

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

988 Has Officially Launched!

988, the new suicide and crisis lifeline, has officially launched! For years, anyone in the U.S. who is in crisis or concerned about someone being suicidal could call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.8255. As of today, these same individuals can now call 988 and be connected to a trained crisis counselor 24/7. 988 now serves as the three-digit calling code, similar to 911, for anyone experiencing mental health related distress, or for those who are concerned about someone they know.

According to SAMHSA.gov, “988 is the first step towards a transformed crisis care system in America.”

988 is built on a three-pillar foundation:

- Someone to call - when you are experiencing mental health or substance use related distress.
- Someone to come - enhanced crisis response services within all communities to deescalate crisis when a phone call isn't sufficient.
- Somewhere to go - connecting those individuals who need additional resources or a higher level of care.

When an individual calls 988, they are routed to the closest call center based on their area code, or the nearest overflow call center, so a local trained crisis counselor who knows the individual's community will be able to better assist them in the immediate crisis and provide follow up resources when applicable. English and Spanish speaking resources are available, and 988 has partnered with a national translation service company to provide services in more than 250 languages when needed.

One of the biggest differences in this transition is that this number is no longer just for those who are suicidal; it is now to be utilized for anyone experiencing mental health or substance related distress. Services will be available in call, text, or chat to ensure anyone who wants to reach out feels comfortable to do so.

We hope that the implementation of 988 will transform our behavioral health system not just here in Nebraska, but throughout the country. We are extremely excited about this transformation!

There is hope.

