



SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

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

Managing Holiday Blues

Welcome to the December 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. You've made it to December! Things are starting to wind down for the semester and the stress of finals will hopefully be temporary. Many of you are looking forward to the holidays and getting to spend time with friends and family. For some, the holidays are an exciting time, but for others it can be a more difficult time of year for a variety of reasons. The holiday blues tend to begin affecting people during the months of November and December and are generally experienced as feelings of sadness or depression that vary in intensity. These blues can be brought on due to many different reasons. This month we're acknowledging the holiday blues and looking into ways you can cope during the holidays this year.

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Links on Coping With Holiday Blues

- [What Are the Holiday Blues?](#)
- [Stress, Depression, and the Holidays](#)
- [Dealing with Holiday Blues](#)
- [Positive Actions to Prevent Holiday Blues](#)
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Counseling Services Wellness Week

Counseling Services is putting together a new and exciting event for our campus community. The week of January 24, 2022 we will be hosting Wellness Week and bringing awareness and presentations on the benefits of mindfulness to students. Look for more information coming to you soon!

Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues

- 1) Find time for yourself to relax and enjoy some quiet time each day.
- 2) Set realistic expectations for the break.
- 3) If you're feeling lonely or isolated, reach out to friends, family, or community social events for support and companionship.
- 4) Practice setting boundaries and saying "no" when you need to.
- 5) Acknowledge grief if you've lost a loved one, a tradition, or time with family or friends.
- 6) Exercise regularly, even if you're just taking a quick 10-minute walk

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

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.