

Cut the Clutter and Get Organized

Denise Dias
Sedgwick County Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

Leader's Guide

Lesson Objectives

1. Increase participants' knowledge of home organization.
2. Identify strategies participants can use to reduce or eliminate clutter from their homes.
3. Participants will learn organizational techniques and practice these techniques through a program activity.

Intended Audiences

FCE groups, Extension, mothers of preschoolers/mother's day out programs, community agencies, church groups, senior centers and others.

Introduction to the Topic

American consumers have a penchant for purchasing a great deal of "stuff," which has led to clutter-filled houses. In addition, families have less time to keep everything organized. This lack of organization causes stress for the person in charge of the household. Children and other family members in the home also feel unsettled by this lack of organization.

The focus of this lesson is to encourage individuals and families to adopt new habits to help keep their homes more organized, resulting in less stressful living. Participants will share ideas about how to involve other family members in clutter control and will review some basic storage concepts.

Before the Lesson

- Review the leader's guide and fact sheet (MF2879).
- Obtain copies of the fact sheet for each participant.
- Search the Internet for relevant Web sites to enhance the topic.
- Gather materials needed for the activities listed below.

Presenting the Lesson

The lesson covers basics of how to sort through and clean up clutter. A special section contains ideas for closet cleaning and storage. You may want to bring illustrations of cluttered or poorly organized closets – including before and after cleaning pictures.

The presentation may be oral, or you may download the PowerPoint presentation (EP161) from the K-State Research and Extension Publications Library, www.ksre.ksu.edu/library. It is also available through the FCS Web site, www.ksre.ksu.edu/fcs.

Be sure to allow time for participants to discuss strategies they use at home to keep things neat and organized. This discussion can be the icebreaker at the beginning of the lesson.

Optional Program Activities

1. Put the sorting method into practice

Give each participant two envelopes and two index cards. Have them write *Give Away*

and *Store/File* on the envelopes. Have them write *Put Away* and *Trash* on the cards. One envelope is for items to give away and one envelope is for items or receipts to store or file. The card labeled *Put Away* is for items to put back into their purses or wallets after they have sorted everything. The card labeled *Trash* is to identify items that need to be thrown away.

Instruct attendees to empty their purses or wallets and sort everything into the four piles. Once they have completed that task, they can return the *Put Away* pile to their purses. Next, participants should place items in the *Give Away* pile into its envelope to take home and give away. The *Store/File* pile needs to go into its envelope and be taken home and filed. The trash pile goes into the trash can.

Ask participants how they felt before, during and after the activity. This same method of sorting clutter can work in any room or closet in their home.

2. Make a job spinner

Use a paper plate or a circle of stiff paper. Divide the circle as you would a pie. In each section, write a household job to do. Make an arrow out of stiff paper and attach it to the paper with a clasp fastener. Then spin the arrow to determine your job.

3. Make a job jar

Write all jobs and chores on slips of paper, and place the slips in a can or jar. When its time to assign chores, every family member chooses a slip of paper from the jar until all slips are gone. These are the chores for everyone to do for the next week, month, etc. One jar could be for routine or daily tasks (such as feeding the pets, washing dishes and taking out the trash) and one jar could be for occasional tasks (washing windows and sweeping the porch).

4. Make a chart or bulletin board

Use it for family members to record their

contributions to clutter control. Make a weekly schedule and rotate jobs so that no one does the same job all the time.

Community Awareness Activities

1. Present the lesson to another group that could benefit from this information.
2. Coordinate a recycling day, e-waste recycling event or dumpster day in your community or neighborhood.
3. Set up a display at a community event that explains how to sort into categories and turn a clutter-filled house into an organized home.

Related Extension Publications

Organizing the Household, MF2254

Delegating, MF2255

Organizing Household Records, L801

(available at www.ksre.ksu.edu/library)

References

Kansas State Cooperative Extension Publication GT-205, Mary E. Tucker, Extension Specialist, Environmental Family Housing, 1986.

Author

Denise Dias, Sedgwick County Extension Agent, FCS
Sedgwick County Extension Office
7001 W 21st Street N
Wichita, KS 67205
316-660-0100
ddias@ksu.edu

Reviewers

Shirley Niemeyer, Ph.D., Professor
Extension Specialist/Research,
Housing and Environment
Room 205 HE Bldg. East Campus
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0804

Jan McMahan, Sedgwick County
Extension Agent, FCS,
EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition
Education Program)

Cut the Clutter Evaluation

Date of Program: _____

Program County: _____

Instructor: _____

1. Because of my participation in *Cut the Clutter and Get Organized*, I learned something new. Circle either yes or no.

2. If yes, what did you learn?

3. Because of your participation in this program, do you plan to take any action or change anything in your life?
Circle yes or no.

4. If yes, what will you change?

5. For the following questions, please place a check in the appropriate box.

	Definitely false	More false than true	In between	More true than false	Definitely true
Because of this program, I have more positive feelings about this topic.					
Overall, I rate this program as excellent.					
Overall, I rate this instructor an excellent teacher.					

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Publications from Kansas State University are available on the World Wide Web at: www.ksre.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Denise Dias, *Cut the Clutter and Get Organized, Leader's Guide*, Kansas State University, July 2009