



Coming soon: The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Maryland will soon have a new way to connect to a local behavioral health crisis call specialist. Calling 988 will connect callers directly to the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which can provide assistance with substance use or mental health crises.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline replaces the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

All contacts with 988 (calls, chats, and texts) remain free of charge.

What does this mean for Marylanders?

When someone in Maryland calls 988, the call will be routed based on the caller's area code. For those calls routed to Maryland, the call will be answered by one of the eight strategically-located call centers. These centers provide phone-based support and information regarding local resources.

Maryland has been operating its own crisis hotline (call 211, press 1) which will remain in operation and accessible to Marylanders throughout the transition period and beyond.

When will 988 be implemented?

July 16, 2022 — 988 becomes operational across the nation.

Both 211 press 1 and the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will remain available. Those experiencing a behavioral health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis, should continue to call 211 and press 1 in Maryland or the Lifeline at its current number (1-800-273-8255) until July 16, 2022.

Who can call 988?

Anyone in need of assistance with behavioral health-related problems.

What can callers expect when they call 988?

Starting July 16, 2022, when calling 988:

Callers will hear a greeting message while their call is routed to a Lifeline network crisis call center (based on the caller's area code)

- A trained crisis counselor will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and provide resources and interventions as needed
- If a Maryland crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller will be automatically routed to a national backup crisis center
- The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 150 additional languages for people who call 988
- Veterans can access the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1

What can someone expect during a chat or text?

- Texts and chats to 988 will also be routed to a Lifeline network crisis call center based on area code.
- A response to chats and texts will be given by a call center staff person

[Learn more about the 988 National Suicide & Crisis Service Lifeline.](#)