



# Victims Services Program

## September is Suicide Prevention Month

### Suicide Prevention Walk

Providence Valdez Counseling Center  
**Friday, September 10th**  
**from 12:00 - 130pm**

Join for a suicide awareness and prevention walk, followed by a remembrance ceremony, light refreshments, and a brief talk by respected community members.

- Meet at the **PVMC Parking Lot at 12:00 pm**, rain or shine!
  - Walking route will take us on an approximately 2-mile loop around town, returning to PVMC.
- **Post-walk remembrance ceremony begins at approximately 12:45 pm.**
- We encourage you to walk with people in your social circle.



All are invited and welcome!

The **five action steps** for communicating with someone who may be suicidal

### 1 ASK

**How** – Asking the question “Are you thinking about suicide?” communicates that you’re open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way.

**Why** – Findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce suicidal ideation.

### 2 BE THERE

**How** – This could mean being physically present, speaking on the phone, or any other way that shows support for that person at risk.

**Why** – Being there for someone with thoughts of suicide is life-saving. Limiting their isolation has been shown to be a protective factor against suicide.

### 3 KEEP THEM SAFE

**How** – It is important to establish immediate safety. Have they already done something to harm themselves? Do they have a detailed plan? Timing for the plan? What sort of access do they have for their planned method?

**Why** – Knowing the answers to each of these questions can tell us a lot about the imminence and severity of danger the person is in.

### 4 HELP THEM CONNECT

**How** – Helping someone with thoughts of suicide connect with ongoing support, can help to establish a safety net. Below is a list of resources in our community.

**Why** – Studies have shown that individuals that have reached out to National Suicide Prevention Lifeline were less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed and more hopeful by the end of the call.

### 5 FOLLOW UP

**How** – After the initial contact and after connecting them with immediate support, follow up to check in to see if there is anything more you can do or just to let them know you are thinking of them.

**Why** – This type of contact can continue to increase their feelings of connectedness.

**The National Suicide Prevention 24-Hour Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**

## Contact

**Samantha Rice, Director**  
 (907) 255 - 7172

**Keristyn Weber, Advocate**  
 (907) 255 - 7413

**Office Phone**  
 (907) 835 - 8069

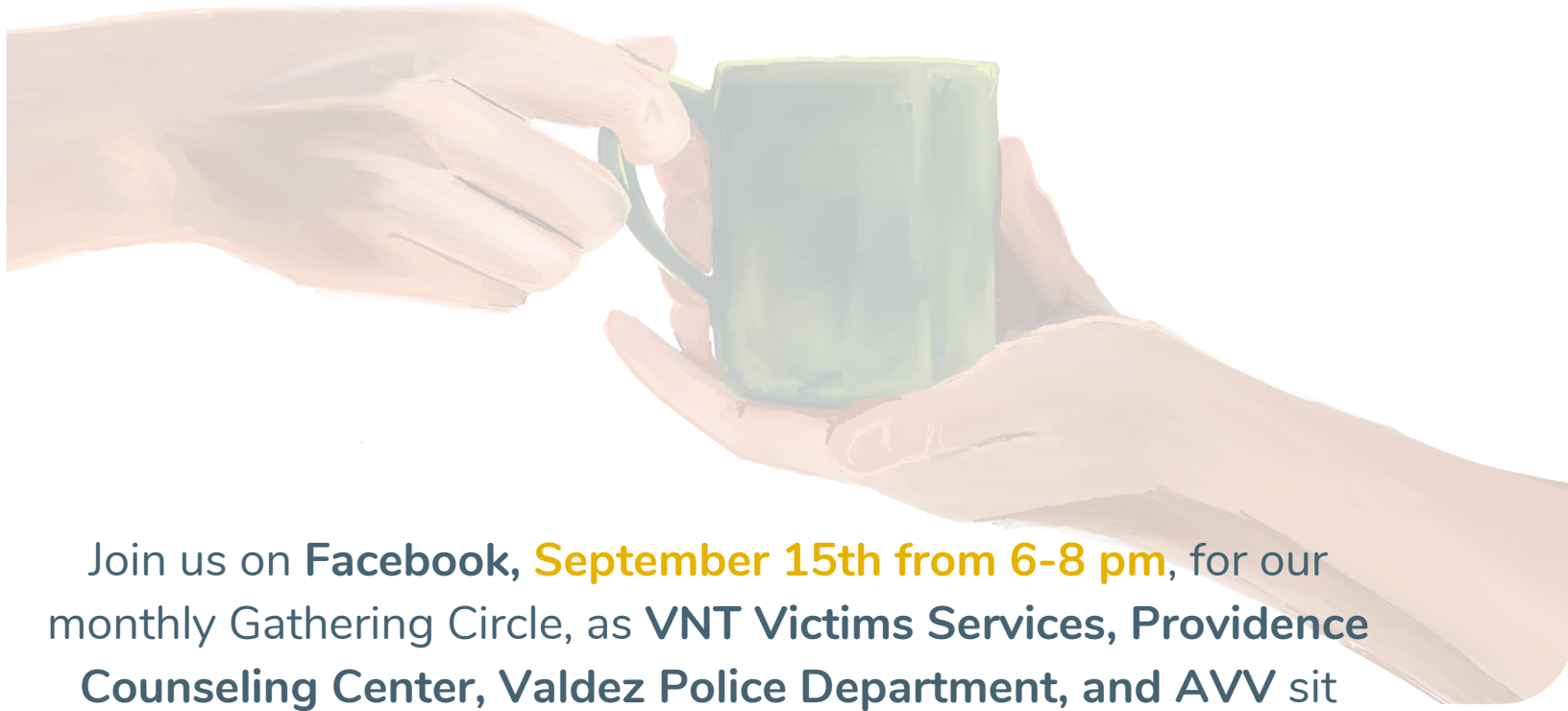
**24/7 Crisis Hotline**  
 (907) 835 - 1144

