



On July 16th, 2022

988 will become the nationwide 3-digit dialing code for
Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis

*988 will be the new 3-digit dialing code connecting people to the
existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.*

*Compassionate, accessible care and support will be available for
anyone experiencing mental health-related distress including
thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis.*

*NOTE: The existing 10-digit telephone number for Lifeline
(1-800-273-TALK or 8255)
will continue to be available even after 988 is operational.*

There is hope.



Talk with us.



What is 988?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has required that everyone in the United States and its territories have immediate access to suicide prevention and crisis services through an easy to remember 3-digit dialing code.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) is currently accessed by a 10-digit telephone number (*1-800-273-TALK*). The Lifeline responds 24/7 to calls, chats or texts from anyone who needs support for suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis. Lifeline connects those in need with trained crisis counselors. Its services are free and confidential.

Frequently Asked Questions



What happens when I call 988?

Starting July 16th, 2022, when calling 988, callers first hear a greeting message while their call is routed to the local Lifeline network crisis center. There are currently 5 Lifeline member centers answering the calls for New Jersey residents. A trained call specialist will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and share resources if needed. The Lifeline provides crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 250 additional languages for people who call 988.

How is 988 different from 911?

988 was established to improve access to crisis services in a way that meets our country's growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs. 988 will provide easier access to the Lifeline network and related crisis resources, which are distinct from the public safety purposes of 911. 911 will continue to be used for all circumstances when there is an imminent life-threatening emergency for themselves or someone else. This includes a mental health emergency.

How is 988 different from 211?

211 will continue to be used in non-emergency circumstances where the caller is looking to find community resources, such as food banks, shelters, financial assistance, etc.

For more information about NJ211, visit <https://www.nj211.org>

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

The primary goal of 988 is to provide support for people in suicidal crisis or related mental health distress in the moments they most need it. While some safety and health issues may warrant a response from Law Enforcement and/or Emergency Medical Services (namely when a suicide attempt is in progress), the 988 coordinated response is intended to promote stabilization and care in the community, where the person is.

What do individuals calling who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD) need to know?

If you are a person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD), 988 is a resource you can use. 988 counselors will provide you with immediate assistance if you are thinking about suicide, having a mental health or substance use crisis, or are affected by someone who is. 988 may also provide a connection to the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, or other resources, for additional support based on your needs and circumstance.

What do families of individuals with IDD need to know?

988 is a service where compassionate, accessible care and support is available to any caller. Call specialists support persons contemplating suicide, anyone having a mental health or substance use crisis and persons who are concerned about or affected by someone who is.

Should I provide information on my disability?

People contacting 988 are not required to provide personal information in order to speak with a counselor. Counselors may ask a variety of questions in order to assess each individual's situation. It is important to know that the more information provided to the counselor, the better they will be able to assist. However, the decision regarding what to disclose is entirely up to the caller.

What do agencies that serve individuals with IDD need to know?

Providers rendering services to persons with IDD and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI) are reminded that 988 is distinct from 911. Under [Danielle's Law P.L. 2003, c.191](#), **911 must continue to be called in any situation where a prudent person could reasonably believe a life threatening emergency exists**. More information on Danielle's Law can be found [here](#).

988 can be used in situations that are not life-threatening to provide support for a person with IDD who may be thinking about suicide, having a mental health or substance use crisis, or be affected by a person who is. Support staff can also contact 988 if they are unsure how to best assist someone experiencing one or more of these challenges. 988 may provide a connection to the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, or other resources, for additional support based on the circumstance.

For More Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit

[988 Frequently Asked Questions | SAMHSA](#)

If you have questions about 988 in New Jersey, please email the NJ 988 Team at

988Questions@dhs.nj.gov

For more information about 988 in New Jersey, please visit

<https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/initiatives/988/index.html>

For more information about 988 efforts at the national level, please visit

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988>