

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline



Is 988 working?

The new 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is already reaching more Americans in distress – and connecting them to help faster — than the old 10-digit suicide prevention line it replaced. In August of 2022, the Lifeline saw a 45% increase in overall volume of calls, texts, and chats compared with August 2021. Answer time is faster as well; in August of 2022, the average answer time was 42 seconds, while the previous year was around 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

The Lifeline is effective in reducing suicidal and emotional distress. Since it's inception in 2005:

- the Lifeline has served over 10 million people;
- call centers in the Lifeline divert hundreds of thousands of calls from 911 every year and;
- independent evaluations demonstrate that Lifeline centers are effective in reducing emotional distress and suicidality.



How does 988 call routing work?

When a caller dials 988, they will hear a recorded introduction message providing details on 988 services. Callers then have the option to self-identify for connection to a specific call center — for instance, pressing 1 to identify as a veteran and speak with the Veteran crisis center. If a caller does not self-identify, they will be connected to their local crisis call center. 988 technology uses the caller's area code to route the caller to the closest call center. Crisis centers can transfer calls to other centers as needed.

Does 988 involve the police?

988 crisis counselors are trained to de-escalate mental health crises with minimal involvement of emergency services. In rare instances where a caller is in immediate danger and the crisis counselor cannot de-escalate over the phone, 988 may contact emergency services. **Less than 3% of calls to 988 result in dispatching emergency services**, and less than 1% of calls result in involuntary dispatch.



Does 988 require personal information?

When a caller reaches out to 988, the Lifeline crisis counselor who responds will know their phone number if they call/text, or their IP address if they use chat. Beyond that, the Lifeline will not know who the caller is or where they are located. Callers are not required to provide any personal information to receive support from the 988 Lifeline.

988 call centers may use geolocation if emergency services are dispatched. Geolocation is only used when a caller's safety cannot be secured over the phone and geolocation software is not available at all call centers. 988 decreases the number of calls to 911 and is an effective way to get help while rarely involving emergency services.



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