pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

988

A Direct Link for Suicide Prevention and Crisis Support

Pennsylvanians will soon have a new, easier way to connect to mental or behavioral health crisis services. Dialing 988 will connect callers directly to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

How will 988 help?

Trained professionals are waiting to listen

Trained 988 counselors located at 13 PA crisis call centers can immediately provide phone-based support and/or connections to local resources. If needed, the counselor can:

- Activate a mobile mental health crisis team that will arrive on site.
- Provide therapeutic interventions.
- Make referrals for outpatient services or transportation for further evaluation.

Phone-based intervention has proven highly effective

Between 80-90 percent of calls are resolved through conversations with call center staff, without further intervention.

988 keeps lines open for anyone experiencing crisis

By directing cases to 988 when a mental or behavioral health crisis isn't life threatening, the response provided by public services, such as law enforcement and EMS, can be reserved for situations in which lives are endangered.

When will 988 be implemented?

July 16, 2022 — People who call, text, or chat with 988 will be connected to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The existing Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will remain available.

Who can use the new number?

988 can be used by anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental or behavioral health, and/or substance use crisis — no matter where they are or where they live. Lifeline services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no cost to the caller.

76,000

Number of 2020 calls received by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by Pennsylvania Residents

What happens when you call 988?

The caller dials 988 → **The caller is routed to a local 988 call center** → **If not answered within 60 seconds, the call is routed to one of PA's three regional 988 call centers**

Press "1" to reach the Veteran Crisis Line

Press "2" to reach the Spanish sub-network

If a regional call center is unavailable, the call is routed to the national backup network