



# SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

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

## National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week!

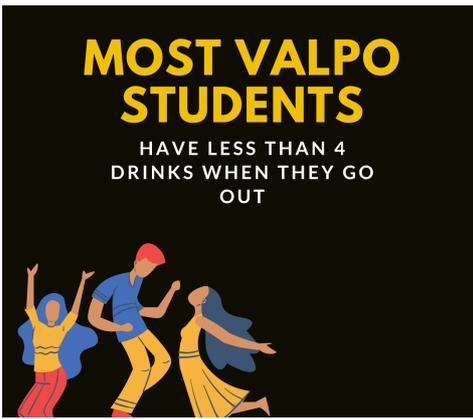
Welcome to the October issue of the Shield for Success! This monthly newsletter is divided into two parts. The first section will give information and resources on a topic relevant to the current month. The second section will offer helpful tips and exercises tailored to each month's topic. October is a month filled with both exciting events (Homecoming! Halloween!) but can also be filled with the stress of midterms and an increase in burnout as we start to approach the final 3rd of the semester. This combination can lead to an over-reliance on unhealthy coping strategies, one of which can be excessive alcohol intake. This month we recognize National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week which occurs from October 17th to the 23rd and are eager to share some resources and information with you to help you better manage your stress and to encourage responsible decisions around alcohol use.

### In this issue:

- Alcohol Awareness!
- Responsible consumption tips
- Free Alcohol Screening Day!
- Instructions
- Tips for Managing Stress
- Mental Health Pain Scale

### How to consume alcohol responsibly

- Track: Always know how many you've had
  - Plan: Set a time to come home and stick to it
  - Alternate: Drink water after every drink to slow your consumption rate down
  - Measure: Make your own drinks
- Finally: Never drink to cope with a negative emotion



## Free Alcohol Screening Day!

When: Tuesday October 19, 11:00am-3:00pm

Where: First floor of the Library

Come take a free, anonymous self-assessment and get a prize!

## 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 Healthy Coping

1. Include time for socializing and relationship building every day
2. Plan one weekend activity that gets you out of your residence hall
3. Set a bedtime that allows you 8 hours of sleep and stick to it
4. Log in to [TAOConnect.org](http://TAOConnect.org) and do one mindfulness activity
5. Attend an Athletic or other Event on Campus

## A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale

[thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com](http://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](mailto:counseling.center@valpo.edu), subject Shield for Success topic ideas.