**Email**  
[victims\\_services@valdeztribe.org](mailto:victims_services@valdeztribe.org)

**Mailing Address**  
 PO Box 1634 Valdez, AK 99686

If you or someone you know is a **victim of crime** and are in need of help call **(907) 835 - 1144**

# Gathering Circle



Join us on **Facebook**, **September 15th from 6-8 pm**, for our monthly Gathering Circle, as **VNT Victims Services, Providence Counseling Center, Valdez Police Department, and AVV** sit down together to talk about the importance of understanding and bringing awareness to suicide.

## 24/7 Crisis Hotline

**(907) 835-1144**

- You need someone to talk to
- You need information & resources
- You don't know what to do next
- You are a victim of a crime of trauma
- You are a family member of a victim

## Important Dates

**Last Day Valdez Fish Derbies**  
September 5

**Labor Day - VNT Offices Closed**  
September 6

**Suicide Prevention Walk**  
September 10

**Patriot Day**  
September 11

**Gathering Circle**  
September 15

If you or someone you know is a **victim of crime** and are in need of help call **(907) 835 - 1144**



# Valdez Native Tribe Social Services

## COVID and Youth

As the 2021-2022 **school year** begins, parents are faced with deciding what they feel is best for their children. The COVID-19 virus continues to mutate and impact how society is functioning and interacting. School districts are faced with continuing to develop plans on how to assist children in attending school in person and obtaining the academic education and social development needed for each cohort. Research has shown, an individual's perceptions of their support system impact their emotional functioning. A recent study by Rogers, Ha, and Ockey (2021) found that **during COVID-19, adolescents** perceived various changes in their relationships with friends and families. Due to the adolescents' perceived increase in negative emotion and decrease in positive emotion experienced increased levels of **depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and loneliness** (Rogers, Ha, & Ockey, 2021). Adolescence is a period where significant changes in social interactions and interests develop. During this period, adolescent's attachments change from the family system to friends. This change is a normal period of development where adolescents explore their identity and develop independence from their families. Friends are used more for support when facing social, interpersonal, or environmental dilemmas. While COVID-19 mandates and social distancing are recommended, the negative effects of social isolation, social distancing, and other precautions are **impacting youth**. A parent can assist their youth by watching for depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and loneliness. Depending upon the individual, symptoms can present differently.

### Depressive symptoms can present as:

- Sadness, emptiness, hopelessness
- Loss of interest
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Tearful
- Sleep disturbances (sleeping too much or too little)
- Tiredness or lack of energy
- Reduced appetite or an increased appetite (weight gain)
- Low motivation
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or a failure
- Difficulty concentrating, focusing or remembering things
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or self-harming behaviors
- Symptoms in young children can include clinginess, worry, aches, and pains, refusing to go to school.
- Symptoms in youth can include poor performance or attendance at school, feeling misunderstood, extremely sensitive, using recreational drugs or alcohol, and avoiding social interactions.

### Anxiety symptoms parents can observe for is:

- Worry or anxiety that is out of proportion to the events
- Overthinking, Worst-case scenario
- Perceiving situations as a threat when they are not
- Difficulty handling uncertainty
- Fear
- Difficulty controlling worry
- Inability to control worry, relax, feel on edge
- Difficulty concentrating

### Physical signs/symptoms may include:

- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Muscle tension/aches
- Trembling, twitchy
- Nervousness, easily startled
- Sweating
- Nausea, diarrhea, IBS
- Irritability

Parents can speak with their children and actively listen and validate their children's thoughts and concerns. Spending quality time with their children can assist in decreasing isolation and provide social interaction. Each child will be different and unique. As you listen to your child, engage them in their interests, and try to ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions will assist in having a conversation with your child. If you ask a close-ended question (fine, good, yes, or no answers), you may not have a productive conversation for yourself or them. Engaging in the physical activities your child is interested in can increase the child's dopamine, oxytocin, endorphins, and serotonin levels, which can assist in decreasing depression and anxiety levels.