

988 IS HERE.

With the new dialing code available nationwide, what is and isn't changing?

Starting on July 16, 2022, 988 is available nationwide as a number for people to call or text during a mental health, substance use or suicide crisis. Having an easy-to-remember, three-digit number will help more people connect easily and quickly to trained counselors during a crisis. This is an important first step to help people in crisis and their families, but what does this three-digit number mean for you?

What Changed on July 16

- ✓ Anyone in the U.S. can dial 988 to connect to the existing Lifeline Network, instead of the full ten-digit number (though the full number, 800-273-8255, will still work)
- ✓ The Lifeline is expanded beyond only suicide to support people in a range of mental health, substance use and suicidal crises
- ✓ People can also text 988 for support, another way to contact trained crisis counselors

What Won't Change Unless Policymakers Act

- ✗ Call centers will continue to operate with existing, limited resources despite the anticipated increase in volume
- ✗ Mobile crisis teams are not available in every community – which also means law enforcement remains the likely in-person response to someone in crisis in many places
- ✗ Crisis stabilization options are available in few communities, leading people to cycle in and out of emergency rooms and jails with nowhere to turn for short-term, intensive care
- ✗ The crisis services available to people contacting 988 will vary community-by-community

The availability of 988 will undoubtedly help more people connect directly to mental health support during a crisis, but it does not mean every community has full crisis response system ready to help. Right now, the full system we need to have in place to respond to people in crisis who call or text 988 is not available in many communities in across the country. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop a robust mental health crisis response system that works for everyone. 988 is the first step, but the work to reimagine crisis response is only beginning.



REIMAGINE
Crisis Response

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ReimagineCrisis.org