

## **988 is the 911 for Those in a Mental Health Crisis**

When you fall down and can't get up, you can call 911 for help. When you have chest pains and think you might be having a heart attack, you can call 911 for help. When you think someone is breaking into your home, you can call 911 for help. If you have or know someone who has been in a situation like this, you know how important it is to have a life saving service come to your assistance with just the push of 3 buttons on your phone.

Well now people who are suffering with a mental health crisis, suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors, substance use, and/or emotional distress have their own 3 digit help number: 988!

### **Using this number can help save lives just like 911 does for physical health and safety emergencies.**

988 is accessible 24/7 for those who are in mental health distress. You can call for yourself or for someone you care about who you believe is in a mental health and/or substance use crisis. When you call 988, you will be connected with a trained mental health professional no matter where you are located within the United States. Studies have shown that people who use hotlines when experiencing distress, are less depressed and/or suicidal after speaking with a trained professional.

One of the benefits of this new hotline is that people can access it through the phone by calling 988, they can also text to the same number, 988, or they can go to the website and use the chat function. This increases the ways people can access help.

Just like with a heart attack, having quick access to help is essential. So how or what would determine if you should call this number? First and foremost, if someone is verbalizing and/or showing behaviors that indicate they want to hurt themselves or someone else, immediately calling the hotline can save their lives or someone else's. The mental health professional on the other end of the call, text, or chat will know what to do and walk you through it. For those that don't meet the need for an emergency response, the trained professionals who answer these calls will be able to provide the caller with information on where they or whoever they are calling about, can receive the care that is needed. Sometimes people may get referred to their local emergency room. Other times someone may be called out to the person's residence to assess the situation. Then there are the many outpatient programs and services that exist that may be a benefit to the individual and their loved ones.

Even if you are not sure if you should call this hotline or not, please do! They will be able to help you figure out what will best meet your needs or your loved one's needs.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988>

<https://988lifeline.org/>

