

Uniting for Mental Health

Louisiana 988 Helpline Media Toolkit



Table of Contents

About p. 3

Key Statistics & Messaging p. 4

Key Terminology p. 5

Reporting on Suicide p. 6

Media End Cards p. 7

Media Examples Featuring 988 Messaging p. 8

Frequently Asked Questions p. 10

Facts p. 12

About 988

In 2022, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) launched the Louisiana 988 helpline to make it easier for residents to get the immediate emotional support they need when they need it.

988 was established nationally to improve access to support services and address our country's growing suicide and mental health-related care needs. 988 offers easier access to the helpline network and related resources, distinct from the public safety focus of 911, which is primarily for dispatching emergency medical, fire, and police services.

Studies show the helpline works – most people who call the helpline report feeling significantly less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to a specialist.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), almost 98% of people who call, chat, or text 988 get the support they need and do not require additional services at that moment.

The LDH Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) has contracted with two certified call centers in Louisiana to respond to 988 calls, chats, and texts from Louisiana residents statewide. Both centers are certified by Vibrant Emotional Health, the federal 988 administrator, and must meet Vibrant's national standards as well as the requirements of a national accrediting agency.

LDH/OBH is committed to ensuring everyone in Louisiana has access to quality emotional and mental health support – whether they're experiencing issues around anxiety, depression, alcohol or drugs, thoughts of suicide, or anything in between.

988 is here to help.



Key Statistics & Messaging

Reporting on sensitive topics like suicide, mental health, or emotional distress can be challenging. To help, LDH/OBH is sharing the latest state and national statistics, along with key messages about the Louisiana 988 helpline. Clear, consistent communication is vital for addressing concerns and helping audiences understand why these issues matter and what to expect when seeking help.

Key Statistics

- + 1 in 5 adults live with a mental health condition.¹
- + In 2023, over 49,000 Americans died by suicide – roughly one death every 11 minutes.²
- + In 2024, there were 33,059 emergency department visits related to suicidal ideation and attempt in Louisiana.³
- + In 2023, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in Louisiana, with 691 people dying by suicide.³
- + Suicide was the 3rd leading cause of death for Louisianans ages 10-24 (9.7 per 100,000) and 25-34 (22.2 per 100,000).³

Key Messages

- + Too many of us are experiencing mental health-related distress without the support and care we need. 988 is here anytime, day or night, to listen and help.
- + Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org to connect to a 988 specialist for free, confidential support, 24 hours a day.
- + 988 specialists are ready to help whether you're feeling overwhelmed, having thoughts of suicide, or have concerns about gambling, alcohol or drug use. No issue is too small – reach out any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- + 988 specialists can connect you to local resources like housing, financial assistance, mental health services and gambling, drug, or alcohol recovery services. 988 is always within reach, with specialists ready to listen day or night.
- + All of us need help sometimes. Being human means helping others – and reaching out to help ourselves. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org – it's free, confidential, and available 24/7.

¹ National Institute of Mental Health, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

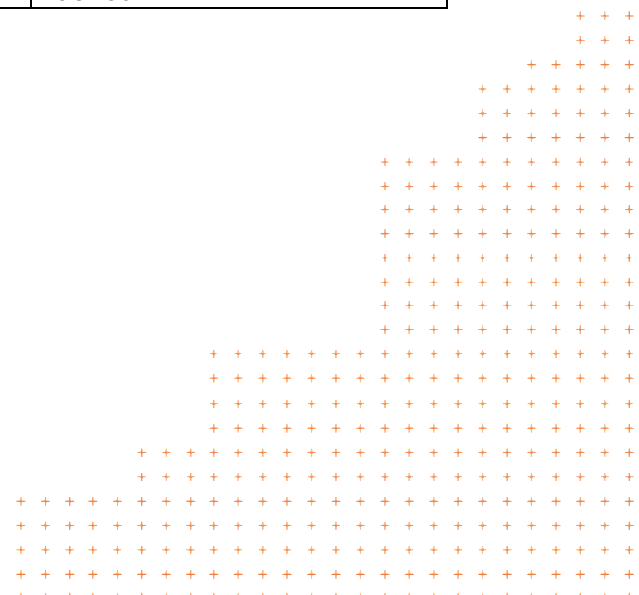
² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Suicide Data and Statistics—Data*, last modified March 26, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>.

³ Louisiana Department of Health, *Suicide Two-Pager* (March 2025), <https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/obh/Behavioral-Health-Immediate-Resources.pdf>.

Key Terminology

Research conducted to understand how people think and talk about behavioral health shows preferences for certain language related to the topic. Recommendations based on those findings are detailed in the chart below.

