



SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

Monthly tips for success and promotion of overall well-being brought to you by **Valparaiso University's Counseling Services**

A New School Year

Welcome to the initial Fall 2021 issue of the Shield for Success! This monthly newsletter is divided into two parts. The first section will give information and resources on a topic relevant to the current month. The second section will offer helpful tips and exercises tailored to each month's topic. For some of you, you're returning back to campus after a weird, isolated, and often exhausting year due to Covid. For others, you're brand new to Valpo and curious what your experience will be like. Valpo will be in-person, open, and engaging this year. There will likely be a mix of hesitation and excitement with students about spending more time in-person with others. If you're nervous about this, try to ease yourself back into social interactions, planning for both virtual and in-person activities. Be aware of general concerns that may come up with a new year or college experience. Make sure to communicate expectations and boundaries with roommates, keep an eye out on your class schedules and practice time management, try to practice good sleep hygiene as you adjust to a new schedule, and above all else remember to practice self-care when possible. Below are some tips and resources to help navigate this new year.

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Helpful Resources

- [Five to Thrive Checklist for Returning Students](#)
- [Coping with Anxiety About Returning to Campus](#)
- [Managing a Mental Health Condition in College](#)
- [Freshmen Guide to College Transition](#)



Virtual Time Management Workshops

Presented by Counseling Services:

- Thursday, Sept. 2nd @ 2:00-3:15pm
- Wednesday, Sept. 8th @ 4:00-5:15pm
- Friday, Sept. 10th @ 11:00-12:15pm
- Monday, Sept. 13th @ 4:30-5:45pm

To sign up, please complete this [form](#).

Instructions

Step 1: If you choose to participate, first rate your mood on a 1-10 scale, you can use the Mental Health Pain scale provided.

Step 2: Each day you will have the opportunity to complete a different exercise. On weekdays, Monday through Friday, pick one exercise from the list provided for you below. 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 1.

Exercises for Returning to Campus

1. *Connect with others around you and find ways to get involved on campus.*
2. *Create a routine to adjust to the semester and get better sleep.*
3. *Set healthy boundaries with roommates.*
4. *Take breaks from studying to avoid burnout.*
5. *Familiarize yourself with campus and allow time to get to and from classes*
6. *Practice new coping skills through [TAOConnect](#).*

A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale

thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com

MILD

- 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.

MODERATE

- 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.

SEVERE

- 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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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.