

WELL-BEING WEEK IN LAW

ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDE

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WELL-BEING WEEK IN LAW

MON



STAY STRONG

Physical Well-Being

TUES



ALIGN

Spiritual Well-Being

WEDS



ENGAGE & GROW

Career & Intellectual Well-Being

THURS



CONNECT

Social Well-Being

FRI



FEEL WELL

Emotional Well-Being

Activity Title:

Vanquishing Languishing

Well-Being Dimension:

Emotional Well-Being

Author:

Anne Brafford, JD, MAPP, PhD Candidate, Vice President, Institute for Well-Being in Law

Activity Objective

To bolster fuller daily engagement and vitality and get over feelings of languishing.

Well-Being Connection (How/Why Does this Work?)

“Behavioral Activation” to Overcome Inertia

The pandemic (and other world concerns) have left many of us not feeling fully well, and multiple experts have offered insights:

>>> In Spring 2021, psychologist Adam Grant wrote a [New York Times article](#) that gave that “blah” feeling a name: *languishing*. He described it as “a sense of stagnation and emptiness...as if you’re muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield.” The article struck a cord with many, who seemed relieved to know that they weren’t alone in feeling stagnate.

>>> Dani Blum followed up on Grant’s *NYT* article with her own on how to leave languishing behind and achieve *flourishing*. [Her article](#) recommended 6 simple daily practices to spark a sense of fulfillment, purpose, and happiness.

>>> The collective blahs have persisted, causing Brad Stulberg to [write a related article](#) in February 2022 suggesting active steps to avoid health-damaging inertia. He recommended practical strategies based on a well-established therapy (typically used for depression) called [behavioral activation](#) in which people commit to engaging in valued and enjoyable activities.

All three articles are evidence-based and worth a read for steps to overcome languishing. This Activity Guide focuses on *behavioral activation* to cultivate a greater sense of psychological well-being.

***Note: This Activity Guide does not constitute medical advice. If you are experiencing persistent depressive symptoms, please consult a medical health professional.*

Procedure

Behavioral Activation

The behavioral activation approach aims to make us more aware of our patterns of avoidance by monitoring and reviewing our daily behavior. Once we recognize our patterns, the main objective is to identify and reengage with activities and situations that reinforce and align with our values and that we enjoy. The focus is on increasing experiences of pleasant or pleasurable events, solving problems, engaging in behaviors that lead to experiences of mastery and accomplishment, and engaging in meaningful and difficult behaviors that are consistent with our life values (Kanter et al., 2010).

Below are suggested steps to give behavioral activation a try in your own life. For more detailed guidance, check out Michael Addis and Christopher Martell's workbook, [Overcoming Depression One Step at a Time: The New Behavioral Activation Approach to Getting Your Life Back](#). The University of Michigan's School of Medicine also offers a [free online handbook](#).

STEP 1. Monitor Your Behaviors & Moods

Much of our behavior is so automatic that it occurs outside of our awareness and as a matter of habit. To begin to change our patterns to boost well-being, we need to gain better awareness of them. A good way to do so is to create an Activity and Mood Monitoring Chart. For a week or more, complete an activity log (sort of like your billable time log) on an hour-to-hour basis. Simply write down brief statements of what you're doing each hour (Addis & Martell, 2004). PositivePsychology.com provides a free [Activity Schedule](#) that you can use.

STEP 2. Identify Corresponding Moods

Next, for each activity, write down a few words that describe how you felt during the activity. Words might include, for example, happy, joyful, passionate, angry, anxious, or sad. Rate each emotion on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most intense (Addis & Martell, 2004). Alternatively, rate the level of Depression, Pleasure, or sense of Achievement you felt before and after the activity. You can use a [free template](#) provided by Therapist Aid. An alternative [Pleasurable Activity Log](#) is available on PositivePsychology.com.

STEP 3. Review What You Noticed

After you've created your logs for a week, review them and identify patterns. Did your moods vary or not? Are there common times of the day that are more difficult or easier for you? Are there situations that routinely make you happy or are associated with negative emotions? (Addis & Martell, 2004).

Procedure

STEP 4. Identify Behaviors' Impact

Next, review your logs and identify what activities or behaviors made you feel bad frequently. Consider alternatives that can make you feel better or improve the situation. Also identify activities and behaviors that regularly boosted your mood. Consider why that was so and how you can increase those ingredients in your daily schedule.

STEP 5. Reflect on Other Types of Enjoyable & Valued Activities

Also think about other types of activities that you enjoy or value or that make you feel a sense of achievement. PositivePsychology.com offers an [Activity Menu](#) to help you identify such activities.

You also can consider how much you value and how satisfied you are with major life areas:

	Value	Satisfied
Family		
Significant Other (Romantic Relationships)		
Friends		
Career		
Fun & Recreation		
Health		
Money		
Personal Growth		
Physical Environment		
Community Service		

On a scale of 1 (not valued) to 10 (highly valued), rank each category based on how much you value it in your life right now. On a scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 10 (highly satisfied), rank your level of satisfaction with each life area.

- In what area is your satisfaction most misaligned with your values?
- On what area would you like to focus in the next week or month?
- What's the first thing you can do to raise your satisfaction with that area?

Procedure

STEP 6. Schedule Enjoyable & Valued Activities Into Your Week

After looking over the behaviors, activities, and alternatives from Steps 4 and 5, create a daily log for the upcoming week in which you schedule do-able activities that are aimed at increasing your positive emotions and/or taking care of a responsibility that's important to you. You can use PositivePsychology.com's [Activity Schedule](#) for this purpose.

STEP 7. Make a Behavior Contract With People Who Care About You

Support from others who care about you can aid your progress. A Behavior Contract is a useful way for you to create an agreement with friends, family, and colleagues that identifies the ways they can help you build better well-being. PositivePsychology.com offers a free template for a [Behavior Contract](#) that you can use to recruit others to help you achieve your goals.

STEP 8. Adopt a Mindset of Curiosity

Maintain an experimental (not a judgmental) mindset. Notice how you feel and whether your plan is working or not. No matter what the outcome, you're likely to learn something useful. Keep trying new experiments to discover what works best for you.

STEP 9. Periodically Measure Your Progress

>>> To measure progress on your daily efforts to be more engaged in enjoyable and valued activities, check in with yourself by reflecting on the questions below. On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate what best describes how much each statement was true for you during the past week:

1. There were certain things I needed to do that I didn't do. (Reverse scored)
2. I am content with the amount and types of things I did.
3. I engaged in many different activities.
4. I made good decisions about what type of activities and/or situations I put myself in.
5. I was an active person and accomplished the goals I set out to do.
6. Most of what I did was to escape from or avoid something unpleasant. (Reverse scored)
7. I spent a long time thinking over and over about my problems. (Reverse score)
8. I engaged in activities that would distract me from feeling bad. (Reverse scored)
9. I did things that were enjoyable.

(Source: Kanter et al., 2007)

Procedure

Periodically Measure Your Progress (cont.)

>>> Consider periodically measuring your level of happiness. University of Pennsylvania's Authentic Happiness website offers a [Questionnaire Center](#) that includes free measures to do so, including, for example, the Authentic Happiness Inventory, the General Happiness Scale, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS).

>>> The non-profit Mental Health of America offers a Depression Test and a collection of other free, [confidential, online self-screening tools](#) on mental health and addiction topics. If your results indicate you may be experiencing symptoms of a mental illness, consider sharing your results with someone. A mental health provider (such as a doctor or a therapist) can give you a full assessment and talk to you about options for how to feel better.

Sources & Resources

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