

thrive!

Helping AU employees optimize their health and wellbeing.

COPING WITH COVID-19 BURNOUT

'Somebody to lean on'

Why it's important to extend support, empathy to others during the pandemic

Note: This is the third in a series of articles from Auburn University Human Resources (AUHR) on dealing with COVID-19, mental wellness and other relevant topics.

Fifty years ago, a young man from West Virginia sat forlorn in his decrepit Los Angeles home -- a world away from his family and his community. But as this talented musician played the piano, he kept pondering one phrase: "Lean on Me." From that lonely place, Bill Withers penned words which have comforted and inspired millions, especially during the pandemic:

*Lean on me when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on.*

Now more than ever, we in the Auburn employee family need to lean on each other. There's no better time to consider these words from The Auburn Creed: "I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all."

One way to do that is by empathizing and extending grace to others. Dr. Anthony Campbell, an Assistant Professor in Liberal Arts, was recently interviewed by Alabama NewsCenter about how to celebrate Thanksgiving in the midst of a pandemic and our current political climate. What he said about empathy applies regardless of the season.

"Emotions are running high related to many circumstances we have all encountered," he said. "It is important to acknowledge the wide range of thoughts and feelings that we and our loved ones are experiencing. I think one of the most important components of relationships is using empathy to gain a better understanding and appreciation of others. This year, especially, **it is valuable to imagine ourselves in the shoes of others and validate their experiences.**"

Speaking of thanksgiving, it is just as important that we thank others. We can't help but think about the selfless contributions of our "frontline workers" -- many of whom have worked on campus during the entire pandemic. They include Staff, Administrative/Professional and Faculty. The administrative assistant who cheerfully serves customers, the groundskeeper who keeps our campus beautiful and the medical professional who provides COVID-19 tests and vaccines are just a few of many who deserve a big "WAR EAGLE!"

Last year, United Way of Central Alabama shared "Eight Ways to Thank Frontline Workers." Some of our favorites include donating a meal, sharing a message on social media and creating a sign that can be displayed.

Let's remember that we are better when we work together and support each other. Now more than ever, we need to support each other. As Withers wrote:

*You just call on me, brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on.
I just might have a problem that you'll understand,
We all need somebody to lean on.*



WEBINARS BEGIN THIS THURSDAY

As of Friday afternoon, more than 250 employees had registered for one of the two webinars on mental wellness and dealing with COVID-19 fatigue that will be offered tomorrow (Jan. 28) and on Thursday, Feb. 4:

*** Jan. 28, "Managing COVID Fatigue"**, American Behavioral

*** Feb. 4, "Working Toward Wellness: Supporting Mental Health in a Zoom World"**, Offices of Student Counseling and Psychological Services, Health Promotion and Wellness Services, and Auburn University Psychological Services.

Both webinars begin at 2 p.m. To register, visit aub.ie/covidfatigue (Jan. 28) or aub.ie/workingtowardwellness (Feb. 4). If you have additional questions, email thrive@auburn.edu.