Suicide Prevention Summit

La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative

Raising Awareness and Hope in the Community

September 17, 2025

8:45 a.m.–4:15 p.m. | Student Union, UW-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI

In partnership with:

La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative
UW-La Crosse Graduate & Extended Learning

UW-La Crosse Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are a means of recognizing and recording satisfactory participation in non-degree programs. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UWL) awards one CEU for every 10 contact hours in a continuing education experience. Actual contact hours are recorded. **(0.5 CEUS/5 Contact Hours when attended in full.)**

You must attend the Suicide Prevention Summit in its entirety to earn UW-La Crosse CEUs.
UWL CEUs fulfill continuing education requirements for many professionals, agencies and organizations. Professional associations may have specific licensing requirements. Individuals should contact their licensing association before assuming UWL CEUs will fulfill all requirements.

UW-La Crosse keeps records of individual CEUs for three years of programming. Certificates are emailed within **two weeks** of the conclusion of the program. UW-La Crosse CEUs are included in registration fee.

Session credit sign in form.

uwlax.edu/sps

La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative

Your Life Matters

Welcome

The La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative welcomes you to the 2025 Summit. We are happy to be celebrating our 21st year as a Committee. We hope today's Summit will offer you connection with others along with information to take with you to use in your personal and/or professional life.

Your Life Matters … *YOU* Matter!

Together, we create change—thank you for being a part of the solution.

DID YOU KNOW...

Did you know the La Crosse County Suicide Prevention Initiative has been active since 2004? Since its founding, the Initiative has hosted an annual conference and organized a variety of events focused on education, prevention, and community support. We meet monthly in a flexible hybrid format—virtually and in-person—to accommodate the needs of our members.

We're always seeking new voices, perspectives, and expertise. If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, please connect with a committee member today or email us at laxspi@gmail.com.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS EVENT

Thursday, September 18, 2025
6–7:30 p.m.
The Nature Place in Myrick Park, La Crosse

We welcome family and friends impacted by suicide loss, as well as any community members, to join us for a night of raising awareness of suicide and its prevalence in our community and remembering those we've lost.

Exhibit & Information Tables

are open throughout the conference. Our exhibitors have resources for you to take and share with others.

Thanks to all!

- 988 Wisconsin Lifeline
- Catholic Charities
- Charlie Health
- Emplify Health
- Great Rivers 211
- Heart Line Counseling and Consulting
- Kevin's Legacy Foundation
- La Crosse County
- La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative
- Mayo Clinic
- Nystrom & Associates
- St. Clare Health Mission
- Stein Counseling
- UW-La Crosse Graduate & Extended Learning
- UW-Superior Graduate Programs

Raising Awareness and Hope in the Community

To learn more about what we do in the community visit:

lacrossesuicideprevention.org

2025 SUICIDE PREVENTION SUMMIT
Schedule

8–8:45 a.m.	**Registration, Continental Breakfast, & Visit Exhibitors**	**The Bluffs**
8:45–9 a.m.	**Welcome**	**The Bluffs**

9–10:15 a.m.

MORNING KEYNOTE SESSION

A Day in the Life of an Inpatient Psychiatric Unit — **The Bluffs**

–Emily Rae, M.D., Psychiatry Co-Department Chair, Emplify Health, La Crosse, WI
–Robyn Deyo, M.S.S.W., Inpatient Social Worker, Emplify Health, La Crosse, WI

The presenters will describe what treatments, programming and therapy are available on an inpatient psychiatric unit and what role these units play in helping people in a mental health crisis. Additionally, they will discuss involuntary and voluntary treatment and what that entails.
UWL CEUs: 0.125

10:15–10:30 a.m. — **Break**

10:30–11:45 a.m.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Invisible Backpack: From The Powerlessness of Unhealed Trauma to The Power of Resiliency, Hope and Healing — **3310**

–Tracey Atkinson, M.S., Owner, Tracey Atkinson Counseling & Coaching LLC, Janesville, WI

Tracey will share her story of childhood sexual abuse and how the negative impacts of this trauma filled her invisible backpack full of cognitive distortions. These distortions ultimately created a path of self-destruction and self-hatred, leading to multiple suicide attempts. Tracey's power of healing led her to become a therapist, an advocate and motivational speaker.
UWL CEUs: 0.125

