



988: What You Need to Know



988 is the new three-digit number for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, formerly the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number — it is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress — whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

988 offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors to help people experiencing:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Mental health or substance use crisis, or
- Any other kind of emotional distress

People can call or text [988](tel:988) or chat 988lifeline.org for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. Vermont Lifeline Centers are ready to respond to local calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

988 offers callers multiple languages, while text or chat are currently provided in English only.

If you or someone you know is in imminent danger, call 911.

WHAT PARTNERS NEED TO KNOW:

- 988 will accept calls from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis. People can also contact 988 if they are concerned about a loved one. Vermont Lifeline counselors are trained to reduce stress, provide emotional support, and connect you with anyone in distress to local resources.
- Over 98% of calls are resolved on the phone and do not result in the need for in-person response. If an in-person response is requested or required, the counselor may transfer to another service which could involve a crisis response team or 911.
- 988 offers callers multiple languages, while text or chat are currently provided in English only.
- Callers in Vermont who dial 988 will be connected with in-state operators when available. Current data shows that 90% percent of calls from Vermonters are answered by Vermont Lifeline Centers.
- Continue conversations with staff in your agency on the existing referral sources and how your teams will incorporate 988 into treatment and crisis planning. Provide 988 information to clients and other individuals in need. 988 should be incorporated as part of a comprehensive safety plan, but it should not be the only resource provided for individuals in crisis.

