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988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Need Support Now?

If you are having thoughts of suicide

If you need mental health-related crisis support

If you are worried about someone else

Please call or text **988**
or visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline chat](#)
to connect with a trained crisis counselor



Latest 988 Update
[988 Update \(September 2022\)](#)



New Jersey
MentalHealthCares
 1-866-202-HELP(4357)
 Who cares? We do!

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What is 988?

On July 16th, 988 will become the nationwide 3-digit dialing code for Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention. 988 will connect people to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Compassionate, accessible care and support will be available for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

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Will the 10-digit telephone number for Lifeline still work?

Yes. The existing phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (or 8255). This number will continue to be available even after 988 is operational.

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Lifeline Centers for calls, chats and texts (available now)

The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has been working with the five current Lifeline member centers to prepare for the transition to 988. When you call or text to 988, or chat through <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>, a trained counselor will listen to you, understand how your problem is affecting you, provide support, and share resources that may be helpful. In New Jersey, DMHAS is funding centers to expand their capacity to respond to the 988 Lifeline system. If a call, chat or text cannot be answered by a New Jersey center, it is routed to a national backup center.

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Mobile Crisis Response (in development)



DMHAS is developing a statewide Mobile Crisis Response program for situations requiring a mental health response in the community. When this program is operational, Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams will be available to help individuals de-escalate their crisis and access needed resources. Until the Mobile Crisis Response system is in place, existing community services will be available to help people in crisis who contact 988. Once Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams are activated, they will work with and complement current crisis response services.

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Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Centers (in development)

DMHAS is developing Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Centers which will be located throughout the state. These Centers will offer community-based services in a facility designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, and provide referrals to other community programs.

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How did 988 get started?

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), was established in 2005 as the nation's public safety net for individuals experiencing emotional distress or a suicidal crisis. The current Lifeline system uses a 10-digit telephone number (1-800-273-TALK). Calls are routed to the nearest available Lifeline member center where trained call specialists listen to and assist callers with getting the help they need. The Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to individuals in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the U.S.

On July 16, 2020, the FCC issued an order designating 988 as the new Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line number. It required all U.S. telecommunication providers to activate 988 for all subscribers by July 16, 2022. This meant that every phone in the United States and its territories would then have access to suicide prevention and mental health crisis services via call, chat, and text through a 3-digit dialing code.

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How is New Jersey planning for 988?

The State of New Jersey has a strong acute care and crisis response system currently in place. In January of 2021, DMHAS received a Planning Grant from Vibrant Emotional Health to prepare for the development of appropriate infrastructure and operations necessary for the full implementation of 988. And now, DMHAS is working with an array of stakeholders to develop and implement additional programs that will establish the 988 system as a statewide, comprehensive mental health response to people experiencing a suicidal, mental health or substance use crisis.

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Where can I find an overview of 988 information for New Jersey?

Valerie Mielke, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, made a presentation that provides an overview of 988.

Click on this link to watch Assistant Commissioner Mielke's presentation.

[988 Overview Presentation](#)

[988 Update \(September 2022\)](#)

[988 Overview PowerPoint \(printable\)](#)

[988 Updated PowerPoint \(printable\)](#)

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Are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about 988 available?

This is a link to general information from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) which oversees 988 for the Federal government. [988 Frequently Asked Questions | SAMHSA](#)

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If I have questions about 988 in New Jersey who should I contact?

Please email the NJ 988 Team at 988Questions@dhs.nj.gov

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Where can I get more information about 988?

[SAMHSA 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#)

[The Promise of 988: Crisis Care for Everyone, Everywhere, Every Time](#)

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988 Messaging Tool Kit

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