



FAQ Resource

988 is the three-digit dialing code for people to connect to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline).

How can I contact 988 to get help?

Call or text 988 or chat at 988Lifeline.org/chat.

988 replaces the 10-digit Lifeline number, (800) 273-TALK (8255). Both numbers work but 988 is much easier to remember.

Why should I use 988?

988 offers confidential, compassionate, and accessible care and support. It is available for anyone who experiences a mental health-related crisis. That includes thoughts of suicide, a mental health or substance use crisis, or any emotional distress. People can call for themselves or for a loved one who may need crisis support.

Studies show that after speaking to a 988 counselor, most callers are much more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful. Almost 98% of people who call, text, or chat to 988 get the crisis support they need and do not require more services at the moment.

What happens when I call 988?

1. You hear a welcome message, then press **1** to reach the Veterans' Crisis Line; **2** to reach services in Spanish; or **3** to reach specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth. You can choose one of these three options if it applies to you or just stay on the line. Teletype (TTY) users can use their preferred relay service or dial 711, then 988.
2. A trained crisis counselor answers.
3. The counselor listens to you to understand how your problem affects you or your loved one, provides support, and shares resources and referrals that may be helpful.

What happens when I text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat?

In some communities, 988 may connect you to more services or follow up with you to make sure that you receive care (not all areas have this capacity).

(Both are available in English only)

1. If you chat, you receive a pre-chat survey. If there is a wait to chat with a crisis counselor, a wait-time message appears.
2. For both text and chat, a trained crisis counselor answers.
3. For both text and chat, the counselor listens to you to understand how your problem affects you or your loved one, provides support, and shares resources and referrals that may be helpful.

What services does 988 provide?

For 988, trained crisis counselors answer all calls, texts and chats. They provide support and resolve most crises through this initial contact. This reduces the need for an in-person response. For most people who seek help for a mental health crisis, 988 is the intervention they need. 90%+ of crises can be assisted over the phone.

988 is different than 911. For 911, the focus is mainly to collect information and dispatch an in-person emergency service like EMS, fire, and/or police.

Is the Veterans Crisis Line still available? Can I reach it by dialing 988?

The Veterans' Crisis Line is still in service. Veterans, service members, and family members can call 988 and press **1** to connect to the Veterans' Crisis Line. It is run and staffed by the Veterans' Administration. The Veterans' Crisis Line is also available by text at 838255 and by chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat.

Will I be tracked or traced if I contact 988?

When you contact 988, the counselor who answers your call knows your phone number if you call/text or your IP address if you chat. Other than that, they do not know who you are or where you are located. 988 does not have any capabilities right now to directly "trace" any users (phone, text or chat) to determine their geographic locations. 988 simply routes callers to the nearest network call center using the caller's area code, which may or may not match your current location. If that call center has no capacity, you may be connected to a call center in another area code.

Does 988 collect my information/data? What do they do with that information?

All contacts to 988 are confidential. You are never required to provide identifying information to receive help from 988. During your contact with 988, you may voluntarily share certain information to identify yourself. That information may be documented in notes about your conversation. However, it is not shared outside 988 without documented verbal or written consent. 988 protects any and all confidential and identifying information that you may share. The only exceptions are cases where there is imminent risk of harm to yourself or someone else, or where otherwise required by law.

Learn more about 988 at
www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988

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