

## Mental Health Tips

# Feeling empty and just “meh”?

# You are languishing

You feel stuck, your mind wanders aimlessly, the world seemingly becomes joyless. It’s “languishing” – a sense of stagnation and emptiness that many of us are having during this pandemic. Here are some tips for you.



## WHY ARE WE LANGUISHING?

This pandemic has put many things we know and enjoy on hold, like traveling, exercise class, dining out or simply the daily commute. We are all living in the interim, where what we once knew no longer exists and the destination remains uncertain. Persistent uncertainties, loss of control over even small matters, living in the interim can be unsettling and disconcerting – hence languishing.

On the other hand, this interim period can be a space for reflection, growth and transformation. Rather than languishing and waiting for the world to happen, this is an opportunity to thrive.

## WHAT DOES LANGUISHING LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

Languishing can be understood as the state of low mental health and wellbeing. It is the void between depression and thriving. Languishing dulls your motivation and puts you at higher risk for mental illness.

The danger of languishing is not easy to notice. Have a look at the list of symptoms below.

- 01 Struggle to concentrate and make decisions**  
You struggle to find the right words than usual. Your train of thoughts are easily disrupted. Your attention span feels shorter than before. Complex tasks like report writing or strategy development become difficult.
- 02 Lack of enthusiasm**  
The purpose and meaning of work and life become foggy. Your job feels like just another means of survival. You feel indifferent towards the causes that you have always cared about.
- 03 Lack of vitality and motivation**  
Things that used to bring you joy, do not feel joyful anymore. You feel apathetic, mentally tired and avoid seeing others. You begin to lose track of simple things such as healthy eating and exercising.
- 04 Feel overwhelmed**  
The daily routine becomes overwhelming and too much to handle. Managing work, creating plans, maintaining home duties seem endless.

If any of these resonate with you, you are not alone. Even if you are not languishing, you probably know people who are. Understanding it better can help you help them.

This infographic was inspired by “There’s a name for the blah you’re feeling: It’s called languishing” by Adam Grant | The New York Times, 5 May 2021.

## FROM LANGUISHING TO THRIVING

Tips to shift your mind from languishing to thriving

### Articulate your feelings

Talking about your feelings gives you a clarity about the stage of your mental health and raises the need for intervention. Even when all you feel is emptiness, talk about it with someone you trust for more perspectives and supports.



### Embrace the interim

Recognise the fluidity and freedom that come with uncertainties. List down what you enjoyed and want to keep from last year, and what you want to let go. What will this mean for your life and work in the future? Try out different options and stay open to making mistakes.



### Focus on small goals

When the world feels overwhelming, gain back control through small wins. It can be going out for a walk or making your own dinner. Small wins every day can will help you rediscover the energy and enthusiasm that you’ve missed.



### Give yourself uninterrupted time

Even just 10 minutes, give yourself an interrupted space to digest and appreciate what has happened in the day. Just you and yourself, no phone, no work email or any potential distractions.



### Get in the “flow”

Immerse yourself in pastime activities where your sense of time and place melts away. It can be solving word puzzles, painting, cooking or dancing. This state of “flow” will re-energise you and help you reconnect with yourself and your passions.



**If you are struggling with stress, burnout and depression, talk to your doctor for a formal diagnosis and treatment.**