988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Partner Toolkit

The Department of Health 988 Crisis Systems Section developed this toolkit to help partners communicate with people in Washington about the implementation of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

You can use the content in this toolkit as a reference to address your audience's needs.

Contact the 988 Program Inbox with any questions.

Washington State Department of HEALTH

DOH 971-056

Updated July 2025

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

What's the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline? 3
988 at the Department of Health 4
Background Information about the 988 Lifeline 4
House Bill 1477 4
House Bill 1134 4
Related resources 5
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Resources 5
Websites 5
Toolkits and guides 5
Fact sheets 5
988 Lifeline crisis numbers and subnetwork lines 6
Other crisis numbers and helplines 6
How the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline works 6
Languages 7
988 Lifeline crisis centers in Washington 8
Getting support from the 988 Lifeline 8
How are calls, texts, and chats routed? 9
Is the 988 Lifeline confidential? 9
988 Lifeline Subnetwork Lines 10
The Native & Strong Lifeline 11
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the 988 Lifeline 12
Logos and branding 15
Photography 15
Social Media hashtags 15
Videos 16
Facebook, X, and Instagram posts (English) 17
Facebook, X, and Instagram posts (Spanish) 18
Social media shareables 18

What's the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline?

On July 16, 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) became the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. 988 became the new, nationwide 3-digit number for people experiencing any type of emotional distress or mental health crisis.

The 988 Lifeline exists to provide people in crisis with free, confidential, compassionate support.

Contact the 988 Lifeline to get support for:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Mental health crises
- Substance use concerns
- Other emotional distress

You can also contact the 988 Lifeline if you're worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

The 988 Lifeline is available 24/7/365 via call, text, or chat, as well as videophone for people who use American Sign Language (ASL).

988 does not replace any crisis centers in Washington. It's an addition to the state's network of crisis center providers. The previous NSPL number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), remains active along with 988.

988 at the Department of Health

The 988 Crisis Systems Section was established in February 2023. It's housed in the Office of Healthy and Safe Communities (OHSC) in the Division of Prevention and Community Health (PCH) at the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).

DOH doesn't implement the 988 Lifeline directly or provide 988 Lifeline crisis services. The 988 Crisis Systems Section supports implementation of the 988 Lifeline in Washington, in part by implementing House Bills 1477 and 1134 and other legislation. These bills help expand, enhance, and fund mental health crisis response and suicide prevention services in Washington. The 988 Crisis Systems Section also manages contracts with the three current 988 Lifeline crisis centers and will manage contracts for the future designated 988 contact hubs.

Learn more about the 988 Crisis Systems Section at DOH.

Background Information about the 988 Lifeline

In 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act. The act made 988 the new, nationwide, easy-to-remember 3-digit dialing, texting, and chat number for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, or a mental health-related crisis.

House Bill 1477

The Washington Legislature passed House Bill 1477 (E2SHB 1477 (PDF)) to support 988. This bill enhances and expands mental health crisis response and suicide prevention services for everyone in Washington state. Governor Jay Inslee signed E2SHB 1477 into law on May 13, 2021. E2SHB 1477 is also known as the Crisis Call Center Hubs and Crisis Services Act.

E2SHB 1477 also established the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy (CRIS) Committee, Steering Committee, and Subcommittees. These committees develop recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to help implement the national 988 number and parts of E2SHB 1477 and other legislation. If you would like to participate as a member of the public, you can register to attend a meeting and submit public comments.

For full details, please see the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy (CRIS) Committees webpage.

Contact the 988 Program inbox with questions about 988 implementation in Washington.

House Bill 1134

In 2023, the Washington Legislature passed House Bill 1134 (E2SHB 1134) to help implement the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This bill expands crisis services in Washington by creating an

endorsement for rapid response crisis teams and funding these mobile units and training for responders.

The bill charges the University of Washington to make recommendations for crisis workforce and resilience training for mental and behavioral health care workers in Washington and DOH to create a social media campaign promoting the 988 Lifeline and develop informational materials explaining the 988 Lifeline, how it works, and how to use it.

