

# Time Management and Avoiding Procrastination



## Grad Success Week 2023

Presented by:

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# Territorial Acknowledgement

*The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.*

# Outline

- Understanding Procrastination
- The Procrastination Equation
- $$M = \frac{\text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value}}{\text{Impulsivity} \times \text{Delay}}$$
- **Expectancy**
- **Value**
- **Impulsivity**
- **Delay**
- **Make a Commitment**



# Definitions

## **Motivation:**

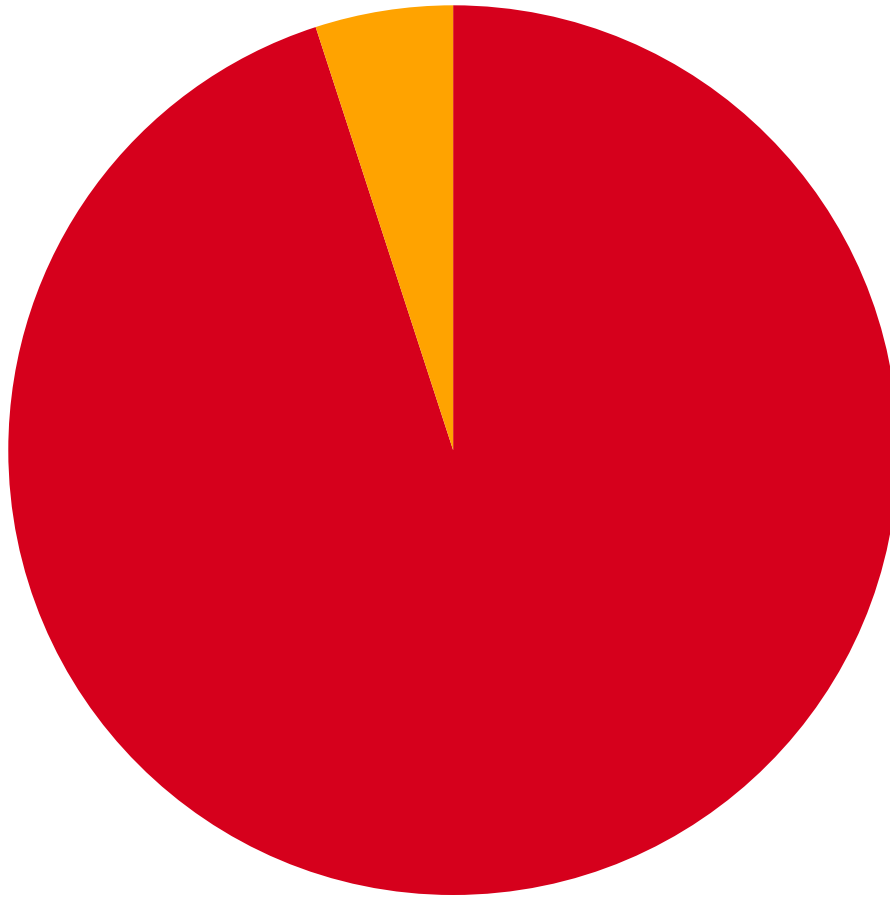
- something (such as a need or desire) that causes a person to act
- a motivating force, stimulus, or influence : incentive, drive (Merriam – Webster)

## **Procrastination:**

- an irrational tendency to postpone things that should be done (Lay, 1986)

