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## It's Time for Leisure Time

Now more than ever before, it is important to include in therapy sessions the target problem of appropriate use of leisure time. A significant part of my therapeutic interventions is discussion of the question, "how are you spending your "down time." Sometimes the client will answer with "what down time," at which point the discussion will go to Type A personality (Holmes and Rahe) and the benefits of finding activities that can be relaxing and stress reducing. The recommendation should be appropriate to the attributes of the client, for example, variations on hobbies or activities of interest.

Leisure time Activities (LTA) is a well-researched behavioral science. The University of Minnesota offers a degree in LTA; my interest in using LTA as an important therapeutic tool started at "the U." Hugh Prather, American, self-help writer, lay minister and counselor, asked an intriguing question, in his book Notes To Myself, that hooked this writer, "why do I feel that when I am doing nothing, I am wasting time?" The question is thought-provoking, to say the least: it is (my) the question when introducing LTA.

Recommended LTA should have some specificity rather than being generalized. For example, suggesting listening to music is general; the therapist should lead the client in thinking through how the s/he reacts to different genres of music. Once my suggestion to a client was that she listen to a soft jazz artist; client's feedback was it made her more anxious. She tried LL Cool J; his music relaxed her. Lesson learned! Yoga is a good activity to recommend because it can be geared to the individual's age, size, space and physical limitations/abilities. Benefits are physical strengthening of core muscles, cognitive-operations (Piaget) and can be very relaxing.

"Doing nothing" is fundamental to "recharging" one's mental, emotional, and physical capacities. Appropriate LTA can be beneficial to one's well-being and help to buoy one's attitude during the period of "social distancing." The challenge at this point in time is to make decisions for LTA consistent with the client's interests, capacities and availability. Client's interests would include home-based or sedentary fun things or hobbies that s/he has participated in or wanted to but never did. Capacity refers to what a client is physically or mentally able to do; and availability refers to resources. Of course, there is nothing wrong with being from time to time, a couch potato.