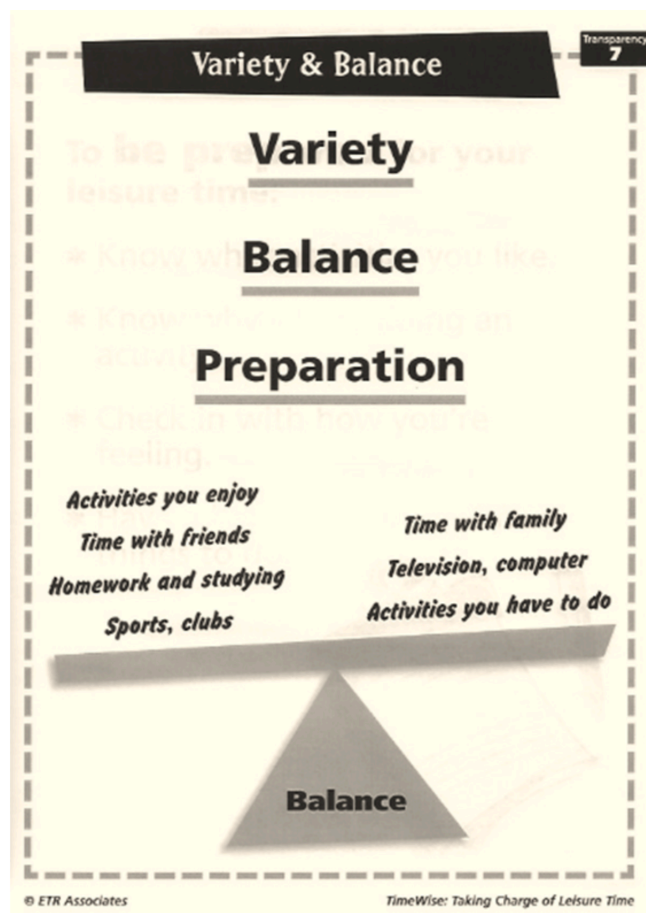
Subtopic 1: Variety and Balance

A good variety of activities means having a range of things to do. We already talked about making sure that you have activities that will give you different types of benefits. That includes things like being physically challenged, being mentally stimulated, and being relaxed. Some activities are easy and some are hard. Some require skills and practice. Some activities you can just do without any preparation. You need an assortment or mix of these types of activities to gain the most out of your leisure.

Why is variety important? Imagine if we were all wearing the exact same color of shirt, and we did that every day. Or imagine if you did the exact same thing after school every day, with no variation.

Variety means that people should have a good mix of types of activities to get a variety of benefits and not get bored with doing the same thing all the time. For example, people should have a mix of indoor, outdoor, social, individual, creative, physical, and volunteering (and so on) activities. This might also include things they enjoy and have done for a long time, and those that they would like to explore.

Balance means that people have a good balance of leisure time, homework, family time, and sleep.



Activity 1: Planning for Variety and Balance at the Fair

Think about going to the county fair. Imagine if the fair had all the same food, or all the same rides or activities. It might be pretty boring and you would probably lose interest in being there and want to go do something else. Or maybe there are so many exciting or scary rides that you feel overwhelmed.

In groups of two or three and have them spend a few minutes thinking about how to design a fair, video game, or something they can relate to. They should make sure that what they design has a variety and balance of experiences and activities. Jot your ideas on paper and share with the class.

Activity 2: Variety and Balance Scenarios

Choose one or more of the scenarios to discuss in class.

Consider This Scenario for Variety and Balance

Ahmaud loves soccer. He plays every chance he gets. He's on the team and they practice every Tuesday and Thursday from 4 to 6 pm. They have a game every Sunday. Ahmaud's friends are all soccer players, too, so in his spare time he plays pick-up games with them.

There are some other consequences of not having a variety and balance in your leisure activities.

Is Ahmaud's leisure time balanced? Why or why not? [Unbalanced because he just does one activity.]

What do you think the problems with having only one activity might be? [Not a variety of benefits, he might get bored with it.]

What if something happened and Ahmaud couldn't play soccer anymore? [He wouldn't be prepared to avoid boredom because he doesn't have any other interests]

1. What would you like to know about Ahmaud and his leisure lifestyle in order to provide suggestions for having more variety and balance? [Motivations, home situation, siblings, friends, interests, etc.]
2. What would happen if something happened and Ahmaud couldn't play soccer any more? How would he feel? What would he do?
3. Does Ahmaud get a variety of benefits by being so focused on soccer?
4. What happens if someone's life is not balanced and have a variety of activities? [Can become bored, stressed, lonely, make unhealthy choices, engage in negative or unsafe risky behaviors.]
5. Students are asked to reflect on how much variety and balance they have in their leisure time and set a couple of goals for the upcoming week that will give them more variety and/or balance in their leisure time.
6. Use a Personal Learning Plan, Summer Plan or Passion Project, or something similar, to start setting leisure goals towards exploring interests and build on the plan for overcoming obstacles and connecting with resources (covered in another session).

Consider This Scenario for Variety and Balance

Chantal spends every minute she can with her 3 best girlfriends. They talk on the phone, text, SnapChat, eat lunch together at school, and spend time at each other's houses (pre-pandemic!). When they are together they basically talk and listen to music. Sometimes Chantal gets bored, but she would never dream of doing an activity her friends wouldn't approve of.

Is Chantal's time balanced or unbalanced? Why or why not? [unbalanced, she doesn't do things with different people or spend time alone]

What problems can arise from always hanging out with the same friends? [might feel smothered, no time to be alone, no time to be with family, can prevent her from learning new things or developing new interests, likely to get bored.]

Consider This Scenario for Variety and Balance

Sofia has many interests. She plays the piano, is on the track team, loves to make crafts, and has many different friends. She has lessons or practice Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. On Wednesday she usually spends time with her best friend, and on Fridays she goes out to dinner with her family and then they have movie night together.

On school nights she does her homework later in the evening so she can fit it in. On weekends, she either has a track meet or uses her free time to play the piano, work on crafts, or go to the mall or local park to hang out with her friends.

