

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 newly approve three-digit phone number that will 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?

988 will allow a shift from a law enforcement and justice system response to one of immediately connecting to care for individuals in suicidal, mental health and substance use crises. The number is the first step to make a fundamental shift in how people in crisis are engaged in our communities. When you've got a police, fire or rescue emergency, you call 911. When you have an urgent mental health need, you'll call 988.

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 South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) shares that *callers will soon be required to start using 10-digit dialing to make all local phone calls in South Dakota.* Officials say the change will be required as early as Oct. 24 and no later than July 15, 2022, depending on your telephone provider. However, the PUC is advising people to start using 10-digit dialing (605 area code + phone number) ahead of the transition to avoid problems later.

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.

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

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

- South Dakota Public Utilities Commission: [10-Digit Dialing FAQ](#)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- [Vibrant Emotional Health](#)
- 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>

Disclaimer: This HelpSheet is developed by the Helpline Center for informational purposes only. HelpSheets provide a brief overview of the designated topic. For more information, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211.

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