The campaign and informational materials, like the campaign toolkit, will help increase awareness of the 988 Lifeline and encourage people to reach out during a crisis.

Other key parts of the bill include working to divert mental health crisis calls made to 911. This means that 988 crisis counselors will work directly with 911 dispatchers, on-site at Public Safety Answer Points (PSAPs) or remotely, to answer these calls and support people having thoughts of suicide or experiencing another type of mental health or substance use crisis.

Related resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Resources

Websites

- DOH 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline web page: Available in English, Spanish, and 14 other languages. Use the dropdown menu at the top to choose your preferred language.
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Also available in Spanish
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline website
- Native & Strong Lifeline

Toolkits and guides

- SAMHSA 988 Partner Toolkit
- Washington 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Crisis Center Best Practice Guidelines: These guidelines establish best practices for Washington's 988 Lifeline crisis centers and Regional Crisis Lines. For more information, visit Health Care Authority's website.
- Native & Strong Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Fact sheets

These DOH fact sheets are available in both English and Spanish.

English:

- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: What happens when you call?

- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Fast facts
- Native & Strong Lifeline
- What 911, Fire, EMS, and First Responders Need to Know About 988
- Mental Health Crisis Call Diversion Initiative
- Georouting of Calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- Georouting of Calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Information for Tribal Partners

Spanish:

- What 911, Fire, EMS, and First Responders Need to Know About 988 (Spanish)
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Fast facts (Spanish)
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: What happens when you call? (Spanish)
- Native & Strong Lifeline (Spanish)
- Mental Health Crisis Call Diversion Initiative (Spanish)

You can find other resources at the DOH 988 website.

988 Lifeline crisis numbers and subnetwork lines

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 or chat with the 988 Lifeline. The previous 10-digit number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is still active along with 988.
- Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 then press 1, text 838255, or chat online.
- Spanish Language Line: Dial 988 then press 2, text Envía "AYUDA" all 988, or chat with the Spanish Language Line
- Native & Strong Lifeline: Dial 988 then press 4.

Other crisis numbers and helplines

Teen Link: Call or text 866-TEENLINK or chat online

The Trevor Project : Call 1-866-488-7386, text "START" to 678-678, or chat online

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: Call or text 1-833-TLC-MAMA

Disaster Distress Helpline: Call or text 1-800-985-5990

Trans Lifeline: Call 877-565-8860

Native Resource Hub: Call 1-866-491-1683 to reach the centralized information center for all

How the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline works

Crisis counselors at the 988 Lifeline provide free, confidential support for thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, and any other type of emotional distress.

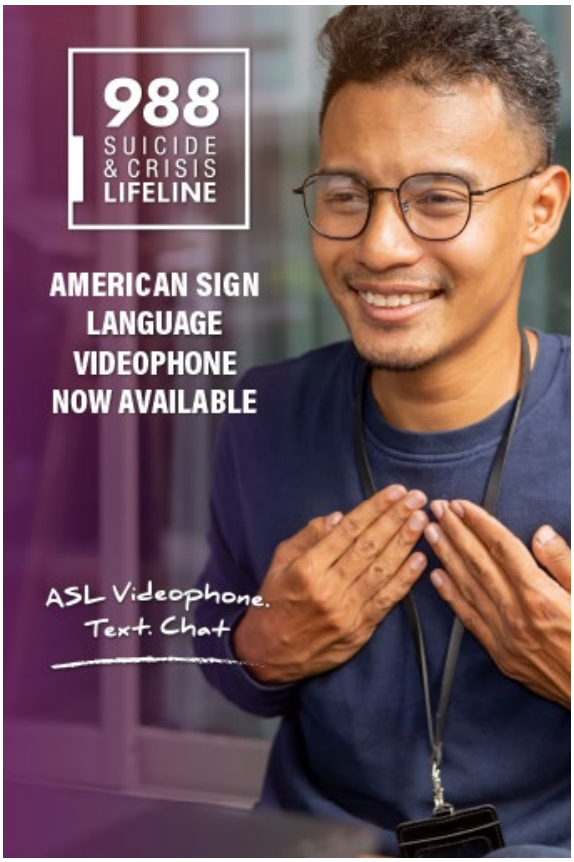
The 988 Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. You can contact the 988 Lifeline for yourself or a loved one who may need crisis support. You don't need to provide any personal data to get services when contacting 988.