Use this:	Instead of this:	Because:
Helpline	Hotline or crisis line	"Hotline" feels like it will be staffed by volunteers; "crisis" feels like things have to be out of control to call, chat, or text
Safe, supportive, confidential	N/A	This helps destigmatize help-seeking
Everyone needs help	N/A	This helps destigmatize help-seeking
Brave and courageous	N/A	This helps destigmatize help-seeking
Hope, resilience, "it gets better"	Struggle	"Hope" is motivating whereas "struggle" feels diminishing
Emergency	Crisis	"Emergency" feels solvable and like something that could happen to anyone; "crisis" feels out of control and like an elevated level of need that some people do not identify with
988 specialists	Trained crisis counselor	"Trained" feels like someone with little experience
Plain language like "depression or anxiety" and "drugs or alcohol"	Mental health, behavioral health, or substance use	People can relate better to more concrete terms; the more technical terms evoke more stigma
Immediate	Fast	"Fast" feels like care might be rushed



Reporting on Suicide

Media Plays a Key Role in Suicide Prevention

- + Responsible reporting can reduce suicide contagion, dispel myths, and highlight help-seeking

Guidelines for Safe Reporting

Report Suicide as a Public Health Issue

Including stories on hope, healing, and recovery may reduce the risk of contagion.

Include Resources

Provide information on the warning signs of suicide as well as resources including the Louisiana 988 helpline at Louisiana988.org.

Use Appropriate Language

Phrases like “committed suicide” or describing suicide as “successful,” “unsuccessful,” or a “failed attempt” can contribute to stigma, perpetuate myths, and work against suicide prevention goals. Instead, use clear, nonjudgmental language such as “died by suicide” or “killed him/herself” or “took their own life” or “suicide attempt survivor.”

Emphasize Help and Hope

Stories of recovery are powerful, especially from those with lived experience of suicide risk. Avoid interviewing survivors of suicide loss or attempts immediately after the event; giving time allows them to share their story in a more supported and empowered way. Individuals still in significant distress may unintentionally affect others who are vulnerable or grieving.

Ask an Expert

Interview suicide prevention or mental health experts to ensure that you're sharing factual information about suicide and mental illness.

Reporting Under Unusual Circumstances

A mass shooting

A mass shooting where a perpetrator takes his or her life is different from an isolated suicide. Recommendations for reporting on mass shootings can be found at [The Jed Foundation](https://TheJedFoundation.org).

A homicide-suicide

A homicide-suicide is also different from an isolated suicide. The circumstances are often complex in these incidents, as they are in suicide. To minimize fear in the community, avoid speculation on motive and cite facts and statements that indicate that such events are rare. Show sensitivity to survivors in your interviews and reporting.

For more guidance – including recommendations on safe reporting on suicide, recognizing warning signs, and what to do – visit reportingonsuicide.org/recommendations.

Media End Cards

When reporting on sensitive topics such as suicide, mental health, emotional distress, or events that may trigger emotional responses, like severe weather coverage, please use the recommended media end cards to ensure your readers, viewers, or listeners have a clear and simple call to action if they or someone they know is experiencing mental health issues or distress.

Option A: Stacked Logo and Text



The Louisiana 988 helpline offers immediate emotional support for those experiencing anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, concerns about drugs and alcohol, and more. Free, confidential support is available 24/7. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.

Option B: Horizontal Logo and Text



The Louisiana 988 helpline offers immediate emotional support for those experiencing anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, concerns about drugs and alcohol, and more. Free, confidential support is available 24/7. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.

Logos are available in color or black and white.

[Download Assets](#)

Media Examples Featuring 988

Messaging

This page provides sample formats to visually demonstrate how messaging about the 988 helpline can be integrated into various types of media stories and platforms. These examples are designed to help partners naturally incorporate 988 into a wide range of content – from distressing topics and breaking news to features on depression, anxiety, or drug or alcohol use.



Standard End Card Use:

The Louisiana 988 helpline offers immediate emotional support for those experiencing anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, concerns about drugs and alcohol, and more. Free, confidential support is available 24/7. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.



Content Warning:

Content Warning: This article discusses topics that may be distressing to some readers. If you or someone you know is struggling, the Louisiana 988 helpline offers free, confidential support 24/7. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.



Logo Use

Including the 988 logo in stories related to mental health serves as a visual cue that confidential support is just a call, text, or chat away.



Live News Ticker:

In times of disaster – when anxiety and emotional overwhelm are common – sharing timely, supportive resources is essential.

The Louisiana 988 helpline offers immediate emotional support for those experiencing anxiety, depression, and more. Call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.



Social Media Integration

Sharing content via social media is a fast, effective way to reach audiences with critical support resources like the 988 helpline.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Louisiana 988?

The 988 helpline provides immediate emotional and mental health support to Louisiana residents. The helpline is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

What are the different ways I can contact 988?

You can call or text 988 or chat online at Louisiana988.org.

