

# SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

Valparaiso University's Counseling Center monthly tips for success and promotion of overall well-being

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## 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 below.

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.

This volume of the Shield for Success is brought to you by the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant. The purpose of this grant is to support campus mental health promotion and reduce negative attitudes and stigma toward suicide prevention in our community.

## What Does the Research Tell Us about Suicide?

Suicide is related to brain functions that affect decision-making and behavioral control, making it difficult for people to find positive solutions. Asking someone directly if they're thinking about suicide won't "put the idea in their head" - most people will be relieved when someone starts a conversation (AFSP, 2021). Every person is different and has their own unique life stressors that may contribute to having thoughts of suicide. While there is no specific number of warning signs that would indicate someone is thinking of suicide, knowing the warning signs can help you identify when it may be time to reach out for support. You are not alone and connections can make a difference.

If you are in an immediate crisis please call VUPD at 219-464-5430. Here are other crisis & campus resources available to you:

- Valparaiso University Counseling Center: 219-464-5002 (M-F; 8-12, 1-5)
- Campus Pastors – Chapel of the Resurrection: 219-464-5093; Rev. James Wetzstein & Pastor Kate Museum Dabay
- Residential Learning Coordinator's – Office of Residential Life: 219-464-5413
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255); suicidepreventionlifeline.org (24/7)
- Crisis Text Line: Text "TALK" to 741-741 (24/7)
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 (crisis line dedicated to LGBTQIA+ people under 25)

## Helpful Resources for Coping with Suicidal Thoughts

- [Are You Feeling Suicidal?](#)
- [How to Cope with Suicidal Thoughts](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Jed Foundation Mental Health Resource Center for Young Adults](#)
- [Half of Us](#)
- [Active Minds](#)

## A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale

thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com

MILD		<b>1</b> Everything is a-okay! There is absolutely nothing wrong. You're probably cuddling a fluffy kitten right now. Enjoy!
		<b>2</b> You're a bit frustrated or disappointed, but you're easily distracted and cheered up with little effort.
		<b>3</b> Things are bothering you, but you're coping. You might be overtired or hungry. The emotional equivalent of a headache.
MODERATE		<b>4</b> 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.
		<b>5</b> Your mental health is starting to impact on your everyday life. Easy things are becoming difficult. You should talk to your doctor.
		<b>6</b> 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.
		<b>7</b> You're avoiding things that make you more distressed, but that will make it worse. You should definitely seek help. This is serious.
SEVERE		<b>8</b> 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.
		<b>9</b> 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.
		<b>10</b> 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.



## Skills to Improve Emotional Well-Being

1. Reach out to a trusted person or support line. Examples: Peer Minister, Residential Assistant, and/or National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
2. Create a list of coping skills and try one
3. Go on a walk outside or watch nature from a window
4. Write down thoughts in a journal
5. Eat a healthy meal

Created by your Campus Suicide Prevention SAMHSA GLS Grant Team:  
Michelle Bulington, MSW, LSW,  
Lee Sanchez, Samaiya De Jesus,  
and Valpo Active Minds.

Check us out on Instagram:  
onus\_yu & valpoactiveminds

If there are any topics you are interested in seeing or learning more about please email [counseling.center@valpo.edu](mailto:counseling.center@valpo.edu), subject Shield for Success topic ideas.