An Elementary Approach to Suicide Prevention — **3130**

–Bradley Larrabee, M.Ed., Principal, School District of Maple, Maple, WI

School Based Mental Health - A Structure to Drive Change: In a post pandemic educational system schools throughout the country have noted a dramatic increase in student mental health needs. This increase has come alongside a decrease in students' executive functioning. Historically approached student mental health as a parent's suicide prevention.
UWL CEUs: 0.125

The Power of Resilience: Turning Adversity into Strength — **3314**

–Nicholas Dillon, M.S., LCDC, CSAC; CEO of Believe Wellness Center, PLLC, Pewaukee, WI

Resilience is the bridge between adversity and strength, empowering individuals to overcome life's challenges. In this presentation, "The Power of Resilience: Turning Adversity into Strength," Nicholas Dillon shares his personal journey as a suicide and bullying survivor to illustrate how resilience transforms pain into purpose.
UWL CEUs: 0.125

Suicide and Brain Injury: The Risks and the Responses — **3110**

–Robert Karol, Ph.D., ABPP/RP, CBIST/R; President, Karol Neuro + Rehab Consulting, Eden Prairie, MN

There is an increased likelihood of suicide attempts after brain injury. This presentation will cover risk factors and warning signs professionals need to be aware of as well as specific variables that contribute to heightened likelihood among people with brain injury. The talk will address professional responses when suicide ideation occurs.
UWL CEUs: 0.125

2025 SUICIDE PREVENTION SUMMIT
Schedule

Noon–12:45 p.m.	**Lunch**	**The Bluffs**

12:45–1:15 p.m.

SPECIAL AFTER LUNCH SESSION

Moving with Meaning **The Bluffs**

–Jennifer TeBeest-Severson, M.A., LPC-IT, R-DMT, Outpatient Therapist, Stein Counseling, Onalaska, WI

This presentation helps explore how movement in therapeutic practice offers many benefits for both clients and practitioners. We will experience how mindful movement and somatic practice can be done in different ways to allow for expression and aid in regulation.

1:15–1:30 p.m. **Break**

1:30–2:45 p.m.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Suffering Out Loud vs. Suffering in Silence: Offering an Operational Distinction Between Chronic Suicidality in Bipolar Disorder (BPD) Compared to Other Diagnoses **3314**

–Valéry Brosseau, M.S.W, CEO & Head Facilitator, Validate Mental Health Consultants, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The literature often presents chronic suicidality as a BPD phenomenon; a form of communicating distress. A shift in the operationalization of the term is needed, offering a distinction between chronic suicidality as a means of garnering social and clinical support, and chronic suicidality not presenting with demonstrative attempts to convey suffering or seek care.

UWL CEUs: 0.125

K.A.Y.A. Keeping Autistic Youth Alive **3110**

–Tim Markle, MS, Founder/Director, Forgiveness Factor, Stoughton, WI
–Hunter Markle, Self-Advocate, Stoughton, WI

One of the core features of Autism Spectrum Disorder is difficulties in social situations and communication difficulties. These can lead people not feeling like they belong and possibly even becoming a burden. We want to look at how we can help autistic youth/young adults to achieve a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. Hunter is 27 year old autistic who has struggled with belonging, purpose and suicide ideation. Tim is his dad and has worked with families who have neurodivergent children for over 16 years and has had his own struggles with suicide ideation. This session will combine personal experience with professional knowledge to provide insight into how we can help keep autistic, and other neurodivergent youth, alive.

UWL CEUs: 0.125

Surviving a Sentinel Event: Provider Self-Care Following a Patient Suicide **3130**

–Lisa Howell, Ph.D., Clinical Health Psychologist, Mayo Clinic, Chandler, AZ

Many mental health providers will face the loss of a patient to suicide. Estimates show that providers have a 50/50 chance of having a patient suicide during their career (Plankum and Tillman, 2016). Psychologists are more likely to die by suicide than any other profession (DeAngelis, 2011). This demonstrates the need for support following a sentinel event.

