

988 Information and Update

The plan for a nationwide, three-digit phone number for suicide prevention is moving along, but is **not active** or ready for people to use.

What's the Difference Between 211, 1-800-273-8255, and 988?

- **211** is the easy to use number to reach the Helpline Center. It is used for social service information, government information, basic needs resources and referrals to programs to help meet the callers' specific needs.
- **1-800-273-8255** is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The Helpline Center is South Dakota's only accredited suicide crisis center and answers the 1-800-273-8255 number for the entire state. All South Dakotans have access to the crisis line 24 hours a day, every day. The service is free and confidential.
- **988 is the new proposed three-digit phone number that would replace the 1-800-273-8255 phone number.** Eventually it will connect callers in a mental health or suicide crisis to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The Helpline Center's trained crisis workers would offer support, crisis intervention and safety planning.

Why will the Crisis Number Change?

Dialing three numbers for help is easier to remember than a longer 10-digit number. In a mental health crisis, it may be difficult for those in need to find or remember the toll-free crisis line. 988 will be memorable and as the FCC report states, "make it easier for Americans in crisis to access potentially life-saving resources."

When will the Crisis Number Change?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted on July 16, 2020, and unanimously approved the change to 988. The ruling means all phone service providers are required to direct 988 calls to the crisis line by July 16, 2022.

The FCC has published a Fact Sheet with in depth information about the 988 plan. You may download a copy [here](#).

What Do We Do in the Meantime?

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts please call **1-800-273-8255** anytime, day or night to connect with a trained, caring Helpline Center staff member for help.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and attempts. Any high school student in South Dakota can call 1-800-273-8255 or text icare to **898211** for support and information from the Helpline Center's staff.

For more information on suicide prevention, call 211 or search our online database:

- www.helplinecenter.org/211database
 - Use the following keyword search terms:
 - Suicide Prevention Hotlines

Sources:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC); "FCC Proposes New 3-Digit Number as Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Crisis Hotline" <https://www.fcc.gov/fcc-proposes-new-3-digit-number-suicide-prevention-mental-health-crisis-hotline>

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