You can reach the 988 Lifeline using any landline, cell phone, or voice-over internet device in the United States.

Languages

988 services are available in English and Spanish for call, text, and chat.

When calling, you can also get interpretation services in over 240 languages and dialects. To get support in another language, call the 988 Lifeline and say the name of the language you need.



You can also get crisis support in American Sign Language (ASL) by visiting the 988 Lifeline website and clicking the "ASL Now" button at the top of the page.

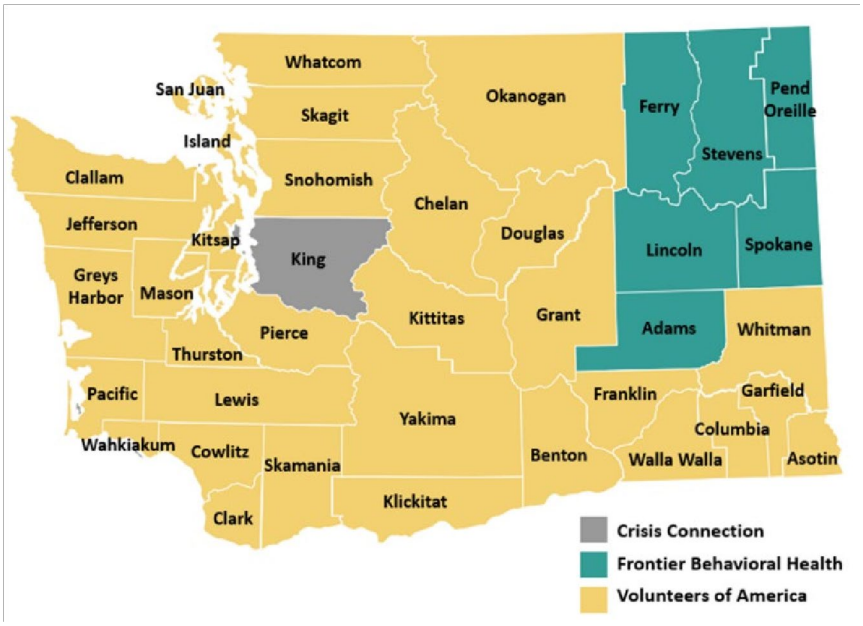
988 Lifeline crisis centers in Washington

All calls, texts, and chats made to 988 from a Washington area code will be routed to one of Washington's 988 Lifeline crisis centers. These 3 centers include:

- **Volunteers of America Western Washington:** This center serves 32 counties and administers the Native & Strong Lifeline and the Native Resource Hub.
- **Frontier Behavioral Health:** This center serves Adams, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Spokane Counties.
- **Crisis Connections:** This center serves King County.

Any calls, texts, or chats these centers can't answer will be routed to another crisis center in Washington.

This map shows the counties each center covers.



There are no changes to dispatch for Designated Crisis Responders and mobile crisis response teams or the functions of any other regional crisis service. If you contact 988 and your crisis counselor determines that you may need an in-person response from a Designated Crisis Responder or mobile crisis response team, they'll connect you with a Regional Crisis Line for an in-person response.

Getting support from the 988 Lifeline

Here's what to expect when contacting the 988 Lifeline:

- You'll hear or read a greeting message, depending on the type of device you use to contact the 988 Lifeline.

