

**988**  
SUICIDE  
& CRISIS  
LIFELINE

# How Our Calls Are Routed

## THE LIFELINE PHONE SYSTEM

The **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States.

The Lifeline is funded by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** and administered by **Vibrant Emotional Health**.

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

**Vibrant**  
Emotional Health

The Lifeline is made up of a network of over **200 independently owned and operated local centers**. To reach the Lifeline, call 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

The Lifeline network was designed to **connect callers with local crisis centers**, by using a phone system that routes calls based on the caller's phone number.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE CALLS THE LIFELINE?

When someone calls 988, they will hear our **automated greeting message** that features additional options:

“

You have reached the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, also serving the Veteran Crisis Line. Para Español oprima el número dos. If you are in emotional distress or suicidal crisis, or are concerned about someone who might be, we are here to help.

If you are a US military veteran or current service member, or calling about one, please press 1 now. Otherwise, please hold while we route your call to the nearest crisis center in our network.

”

We'll play a little music while we connect the caller to a skilled, trained crisis counselor.

Our phone system will **route the call to the closest crisis center** in the Lifeline network based on area code.

Each crisis center picks their **coverage area** (which can be defined by zip code, area code, county or even state), and their hours of operation.

A trained crisis counselor at a local center will answer the phone.

This person will listen to the caller, work to understand what the caller is experiencing, provide support, and collaborate with the caller on ways to feel better and connect with any needed help or resources.

## CALL FLOW



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE CHATS WITH THE LIFELINE?

When someone uses the Lifeline chat via <https://988lifeline.org/chat/> they'll **first complete a short survey** letting the crisis counselor know a little about their current situation, and **then see a wait-time message** while they are connected to a crisis counselor.

A trained crisis counselor will **answer the chat**, converse with the chatter to understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and share resources that may be helpful.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE TEXTS THE LIFELINE?

When someone texts 988, they will **complete a short survey** letting the crisis counselor know a little about their current situation.

They will be then connected with a **trained crisis counselor**, who will interact with them to understand what the texter is experiencing, provide support, and connect them with any needed help or resources.

## LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Lifeline, please visit:

[www.988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)

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