Is Sofia's time balanced or unbalanced? Why or why not? [balanced, variety, she has a variety of different types of activities, the benefits she gets, and the people she spends time with.]

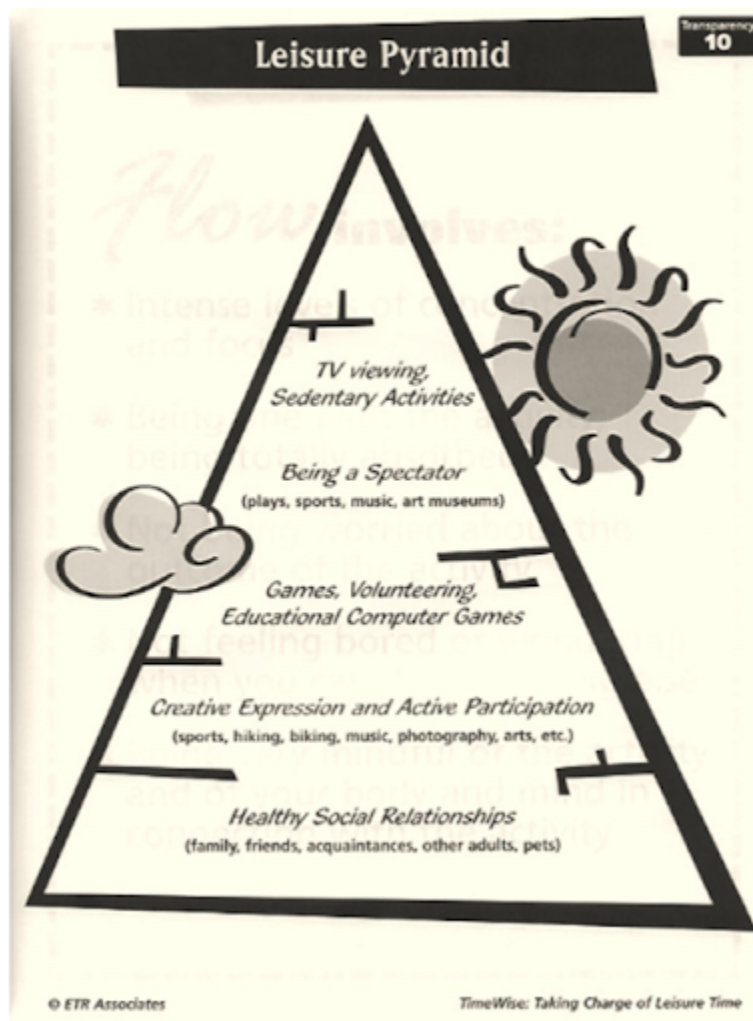
Are there any potential problems with spending her time like she does? [might feel stressed with too much to do]

Subtopic 2: Leisure Pyramid

Here is another way to look at having a healthy balance of leisure activities.

Maybe you've studied the pyramids in Egypt. Pyramids are strong structures because they have a strong foundation, and are built up layer by layer. The foundation supports all the layers above it, and each layer is strong enough to hold the layer above it.

Just as some foods are healthier for you than others and give you a strong foundation to go about your day, some activities are healthier for you than others and provide the foundation for a healthy leisure lifestyle.



Discuss

- Why are the activities at the bottom healthier and give you more benefits?
 - [You are more engaged and focused, creative]
- Why are the activities at the top give you the fewest benefits?
 - [They may be enjoyable and needed, like to relax, but we are not as engaged and more passive. They are more likely to be boring and not interesting. We need fewer of those activities]
- Where does texting, TikTok, snapchat or other social media fit in?
- What is missing?
- Can some activities in the pyramid bring harm to yourself or others? Discuss.
[Examples of activities that can cause harm to yourself are substance abuse; dangerous high-risk activities; and too much or not enough sleeping, eating, relaxing, or exercising. Activities that can cause harm to others include substance misuse, inappropriate competition, bullying, gossip, fighting, hurting animals, breaking the law, and so on.]



Summarize

When you are setting goals and planning for your leisure time, you also want to consider how much variety you have in your activities, and you'll want to make sure you have a balance of different types of activities. Variety means that you should have a good mix of things you enjoy and have done for a long time, and those that you would like to explore, that might give you different benefits.

Balance means that you have a good balance of leisure time, homework, family time, and sleep.

Think about your upcoming week. How much variety and balance will you have in your leisure time?

Set one or two goals about something you would like to change in order to get more variety and balance in your week.

LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 8: Getting Into the Flow

Flow is a concept developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. It refers to a psychological state where one is completely immersed in and highly focused on what one is doing. Flow can happen in any activity, from work to doing artwork to praying to sports. Anything can produce being in the flow, but certain conditions or elements have to be in place for one to get in the flow. Also, there are certain types of activities that tend to lend themselves to a flow experience. Research suggests that experiencing flow on a regular basis contributes to health and wellbeing. This session will address flow in leisure.

Student Goals

1. Understand the concept of flow, including elements that tend to contribute to, and detract from, being in flow.
2. Understand the relationship between skill level and degree of challenge, and anxiety and boredom, relative to flow.
3. To be motivated to engage in more activities that are likely to produce a flow experience.

Students will Think About

- What have I done that gets me into the flow experience?
- How do I know when I am in the flow?
- What activities could I do more of that might contribute to flow?
- When do I feel anxious, or bored, and how does that relate to what I'm doing and the level of my skill and the challenge.

Subtopics

1. Leisure Pyramid Review
2. What is Flow?
3. Relationship Between Skill and Challenge
4. To Get Into the Flow

Materials

- TW teacher manual pp. 92-97
- Master 15 (Leisure Pyramid), Flow Involves and Flow Diagram (Transparencies 11-12)

Subtopic 1: Leisure Pyramid Review

The Leisure Pyramid suggests we have better experiences when we do activities that are engaging and that we are “all in” and are fully present when we do the activity. This happens most often with activities on the bottom rungs of the pyramid, because these activities are more engaging and our minds don’t wander as much because we are more focused.