- You'll have the option to choose to be connected to one of the subnetwork lines listed below or press 0 to bypass the greeting and be connected to a crisis center.
- If you don't choose any options, you'll be connected to a crisis center based on your geographic location or area code, depending on your service carrier.
    - If you connect to the 988 Lifeline by text, you'll be routed to a crisis center by your area code.
    - If you connect over online chat, your message will be routed by ZIP code.
- If demand for 988 Lifeline services is high, you may wait for a short time before a crisis counselor answers.
- The crisis counselor who answers will listen to your concerns, offer support with your crisis, and provide more resources.
- Counselors will only transfer calls, chats, and texts to emergency services when a risk to someone's life can't be reduced during the conversation. Only a small percentage of calls, chats, and texts are transferred to emergency services. In about half of these cases, the person contacting the 988 Lifeline agrees to the transfer.

How are calls, texts, and chats routed?

T-Mobile and Verizon have enabled georouting for 988 Lifeline calls. This means that all calls made from phones serviced by T-Mobile and Verizon will be routed to a 988 Lifeline crisis center based on the help-seeker's geographic location. This includes calls made from Tribal reservations.

AT&T will enable georouting later in fall 2024, with smaller carriers to follow in the future. Until a carrier enables georouting, calls will still route by area code. Text messages will continue to route by area code for now, and online chats will still route by ZIP code.

Georouting uses only general location information to protect privacy and confidentiality for all help-seekers.

Is the 988 Lifeline confidential?

People contacting the 988 Lifeline can choose what to share with crisis counselors. You don't have to provide any personal details, like your name, address, or insurance information, to get crisis support.

The network system has several safeguards to address concerns about privacy and confidentiality. Your call, text, or chat may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance or training purposes. Additionally, crisis centers in the 988 Lifeline network may independently use recordings for training purposes. This depends on the best practices of the center.

988 Lifeline Subnetwork Lines

The 988 Lifeline offers subnetwork lines so help-seekers nationwide can get more specialized support. People contacting 988 from a Washington area code or while physically located in Washington have an additional subnetwork to choose from. In total, there are 5 options:

- **Veterans and service members:** If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, dial 988 and press 1 to be connected to the Veterans Crisis Line. You can also chat online or text 838255. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to call.
- **Spanish speakers:** Dial 988 then press 2, text "AYUDA" (envía "AYUDA" al 988), or chat with the Spanish Language Line.
- **American Indian and Alaska Native people:** The Native & Strong Lifeline is fully staffed by Native crisis counselors who are tribal members and descendants closely tied to their communities. They provide culturally affirming crisis intervention and support to all Native people in Washington. Help-seekers can reach the Native & Strong Lifeline by calling 988 and choosing option 4, but this call must be made from a Washington area code or a phone that gets service from a carrier that has enabled georouting.
- **People who use American Sign Language (ASL):** If you're deaf or hard of hearing and use ASL, you can get crisis support by visiting the 988 Lifeline website and clicking the "ASL Now" button at the top of the page. You can also call 1-800-273-TALK.

The Native & Strong Lifeline

The Native & Strong Lifeline launched in November 2022. It's Washington's crisis line for American Indian and Alaska Native people. Like 988, it's free, confidential, and available 24/7/365.

The Native & Strong Lifeline exists to prevent suicide in Native communities by providing people with culturally affirming crisis support and resources. People who call can get support that centers the traditions, wisdom, and lived experience of Indigenous people.

You can reach this line by calling 988 from anywhere in Washington and choosing option 4. Currently, this line is only available via phone.

- If your phone gets service from a carrier that has enabled georouting, you'll hear the option to press 4 to reach the Native & Strong Lifeline.
- If your phone's service carrier hasn't enabled georouting, you'll need to call 988 from a phone with a Washington area code.

Volunteers of America Western Washington (VOAWW) administers the Native & Strong Lifeline. This line serves all Indigenous people in Washington, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, First Nations, Urban Indians, enrolled tribal members, and unenrolled descendants.

This line is fully staffed and operated by Native crisis counselors. As a crisis line for Native people by Native people, it's the first of its kind in the United States.