# How “normal” is it

Incidence



- Procrastinates
- Doesn't

# How “normal” is it

Incidence

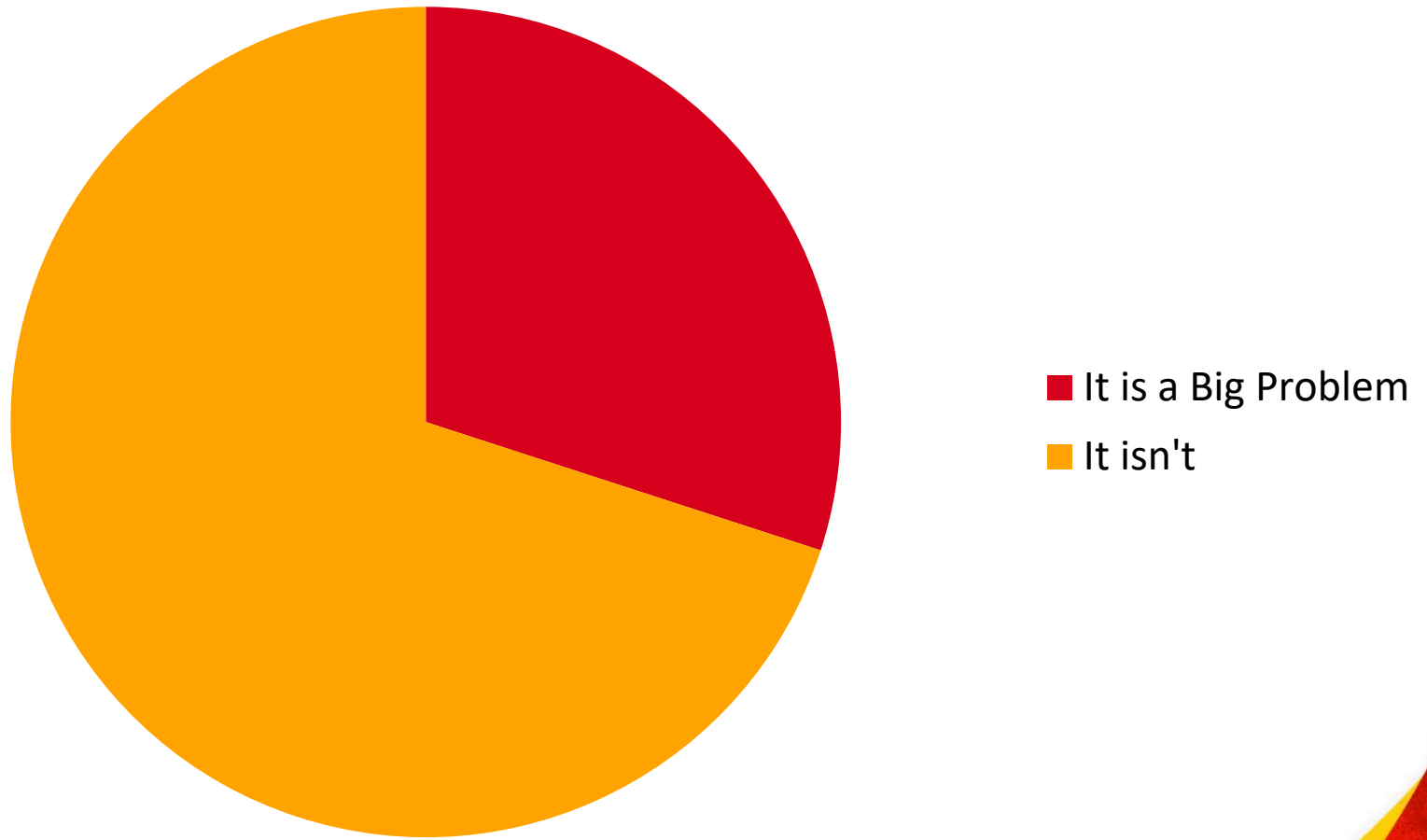


■ It is a Problem