Ask and discuss:

- Would anyone like to share an activity they do in which you are sort of into it, but sort of not, or when you are a little bored, or maybe wishing you were doing something else?
- Would anyone like to share an activity they do in which you become completely engaged and involved in the activity?

Locate the activities on the Leisure Pyramid.

Discuss elements of the activities shared that fit on the top rungs of the pyramid [bored, restless, not paying a lot of attention, etc.]

Discuss elements of the activities shared that fit on the bottom rungs of the pyramid [focused, enjoyable, concentration, feeling competent/having the skill to do the activity, etc.].

Subtopic 2: Elements of Flow

Ask and discuss:

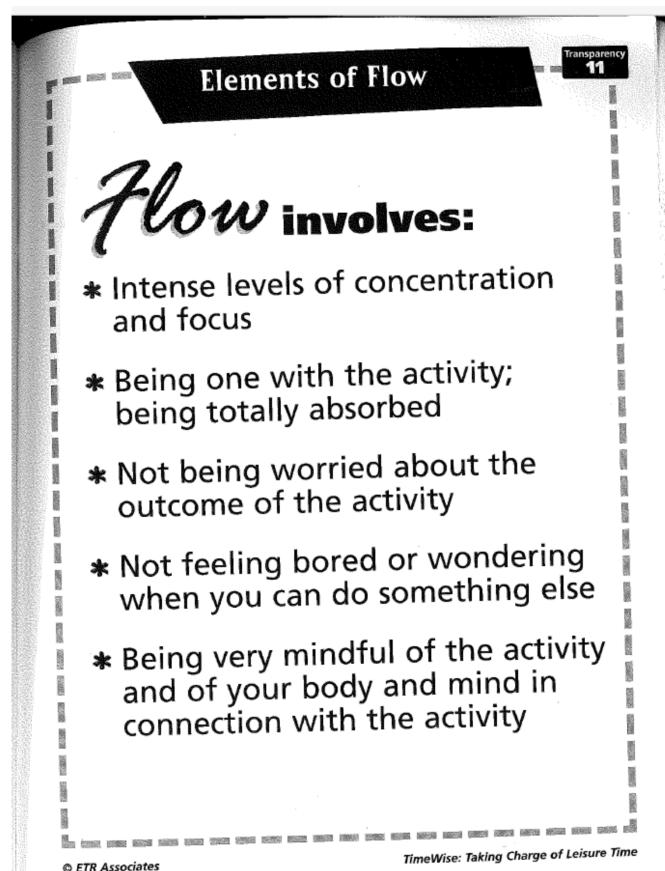
Think about how you felt during these activities.

- Were you aware of what was going on around you?
- Did you lose track of time?
- Did you have a high level of “want to” motivation?
- Did you feel as though you had a good skill level to do the activity?

How did these feelings differ between doing things on the top rungs vs. the bottom rungs?

Often when we do activities on the bottom rungs of the pyramid, we tend to “get in the zone” or experience “flow.” Flow is a concept to describe what we feel when we are very immersed in what we are doing and are having a very positive and enjoyable experience. Flow activities contribute to our overall health and wellbeing.

Discuss the elements of flow (transparency 11).



Subtopic 3: Relationship Between Skill and Challenge

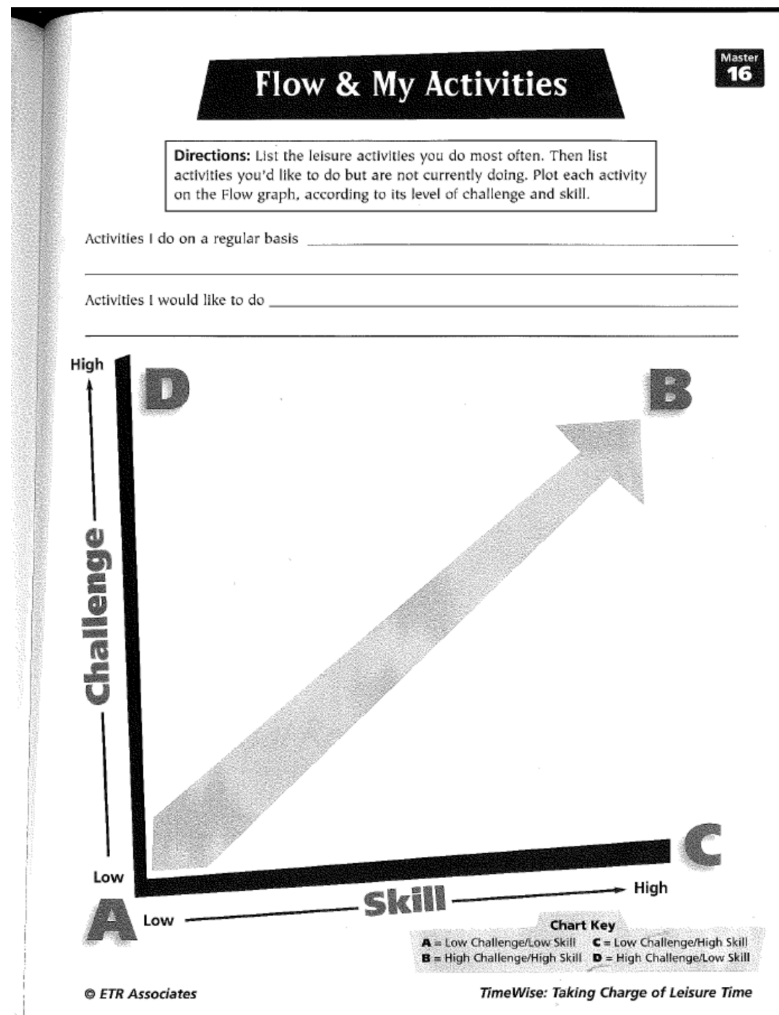
Ask and Discuss:

- What do you think causes people to be focused and absorbed in the activity, versus being unfocused and uninterested?

As important aspect of getting into the flow is that a person has a good match between their skill level and the degree of challenge of the activity.

You may want to use either Flow Model 1 or Flow Model, or both, to discuss the relationship between skill level and challenge and emotion. In Model 1, the arrow in the middle pointing from A to B is called the Flow Zone. It suggests that one can achieve flow at low skill levels if the challenge is not too difficult and the person feels they can handle that challenge. As long as there is a balance between skill level and challenge, flow may be achieved.

