



TIMEWISE, 2ND EDITION 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)

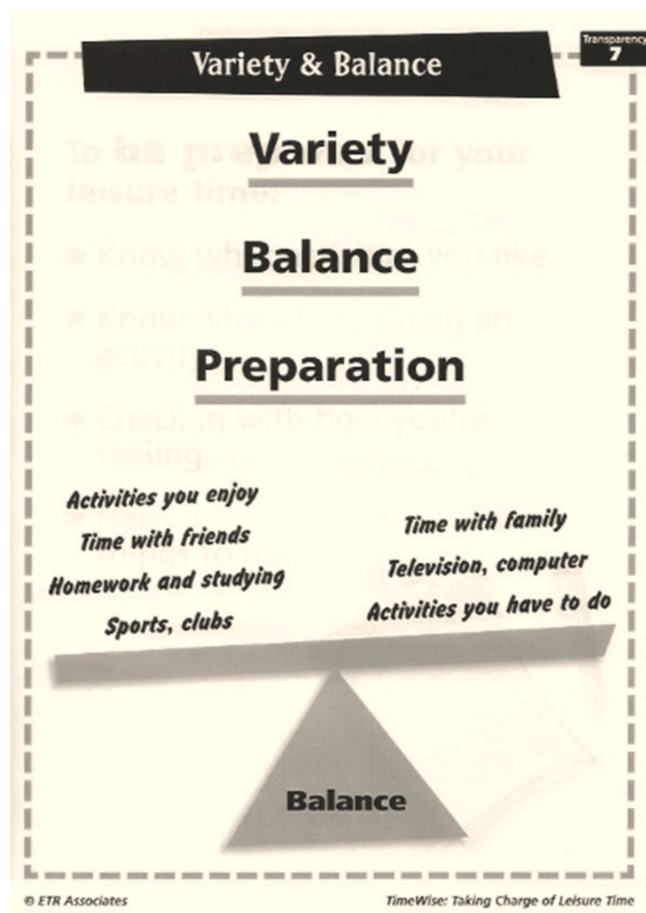
Subtopic 1: Variety and Balance

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.]

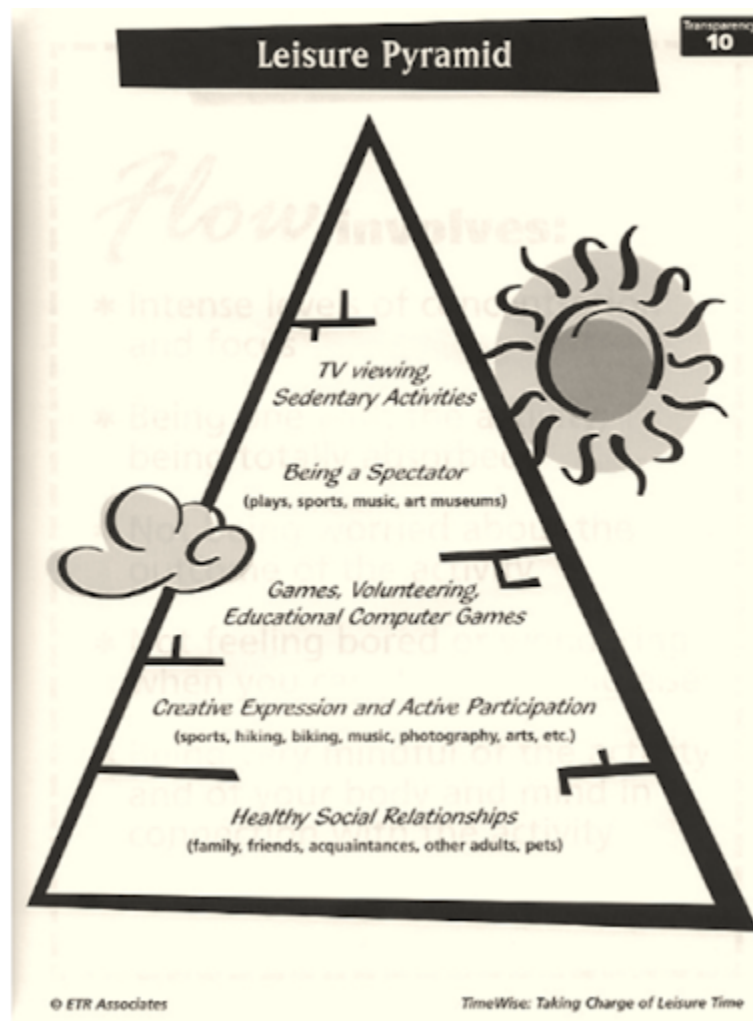
Are there any potential problems with spending her time like she does? [might feel stressed with too much to do]

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.