UWL CEUs: 0.125

Ethical Care & Decision-Making in Suicide Assessment & Intervention **3310**

–Tara Allert, Ed.D., LPC, SAC, ACS, Behavioral Health Consultant, Emplify Health, La Crosse, WI

In this presentation, we will review current research related to suicide prevention. Additionally, we will explore comprehensive assessment and intervention strategies emphasizing the integration of ethical principles and importance of clinician wellness in this work. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of evidence-based tools for assessment as well as frameworks for intervention to support suicide prevention.

UWL CEUs: 0.125

2025 SUICIDE PREVENTION SUMMIT *Schedule*

2:45–3 p.m.	**Break**	
3–4:15 p.m.	**AFTERNOON KEYNOTE SESSION** **LGBTQIA+ Mental Health and Suicide** *–Jennifer Mueller, Ph.D., Clinical Site Director, Licensed Counseling Psychologist, Nystrom & Associates, La Crescent, MN* This presentation will review language often used to discuss gender and sex. It will review various mental health and suicidality risk factors LGBTQIA+ youth, adults, and older adults. It will also review local and national crisis resources. **UWL CEUs: 0.125**	**The Bluffs**
4:15 p.m.	**Adjourn**	**The Bluffs**

If you would like more information on supporting the
La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative
please reach out to **laxspi@gmail.com**.

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Great Rivers 2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Help.

If you or someone you care about is thinking about suicide, **DIAL 2-1-1** to talk to a crisis specialist. Great Rivers 2-1-1 offers free, confidential community information and referrals 24/7.

PRESENTERS

Emily Rae, M.D.

Psychiatrist, Co-Department Chair, Emplify Health

Emily Rae, M.D., has worked as a psychiatrist at Gundersen Health System for 21 years. She completed medical school at the University of Minnesota and did her psychiatry residency and child/adolescent psychiatry fellowship at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Emily has worked on the inpatient psychiatry unit at Gundersen throughout her career.

Robyn Deyo, M.S.S.W.

Inpatient Behavioral Health Social Worker, Emplify Health

Robyn L Deyo, M.S.S.W. has worked at Emplify Health/Gundersen Health System for the last 12 years as an in-patient behavioral health social worker. She has primarily worked with the adolescent population during this time. During her time at Gundersen, she has also worked on the adult behavioral health unit and in the emergency room. She gained her undergraduate degree at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and her masters at Southern New Hampshire University.

Jennifer TeBeest-Severson

M.A., LPC-IT, R-DMT, Outpatient Therapist, Stein Counseling

Jennifer TeBeest-Severson, M.A., R-DMT, LPC-IT, works as a Registered Dance Movement Therapist and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Training at Stein Counseling in Onalaska, WI, where she focuses on integrating movement as a psychotherapeutic tool in mental health interventions for clients of all ages. Jen seeks to share the powerful connection between movement and mental health, and how it benefits clients and practitioners to enhance the mind-body connection for optimal mental health and self awareness.

Jennifer Mueller, Ph.D.

Clinical Site Director, Licensed Counseling Psychologist, Nystrom & Associates

Jennifer Mueller, Ph.D., is a psychologist working in the La Crosse region for more than 20 years. She specializes in working with people who are dealing with a variety of concerns that are disrupting their life including anxiety, depression, grief, adjustment, abuse/trauma, and relationship concerns. As a member of World Professional Association for Transgender Health, some of Jennifer's clinical work is focused on issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender dysphoria.

PRESENTERS

Tara Allert, Ed.D., LPC, SAC, ACS

Tara is a clinical therapist with broad experience and special interest working with addiction and trauma. She has training in TF-CBT, FFT, EMDR, CBT, and other modalities. Whether working with individuals or families, Tara's approach is to enter from a place of curiosity, and believes that each client or system has the inherent strengths and qualities needed to step into growth.

Tracey Atkinson, M.S., LPC

Tracey is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Life Coach in the State of Wisconsin. She has been working in the mental health field for over 15 years. Tracey has worked in settings such as an inpatient hospitalization facility, outpatient mental health clinic, mobile crisis, contracted position in a school setting and has worked collaboratively with local police and sheriff departments, emergency rooms, jails, and with a local Children's Advocacy Center. She specializes in trauma work and has presented at multiple mental conferences on trauma.

Valéry Brosseau, M.S.W.