Flow Model 1:

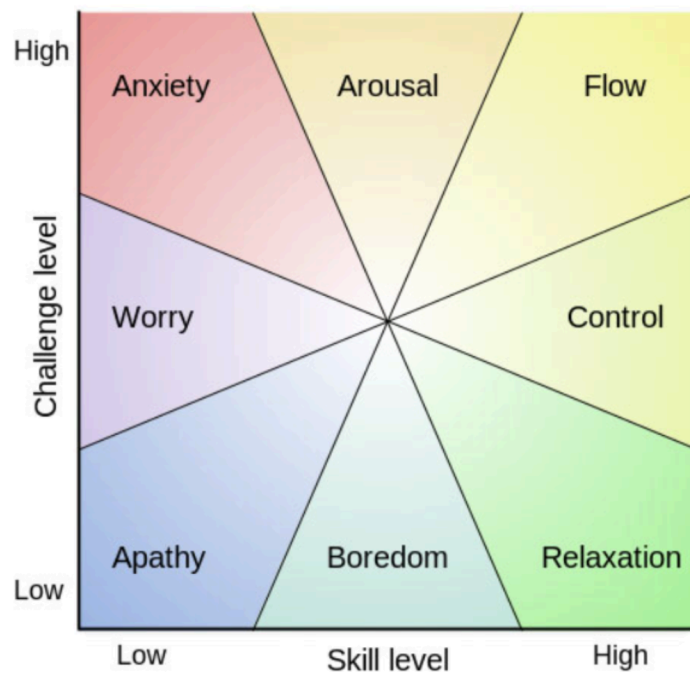


- What are some activities that you do that would fit into category A in Model 1? What about D, or in between A and D?
- How would you feel if you were in a situation where you had a high degree of skill but there was little challenge? For example, you had a good skill level at modern dance but you were rehearsing for a play where you were learning a dance that was very simple and that you had learned 2 years ago.

Low skill level and high challenge is likely to lead to anxiety, whereas high skill and low challenge is likely to lead to boredom. Flow Model 2 details these relationships in more detail.

Flow Model 2:

Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Model



Flow Model 2 shows a more detailed description of what can happen when skill level and challenge is unbalanced.

What this concept suggests is that if we know how to choose activities that match our skill level, we are more likely to have a positive experience.

Subtopic 4: To Get Into the Flow

Here are some ways to get into the flow in your daily activities.

1. **Find Activities You Enjoy:** Flow is more easily achieved when you're passionate about what you're doing.
2. **Set Clear Goals:** Knowing what you need to achieve and how to measure progress is crucial.
3. **Balance Challenge and Skill:** The activity should be challenging enough to engage you but not so difficult that it leads to frustration.
4. **Eliminate Distractions:** Create a workspace and mindset that minimizes interruptions and distractions.
5. **Practice Mindfulness:** Focusing on the present moment through techniques like meditation can help you enter flow.
6. **Seek Feedback:** Knowing how you're performing can help you adjust and stay on track.
7. **Embrace Challenges:** Stepping outside your comfort zone can help you engage more fully with the present moment.
8. **Connect with Your Environment:** Nature can be a great environment for reducing stress and enhancing focus.
9. **Be Patient and Persistent:** Flow is a skill that can be developed through practice.

Summarize

Low challenge and low skill (situation A in Model 1) may be easy or relaxing but it is not very engaging. Low challenge and high skill (situation C in Model 1) is likely to lead to boredom. When the challenge is much greater than your skill (situation D) you may feel anxious, stressed, or frustrated.

The flow feeling is like a natural high. Try to find activities that get you into the flow (the arrow in Model 1), and try to continually increase your skill level and challenge level to keep things interesting and not boring. It will also contribute to a healthier and happier you.



LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 9: Risk Taking in Leisure: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Risk taking is a very important part of adolescence. Many think that risk taking is negative, but there are many positive benefits from positive risk taking. The problem is that it is often challenging for young teens to differentiate between the two. It is hard for them to assess what might be a positive risk or a negative risk, which leads to poor or ineffective decision making.

Risk taking occurs throughout the day, and especially during free time because it is a “freer” context. Furthermore, because teens are often in social situations, the possibility for making risky decisions increases. It is also easier to experiment and explore one’s boundaries during free/leisure time.

For more information on risk taking and adolescent brain development, see the teacher notes at the end of this session. In addition, contact Healthy Lamoille Valley for additional resources on youth substance misuse prevention.

Student Goals

1. Identify and understand positive and negative risk taking in leisure.
2. Learn to identify when activities might turn into negative risk.
3. Understand the influence of being in a social situation to take a risk, both positive and negative.

Students Will Think About

1. In general, the types of risks they like to take that give them positive challenges and benefits.
2. How what they do in leisure time can provide them with positive risks.
3. What kind of risk taker they are.
4. How they can analyze a situation and be aware when it might turn into a negative risky one.

Subtopics

1. Defining risk, positive and negative risk, and risk taking
2. Risk taking in leisure time
3. Knowing when a situation might turn risky

Activity

1. Identify Positive and Negative Risks (2 activity choices)
2. Analyzing When a Situation Might Turn Risky

Materials

TimeWise teacher manual, pages 87 to 91, risk dilemma cards (Master 14).

The following are good videos to show students:

- *Risky Decisions -- They Can Be a Good Thing for Teens to Make:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dliN2jLBbCU>
 - Risk Index, Decision Trap
 - HALT: Don't take a risk when you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired
 - Don't cross the stupid line!
- *Teens and Risk Taking:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh4-R9xFAys>
- *The Adolescent Brain:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1u5OEc5eY>
- *How Friendship Affects the Brain:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmVpwXH4jhA>
- *The Adolescent Brain: A Second Window of Opportunity:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1FRco3Bjyk>

Subtopic 1: Defining Risk and Risk Taking

Risk taking is a very important part of adolescence. Many think that risk taking is negative, but there are many positive benefits from positive risk taking. It is often challenging for young teens to differentiate between the two. It is hard for them to assess what might be a positive risk or a negative risk, which leads to poor or ineffective decision making.

