

Session 7:

Integrated Wellness

— Strategies

TIME: 150 MINUTES

ACTIVITIES:

- *How do I use my time?*
Exercise and reactions;
and
- *Integrated wellness*
strategies exercise and
discussions.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- to banish the mindset that problems are insurmountable and that we have no strategies;
- to remind women human rights defenders of their power to make choices and to heal themselves (which in turn helps us to look at how to support others);
- to introduce a range of useful, practical integrated wellness strategies;
- to remove blocks to our access to sustainability strategies; and
- to make participants aware of their internal capacities
– and that changing the culture of human rights work begins with the individual.

ADAPTATION NOTES:

- The integrated wellness strategies exercise can be replaced or enhanced by exercises included in Part Three: Facilitator's Toolkit. In some cases, Day Two may be designed with a focus entirely on well-being.
- Integrated wellness strategy exercises can be held outside, in nature (which is preferable). They can be preceded by a silent meditation walk.
- For more challenging groups, the integrated wellness exercise can be replaced by an open discussion of strategies to cope with violence and/or stress.

EXERCISE:FORMAT:

EXERCISE

How do I Use My Time?

TIME: 30–60 MINREQUIRED 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.

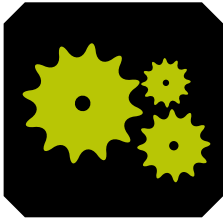
Reassure participants that the written exercise is for them alone, it will not be handed in, and no one else would see it.

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.



WRITTEN EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/3

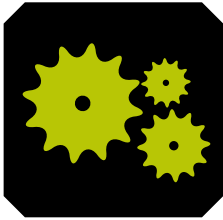
FORMAT:

WRITTEN
EXERCISE

Use of Time²⁴

1) Your work	Hours /day	Days /week	Hours /week
a. In total, how many hours per day do you spend working as an activist (paid and unpaid)? Number of days a week that do you this work? ['Work' includes meetings (in or out of office), events, conferences, work chats, replying to official e-mails, workshops, office work, work at home, 'social' work events, consultancies].			
• On average, how many hours per day do you spend on unpaid work (activism)? Number of days per week?			
• On average, how many hours per day do you spend on paid work (activism)? Number of days per week?			
b. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on paid work that is not related to your activism (often your main source of income)? Number of days per week?			
c. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on domestic chores (cleaning, administration, shopping, caring for others, etc.)? Number of days per week?			

2) Your resources	Hours /day	Days /week	Hours /week
a. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on your training (this could include school, classes, library, courses, lectures, workshops, diploma courses, preparing for exams, thesis)? Number of days per week?			
b. Nutrition: on average, how many hours per day do you spend eating?		7	
How many times per day on average do you eat? _____			
Do you frequently skip any meals in a day? _____ If yes, which meal? _____			
Do you substitute meals with 'fast food'? If yes, which meals? _____			
c. Exercise: on average, how many hours do you spend doing some form of exercise per day? Number of days per week?			
d. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on personal care (having a massage, applying a mask, having your hair cut, nails done, long relaxing baths, etc.)?			
e. Rest: how many hours per day do you spend on quality rest (sleep or naps)? What time do you usually go to bed? _____ What time do you usually rise? _____		7	



WRITTEN EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/3

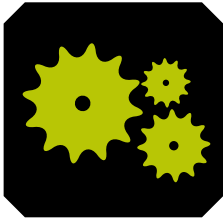
FORMAT:

WRITTEN
EXERCISE

Use of Time

2) Your resources	Hours /day	Days /week	Hours /week
f. Personal development/contemplative practices: how many hours per day do you spend on personal development (being with yourself, reflecting, meditating, other contemplative/spiritual practices, attending healing and/or therapy sessions)?			
g. How many hours per day do you spend on your interpersonal relationships: family, partner/lover(s), friends, others? How many days per week?			
h. How many hours per day do you spend on sexual pleasure (alone or in company)? Days per week?			
How many hours per day do you spend on other pleasurable/relaxing/supportive activities? Number of days per week? What are these activities? List here:			

3) Coping mechanisms	Number /day	Days /week	Amount /week
a. Stimulants: how many cups of coffee do you drink per day? Number of days per week?			
b. Cigarettes: how many cigarettes do you smoke per day? Number of days per week?			
c. Alcohol: how many units of alcohol do you drink per day? (One unit = small glass of wine or half a pint of beer.) Number of days per week?			
d. Other: what other ways do you find yourself coping with stress? (For example, sleeping more than usual, irritability with family and friends, binge/comfort eating.) List here:			



