



TIME MANAGEMENT

JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES THEORY

- **Job Demands:** Reduce workload to prevent burnout and negative outcomes
- **Job Resources:** Enhance support systems and resources to improve work engagement and positive outcomes

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE JOB DEMANDS

- **Intentional Decision-Making:** Prioritize tasks and align activities with personal and professional goals
 - **Ikigai:** A Japanese concept that means "reason for being"¹
 - Encourages us to align our work with what we love, what the world needs, what we can be paid for, and what we are good at
 - This alignment helps us find purpose, joy, and fulfillment in daily life





TRAINING TO ENHANCE RESEARCHER RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

- **Eisenhower Decision Matrix:** Helps prioritize tasks by categorizing them into four quadrants
 1. Important and Urgent in green: Top priorities needing immediate attention
 2. Important but Not Urgent in blue: Schedule for later
 3. Urgent but Less Important in yellow: Delegate to others
 4. Neither Important nor Urgent in red: Eliminate these distractions

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	First focus on important task to be done ASAP	Important, but not-so-urgent stuff, should be scheduled
Not Important	Urgent but less important, delegate to others	Neither important nor urgent, don't do at all

- **Delegation:** Use the 6 levels of delegation to manage tasks efficiently²
 - Do as I say
 - Look into this
 - Give me your advice, I'll decide
 - Explore, decide, and check with me
 - Explore and decide within these limits
 - Take care of it for me
- **Make things count twice:** Create various outputs, such as publications, presentations, and datasets
- **Learn to Say No:** Develop strategies to decline requests strategically to maintain focus on core objectives
 - **It's tough to say "no":** Saying "no" is essential to protect your time and energy by establishing healthy boundaries
 - **Do not say "yes" or "no" on the spot:** It's perfectly acceptable to say, "Let me think about it and get back to you."
 - **When to say "yes" or no":** Questions to guide your decision-making³
 - Does the request fit with your career goals?
 - Would the work use your skills?
 - What is the long-term benefit of this work? Could it lead to other work that is more closely related to your goals?
 - What is the timing of this work? Does it need to be done within a week, a month, or can it be done more long term when you may have more time?



TRAINING TO ENHANCE RESEARCHER RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

- Can you be involved in part of the work but not all?
- Are you able to give up another responsibility in order to take on the new request?
- Is the requestor someone who is your supervisor or who can influence your career?
- Would saying "no" jeopardize other parts of your job or career goals?
- **"No Committee":** Helps evaluate and decide on new opportunities⁴
 - **What:** Helps you decide whether to decline or accept requests strategically
 - **Who:** Small group of individuals (ideally 3 members) who prioritize your well-being, understand your professional environment (e.g., service obligations, politics, unpaid labor, visibility tradeoffs), can keep confidences
 - **How:** Send an e-mail with a new opportunity that includes a clear description of the opportunity, what you know about expectations, your reasons for wanting to say yes, your doubts or concerns
- **How to say "no"**
 - Be clear: Respond directly and assertively without being unkind
 - Give reasons: Briefly explain why you cannot accept the project, maintaining honesty
 - Offer help if you can: Suggest someone else who might be interested or provide helpful resources
- **Example phrases for saying "no"**
 - **Priority/bandwidth/timeline-based "no"**
 - "When would you need this by? I'd love to help, but given my current workload, I wouldn't be able to do this well. I don't want to overcommit."
 - "I'm currently focusing on [grant writing / existing projects], so I won't be able to commit to this."
 - **Alignment-based "no":** "I appreciate the opportunity. Given my current focus, I wouldn't be able to give this the attention it deserves."
 - **"No" and suggesting another person:** "I won't be able to participate, but based on the scope, you might consider [Name], who has particular strength in this space."



STRATEGIES TO INCREASE JOB AND PERSONAL RESOURCES

- **Protect Your Focus**
 - Set **no more than 3 goals** at any given timeframe
 - **Segment goals into various timeframes:** yearly, quarterly, weekly, and daily
 - Ensure yearly goals guide quarterly objectives, which in turn influence weekly and daily tasks
 - **Embrace serial monotasking** to enhance productivity by avoiding the pitfalls of multitasking
- **Manage your calendar** to protect deep work time, organize tasks, and manage time effectively
 - **The Pomodoro Technique:** Do focused work during 25-minute intervals (known as pomodoros)
 1. Pick a task
 2. Set a 25-minute timer
 3. Work on your task
 4. Take a 5-minute break
 5. Take a longer 15-30-minute break after 4 sessions
 - **Timeboxing:** Migrate your to-do list to your calendar to maximize productivity
 - Schedule critical tasks during peak productivity hours
 - Include buffer times to reduce stress and allow flexibility
 - Regularly review and adjust time blocks as needed
 - **Gantt chart:** Project management tool for planning and tracking tasks over time
 - **Vertical axis:** Lists tasks
 - **Horizontal axis:** Timeline
 - **Horizontal bars:** Represent tasks, length indicates duration



REFERENCES

1. https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2022/03/ikigai_japanese_secret_to_a_joyful_life.html
2. Meisel A. The Art of Less Doing : One Entrepreneur's Formula for a Beautiful Life. Paperback Edition. Lioncrest Publishing, a division of Scribe Media; 2016.
3. Schrager S, Sadowski E. Getting More Done: Strategies to Increase Scholarly Productivity. J Grad Med Educ. 2016;8(1):10-13.
4. Golash-Boza T. Get Yourself a NO committee. Blogspot.com. Published 2016. Accessed March 6, 2026. <https://getalifephd.blogspot.com/2016/01/get-yourself-no-committee.html>

This module is part of the Training to Enhance Researcher Resilience and Adaptability program funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under grant R25GM153811. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

Co-PIs: Rachel Schwartz, PhD; Jina L. Sinsky, MD

Content Expert: Joyce M. Chang, MD