Many people enjoy taking a risk, but some people are not risk takers at all. What do you think of when you hear or think that someone is a risk taker? What comes to your mind? [Ask class what they think.]

Examples:

- Brave
- Stupid
- Daring
- In for trouble

Risk-takers can be thought of in both positive and negative ways. First, let's start by defining risk.

Ask students what they think risk means. Perhaps record answers on the board.

In simple terms, risk is the possibility of something bad happening. Risk involves uncertainty about the effects/implications of an activity with respect to something that humans value (such as health, well-being, wealth, property or the environment), often focusing on negative, undesirable consequences. (Wikipedia)

Activity 1: Identifying the Positive and Negative Risks (2 possible choices, or devise your own)

Choice 1. Use one or more of the suggested videos (under materials) to spark a discussion about when taking a risk is a positive thing, and when it is a negative thing.

Discuss when taking a risk is a positive thing, and when it is a negative thing. What clues in the environment might lead to deciding whether a risk is positive or negative. Can the same risk behavior, e.g., [choose something that would resonate with your students], be positive in one situation and negative in the other? What factors might be present to make the risk positive or negative? (For example, when stressed or angry or in a heightened emotional state, one might react to a situation differently than if one was in control. Or, when one is

with a social group where one is trying to maintain or gain status, there may be a heightened chance for risk taking than if one was alone or with a couple close friends they don't need to impress.). Talk about how being with peers has a major impact on good decision making as well as an increased likelihood of taking a risk that will have negative consequences.

Help them learn to focus on taking a pause and exercising good decision-making. Discuss calculated risks.

Choice 2: Read or have someone read (or put on a screen) the following scenarios.

How much risk is involved in each one? Is the person taking a positive or negative risk? What do you think the consequences could be in each case?

Risk Taking Scenarios:

Cornea is late for work. She needs to cross a busy street and traffic is coming fast. The light is just changing but she runs across the street.

Samson is really very shy. But he really wants to be part of a drama group, so he auditions for a part in the play.

Taneesh's mother won't be home for another two hours. She told him to stay home and watch his younger sister, Taylor. Taneesh wants to hang out with his friends, though, so he sneaks out.

Jordan is finally getting a chance to play basketball with her friends. She has never been that good of a player, but they needed one more person for the team. At an important point in the game she gets the ball. She is surrounded by the other team, but she thinks she can make the basket so she shoots the ball. She knows her teammates are all looking at her.

- Identify the positive and negative risks.
- Discuss the possible consequences of these situations.
- Can you relate to any of these situations?
- Think about your self. What have you done to qualify as a risk taker?

In each case, there was a possibility of being injured or of suffering some other loss, such as loss of face or friends' or parents' disappointment.

Similarities in the decision-making process.

Other topics to discuss:

- Are all of you comfortable with the same amount of risk?
- How do you decide how far you are willing to go?
- There are different kinds of risk: Personal, Physical, Emotional

Many situations contain elements of positive and negative risks.

For example, imagine rafting down a river. What are some of the risks involved?

First of all, there is general risk in being on the river. There is physical risk if you were to fall out of the boat. There is emotional risk, too, if you are afraid of rafting.

But these risks are not necessarily negative. If you take the physical risk of rafting down the river, you will challenge yourself physically and may discover that you are stronger than you thought you were. And, if you are afraid, your trip down the river can be a positive risk as you face that fear and maybe overcome it. You learn from that experience that scary things can be fun, and that you can do things even when you are afraid.

Also note that as you proceed down the river, there will be different degrees of risk. In part of the river, the water will be smooth. The sun will be shining on your face as it streams through the trees. This part of the river isn't very risky.

But a few minutes later, the river can become very risky. You might hit some rapids, and suddenly the river is very risky—physically and emotionally, positively and negatively.

Subtopic 2: Risks During Leisure Time

We have discussed that some risks are good, and we seek them out to get a thrill or for excitement. What kinds of leisure activities give us positive risks or challenges?

Write on the board:

Leisure: A Time of Risk and Opportunity

Have students discuss what they think this means. As we know, risk taking occurs throughout the day. As we've discussed, in free and leisure time, the possibilities of both positive and negative risk are high among teenagers because you have more freedom and more opportunities to make your own decisions.

What risks might take place in leisure time? [harm to self or others, vandalism, substance use, violence, etc.]

What opportunities? [remind students about the benefits, including social emotional learning, dealing with conflict, time for relaxing, to develop skills, opportunity to learn from mistakes, etc.]

Desiring a Positive Challenge

There are many things we do in leisure time because we want a challenge, and often to address the challenge we have to take positive risks.

Think back to Samson's situation: Samson is really very shy. But he really wants to be part of a drama group, so he auditions for a part in the play.

Taneesh had another type of challenge: Taneesh is finally getting a chance to play basketball with her friends. She has never been that good of a player, but they needed one more person for the team. At an important point in the game she gets the ball. She is surrounded by the other team, but she thinks she can make the basket so she shoots the ball. She knows her teammates are all looking at her.

In both of these situations, the person was taking a personal risk. It was a challenge. But in each case, the person had a positive self-image and a desire to pursue an interesting leisure activity.

Things that make leisure activities a positive challenge are when a person's skill level meets the challenge.

If there is too much challenge, a person becomes anxious and there might be negative consequences. Can you think of any examples? [In the case of Samson, for example, he might have gone for the audition, felt the competition was too high, and left and got drunk to overcome his anxiety.]

If there is not enough challenge, a person is likely to become bored. Can anyone think of an example? [In Taneesh's situation, if she had been a really good player, and everyone else was not as good, she might get bored and quit the team.] What are the consequences when someone gets bored?

Too much or too little challenge can happen in all parts of our lives. We need to be aware of this and make good decisions so that we can achieve the right balance between challenge and skill – it is easiest to do this in our free time because we have the most choice during this time. Therefore, choose your leisure activities to make sure you get the right amount of risk and challenge for you, and that you don't have to take negative risks in other aspects of your life.

