

Though 988 is a new number, it connects callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (the Lifeline) which has been around since 2005, providing access to crisis lines through more than 200 local crisis centers throughout the country. **Here in Alameda County, Crisis Support Services of Alameda County (CSS) has been operating a crisis line since 1966 rooted in the value of neighbors helping neighbors.** Today, CSS responds to more than 35,000 calls annually from people living or working in Alameda County. The long term vision for 988 is a more robust and connected crisis system.



First, you'll hear an automated greeting with additional options. Press (1) for the veterans Lifeline and (2) for the Spanish Lifeline.



We'll play you a little music while we connect you to a trained crisis line counselor. The location of the counselor is based on the area code of your phone.



The crisis line counselor will provide emotional support, safety assessment, safety planning, and referrals to appropriate and available resources.

Below are some frequently asked questions:

What is 988?

988 is the new number for the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255), where free compassionate support is available 24/7 for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress—whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. 988 is not 911 but if a caller is experiencing a medical emergency, is in imminent danger, or in need of an immediate intervention, 988 will contact 911.

What happens when I call 988?

When calling 988, callers first hear a greeting message while their call is routed to the local Lifeline network crisis center based on the caller's area code. If you call from a 510, 341, or a Tri-Valley 925



number, your call will be directed to **Crisis Support Services of Alameda County (CSS)**. The routing is not always perfect and your call may be routed to a neighboring crisis center. **If you live/work/or spend time in Alameda County you are welcomed to call us directly at 1-800-309-2131.**

Do the phone or text counselors know where I am located?

At this time, 988 does not have geolocation capabilities that are commonly available when calling 911 or even using various applications on cell phones. This capability might become available in future years. CSS is committed to transparency and will notify our community when geolocation is activated.

How is 988 different from 911?

988 was established to improve access to the Lifeline using an easy to remember 3 digit number. 988 is distinct from the public safety purposes of 911 (where the focus is on dispatching Emergency Medical Services, fire and police as needed). 988 will refer to 911 in cases where emergency services are needed.

If I call 988, will first responders (police, fire, ambulance) be dispatched?

988 is intended to promote stabilization and care in the least restrictive manner. Currently, fewer than 2% of 988 calls require connection to emergency services like 911. The primary goal of 988 is to provide support for people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress in the moments they most need it. The vast majority of those seeking help from the 988 do not require any additional interventions at that moment. Some imminent safety and health issues may warrant a response from law enforcement and/or Emergency Medical Services (namely when a suicide attempt is in progress).

Is 988 available in languages other than English?

988 provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide interpretation services in over 250 additional languages for people who call 988. Callers will be prompted to press 2 for Spanish.

What happens if I text 988?

Currently text services are only available in English and are not routed to local centers. If you text 988, any participating Lifeline crisis center in California could respond to your texts. Once connected, a crisis counselor will listen to you, work to understand how your problem is affecting you, provide support, and share resources that may be helpful. 988 text might also contact 911 if a texter is experiencing a medical emergency, is in imminent danger, or in need of an immediate intervention. **If you are looking for a local text resource, CSS operates a text line 8am-midnight 7 days a week. You can access this service by texting SAFE to 20121. Limited Spanish hours are also available on the local text line. Learn more [HERE](#).**

For more information visit 988alamedacounty.org or crisissupport.org