

# Minnesota 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - 2022 Call Summary

## 988 Connects callers to a local, trained crisis specialist

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) provides emotional support for people in distress or experiencing a suicide, mental health, or substance use crises. The 988 Lifeline can also connect callers to additional local resources and community support services as needed. 988 is a new calling code, not a new service, that replaces the previous 1-800-273-8255 number to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

In Minnesota, 988 calls, chats, and texts are answered by five organizations, Carver County Health and Human Services, First Call for Help, Greater Twin Cities United Way, FirstLink, and Mental Health Minnesota (text and chat only). Each 988 Lifeline Center is staffed with trained crisis specialists focused on promoting safety, offering emotional support, providing crisis intervention, and connecting people to appropriate local resources. Learn more about the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/mnresponse/988.html\)](https://health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/mnresponse/988.html) network in Minnesota. Data presented below is reported in aggregate by each 988 Lifeline Center to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

## Minnesota's expanded capacity to respond to Calls, Texts, and Chats

In 2022, Minnesota 988 Lifeline Centers answered over 30,000 calls, a 154% increase from 2021. Minnesota expanded capacity to respond to texts and chats 24/7 in April 2023 and has engaged with over 600 people this way.

## Why do people call 988?<sup>1</sup>

The content of the calls received are categorized by 988 Lifeline Centers as one of four types. The most common type of calls received are from people experiencing extreme emotional distress, such as anxiety, depression, anger, or fear. Callers may also be experiencing thoughts of suicide. These types of calls accounted for 42% of all calls answered in 2022 and are often more time intensive than other types of calls received.

Less than a quarter (22%) of calls answered are responding to a more heightened situation where a caller requires immediate crisis intervention, such as when a person is actively considering or has taken actions towards suicide. In both types of calls, crisis specialists provide assistance based on the severity of the situation to ensure caller safety and help the caller

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<sup>1</sup> The following data summarizes call content only. As capacity to respond to text and chat continues to expand, additional data will become available for text and chat.

navigate their crisis. In some situations, they may facilitate a warm handoff to local county crisis mobile team or emergency response, as appropriate.

In approximately 10% of calls, crisis specialists are responding to requests for referrals and information related to suicide prevention, mental health or substance use support, or other community support services.

In 2022, 26% of calls received are indicated as nonproductive, meaning that the intention of the call did not relate to the services that the 988 Lifeline provides. Examples of nonproductive calls include prank calls or calls testing the line. Crisis specialists respond to these calls with the assumption that they are people who may need support in the future.

## What happens when someone calls 988?

The most common outcome of a call is a connection to a mental health or other local community support service, and an established safety plan. **In 2022, approximately 10,000 referrals were made** to mental health providers, substance use supports, services for people with disabilities, and basic needs such as food pantries and housing navigators, as well as other community resources. **Over 9,000 safety plans were established** with callers. In developing a safety plan, crisis specialists work with the caller to identify their personal coping strategies, supportive people and professional resources they can access, and their personal reasons for living. In creating safety plans with callers, crisis specialists also discuss how callers can make their environment safer.

Caller confidentiality is a priority, and escalation to higher care only happens when necessary, or with the callers' expressed consent. In 2022, 5% of answered calls (excluding nonproductive calls) resulted in a warm handoff to county mobile crisis teams; 2% of answered calls (excluding nonproductive calls) resulted in a transfer to 911 emergency services.

## Who is using 988?

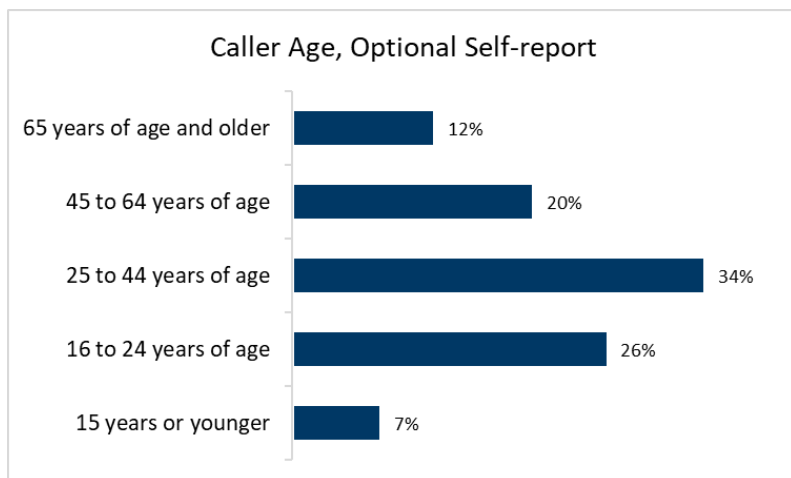
Calling 988 can be anonymous; callers are not required to share any demographic information. However, crisis specialists ask callers to optionally share information that may help them provide more meaningful referrals and for program evaluation purposes. Of callers who provided their gender, 56% identified as women/girls, 41% identified as men/boys, and 2% identified as another gender; 2% of callers identified as transgender.<sup>2</sup> Of callers who identified their age, the largest group (34%) were between the ages of 25-44.<sup>3</sup> In 2022, 12% of callers were between 65 years of age or older, 20% were 45 to 64 years of age, 26% were 16 to 24 and 7% were 15 years of age or younger.

While Minnesota data is not yet available, a national study demonstrated that 76% of crisis text line users were under the age of 25 (Pisani, 2022).

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<sup>2</sup> Callers are not asked about their sex assigned at birth; percentages for men and women includes cis and transgender individuals. Transgender women, men, and nonbinary individuals who volunteered that information are included under 'transgender'. 97% of callers (excluding nonproductive calls) optionally provided their gender.

<sup>3</sup> 62% of callers (excluding nonproductive calls) optionally provided their age.



## Strengthening Access and Delivery of Care

In 2022, more Minnesotans gained access to resources and crisis support through the work of 988 Lifeline Centers. Expanding the capacity of 988 to respond to calls, texts, and chats in Minnesota is a key strategy towards reaching our statewide suicide prevention goal of strengthening access and delivery of care for mental health and suicide. Learn more about how the work of 988 fits into the [Suicide Prevention State Plan \(health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicideprevstateplan.pdf\)](https://health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicideprevstateplan.pdf).

With continued and increased investments in 988 Lifeline Centers, efforts to improve system coordination and cultural responsiveness, and efforts to increase community awareness of 988, Minnesotans will continue to hear the message that they are not alone, help is available, and healing is possible.

## References

Pisani, A. R. (2022). Individuals who text crisis text line: Key characteristics and opportunities for suicide prevention. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 52(3), 567–582. DOI: 10.1111/sltb.12872

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