

988 FAQ



What is 988?



988 is the new three-digit number that connects people to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **This service is for anyone who is:**

- suicidal
- experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis
- experiencing any kind of emotional distress

988 is more than just a number. It is a direct connection to compassionate and accessible care. When you call, text, or chat 988 you are connected to trained counselors that are part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network. Moving to 988 does not mean the 1-800-273-8255 number goes away. Using either number will get people to the same services.

Why do we need 988?



Mental health is just as important as physical health. Now there is a three-digit number for mental health emergencies that's easy to remember! **988 helps New York:**

- Connect with people who are struggling with behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use) concerns as soon as possible, 24/7.
- Reduce unnecessary use of law enforcement and other safety resources in crisis responses.
- Meet the growing need for crisis intervention where it's needed most.
- Shift the mindset about people who struggle with their mental health.
- Reduce healthcare spending with more cost-effective early intervention.

Will services be offered in other languages?



The Lifeline currently provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 150 additional languages.

Does it cost money to use 988?

Contacting 988 is a free service.

Who can contact 988?



988 is for everyone and it's more than a 'suicide' line. **Contact 988 if you are:**

- suicidal
- experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis
- experiencing any kind of emotional distress
- worried about someone in distress.

988 is for people of all ages, genders, sexes, ethnicities, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses. If you are a Veteran or Spanish speaker, 988 has dedicated lines for you.

What happens when I contact 988?



When contacting 988, you will first be routed to a local Lifeline crisis center based on your area code. A trained crisis counselor will answer and listen to how your problem is affecting you. They then provide support and share resources if needed. If a local crisis center is unable to take the call, you will be automatically routed to a national backup crisis center. All contact with 988 is voluntary.

What is the difference between 988 and 911?



988 provides easy access to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network and related crisis resources. This is different from 911, where the focus is on dispatching Emergency Medical Services, fire, and police as needed. The goal of 988 is to meet the growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs.

Learn more about 988:



To request translations of this document:

