

SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

Valparaiso University's Counseling Center monthly tips for success and promotion of overall wellbeing

In this issue:

- Introduction
- Healthy and Responsible Substance Use
- Alternatives to Using: Pick one a day

Introduction

Valparaiso University's Counseling Center (VUCC) plans to provide the VU community with monthly emails surrounding a particular topic related to being a student. Each email will include daily exercises you can complete each week in relation to the monthly theme. Read the instructions below on how to implement these exercises into your daily life (scale for rating your mood is at the bottom). The purpose of these emails is to promote mental health, academic success, and physical wellness. If there are any topics you are interested in seeing or learning more about please email counseling.center@valpo.edu, subject Shield for Success topic ideas.

Instructions

Step 1: If you choose to participate, first rate your mood on a 1-10 scale using the scale provided below.

Step 2: Each day you will be tasked with completing a different exercise. On weekdays, Monday through Friday, pick one exercise from the list provided for you. On weekends, Saturday & Sunday, choose one exercise that you felt improved your mood the most, these exercises do not have to be from the exercises provided.

Step 3: After implementing the exercise, rate your mood using the same scale as Step 2.

Healthy and Responsible Substance Use

If you choose to use substances during your time at college there are many healthy tips and tricks that help you drink responsibly and enjoy your night.

1. Keep Track: always know how much you have drank and set a limit for yourself prior to going out
2. Measure your own drinks: the best way to keep track is to be sure you know exactly how much you are drinking
3. Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate: Alternate between water and alcohol to pace yourself and avoid hangovers
4. Never drink when you're upset: Alcohol can make negative emotions worse and increase impulsive behavior

Alternatives to Using: Pick one a day

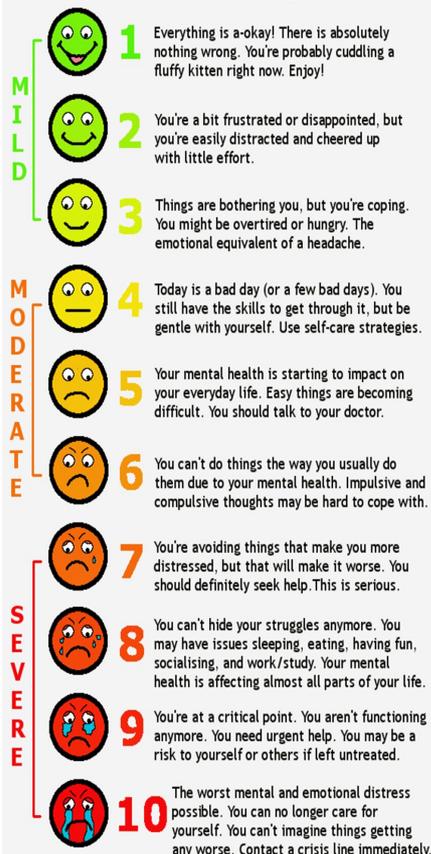
1. Meditate or practice mindfulness
2. Get a milkshake with a friend
3. Have a late night movie marathon
4. Have a long conversation with a friend about things that make you both happy
5. Complete a self-assessment

Copy the link below to access a free self-assessment

<https://interwork.sdsu.edu/echeckup/usa/alc/coll/index.php?id=valpo>

A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale

thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com



The graphic shows a vertical scale of 10 levels of mental health distress, each with a corresponding emoji and description. The scale is categorized into Mild (levels 1-3), Moderate (levels 4-6), and Severe (levels 7-10).

- 1** Everything is a-okay! There is absolutely nothing wrong. You're probably cuddling a fluffy kitten right now. Enjoy!
- 2** You're a bit frustrated or disappointed, but you're easily distracted and cheered up with little effort.
- 3** Things are bothering you, but you're coping. You might be overtired or hungry. The emotional equivalent of a headache.
- 4** Today is a bad day (or a few bad days). You still have the skills to get through it, but be gentle with yourself. Use self-care strategies.
- 5** Your mental health is starting to impact on your everyday life. Easy things are becoming difficult. You should talk to your doctor.
- 6** You can't do things the way you usually do them due to your mental health. Impulsive and compulsive thoughts may be hard to cope with.
- 7** You're avoiding things that make you more distressed, but that will make it worse. You should definitely seek help. This is serious.
- 8** You can't hide your struggles anymore. You may have issues sleeping, eating, having fun, socialising, and work/study. Your mental health is affecting almost all parts of your life.
- 9** You're at a critical point. You aren't functioning anymore. You need urgent help. You may be a risk to yourself or others if left untreated.
- 10** The worst mental and emotional distress possible. You can no longer care for yourself. You can't imagine things getting any worse. Contact a crisis line immediately.



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