Do I need insurance to contact 988?

No, you do not need insurance to contact 988. The service is free. If you need support connecting to other mental health, gambling, or substance use services in the community, contact 988 and we can help you find a provider who can work with you.

What happens when I reach out to 988?

When you contact 988, you will be immediately connected to a 988 specialist who will listen, provide support, and connect you with local resources. The helpline is free, confidential, and available 24/7. Most people receive the help they need, right in the moment.

What can I contact 988 about?

You can contact 988 for help with all types of problems. Whether you had a tough day, are overwhelmed, or are having thoughts of suicide, Louisiana 988 can help.

Some things people call about include stress, feeling overwhelmed, concerns about alcohol or drug use, feeling depressed, emotional response to mental and physical illness, help talking through money concerns, thoughts of suicide, and more.

You can reach out to 988 for yourself or for others you're concerned about.

Can you help me if I'm a service member, a veteran, or a part of a military family?

Yes. When you call 988, press 1 to access 988 specialists who focus on serving military members, veterans, and their loved ones. Military and veteran-specific chat (VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat) and text (838255) are also available.

Can I contact 988 for or about someone else?

Yes, the 988 helpline specialists provide caring support and resources for family, friends, caregivers, and advocates who reach out about another person they are concerned about.

Will you share my information with anyone if I contact 988?

No. 988 is safe and confidential and will not share your information. The helpline will only contact 911 if someone's life is in immediate danger. This is rare. Fewer than 1% of calls involve 911 without a caller's permission.

Does contacting 988 really help?

Yes, the helpline works. Numerous studies have shown that most callers are significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to a 988 specialist. And most receive the help they need, right there on the call, and do not require any other services in that moment.

When should I contact 988 versus 911?

988 provides confidential and free emotional support, 24/7. Contact 911 if you need EMS, fire, or police dispatched to your location.

Will I be chatting with a bot?

No, you will never chat with a bot when you call, text, or chat online with 988. You will always connect with another human who's ready to help.

To review a full list of frequently asked questions or to learn more about 988, please visit Louisiana988.org.



Facts

What is 988 in Louisiana?

The 988 helpline provides emotional support to all Louisiana residents. Anyone who reaches out to 988 can expect immediate, safe support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The helpline is free, confidential and offers call, text, and online chat support.

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is committed to ensuring everyone has access to quality emotional and mental health services — whether you're experiencing issues around anxiety, depression, gambling, alcohol or drugs, thoughts of suicide, or anything in between. Every Louisianan deserves that.

- + The 988 service is available in English and Spanish, with translation services in more than 250 languages. Text and chat are currently available in English.
- + Individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late-Deafened can directly dial 988 on a videophone or click the "ASL Now" button on 988lifeline.org to connect with crisis counselors who can communicate in ASL and are trained in working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. TTY users can use their preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.
- + The chat feature is available through 988's website: Louisiana988.org. People are also encouraged to reach out to 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need immediate support.
- + Most callers report feeling significantly less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to a specialist.

How Does 988 Work?

LDH's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) has contracted with two certified call centers in Louisiana to answer 988 calls from state residents.

- + When you call, text or chat, you will quickly be connected to a specialist.
- + 988 has specialists available for service members, veterans, and their family members.
- + Your specialist will listen to you without judgment and help you reduce the intense feelings you may be dealing with.
- + Your specialist may connect you to local resources and longer-term support (like mental health professionals or drug or alcohol recovery services).

110,437

988 helpline calls
answered as of
June 2025

691

deaths by suicide in
Louisiana in 2023

1 in 5

adults live with a
mental health
condition

1 death

by suicide happens
every 11 minutes

How is LDH Promoting 988?

LDH has launched an integrated marketing campaign to raise awareness of 988 and reduce stigma surrounding depression or anxiety and drugs or alcohol.

- + LDH is committed to work with community partners including, mental health advocates and like-minded organizations, everyday influencers and universities across the state to help amplify messaging and awareness while promoting the 988 helpline.
- + In May 2023, LDH launched the [988 dashboard](#) to provide transparent access to key monthly in-state metrics including the volume of contacts by parish, overall broad demographics, and the type of assistance individuals are requesting. The data is aggregated and allows the caller to remain anonymous.

Please visit Louisiana988.org to learn more and access Louisiana 988 resources.

- + Click on [Media Resources](#) at the bottom of the page for brand logos, Zoom backgrounds, campaign ads, FAQs and 988 fact sheets
- + Click on [Partner Resources](#) for a 988 materials generator
- + Click on [What to Expect](#) to see a video of testimonials from 988 helpline specialists.



Is Here to Help



Free



Confidential



Available
24/7

RESOURCES

[Louisiana 988](#)

[988 Materials](#)

[LDH](#)

[Gambling Help](#)

