

WHEN CAN WE BE TOGETHER?

GOALS OF THE EXERCISE

1. To find an acceptable balance between the competing demands of external activities and family responsibilities.
2. Reduce family tension/stress related to lack of family time.

ADDITIONAL HOMEWORK THAT MAY BE APPLICABLE TO EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES AFFECTING FAMILY ROLE

- Acting as If Page 52
- Everything Is Always Negative in Our House Page 92
- Why Can't You Understand My Side for Once? Pages 164, 166

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS IN WHICH THIS EXERCISE MAY BE USEFUL

- Poor Communication
- Disengagement
- Jealousy
- Anger

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROCESSING THIS EXERCISE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

Many families have difficulty finding time for each other. Children are often involved in numerous activities, and very often both parents are working. As a result, family time is competing with a multitude of other activities and demands. The following activity is designed to help families create time for the family as a whole.

WHEN CAN WE BE TOGETHER?

The following exercise is designed to help family members create time for the family as a whole. Each of you will need some paper and a pen or pencil. During a family meeting, respond to the following statements.

1. Each family member is to express his/her priorities regarding how time is spent (e.g., family time, work, individual time, friends, etc.).
2. Each family member should rank-order these priorities according to most important to least important.
3. Approximately how much time is currently being spent on each priority?
4. Each family member is to express his/her feelings regarding the lack of time spent together as a family or with a particular family member.
5. Have each family member describe how much time he/she would like to spend as a family or with that particular family member.
6. As a family, brainstorm a list of possible family activities that might be considered (e.g., monthly family night out or night in, weekly family meetings to touch base with others and share how his/her week has been, monthly lunch date with Dad, monthly shopping trip with Mom).
7. As a family, use a calendar to select some dates as to when and what you will do together.