Positive risk—"If I do this, my peers will accept me."

Negative risk—"If I do this, my parents will be disappointed."

You have to weigh those kinds of risk against each other, and make the right decision. What is the most important consequence in the short term and long term?

Other Discussion Topics

1. What clues in the environment might lead to deciding whether a risk is positive or negative?
2. Can the same risk behavior, e.g., [choose something that would resonate with your students], be positive in one situation and negative in the other?
3. What factors might be present to make the risk positive or negative? For example, when stressed or angry or in a heightened emotional state, one might react to a situation differently than if one was in control. Or, when one is with a social group where one is trying to maintain or gain status, there may be a heightened chance for risk taking than if one was alone or with a couple close friends they don't need to impress.
4. Talk about how being with peers has a major impact on good decision making as well as an increased likelihood of taking a risk that will have negative consequences.

Subtopic 3: When a Situation Might Turn into a Negative Risky Situation

Some situations can quickly turn into a **risky** situation, even if they were not risky a few minutes earlier. Let's analyze situations to identify why they might turn into a risky situations.

Research suggests that because teens are often in social situations, the possibility for making risky decisions increases due to its more emotional laden context. It is also easier to experiment and explore one's boundaries during free/leisure time, which often involves risk taking (both positive and negative). For example, teens can be very supportive in encouraging someone to try a new activity or take on a leadership role that might seem risky for that person.

Therefore, it is important to think about when a situation might turn risky with negative consequences. This will help you think ahead and prepare to make good decisions about what you do in free time and other time.

Activity 2: Analyzing When a Situation Might Turn Risky

Distribute the following scenarios. Discuss:

- Is this a risky situation? Why or why not? What kinds of risk are involved?
- What could happen to make it negative? (e.g., vaping, too much beer, losing control, not being able to communicate your feelings)
- What kind of risk would that be? Personal? Physical? Emotional? Positive vs. Negative?
- What could you do to remove yourself from the situation, or change the situation to avoid negative consequences?
- What are other risky situations you might find yourself in?
- Why are they risky?
- Sometimes when we are impulsive and don't think through options, we get into trouble.

Scenarios (or design your own)

1. Hanging out alone late at night with girlfriend or boyfriend.
2. Having nothing to do, just sitting around talking under a tree.
3. You are sitting at home and no one is inside. Everyone is out visiting.

4. Your friends are trying to figure out what to do for some fun. You think they are going to find some beer, but right now you are all just sitting around talking.
5. You are sitting in class and no one is volunteering to answer a question, but you know the answer.
6. You and your friends are just talking, and another group of kids your age walks by.

If you are not prepared to think about how a situation can turn risky, you can't avoid a negative risk. In some situations, there are different risks that compete with each other. For example, you can risk parental disapproval and you can risk your peers not liking you. So you have to make a decision what to do and manage peer pressure.

You have to weigh those kinds of risk against each other, and make the right decision. What is the most important consequence in the short term and long term?

Summarize

Reasonable risk-taking behavior allows teens to develop skills in making choices, being independent, and taking responsibility for their actions. It allows them to understand themselves better. Also, exploring one's boundaries and identity are important things for teens to do. Risk taking can be very healthy, provide benefits, and contribute to one's development.

On the other hand, teens often misjudge not only how much risk a situation holds, but that they will be able to avoid negative consequences of they go along with the risk. It is especially true when teens are hanging out with their friends. An important skill is to learn to analyze the situation and be aware of factors that might turn the situation from a positive situation to one with negative consequences.

Notes for Teachers

Research suggests:

Adolescents understand the concept of risk. They typically don't underestimate risk, they tend to overestimate. But they generally have an optimistic bias, thinking they protect themselves more than their peers.

Hormones (testosterone and oxytocin) increase empathy and trust for their in group and heighten the need for affiliation and social success. Thus, especially young teens, are more

likely to take risks when in the presence of their peers. You can see by the graph that the presence of peers significantly increases the likelihood of making a risky decision.

Because of brain development, teens are vulnerable to intense emotions and misinterpretation of others' intentions and emotions.

Teen brains are also biased toward sensation seeking, which can be both positive and negative, and the free time context offers many opportunities for sensation seeking.

These factors contribute to why substance use starts for most people during their teenage years. Teens are much more likely decide how to act in a situation or to express a preference for something faster than adults would in a similar situation. Mature decision makers have had more experience and pay attention to relevant information and exclude extraneous other things going on.

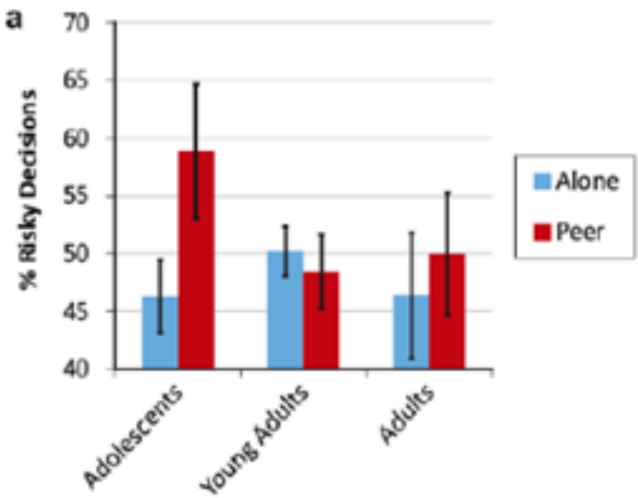
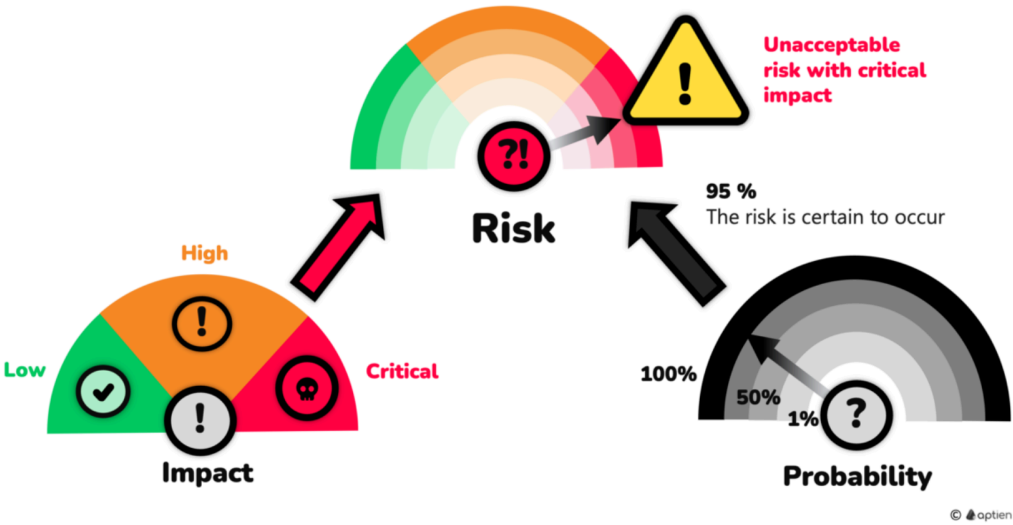
“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities; in the expert’s mind there are few.”

