988 Community Education and Awareness Toolkit
The Helpline Center (HLC) in partnership with the Department of Social Services created this toolkit to share marketing and educational resources about 988 in South Dakota. Use the materials in this toolkit to share information about 988 with your communities.

The resources in this toolkit have been created to provide information to the public. With these materials, you can help members of your community learn:

- What is 988
- How 988 can help
- When to contact 988
- How to contact 988
- ...and more!

For more information on 988, visit the Helpline Center at HelpLineCenter.org/9-8-8/
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Ideas for Community Engagement

Schools

**School administrators:** Make sure that teachers, parents, and counselors know that the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. School materials should be updated to reflect this change. Also make sure that parents, teachers, and counselors know 988 is available by calling, texting, or chatting.

**Teachers:** Share information about 988 with students by using South Dakota’s 988 resources when talking about mental health. Hang a 988 poster in your classroom for students to see.

**Students:** Support your peers by making sure they know 988 is available by text and chat, as well as by phone. Promote 988 within your student clubs and organizations.

Caregivers & Families

Normalize talking about mental health in your household. Talk to young people in your family about 988 so they know when and how to reach out.

Providers

Make [educational materials](#) about 988 available in your office. Educate staff about 988 during meetings and trainings. Talk to individuals receiving services about 988 during screenings.

Organizations

Share information about 988 in your email blasts, social media, and newsletters. Hang posters in popular locations around your workplace. Consider adding 988 to your organization’s [email signature](#).

First Responders & Uninformed Personnel

Include education about 988 in all staff trainings and ensure staff understand how the service fits into their work. Create a culture where staff feel comfortable reaching out to 988. Work with the HLC to learn how to best respond to behavioral health crises. Support your peers by sharing information about 988 after critical incidents.

Individuals

Follow the [5 Easy Steps to Share 988](#).
How to Talk About 988

Email Signature
Use the following text in your or your organization’s email signature:

“Are you in crisis, experiencing emotional distress, struggling with substance use or worried about someone you know? Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

Publications
Include one of the following options when you want to share 988 as a resource on any documents, images, or publications:

Option 1:
If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat.

Option 2:
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat.

Social Media
Use these examples to share information about 988 on your social media channels:

Option 1:
988 is more than just a number. It is a direct connection to compassionate and accessible care. Find materials to spread the word about 988 here: helplinecenter.org/988promo.

Option 2:
988 is the new 3-digit number that connects you to behavioral health crisis counselors. Learn more at helplinecenter.org/9-8-8/.

Option 3:
When you call, text, or chat 988, you are connected to trained counselors. Get the answers to the most frequently asked questions about 988 here: helplinecenter.org/9-8-8/.

Option 4:
988 is for everyone. It’s always available if you are in emotional distress, struggling with substance use, need support or have thoughts of suicide. Learn more at helplinecenter.org/9-8-8/.
Conversation Starters
Here are some of the ways you can begin the conversation about 988 with people you know:

Educating Others:

“You can talk to a trained crisis counselor when you call, chat, or text 988.”

“Did you know there’s a three-digit number for people who are struggling or feeling overwhelmed?”

“Have you heard about 988?”

Supporting Others:

“I’ve heard that people who call 988 feel really supported.”

“I feel like you might be struggling and want you to know that 988 has someone there to listen.”

Worried about someone and want to check in? The ‘Just Checking In’ tip sheet can help you have a supportive conversation.
5 Easy Steps to Share 988

1. **Start the conversation.** Ask people you know if they’ve heard of 988. Check out our [988 Conversation Starters](#) for some examples.

2. **Ask to hang a 988 poster at your:**
   a. Workplace
   b. Community stores
   c. Library
   d. Apartment building
   e. Place of worship
   f. Doctor’s office

3. **Share on your personal social media.** Anyone can share this lifesaving service with their friends. [Download a 988 social media graphic](#) and help get the word out.

4. **Normalize talking about behavioral health.** Check in with people you know and share your experiences or coping skills.

5. **Share 988 resources with your social and professional networks.** Whether it’s your bowling league or volunteer group, you can share information about 988 at one of your meetings.
What Happens When I Contact 988?

Follow up services will be offered.
The counselor will:
■ Listen to you
■ Understand how your problem is affecting you
■ Provide personal support
■ Connect you with the resources you need

A trained 988 counselor will talk with you.

The counselor will:
• Listen to you
• Understand how your problem is affecting you
• Provide personal support
• Connect you with the resources you need

Follow up services will be offered.

Call • Text • Chat
Brochures

Our Safeguard and Hope & Help brochures are here for anyone to request or download. In times of crisis, having immediate access to mental health and substance use support is invaluable. These brochures provide information on the 988 Lifeline, dealing with grief, substance use and at-home crisis prevention.

There is Hope Brochure

Download 988 There is Hope Brochure PDF or Request from HLC

Safeguard Brochure

Download 988 Safeguard Brochure PDF or Request from HLC
Posters

Choose from the five poster designs below and download the one(s) that will best reach your audience.

988 Poster

Download Poster PDF or Request from HLC

988, 211: What’s the Difference? Poster

Download Poster PDF or Request from HLC
Posters (cont.)

Choose from the five poster designs below and download the one(s) that will best reach your audience.

