



“988” is the three-digit, nationwide phone number to connect directly to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Too many people experience suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress without the support and care they need. There are urgent mental health realities driving the need for crisis service transformation across our country. In 2020 alone, the U.S. had one death by suicide about every 11 minutes—and for people aged 10-34 years, suicide is a leading cause of death.

There is hope. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – is a **national network of more than 200 crisis centers** that helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. These centers are supported by local and state sources as well as the Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As of July 16, 2022, all calls and text messages to “988” route to a 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call center.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7, confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress.

- **New Nationwide Number:** 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number — it’s a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress – whether thoughts of suicide, mental health, substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.
- **Provides Support:** People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.
- **FCC Rules:** Under FCC rules, calls and texts to 988 will be directed to the Lifeline. Calls and texts to 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) will also continue to reach the 988 Lifeline even after the nationwide implementation of 988.
- **Saving Lives:** The FCC actions reflect its commitment to saving lives and connecting individuals to necessary intervention services. Switching to the easy-to-remember 988 makes it easier for individuals in crisis to access the help they need and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues.
- **Important Step:** The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is an important step toward strengthening and transforming crisis care in this country. It serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.
- **Help for Veterans:** For calls, pressing “1” after dialing 988 will connect you directly to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline which serves our nation’s Veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and those who support them. For texts, continue to text the Veterans Crisis Lifeline short code: 838255.
- **Services in Spanish:** 988 Lifeline voice, text, and chat options are offered in Spanish. To call a Spanish-speaking crisis counselor, dial 988 and then press “2.” To text with a Spanish-speaking crisis counselor, text AYUDA to 988. To chat with a Spanish-speaking crisis counselor, visit <https://988lifeline.org/es/chat/>.





- **LGBTQ Support:** You can reach a specialized LGBTQI+ affirming counselor by texting “Q” to 988 or by pressing “3” when calling. Also, people can chat at 988lifeline.org for themselves or a loved one who may need crisis support.
- **American Sign Language:** People who use American Sign Language can now use their videophones to contact 988 directly.

History

2005: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline launches with the number 1-800-273-8255 and received 46K calls in the first year.

August 2019: FCC staff—in consultation with SAMHSA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the North American Numbering Council—released a report recommending the use of 988 as the 3-digit code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

July 2020: The FCC designated this new phone number for individuals in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis support.

October 2020: The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 was signed into law, incorporating 988 into statute as the new Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line phone number.

November 2021: The FCC adopted rules to expand access to text 988 to directly reach the Lifeline to better support at-risk communities in crisis, including youth and individuals with disabilities.

July 16, 2022: All phone companies and text messaging providers are required to route all calls and text messages to “988” to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

July 20, 2023: The FCC adopted rules to help ensure that the public has access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline if a service outage occurs.

September 28, 2023: Chairwoman Rosenworcel calls on the wireless industry and related associations to explore 988 routing solutions.

To learn more, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/988Lifeline>.