Valéry, a writer and speaker from Montréal, Canada, is a passionate mental health advocate. She began volunteering in the field in 2013, earning awards for her work and developing a deep commitment to ending stigma. In 2019, she delivered a TEDx talk on suicide stigma and has written for organizations like NAMI and the International Bipolar Foundation. Valéry uses her writing and speaking to spark honest conversations and now leads talks and workshops that help individuals and organizations support mental well-being.

Nicholas Dillon, M.S., LCDC, CSAC

Nicholas Dillon is a top Milwaukee motivational speaker, executive coach, and educator with over 20 years of experience in leadership and professional development. Holding Master's degrees in Adult Education and Counseling, he blends behavioral psychology with emotional intelligence to help individuals and organizations grow. As a Certified Master Facilitator, Nicholas offers impactful coaching, workshops, and keynotes that build confidence, resilience, and leadership skills. His work has earned him numerous honors, including the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award. Based in Milwaukee, Nicholas is a trusted voice in personal and professional transformation.

Lisa Howell, Ph.D.

Lisa has been a Clinical Health Psychologist at Mayo Clinic Arizona since December 2023. She serves as Clinical Health Division Chair and Assistant Professor at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science. Certified in Clinical Health Psychology, she completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Mayo Clinic Rochester and is active in research, with over 18 talks and 17 publications.

Robert Karol, Ph.D., ABPP/RP, CBIST/R

Robert is President of Karol Neuro + Rehab Consulting providing program development consultation, staff training/development, case consulting with organizations, behavior management consultation, career management, presentations and workshops. He has also been President of a group private practice specializing in counseling for persons with acquired brain injury and neuropsychological evaluations. He is past Director of hospital-based brain injury programs and Director of Psychology/Neuropsychology, and also Vice President of Brain Injury Services for a provider of long-term care and an Adjunct Professor. He is Board Certified in Rehabilitation Psychology. He has published four books and a number of journal articles.

Bradley Larrabee, M.Ed.

Bradley has embarked on a career journey focused on reaching all students. In his work as a mental health professional, special education teacher, professor, principal and presenter Bradley had developed programmatic frameworks, professional skills, and a passion for ensuring that every student is able to feel welcome and supported in our schools. This path ensures that all students are safe to learn and grow within our schools.

Hunter Markle

Hunter is an autistic young adult who also has some mental health challenges. He is currently working part-time. He enjoys sharing his experience of transitioning into the adult health care system and keeping mentally well. Hunter has presented at the National Federation of Families Conference, Children Come First Conference, Circles of Life Conference, the PATCH program, and has been on numerous panels.

Timothy Markle, M.S.

Tim is the founder and director of Forgiveness Factor, which promotes forgiveness as a path to mental wellness. He teaches and speaks on forgiveness, suicide prevention, and addiction recovery across Wisconsin and beyond. He partners with Stoughton Health and the Stoughton Senior Center to lead a 6-week course, *Freedom Through Forgiveness*, and is a regular guest on podcasts and Life 102.5 FM. A speaker and writer for the International Forgiveness Institute, Tim received the Healing Hearts Hero Award in 2022 for his work on self and interpersonal forgiveness.

2025
La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative

Raising awareness and hope in the community

Call-for-Proposals

2026 Suicide Prevention Summit

September 2026

View details and submit a proposal.

www.uwlax.edu/sps

Thank you to our Sponsors!

La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative

joewasjustjoe. foundation

Kaitlin's Table
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Kevin's Legacy Foundation
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2025 SUICIDE PREVENTION SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tim Blumentritt, B.S.W., Care Center
Karlene Buckmaster, CSW, Social Worker, La Crosse County Health Department
Kris Edwards, Community Member
Christine Hughes, M.S.W., Emplify
Amy Kuester, CRS, Great Rivers 211
Vincent Loera, M.S.W., APSW, Mayo Clinic Health System
Lisa Mackey, LMFT, Guest House Counseling
Deb Mahr, R.N., Kaitlin's Table-Gundersen Medical Foundation
Jennifer Mueller, LP, Nystom & Associates
Jenny Root, CSW, La Crosse County Human Services
Hallie Schmeling, Great Rivers 211
Maria Towle, M.S.W., LCSW, CSAC, Stein Counseling & Consulting Services LTD