Native & Strong Lifeline counselors can offer support with:

- Mental health crises
- Thoughts of suicide
- Substance use concerns
- Other emotional distress
- Getting help for a loved one in crisis
- Safety planning. A safety plan is a plan for staying safe during a mental health crisis or when experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Native & Strong Lifeline crisis counselors will always try to help people in crisis stay safe without involving emergency services like 911. They may refer calls to 911 if the immediate risk to someone's life can't be reduced during a call. The crisis counselor will stay on the line with the help-seeker and keep talking to them while another staff member contacts 911 to request an emergency response.

Nationally, less than 2% of all calls, texts, or chats made to 988 lead to 911 dispatch. In over half of these transfers, the person in crisis consents to getting emergency help.

The Native & Strong Lifeline doesn't replace other tribally operated crisis lines. These continue to operate throughout Washington.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the 988 Lifeline

What is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) and does 988 replace it?

Before July 16, 2022, NSPL referred to a national network of over 180 local, independent, and state-funded crisis centers. These centers, now called 988 Lifeline crisis centers, are equipped to respond and help people experiencing thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, or other emotional distress.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is the new name for NSPL. 988 does not replace the previous 10-digit NSPL phone number but provides another, easier way for people to reach 24/7/365 crisis centers. You can call either 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a crisis counselor.

What happens when I contact 988?

When you contact 988, you'll get an automated greeting message that gives you the choice to continue in Spanish and offers additional options to connect to subnetwork lines, including option 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line. If you call 988 from a Washington area code or a phone

that gets service from a carrier that has enabled georouting, you can choose option 4 for the Native & Strong Lifeline).

If you don't choose any of these options, your call, text, or chat will be routed to a local 988 Lifeline crisis center based on your area code or geographic location, depending on your service carrier. If the local crisis center is unable to take the call, text, or chat, you'll be automatically routed to another center in Washington.

A trained crisis counselor will answer your call, text, or chat. This person will listen to you, work to understand what you're experiencing, provide support, and collaborate with you on ways to feel better. They can also connect you with additional help or resources.

When did 988 go live nationally?

July 16, 2022. You can reach 988 nationwide.

How is 988 different than 911?

The 988 Lifeline was established to improve access to crisis services in a way that meets the nation's growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs. The 988 number provides easier access to crisis centers and crisis resources, which are distinct from the public safety purposes of 911. 911 focuses on dispatching Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire, and police as needed.

If I call 988, will first responders, like the police or EMS, be automatically dispatched?

The primary goal of the 988 Lifeline is to provide support for people experiencing thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, a mental health crisis, or other emotional distress in the moments they most need it. 988 crisis counselors aim to provide support that centers on the person in crisis.

Most of the people who seek support from the 988 Lifeline do not require any additional interventions at that time. Currently, fewer than 2% of 988 calls, texts, and chats nationwide require emergency services, like 911.

Some safety and health issues, like a suicide attempt in progress, may need a response from law enforcement or emergency medical services (EMS). But the 988 Lifeline coordinated response aims to promote the least restrictive type of stabilization and care to people in crisis.

Will help-seekers be referred to 911?

A small percentage of 988 Lifeline calls, texts, and chats may require activation of the 911 system. This may happen when the immediate risk to someone's life can't be reduced during the call, text, or chat. In these cases, the crisis counselor shares information with 911 to help save the life of the person in crisis.

Will my call to the Lifeline be recorded?

The 988 Lifeline greeting states that calls, texts, and chats may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes. Additionally, crisis centers in the 988 Lifeline network may independently use recordings for training purposes. This depends on the best practices of the center.

You don't need to provide any personal data to receive 988 Lifeline services. The network system has several safeguards to address concerns about privacy.

Can I contact 988 for a substance use crisis?

Yes, you can contact 988 for yourself or someone else experiencing a substance use crisis. However, in case of an overdose emergency, call 911 and administer naloxone.

How is 988 funded?

Congress provided the Department of Health and Human Services workforce funding through the American Rescue Plan, some of which supports the 988 Lifeline workforce.

