

Organization

Definition: The ability to manage current and future-oriented task demands. The Organizing component examines the ability to bring order to information and appreciate the main ideas when learning or communicating information.

Basic approach:

- 1) Have an executive assistant or coach keep you on track
- 2) Use creative ways to limit the amount of organizational demands on the individual
- 3) Only work on ONE THING AT A TIME

Smart phones and other electronic devices can help an individual track to-do lists and due dates. Having another person monitor these and help you stay on track can be very helpful.

Delegating tasks to others can lighten the load. Delegate the dreaded tasks. Delegate tasks that you are not good at. Delegate tasks to people who do a better job of it than you do. Delegate any task to someone who costs less than what you can make with your time in another endeavour.

Reduce the organizational demands. E.g. keep an extra set of tools in two work places to reduce the need to “remember” to bring things from home or from work.

Break tasks down into subtasks and assign a time line and due date. Then only work on THAT task. Do not get sidetracked on the other things that need to be done. They WILL be done....when the timeline plan says so. Subtasks and due dates create mini “last minutes” which work well for people who only start to work at the last minute.

Separate larger tasks into sub sets to avoid feeling over whelmed. This isn't sub-tasks. If you have a large stack of papers to sort, divide it in 4 piles and only “look” at one pile at a time. It is a visual trick, but it works.

Set aside time for organization every day. Plan it. Put it in the schedule. Make it a pleasant activity (play music, have a cup of coffee or a sweet treat).

Everybody has different tastes and needs when it comes to organizing tools. Some people love electronics and smart phones. Others like paper agendas. Some people like to see a week at a glance or only a day. The system must fit and work for the individual.

Organizational systems should be flexible to adapt to changing plans and address things that pop up.

Important information that is often needed should be posted in a convenient location to avoid having to retrieve it many times a day. A cork board bulletin board or the front cover of a binder can be a good location.

Organizing information by date or by subject depends on the use and the person. Sometimes lumping it all together in the beginning gets it off the floor & it can be sorted in stages over time. Colour coding, cubbies, desk organizers, bookcases, magazine racks for shelves or hanging file folders, binders with tabs ...there are hundreds of ways to organize information. Not everything

works for everyone. Trial and error is the only way to figure it out. Walk around a business supply store and see what jumps out. Read books and scan the Internet for ideas and try them.

Make frequent notes during the day into a small scribbler, a nice leather bound journal, or a smart phone or Personal Data Assistant.

Adapted from Ylvisaker and colleagues (1998)