

## Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that public policies and practices should promote access to care for people with mental health conditions. NAMI supports a nation-wide toll-free hotline that can adequately respond to people experiencing mental health crises.

## Why We Care:

Mental health crises and suicides can be devastating for individuals, families and communities. When someone experiences a mental health crisis and doesn't receive the care they need, they can end up in emergency rooms, on the streets, involved in the criminal justice system, or in the worst case, they could lose their life. A 24/7 crisis hotline can be the first line of defense in preventing these tragedies and an essential part of any continuum of care for mental health crises.

Since 2004, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) has been accessible nationwide by dialing 800-273-TALK (8255). However, a 10-digit number is not always easy to remember during a crisis, and every year the demand for the Lifeline's services increases. To support those in crisis, access to the Lifeline should be simplified and resources allocated to bring this life-saving resource to a much larger scale.

To date, both Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have taken

steps to support this effort. The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (Public Law # 116-172) designates 9-8-8 as the national number for suicide prevention and mental health crises and permits states to impose fees to support local operations of 9-8-8. The FCC has approved an implementation plan that would make 9-8-8 operational nationwide by July 2022.

**NAMI supports a nation-wide toll-free hotline that can adequately respond to people experiencing mental health crises.**

Simplifying access and increasing resources is just one part of supporting people in crisis who call the Lifeline. To ensure that people can be connected to the care they need when they dial 9-8-8, we need to create a readily accessible crisis response system.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit [www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities](http://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities)