

# 988

If you or someone you know needs services immediately, please call the **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 988**.

## Further resources:

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has resources to help you in finding mental health providers and treatment options through its service locator (<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>).

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** also provides **resources** for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse, as well as support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, older adults and veterans.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/tools-resources/individuals/index.htm>)

## For additional information please contact:

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American Federation of Teachers  
Health and Safety Department

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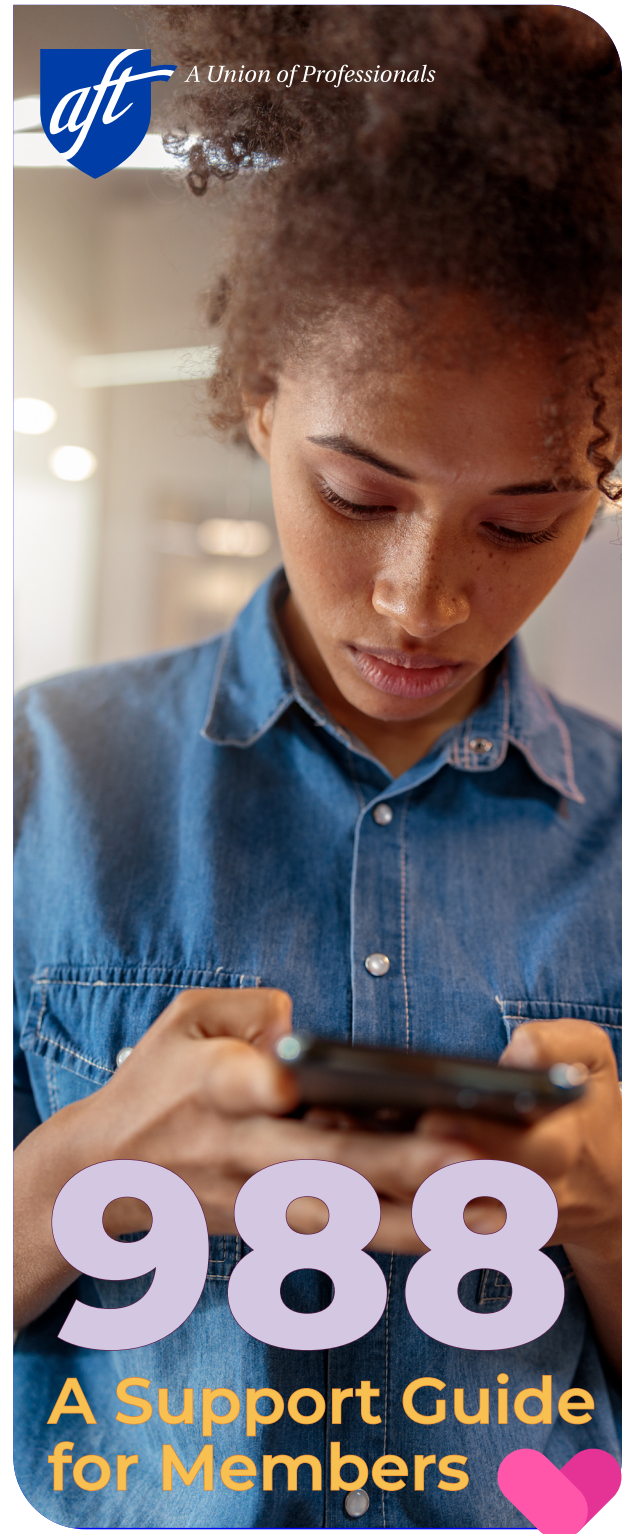
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## What is 988?

It's a suicide and crisis line that offers 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing a suicidal, substance use and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one or another person who may need crisis support.

## How do I know if a crisis warrants 988?

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline accepts calls, texts and chats from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis.

## What should I expect after I call?

You will be greeted by a recorded message while the call is routed to the nearest local Lifeline network crisis center based on your area code. A trained crisis counselor will answer the phone, and you will provide the counselor with a detailed account of what is happening, and the extent of the support needed. Try to remain as calm as possible to ensure each of the counselor's questions is answered thoroughly and the person for whom the call was placed is attended to and carefully supported.

## Is every call answered, and will I get support?

If the local crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller is automatically routed to a national backup crisis center. The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses LanguageLine Solutions to provide translation services in more than 250 additional languages for people who call 988.

## How should I support a person in crisis while we wait?

Calling 988 can be a scary and stressful time for the caller as well as the person in crisis; it can be hard to find the right words when you're feeling overwhelmed and emotional yourself. But you must remain calm.

To the best of your ability, try to ensure that the person feels cared about, accepted, supported and understood. Be sure to use affirming language, letting the person know you support them. Asking open-ended questions can help to open the lines of communication and keep the person talking and occupied while awaiting support.



### Example:

“I am so sorry you’ve been feeling so bad. It sounds like you’ve gone through a lot, I would like to help you. Tell me how I can support you.”

## Now that I have help, what should I do next?

Listen dutifully to the professionals to ensure that you've met any and all requirements of support and answered all questions. If you are experiencing adverse mental reactions or become overwhelmed, take a moment, center yourself, and make sure you collect yourself before leaving the scene. Remember, this was a highly stressful situation. It's OK to be a little startled, so make sure you are stable enough to continue to any next activity.

## Should I follow up on the situation?

Do what feels most natural and comfortable to you. There is no requirement for following up; if you feel uncomfortable or uneasy about the idea of doing so, that is just fine. However, if following up will help you cope and process the experience, then you should do so. Keep in mind that the information you have access to may be limited depending on the scope and outcome of the case; laws and regulations surrounding divulging of information vary.

## What do I need to remember post-care?

You might feel a mix of emotions ranging from anger, frustration, confusion, guilt, or even fear. Know that these are all normal responses. Supporting a person through a crisis can be emotionally draining, so you might need support yourself. You could try the following:

- Talk to friends and family.
- Talk to an emotional support helpline.
- Consider talking to a therapist.