WRITTEN EXERCISE:

PAGE 3/3

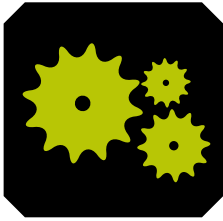
FORMAT:

WRITTEN
EXERCISE

Use of Time

4) Health

a. When was the last time you visited a health care professional/healer?	
b. How many times per year do you have a routine health check up?	
c. Do you feel any pain in your body right now? If yes, where?	
d. If you have pain in your body, what steps do you take to ease that pain?	
e. If you do have health concerns, what are they?	
f. If you do have major health concerns, have you brought them to the attention of a health care professional with whom you feel comfortable?	
g. Any other health comments?	



EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/2

FORMAT:

EXERCISE

Integrated Wellness and Safety Strategies

TIME: 60-90 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: SIX BLANK CARDS OR STRIPS OF PAPER PER PERSON; AND SEVERAL CONTAINERS OR BOWLS FOR PAPERS.

SUMMARY:

This is an exercise to draw out a range of individual strategies that participants use to stay well, to care for themselves, and to cope with the demands of their work.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

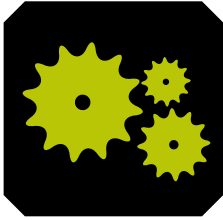
1. Ask each participant to find a comfortable place to work alone. They should write down six different strategies on coloured pieces of paper that they employ to deal with stress and to stay well and safe.
2. As soon as they have completed them, ask the participants to fold their pieces of paper and to place them in the bowls (or other containers).
3. Note that sometimes, participants will resist and say that they do not have that many strategies – facilitators should encourage them to think more deeply. In addition, be clear that no judgement will be made about whether it is a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ strategy – ‘coping’ strategies such as eating chocolate, smoking and drinking are also strategies and should be included on the lists.
4. Facilitators take the answers and group them into themes (this can take a little time, so it is best to do it as answers come in, then complete it during the break).
5. Facilitators will need approximately 20 minutes to organise strategies into themes and to prepare to read them out.
6. At this point, ask participants to go to the workshop’s ‘second space’ and to get very comfortable – ideally

they should lie down and close their eyes. Then the facilitator(s) reads out the themes, with examples, elaborating a little on each, and asks the participants to feel each strategy – how it feels in their body; the thought that they could take the time for it.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This can be a challenging exercise for women human rights defenders – many have told us that they did not have any strategies, and if they did, they were just ‘negative coping mechanisms’. Sometimes they focused on externalised strategies (for example, exclusively obtaining support from international agencies) or challenged some strategies as ‘elitist’ or inaccessible due to cost – during the Nepal workshop, for instance, the idea of ‘massage’ as a wellness strategy was quite contentious and perceived by some as a Western luxury. Others, though, examined the use of massage traditionally in their own cultures, and pointed out that, essentially, this is a healing activity, and can be requested from and received by family members/friends or through a system of barter.

When you spend some time on this exercise, a range of strategies emerge that are accessible to all activists – and often revolve around personal choices, establishing boundaries and value for our bodies and spirit. Examples



WRITTEN EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:
EXERCISE

Integrated Wellness and Safety Strategies

include sleeping more, eating better, exercising, gardening, spiritual practice, dancing, painting, writing, reading light novels or children's books, and spending more time with friends and family members.

This exercise shows the group how many strategies are right there in the room. It demonstrates too that most strategies do not require money – just time – so they are all possible, it is just a matter of taking that time and prioritising wellness, which connects back to the use of resources exercise.

After this exercise, there should be a spontaneous discussion of the strategies. During this discussion participants will add more strategies, and debate why some may or may not work for them.

This is also a good point for facilitators to reflect on why we are looking at strategies and why they are so important, and to reinforce great strategies that came up. Furthermore facilitators can look at themes, and add other strategies or themes that were missing – points that we want to reinforce.

Variations:

Alternately, facilitators can lay out the strategy cards around the circle in the centre of the workshop space and then read them out while walking around. This can be very beautiful visually and connects the strategies with the central space. In addition, it allows participants to look at the strategies later.