

## SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

By Vanessa Kedl, Clinician, M.Ed., LAPC

Suicide is a topic that is often avoided due to stigma and lack of understanding, but that does not mean the subject should be taboo. By opening the conversation and reducing stigma, we can make it easier for people to seek help when they need it most.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, which reminds us of the importance of awareness and honest discussion about mental health struggles which can affect anyone, no matter their age, background, or circumstances. Reducing stigma takes all of us, and even small steps can make a difference.

This month, we want to share some of the warning signs that may indicate when someone is struggling. Recognizing these signs in yourself or others can help us support one another, start important conversations, and connect people to resources. Not all warning signs look the same, and they may appear gradually over time or come on suddenly.

### MEET THE CLINICIAN

*Vanessa Kedl is an Employee Assistance Program counselor at The Village in Fargo. She earned her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from North Dakota State University. Through EAP services, Vanessa provides counseling to individuals of all ages, couples, and families.*

Some signs to look out for include:

- Talking about feelings of hopelessness or emptiness
- Experiencing extreme emotional or physical pain
- Showing intense mood swings
- Increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of being a burden
- Withdrawing or isolating from others, saying goodbye, or giving away important items
- Feeling stuck or trapped with no escape
- Talking about wanting to die or believing others would be better off without them
- Feeling overwhelming sadness, anxiety, agitation, or anger

**If you notice these signs in yourself or others, it is important to reach out for help right away, especially if the behavior is new or has gotten worse recently. Call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](tel:988), or visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) to connect with trained counselors who are ready to listen and help. For ongoing support, you can also use your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit for free counseling by calling [1-800-627-8220](tel:1-800-627-8220).**

Let's continue the conversation together. The Village is here to provide resources, be a listening ear, and ensure no one has to go it alone.