

# Do You Know About 988?

## September Mid-Month Mental Health Tip

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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) was established in 2005 to help those in crisis. In 2022, the Lifeline simplified its number to 988 to make it easier for people to remember and access. In the three years since its relaunch, the call volume has increased by an estimated 40%. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that the Lifeline has answered over 13 million calls, chats and texts across the country and its territories.

September is Suicide Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, promote prevention efforts and support those affected by suicide. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States, with an estimated 49,000 lives lost each year. Understanding how to use 988 can make a life-saving difference.

### How It Works

Using the Lifeline is free and confidential.

- When a person calls 988, they are given the option to connect to the Veterans Crisis Line, access help in Spanish or remain on the line.
- If you speak a language other than English or Spanish, the 988 Lifeline uses Language Line Solutions to provide interpretation to callers in more than 240 additional languages. A video chat option is also available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Once the call is routed, a trained counselor will listen, provide support and share resources. If the counselor feels the person is in danger, they will call emergency services with 911, but their goal is to do everything they can to help with a less invasive plan.
- If the person prefers, they can text or chat online with a counselor in Spanish or English. Before they are connected with a counselor, they will be asked to fill out a quick survey.

Regardless of the method of contact, **the 988 Lifeline is intended to alleviate emotional distress and offer support to anyone.**

### Getting Help

**Call or text 988 or visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) if you or someone you know is experiencing mental health-related distress.**

For further guidance, contact a mental health professional.