■ It isn't

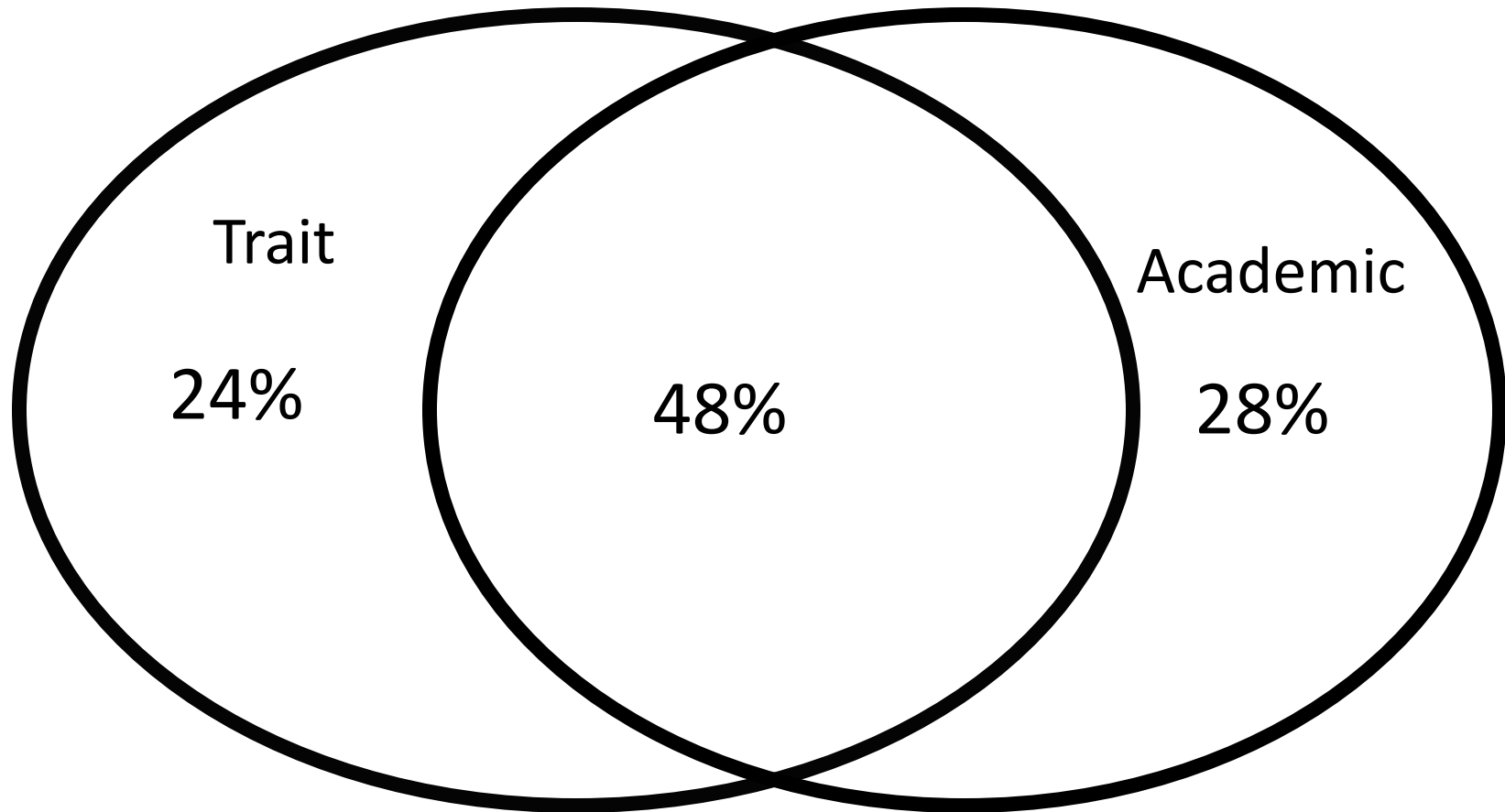
# How “normal” is it

## Incidence



# Academic and Trait Procrastination

Schouwenburg (2004)