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

Research has shown that bombarding teens with risk information won't help them make better decisions, they will just know more. So, it is not very effective just to try to improve their accuracy of risk perception. Practice and discussing emotional salience work better. Learning how to think about risk and reward is helpful.

An aspect of brain development in teens pertinent to Live TimeWise is that goal directed behavior increasingly becomes important, which dovetails nicely with providing opportunities to make decisions and learn skills by scaffolding experiences so that teens have more and more responsibility for planning and making decisions. It is also a ripe time for teens to develop passions that will persist into adulthood.

What is a Risk



Why Do Adolescents Really Take Risks?

- + Brain maturation is not yet complete
 - + Driven by reward
 - + Hormones & early puberty
 - + Peer effects
 - + The pain of social exclusion
 - + Behavioral contributions
- = a HUGE Evolutionary Advantage for human survival (but not an advantage for individuals)
- ▶ In other words, the adolescent brain isn't an accident – rather, it's a perfect evolutionary design





LIVE TIMEWISE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Session 10: Community Resources, Connections, and Belonging

In every community there are resources – places, organizations and people – which could be helpful in various ways to community members. As you grow older and take on more responsibility for making decisions, it is helpful to know what resources are in your community and then to know how to use them. Examples of community resources are the library, the clinic, schools, sports clubs, teachers etc.

Student Goals

1. Understand the concept of community and communities.
2. Develop a sense of belonging to one's communities and why it is important.
3. Develop ideas about participating in one's community (through leisure, recreation as well as other ways) and giving back to one's community (e.g., volunteering).
4. Learn about various recreation and leisure resources in one's communities.
5. Consider the need to "make things happen" if desired resources are not available.
6. Reflect on community resources they know about and those they would like to find out more about.
7. Develop a spatial awareness of my community...e.g., where things are in relation to each other.

Students will Think About

- What is a community?
- How many communities do I belong to?
- What does belonging mean?
- What resources are available in my community?
- What can I do to enhance opportunities for myself and others in my community?
- Which communities do I feel a sense of attachment to? How can I increase my sense of belonging to the different communities I am part of?

Subtopics

1. What is a community? What communities do I belong to?
2. What resources are in our communities?
3. What do “sense of belonging,” “sense of place” or “place attachment” mean?

Activities

1. An Ideal Community
2. Map and Local Community Resources
3. Please also check out the High School and Elementary School sessions on this topic

Materials

- TW teacher manual pp. 46-49
- Student book p. 22 (Where to Find it), and p. 23 (My Leisure Action Plan)
- Master 6 (My Leisure Action Plan)
- Live Your Why Passport Edition
- https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_Place.html (for some ideas about the importance of place attachment.)

Subtopic 1: What is a community? What communities do I belong to?

Practicing the skills you have learned will help you use your leisure time wisely. We have spent time talking about how you will be continuing to make more and more decisions about how you use your time, especially leisure time. This also means getting to know more about your community so you can make better decisions because you'll know more about using the resources you have available to you. Therefore, in this lesson we will be talking about places to go and people you know in your community that can help you develop your interests and make better plans and decision for you leisure time. There may be many resources available in the community which you might not even know about.

Ask and discuss:

- What does “community” mean?
- Are there different types of communities? Brainstorm different types communities and record on the board or screen. [schools, churches, neighborhoods, on-line, recreation centers, etc.]

Community members likely share a common location (even on-line), experiences, resources, beliefs, supports, issues, challenges, and so on.

Today we are focusing on the community we live in (name) and the resources that the community offers.

A **community** is a social unit (a group of people) with a shared socially-significant characteristic, such as place, set of norms, culture, religion, values, customs, or identity. Communities may share a sense of place situated in a given geographical area (e.g. a country, village, town, or neighborhood) or in virtual space through communication platforms. (Wikipedia)

Maps

Maps give us a spatial understanding of a location or community. They help us find things and understand what is available to us. That means we get a sense of where

things are in relation to other things. For example, how close is our school to your home, or how close is your home to a grocery store or a recreation center?

Maps also help us understand how we exist in relation to other people in other areas. Show a map of Vermont on the board or screen.

How does the state we live in affect what we do in our leisure or free time? [weather, close to Canada, natural resources, etc.]



Subtopic 2: What resources are in our communities?

In every community there are resources – places, organizations and people – that could be helpful to you in some way. The important thing is to know what resources are in your community and then to know how to use them. Examples of community resources are the library, the clinic, schools, sports clubs, teachers etc.