Help is 3 Numbers Away Poster

Download Poster PDF or Request from HLC

988 Tear-Off Poster

Request from HLC
Social Media Graphics

Share HLC's social media graphics on your private or professional social media page. Use the suggested social media language in the caption of your posts. The images below are an example of the many graphics available.

Talk with Us Social Graphic 1
Download Social Graphic JPEG or Request from HLC

Talk with Us Social Graphic 2
Download Social Graphic JPEG or Request from HLC

Hope and Help Social Graphic
Download Social Graphic JPEG or Request from HLC
Social Media Graphics (cont.)

Share HLC’s social media graphics on your private or professional social media page. Use the suggested social media language in the caption of your posts. The images below are an example of the many graphics available.

There is Hope Social Graphic

- Download Social Graphic JPEG or Request from HLC

988 Social Graphic Video

- Download Social Graphic Video or Request from HLC
Help is 3 Numbers Away Handout

This hand-out is designed to help individuals distinguish when to call 988, 911, and 211 for support and resources.

Download 988 Social Media Graphics or Request from HLC
988: Just the Facts

Since the launch in July 2022, there has been lots of information shared about 988. These are the important facts about 988 in South Dakota.

- 988 and 911 are separate services with separate contact centers.
- 988 does not have the ability to track callers’ geographic location.
- 988 is for more than just suicidal crises. It is for any problem a person is having that causes them distress.
- 988 offers free and confidential emotional support. You will be connected to a trained counselor who will talk with you and offer you support if you choose to accept it.
- You do not need to provide personal information when you call 988. The counselor may ask for information, but you can decline to share if you don’t feel comfortable doing so.
- 988 is not the 911 for mental health. Rather than immediately sending services to you, 988 provides emotional support from trained crisis counselors.
- Currently, less than 5% of calls to 988 require law enforcement to be involved. This typically happens when there is imminent risk to someone’s life.
- 95% of calls to 988 are resolved over the phone. The other 5% usually require agreed-upon mobile crisis or other follow-up services.
- The people answering the 988 texts, chats, and calls are trained crisis counselors that receive extensive training and supervision, including how to respond to a crisis.

Call • Text • Chat

Download Just the Facts Infographic PDF or Request from HLC
Just Checking In Infographic

This resource highlights the key facts about 988.

Download Just Checking In Infographic PDF or Request from HLC

Just Checking In

We want to make it easy to check in on each other. These tips can help you have a supportive conversation.

**HOW TO ASK:** Different Ways to Start a Conversation about Mental Wellness

- **Ask genuinely.** There are no special words. Being authentic is more important than what you say.
  
  “I just wanted to check in with you. How are you doing?”

- **Ask directly.** Letting someone know you want to hear about mental health can help them feel okay about opening up to you.
  
  “Just checking in. You seem a little down today. How are you doing?”

- **Share how you are first.** Being open about your struggles can help normalize what others are going through.
  
  “I’ve been really anxious lately with everything that is going on. How have you been?”

- **Ask about today.** It can be overwhelming to think about your overall emotional health if you are struggling. Focusing on the moment can be helpful.
  
  “How are you feeling today? How are you feeling right now?”

- **Ask regularly.** If you think someone is struggling, make it an expected part of the conversation that you’ll ask how they are, even if they don’t want to talk that day.
  
  “I just wanted to check in on how you are doing today. I’m thinking of you.”

- **Talk to them about things other than mental health too.** Connect over other aspects of your relationship.
  
  “This meme made me think of you!”

**HOW TO ANSWER:** Different Ways to Respond to Someone Who is Struggling

- **Stay calm.** If someone lets you know they are having a hard time, it is because they trust you to listen. You don’t need any special skills other than being yourself.
  
  “Thanks for sharing that. Tell me more about what’s going on.”

- **Validate their feelings.** Comparing their situation to other people or letting them know why things aren’t so bad is not helpful. Acknowledge that they aren’t okay.
  
  “That sounds really hard.”

- **Be open about your own struggles without comparing.** Normalizing mental health challenges is helpful.
  
  “I’ve been having a lot of anxiety lately too.”

- **Check back in regularly.** Let them know you’re on their mind.
  
  “I’ve been thinking about you since we talked. How are you doing today?”

- **Find ways to stay connected.** Social connection is critical for mental health.
  
  “I’m thinking of having a virtual watch party for our favorite series this week. What night works best for you?”

Call • Text • Chat
### Safety Plan

Use HLC’s safety plan:

- With individuals receiving services
- At tabling events
- For yourself

#### Download HLC Safety Plan PDF or Request from HLC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Safety Plans Work</strong></th>
<th>helplinecenter</th>
<th>988 LIFELINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1** Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.  
  ___________________________________________  
  ___________________________________________  |
| **2** Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.  
  ___________________________________________  
  ___________________________________________  |
| **3** Who / What are 3 people or places that provide distraction? (Write name / place and phone numbers)  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________ |
| **4** Who can you ask for help? (Write names and phone numbers)  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  Phone: __________________________ |
| **5** Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:  
  Clinician: __________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:  
  Address: __________________________  
  Phone: __________________________  
  Call • Text • Chat 988 |
| **6** Write out a plan to make your environment safer. (Write 2 things)  
  ___________________________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  ___________________________________________  
  ___________________________________________  |
988 Magnets
Help make sure 988 is known in every business, workplace, and home.
In South Dakota, 988 is answered by professional crisis counselors at the Helpline Center.