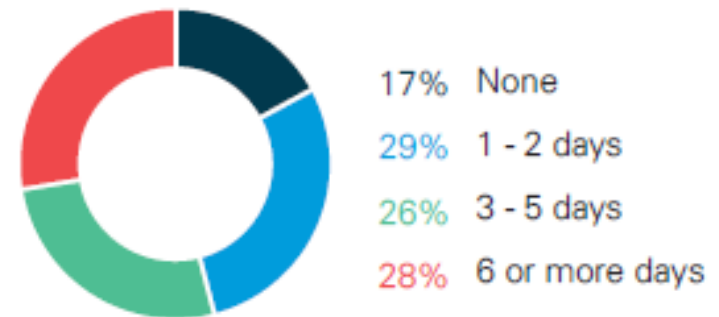


# THE HEALTHY MINDS STUDY

Fall 2020 Data Report

## ACADEMIC IMPAIRMENT

In the past 4 weeks, how many days have you felt that emotional or mental difficulties have hurt your academic performance?





UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY



# Consequences



## External

- Monetary Loss
- Loss of Friendship
- Lower Grades
- Incomplete Program
- Conflict with . . .
- Decreased Responsibility
- Job Loss
- Legal Penalties
- Financial Difficulties
- Accidents

## Internal

- Self-Criticism
- Embarrassment
- Anxiety or Panic
- Tension
- Lack of Concentration
- Loss of Pleasure
- Guilt
- Depression
- Exhaustion, Illness
- Excitement or Thrill

# Procrastination

MOTIVATION IS...

EXPECTANCY X VALUE

IMPULSIVENESS X DELAY

Piers Steele

# EXPECTANCY

## The procrastinator's assumption:

**Motivation** leads to  
**Action**

But in fact

**Action** leads to  
**Motivation** leads to  
**Action**

(Kearns & Gardiner, 2009)

## Avoid Procrastination- Understand Motivation

*“I don’t feel like it today. It’s been a long day. I’ll be ready to get to work on it tomorrow.”*

*“I just doing feel like writing this paper. I need to get motivation to start!”*

- Procrastinators overestimate that they will feel great, have more energy, or be motivated tomorrow
- Procrastinators mistakenly believe that starting or succeeding in a task requires that they feel like doing it



☐ NOW  
☒ LATER

## Avoid Procrastination- Adjust Your Time Perception

*“I’ll be able to get that paper done by Monday. I have all weekend.”*

*“Five chapters isn’t too much to read, I’ll get to that tomorrow.”*

- Procrastinators underestimate time required to complete a task
- Non-procrastinators overestimate the time required

McCown (1986)





On the following table, write down the activities you plan to do in the next few days and how long you think each task will take you. Be specific in identifying the tasks. E.g. Read 3 journal articles. Get 3 journal articles from library. Then, as you do the tasks, monitor how long it actually takes you and write this down.

[illegible]

VALUE

# Assess Your Priorities

- Is University important to you? Why?
- Are you here for yourself or someone else?
- Are you passionate about what you are studying?
- What other areas of my life are important to me and should be prioritized? Why are these things important?

# Setting Priorities



Urgent

Non-Urgent

Important

Unimportant


# Setting Priorities



Urgent

Non-Urgent

Important

**Do Now**

**Do Later**

**Schedule  
Plan**

Unimportant

**Delegate**

**Wait  
2 minute rule**

**Delete**

**Eliminate  
Reward**

## Your Procrastination Benefit Chart

**Situation:**

Short Term		Long Term	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>Delay</i>			
<i>Do</i>			

# IMPULSIVENESS

# Time Management

## Make a Daily Schedule



- Consistency
- Start the day with enjoyable task
- Set goals and break down into small steps
- Limit access to media
- Create space for connecting
- Take breaks
- Identify potential obstacles and plans for overcoming them
- Reward yourself for progress

*Anything to add?*



# Getting Help From Others

- Choose Supportive People
- Parallel Work
- Make a Public Commitment
- Review Plan Together
- Plan Social Rewards



# 5 Minute Rule

- When tempted to Procrastinate,  
commit to work for 5 minutes
- Assess the task
- Set yourself up for more work
- Get the ball rolling
- Reduce anxiety
- Work with the ratios

# Identify Procrastination Patterns




# Procrastination Log Knaus 2002

- What am I delaying?
- What feelings contribute to delaying on this?
- What thoughts contribute to delaying on this?
- What was the outcome?
- What can I do to not delay in this area?

