

What Happens When You Contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Calling 988

1. You're Connected to a Trained Counselor

When you dial 988, your call is routed to the nearest local crisis center in the Lifeline network based on your area code. If a local center isn't available, your call goes to a national backup center.

2. You'll Hear a Brief Greeting and Menu

You may hear a brief automated message with options:

- Press 1 for Veterans Crisis Line
- Press 2 for Spanish
- Hold or follow prompts for English and general support

3. You'll Speak with a Trained Crisis Counselor

A live, trained counselor will answer. They will listen without judgment, ask some basic questions (like your name, how you're feeling, and if you're in immediate danger), and offer support. If you're in a life-threatening emergency, they may involve local emergency services only as a last resort.

4. You'll Work Together on a Plan

The counselor can help you talk through your thoughts and emotions. They may offer coping strategies, connect you to mental health resources, or help you create a safety plan.

5. It's Free, Confidential, and Available 24/7

You don't have to give your name or any identifying information. The goal is support, not judgment—they are there to listen and help.

Texting 988

1. You Send a Text

Text 988 from any mobile phone. Available 24/7, free, and confidential.

2. You'll Get an Automated Response

You'll receive a brief message explaining you've reached the Lifeline. You may be asked if you're in immediate danger or need urgent help.

3. A Trained Crisis Counselor Responds

Within a few minutes, a real person will join the conversation. They'll listen and respond with empathy, not judgment. They may ask questions to understand what you're going through.

4. Support and Resources Are Offered

The counselor will help you talk through what's going on. You may be guided through coping strategies, or linked to local resources. They'll stay with you for the length of the conversation—there's no time limit.

5. It's Private and Confidential

No need to share your name or any identifying info. The conversation stays between you and the counselor, unless there's an immediate risk of harm and emergency help is needed.