

EXERCISE:

How do I Use My Time?

FORMAT:
EXERCISE

TIME: 30–60 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: ‘USE OF TIME’ WRITTEN EXERCISE (SEE BELOW)

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this exercise is to open up discussions to the more ‘personal’ side of integrated security. It includes a written exercise that allows individual participants to take stock of the amount of time they invest in their work as opposed to their physical and emotional well-being.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

1. Hand out the ‘use of time’ written exercise to all participants.
2. Ask them to fill it out themselves, silently (they can sit wherever they are comfortable). They should sit alone, and not discuss their answers with other participants – if they have questions, they can put them to facilitators. This should take approximately 20 minutes.
3. When completed, ask the group members for their reactions to the exercise itself. *This is not to obtain their answers to the questions* (although it is fine if participants want to share a specific point), but to discover what it felt like to look at these questions in a structured way.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This is usually an interesting session, as most participants find the exercise challenging and intriguing. Many have said that they were shocked to look hard at how they were using their time and to see how little they had for themselves.

Reassure participants that the written exercise is for them alone, it will not be handed in, and no one else would see it.

Some participants can get stuck with the process of quantifying their time in this way (that is, it is hard for them to make exact calculations, or they do not add up correctly, etc.). Reassure them that the point of the exercise is to help them to look at their time differently – it does not have to be exact.

Note that the exercise contains a question on sexual pleasure, which may be present challenges to extremely conservative or mixed gender groups (keep in mind that no one will see the answers and participants do not have to discuss them). This question can be removed if necessary. Ironically, in one of the few instances where it was removed (for the reason of cultural sensitivity), during the discussion process, several participants asked why sexual pleasure had not been included as a question, since it is such an important subject in their lives.

Alternative option:

An alternative to the use of time exercise is the ‘when was the last time I...?’ exercise (see page 130), which is very powerful and requires some preparation on the evening before. It should be used if the group needs to release and connect more with the integration of the private/public dimensions of security. It is also helpful in addressing group dynamics. However, it requires careful handling during and after the exercise as it can release a lot of emotions. See Part Three: Facilitator’s Toolkit.