

Focus: Growth

The emotion needs audit asks this question: Are you being mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense that life is meaningful? In the ASE SOS Pilot Study (May 2021) a sense of being physically or mentally stretched was midway in the ranking (ranked 4 out of 10).

What does this mean?

This is about having a sense of meaning in your life and/or work that motivates you to grow, even when things are more difficult. Having a sense of purpose gives us reason to struggle sometimes and to stretch ourselves (mentally or physically).

Griffin & Tyrrell (2015) identify three ways to find meaning:

1. By being needed ourselves and serving those who need us
2. Learning a new skill
3. Being connected to ideas bigger than ourselves

Life (External issues)

In our personal lives we find meaning through the people around us, the ones we love and are loved by. Our friends, family and acquaintances make us feel needed and we are needed by them. This emotional need is also met through working with a community, such as communities that share your values (e.g. a religious group), communities that share your identity (e.g. minority groups) or communities that share your interests (e.g. sports, music, art, theatre).

Work-place issues

For teachers, all three ways of finding meaning are relevant: we are needed by and serve our students, our department/school and our communities; we are always learning and there is always opportunity to learn; and usually teachers have a philosophical, political or moral purpose in what we do. Mental health issues such as depression or burnout can make us lose a sense of meaning in our lives, make things seem pointless and teachers may distance themselves from those they need and are needed by.

What can you do?

Supporting CPD

Opportunities for good quality Continued professional development (CPD) can be both general and specific - as highlighted in the Education Endowment [guidance report into effective professional development](#). Organisations that offer subject-specific CPD include the ASE, Science Learning Partnerships, Institute for Physics, Royal Society for Biology, Royal Society for Chemistry and the Ogden Trust.

Offering new experiences

Teachers have different desires. From the ASE SOS Pilot (2020-2021) these included:

- Continue to develop their teaching
- Satisfied with current situation/role
- Desire extra responsibility
- Seeking promotion within the science department (now or in the future)
- Promotion within current school (Head of Year, senior leadership)
- Develop skills in leadership
- Want a change in hours (Part-time / Full-time)
- Change school (for promotion)
- Preparing for retirement
- Leave the classroom for something else in science education
- Leave teaching completely
- Uncertain • Resigned to current situation
- Take a career break (study or travel)



Relevant RISE tools and resources

Wellbeing / emotional needs



Supporting Sign-Posts



Supporting colleagues with mental health issues



Latham's One-to-Ones's – Guidance



Department meeting – improving well-being

Job Satisfaction



Establishing support networks



Managing working relationships



Acknowledging staff achievements



Latham's One-to-Ones's – Guidance



Building effective relationships with SLT



Work-life balance analyser

Career Intentions



Individual Career Planning



Ensuring your staff leave happy



Department size and shape (short, medium and long term)



Progression Planning