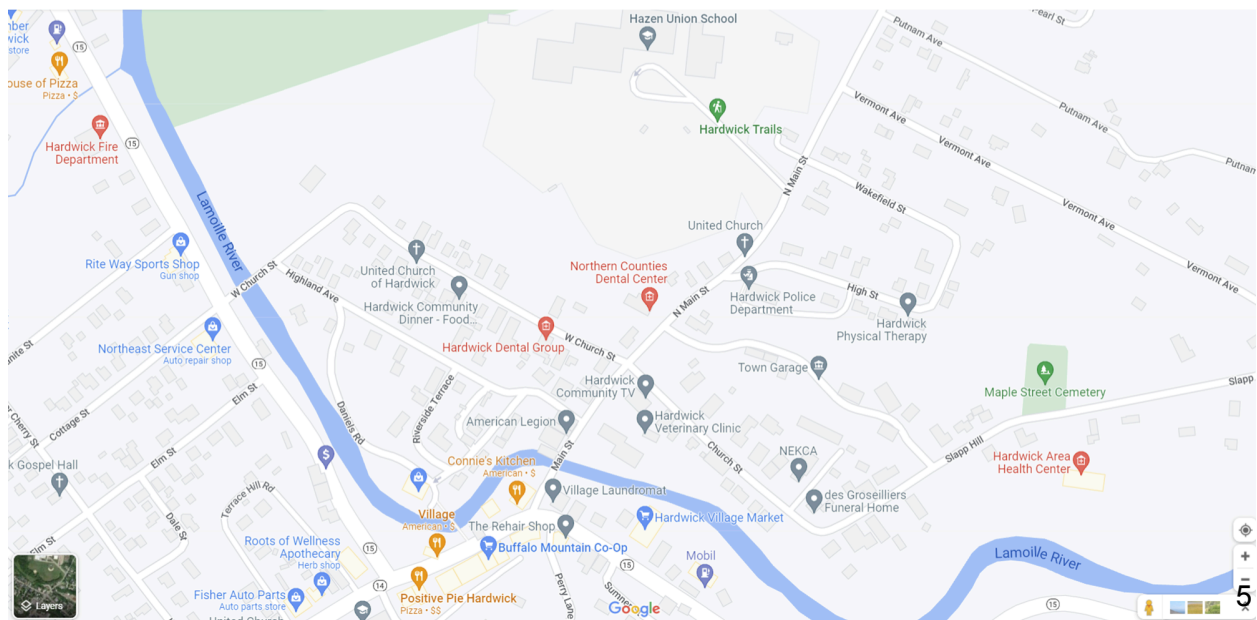
Activity 1: An Ideal Community

In small groups, brainstorm what things and resources they would like to include in an ideal community. For example, what would your ideal community have as resources to support your interests and needs in leisure and other aspects of life? Someone should record the ideas and report out. What kinds of things were easy to decide on.

Ask whether it was easy or hard to agree on what should be included in the community. Perhaps use this as a point of discussion that this is what happens in most communities, there are disagreements on how to run things, etc.

Activity 2: Map Local Community Resources

Find a Google map or similar of your location to display. Discuss what resources are in the community and in surrounding areas. Have students identify where they live on the map, if possible.



Sometimes if there are things you would like to have in your community that don't exist, you might have to take responsibility to organize or advocate for it to become a reality.

Ask and Discuss

In small groups or pairs, discuss the following (choose those questions that make most sense for your situation):

- What community resources have you used? Which are most important to you?
- What community resources would you like to see in your community that don't currently exist?
- What would you like to know more about in your community?
- Do you know where to find places and organizations that offer advice and help to young people?
- Identify places where you typically spend your free time
- When you are at those places, how do you feel? Happy, tired, anxious, bored, etc. Why do you feel that way?
- Who are you typically with?
- Is this a place where healthy activities take place?
- Are there places where risky behavior often takes place?
- If you had a choice, where would you like to spend your time? Why?
- Would you like to make any changes about where you spend your time? What would it be and how can you make it happen?
- How does the physical or natural environment influence you or influence your experience?
- Where are places where you can find adults who can help you or listen to you or provide activities that you would like to do?

Use Live Your Why Passport Edition to discuss various community opportunities.



Share Your Why: Passport Edition



Community Connections

Plan, Do, and Reflect on an activity
that includes one or more of the following:

- Attending a community event
- Meeting new people
- Finding something new to do in your community

Ideas & Activities at
healthylamoillevalley.org/passport



Plan Your Why.

A Community Connections activity that I can do with friends or family is:

When can I do the activity? Day: _____ Time: _____

What needs to happen before I am able to do this activity?



Do Your Why.

The activity I chose: _____



Reflect

What I liked about the activity I chose:

Something I might do differently next time:

One or more important resource in my community I would like to
check out or learn more about: _____

Can we share this activity on our website using your first
name, last initial and grade? **YES NO**

Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Passport # _____

**PASSPORT MUST BE REGISTERED TO
BE ELIGIBLE FOR A RAFFLE**

Return this completed sheet to wherever you
picked it up or a location listed at
healthylamoillevalley.org/passport



Use TimeWise Student Book (pages 22 and 23) and TimeWise Teacher Manual (pages 46-49) to discuss finding community opportunities.

Subtopic 3: What does a sense of belonging to one or more communities mean?

Having a sense of belonging to a community provides numerous benefits, including improved mental and physical health, increased life satisfaction, and a stronger sense of purpose. It can also foster resilience, reduce stress and isolation, and offer opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The concept of sense of place or place attachment has to do with the bond people feel with their environments. It is shaped by personal experiences, social interactions, and how much you feel like you belong there. It also has to do with the resources and opportunities available at the “place.” The “place” can be a river, community, neighborhood, park, ski slope, and so on.

Identify the places you feel an attachment to.

Discuss

- What might you want to change or improve in your community so that you have a stronger place of attachment or bond, feeling of being valued?
- What does it mean to you to belong to a community?
- What feelings do you get by belonging?
- Are there other communities that you might like to belong to?

Use TimeWise Student Book (pages 22 and 23) and TimeWise Teacher Manual (pages 46-49) to discuss finding community opportunities.

Summarize

It is important for us all to feel a sense of belonging to one or more communities. Today we focused on the community we live in and the resources that are available. You also discussed what resources you would like to have. No community is perfect but every member of a community should be responsible for doing their part to make it the best possible. Think about all the communities you belong to and how you could contribute to making them better and stronger.

You may also want to review *Leisure is for Everyone, Global Citizenship* and the high school and elementary school sessions on this topic for more ideas.