DELAY

# Time Management

- Set Goals
  - Break task(s) down into small, discrete, non-overlapping steps
  - Identify when you are going to do the steps
  - Identify potential obstacles and plans for overcoming them
  - Reward yourself for progress
- 

# Set SMART Goals

Set short and long term SMART Goals:

- **Specific:** *who, what, where, when, how, why?*
- **Measurable:** *how can I keep track of my progress? How do I know if I am on the right track?*
- **Action Oriented:** *what specific things can I do to achieve this? Is the goal based on action rather than just ideas?*
- **Realistic:** *is this goal realistic? Do I have the time/resources/knowledge required?*
- **Timely:** *what is the deadline by which I'd like to have the goal achieved?*

# Goal Setting

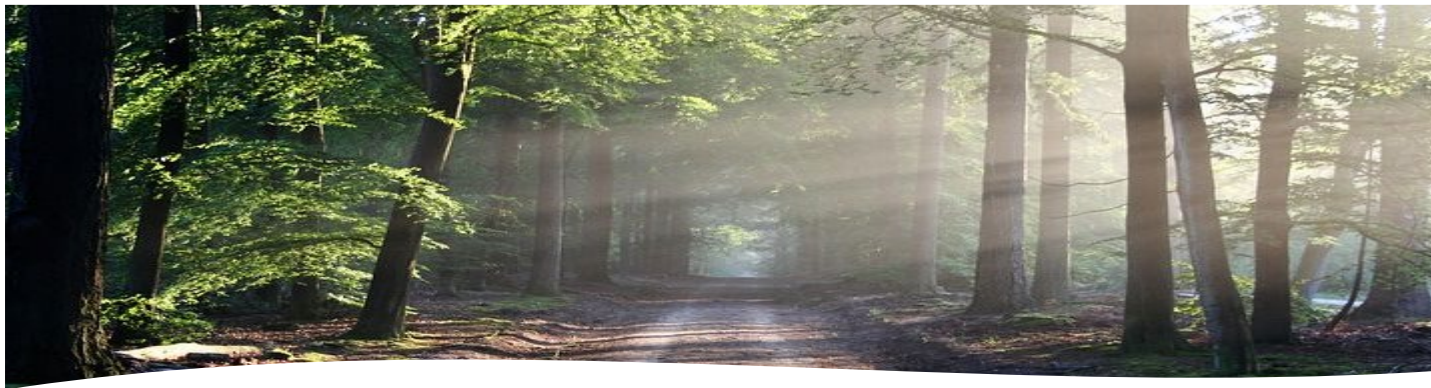
1. Identify final product \_\_\_\_\_  
and target date for completion \_\_\_\_\_
2. Identify major components of product and target dates:

Task	Target Date	Date Completed

3. Now break down the major component with the soonest target date  
and break that down into steps with target dates.

Task	Target Date	Date Completed





## Keeping Balanced

- Healthy diet, sleep hygiene and physical activity
- Growth and learning mindset
- Reach out and encourage others, join a group
- Limit media consumption
- Focus on more relaxing and recharging activities
  - Deep breathing
  - Meditation
  - Guided imagery
- Ask for help and access resources

# Make a Commitment!

- Writing down & sharing goals makes it more likely that you will achieve them
- What one strategy are you going to try?
- Write it down
- Share it – with a partner
- Remember: SMART

## Additional Resources

- Counselling Centre
  - One at a Time Counselling – bookable online
  - Self Help Resources including videos that review these and other strategies
- Student Success Centre
  - Workshops on various academic concerns
  - Appointments bookable online with  
Academic Development Specialists

**Thank you for your  
listening!**

**Questions or comments?**