Motivation and Procrastination

Healthier South Wirral

What is procrastination

Procrastination is a common part of human behaviour. It is the act of delaying or putting off tasks until the last minute, or past their deadline. The reason we can procrastinate may be due to the stress in our lives or unfounded negative beliefs we have about ourselves. This can then turn to negative consequences such as guilt, self criticism and the task at hand piling up.

Procrastination cycle

Task/Goal

Unhelpful Rules/Assumptions

Procrastination Activities

Discomfort Driven

Procrastination Excuses

The unhelpful rules:

- **Needing To Be In Charge-** e.g., I shouldn't have to do something because someone else wants me to, I should be able to do them on my own.

- **Pleasure Seeking-** e.g., I should make the most of my life living it to the full, it is too short to be doing boring mundane tasks.

- **Fear Of Failure Or Disapproval-** (e.g., If I don't do things perfectly I will fail and everyone will be disappointed in me.

- **Low Self-Confidence-** e.g., I can't do it. I am just incapable and inadequate.

- **Depleted Energy** e.g., I can't do things when I am stressed, fatigued, unmotivated, or depressed.

To avoid the guilt we associated with procrastination, we often come up with excuses for our procrastination which help us feel better about putting a task off. These excuses often imply that because of some set of circumstances, we are better off leaving the task to another time.

Procrastination excuses examples:
- "I'm too tired, I'll do it tomorrow"
- "I don't have everything I need, I can't start it now"
- "It is better to do it when I am in the mood"
- "I will start the task at the beginning of the week as it is a fresh start"

Procrastination activities are the things you do as a diversion from or substitute for the key task or goal you need to accomplish. These can be activities that give us pleasure e.g., movies, reading, using social media apps, lower priority tasks e.g., sorting, tidying, or distractions e.g., sleeping, eating, smoking, etc

Ways to help with tasks:

- **Worst-First-** Tackling the task that seems the worst out of the all. This will help   the rest of the task seems less daunting.
- **Using Momentum-** Start by doing a more enjoyable task that can energise you (eg, house work) and then quickly move to a less enjoyable task and use that energy you have built up.
- **Just 5-Minutes-** Spend 5 minutes on a task, rest and reflect to see if you can spend 5 more or even double the time.
- **Prime Place/Time-** Working out the best time of day for you to start a task and the best place that it needs to get done eg doing an assignment in the morning before others are awake at the kitchen table where there are less distractions.
- **Set Time Limits-** A different approach is to set a specific amount of time to work on a task, and stick to just that, rather than extending things even if you feel you can.

Type of help	How much of the task was completed	Comments

Prioritise tasks with time scales to set expectations of yourself:

Priority 1:
   Time:

Priority 2:
   Time:

Priority 3:
   Time

Task 1: Start a walking exercise routine:

1. Find gym wear (5 mins)
2. Get changed (5 mins)
3. Short walk (15 mins)

Task 2:

Task 3:

SMART GOALS
What is your goal and the reason for wanting to achieve this

S	SPECIFIC WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?	
M	MEASURABLE HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?	
A	ACHIEVABLE HOW CAN THE GOAL BE ACCOMPLISHED?	
R	RELEVANT DOES THIS SEEM WORTHWHILE?	
T	TIME BOUND WHEN CAN I ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?	

Incremental steps

This is where you set small, achievable goals for yourself. Small Incremental steps can help us achieve our SMART goals. They help us think about what tools we need to reach the goal we want and the smaller steps in between to help us achieve the goal.

What is the first step I want to achieve?:

What tools do I need?:

Do I need external help?