

WELLBEING

in the Workplace



Mental Health FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

From Languishing to Flourishing: Finding Your Flow

Languishing – the sense of stagnation and general blah so many of us have experienced during the pandemic – can be hard to bounce back from. Also defined as the void between depression and flourishing, languishing often looks like fatigue, burnout, apathy, feelings of detachment or loss of interest in passions and hobbies.

Whether it's apparent or not, all of us have experienced collective trauma due to the pandemic. The resulting grief over things lost, whether it's people in our lives or our general sense of normalcy, can make it difficult – even overwhelming – to move forward and carry out regular tasks.

Signs and symptoms of languishing can vary for each person and may look different whether the individual is at home or at work. Some common symptoms to be mindful of include:

- Apathy toward life and difficulty getting excited about anything.
- Not happy, but not noticeably sad either.
- Feeling detached from life, tasks, or people without feeling negative emotions toward them.
- Lack of motivation.
- Unsettled, but not highly anxious.
- Difficulty focusing on certain tasks, especially some days more than others.
- Feelings of stagnation.
- Feeling disconnected from your purpose in life.

Here's a three-step plan for post-traumatic growth from [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\)](#) that allows you to move from languishing to flourishing – when you feel generally positive toward life, even if bad things are happening:

1. Acknowledge your feelings, which helps neutralize them and gives the power back to you.
2. Turn inward for solutions. Try starting your day by acknowledging that, even though you don't know what might come next, you are alive, doing the best you can and don't want to waste the day or the moment. This shift in mindset generates oxytocin (known as “the love molecule”) in the brain and activates our internal regulation system.
3. Lean in to change. Transitions are hard – and normal and essential. They build our resiliency and allow us to embrace the benefits of the learning that come from change.



To put this plan into action, try making a list for yourself of the things you want to leave behind as you move forward from the pandemic (e.g., toxic relationships, unhealthy habits) and a list of things you want to keep (e.g., increased family time, working from home), then strategize ways you can make it all happen.

 Originally published on [MHFA.org](#)

How to Help a Colleague Who is Struggling

We spend one-third of our adult lives at work, and now that so many of us are seeing our work and our home lives intersect and overlap, we can find ourselves often feeling overwhelmed by all the extra stressors and challenges. All these factors can negatively impact mental health. Left unchecked, they can even lead to feelings of depression and anxiety.

According to the [Mental Health First Aid](#) (MHFA) curriculum, anxiety is characterized by a “persistent feeling of apprehension or dread” in situations that are not actually threatening. Stress can be a trigger for anxiety, so it’s important to identify the symptoms early. Feeling sad from time to time is also common, but if these feelings persist for longer than usual it may be worth taking a second look. Depression is common, with at least one in 10 people experiencing it in their lifetime.

Recognizing when a colleague or employee is struggling can be vital to making sure they get the support they need in a timely manner. It’s also great for productivity — employees who feel respected and supported are more likely to thrive in their roles.



Use these tips from the MHFA curriculum to recognize if colleague is struggling and offer support:

- 1. Notice changes in behavior.** Behaviors like irritability, changes in self-care/appearance, indecisiveness, fatigue and absenteeism can be signs that a colleague is facing a mental health or substance use challenge.
- 2. Have a conversation.** If you notice that your coworker’s behavior change has changed, you can start a supportive conversation with phrases like:
 - » “I’ve noticed you’ve been more quiet than usual and wondered if you are OK?”
 - » “It seems like you are having a difficult time.”
 - » “Is something bothering you?”
 - » “Would you like to talk?”

These questions open the door for you to support your colleague and offer resources when appropriate.

- 3. Listen nonjudgmentally.** When communicating with a colleague, it’s important to be an active listener and validate the emotions that they share with you without comparing them to your own experiences. Most people experiencing distressing emotions and thoughts want to be heard before being offered helpful options and resources. The goal of listening nonjudgmentally is to make it easier for the person to feel they can talk freely about their problems without being judged.

You can #BeTheDifference for your colleagues and employees by knowing the signs, checking in and listening to the needs of those around you.

 Originally published on [MHFA.org](#) ([here](#) and [here](#)).

Self-Care Strategies for Thriving in the Workplace

1. Rethink your time management and get organized.

» **Pro tip:** Try blocking off time on your calendar for specific tasks and checking emails just twice per day (or during designated, pre-scheduled times that work for you).

2. Set manageable daily goals – try to not overwhelm yourself.

3. Delegate some work if you're feeling overly stressed or anxious.

4. Make the most of your “office time,” and save the rest for tomorrow.

» **Pro tip:** Remember that if the work was ever really “done,” we wouldn't have jobs. There are five days in a work week, so prioritize your tasks (with your manager's help, if necessary) to stay grounded.

5. Reward yourself for each completed task.

» **Pro tip:** Even a small reward like a coffee break, a few minutes of random web browsing or a walk around the block can work well.

6. Practice saying motivational positive affirmations. According to [Forbes Health](#), this can bolster confidence, activating certain areas of the brain associated with reward in order to remind people of their self-worth. A few examples include:

- » “I am calm, I am in control, and I am safe.”
- » “I am stronger than my anxiety.”
- » “I am enough. I did enough. I can let go.”
- » “I am a leader, and challenges help me grow.”
- » “I forgive myself for mistakes I made when I didn't know better.”
- » “I am worthy of respect.”



National Support Resources

- [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's \(SAMHSA\) National Helpline](#)
 - » 800-662-4357 (HELP)
- [National Alliance on Mental Health \(NAMI\)](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
 - » Free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - » 800-273-8255 (TALK)
 - » In Spanish: 800-628-9454
 - » For those who are deaf or hard of hearing: 800-799-4889.
- [The Crisis Text Line](#)
 - » Text "MHFA" to 741-741 for free, 24/7 crisis counseling.
- [The Lifeline Crisis Chat website](#)
 - » Chat with crisis centers around the United States.
- [The Trevor Project](#)
 - » Specializes in supporting the LGBTQ community.
 - » 866-488-7386
 - » Text "START" to 678-678