The President's Fiscal Year 2022 budget request provides additional funding for the 988 Lifeline and for other federal crisis funding sources.

At the state level, in addition to existing public/private sector funding streams, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 allows states to enact new state telecommunications fees to support 988 Lifeline operations.

E2SHBs 1477 and 1134 and other legislation are further funded by a tax on Washington's phone and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) lines.

What languages are 988 services available in?

Live 988 Lifeline services are available in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language (ASL). The 988 Lifeline uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 240 additional languages and dialects. Text and chat are currently available in English and Spanish only.

How does the 988 Lifeline accommodate people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

If you're deaf or hard of hearing, you can get crisis support by:

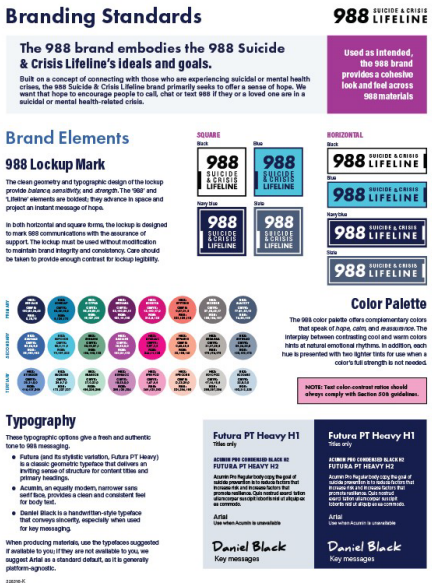
- Using your preferred TTY relay service
- Dialing 711 then 1-800-273-8255.
- Visiting the 988 website and clicking the ASL Now button at the top of the page
- Calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255) from your videophone.

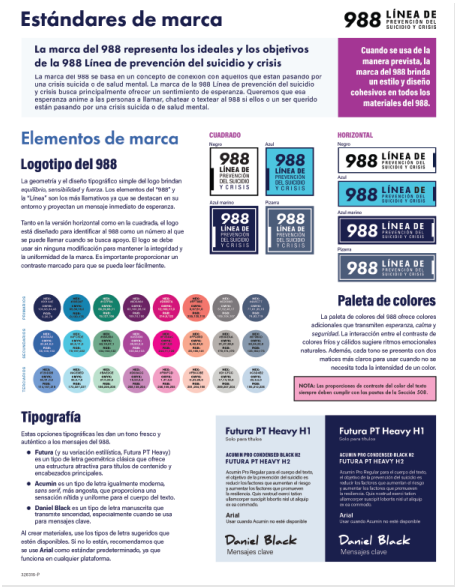
Find more answers to frequently asked questions on the SAMHSA website.

Logos and branding

Find logos, branding guidelines, and icons on the SAMHSA website. Logos are available in English and Spanish.

[Download logos and branding guidelines from the SAMHSA website.]





Photography

The SAMHSA 988 Partner Toolkit has many different resources available for use, including photographs.

You can download 988-branded photographs for different audiences, including Spanish speakers, faith communities, American Indian and Alaska Native people, Black or African American people, and more.

Social Media hashtags

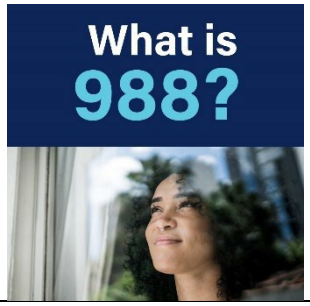
- #988Lifeline
- #YouAreNotAlone
- #HopeHasANewNumber
- #YouMatter
- #SuicidePrevention
- #SaludMental
- #NoEstáSolo
- #LaEsperanzaTieneUnNuevoNúmero

Videos

You can use these videos from SAMHSA in social media posts, stories, and threads.

Find these videos and many others on the SAMHSA Social Media Shareables webpage.

Full videos - use the full videos as individual interactives on the social media platforms.

988 24/7 Crisis Support – 30 seconds • Square (Posts): With audio/Without audio • Vertical (Story, reels): With audio/Without audio	
What is 988 – 40 seconds • Square (Posts): With audio/Without audio • Vertical (Story, reels): With audio/Without audio	
What is 988 for? – 20 seconds • Square (Posts): With audio/ Without audio • Vertical (Story, reels): With audio/Without audio	

Mix and match videos: You can use the mix-and-match videos together to create your own versions for different audiences.

What is 988? – 30 seconds This "What is 988?" item is the first in a series describing the 988 Lifeline. You can pair this video with other videos. • Square (Posts): With audio/Without audio • Vertical (Story, reels): With audio/Without audio	
What is 988 and how does it work? - 3 minutes This video is designed to promote the 988 Lifeline by explaining how it works and why a national suicide and crisis lifeline is essential. • English • English with audio description • English with video captions	

Facebook, X, and Instagram posts (English)

Here are a few examples of social media posts. You can find more social media shareables at the SAMHSA website.

1. If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, or a mental health crisis, 988 provides 24/7 connection to confidential support. There is hope. Just call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.
2. Simply calling or texting 988 or chatting 988Lifeline.org will connect you to compassionate care and support for mental health-related distress.
3. Call 988 if you are having thoughts of suicide, substance use concerns, or any other kind of emotional distress. Reach free, confidential, trained support. Services are available 24/7, in English, Spanish, and 250 other languages.

Facebook, X, and Instagram posts (Spanish)

1. Si usted o alguien que conoce está teniendo pensamientos de suicidio o está pasando por una crisis de salud mental, el 988 proporciona asistencia gratuita y confidencial 24/7. Hay esperanza. Simplemente llame o envíe un mensaje de texto al 988 o chatee a través de 988lifeline.org/help-yourself/en-español.

2. Simplemente llamar o enviar un mensaje de texto al 988 o chatear a través de 988lifeline.org/help-yourself/en-español lo conectará con atención compasiva y apoyo para la angustia relacionada con la salud mental.

3. Llame o envíe un mensaje de texto al 988 o chatee a través de 988lifeline.org/help-yourself/en-español si tiene pensamientos de suicidio, crisis de salud mental o cualquier otro tipo de angustia emocional. Póngase en contacto con asistencia gratuita, confidencial y capacitada. Los servicios están disponibles las 24 horas del día, los 7 días de la semana, en inglés, español y 250 idiomas adicionales.

Social media shareables

Images (English)

SAMHSA has provided these photos, and many others, for use with 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline social media posts and other communications. Find more examples on the SAMHSA Logo and Branding web page.

Download

Download

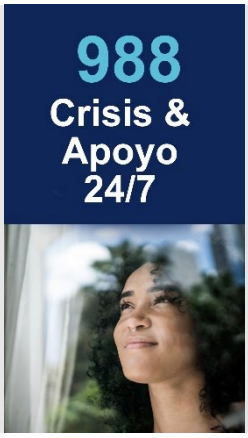
Download

Download

Download

Images (Spanish)

Download



Download

Download

Download

Download

Virtual backgrounds

SAMSHA has provided virtual background for partners to use during virtual meetings. Partners can customize these by adding their own state, territory, tribal, and organization logos to the backgrounds.

988 Virtual Background in Light Blue (JPG | 40 KB)

988 Virtual Background in Gray (JPG | 38 KB)

988 Virtual Background in Navy (JPG | 41 KB)

End cards

When news articles, entertainment programming, or other media material includes content addressing suicide, mental health, or emotional distress, please copy and paste one of the end card options below to share 988 crisis supports with readers and viewers, especially those who may need help or be in crisis.

Horizontal logo & text (English)

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

If you or someone you know needs support now, **call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org**

Square logo & text (English)

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

If you or someone you know needs support now, **call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org**

Text only

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide or a mental health crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.

Visit the SAMHSA website for more social media shareables and logos in English and Spanish.