

988 is Live in Arlington, the Region, and Nationwide!

The 988 crisis line is now up and running in Northern Virginia and in every community nationwide. Every person can dial “988” to reach trained crisis counselors who can help in a mental health, substance use or suicide crisis. What's easier in crisis - 10 digits or 3?

Anyone can contact "988" during a mental health crisis and be connected with a trained crisis counselor who can listen, provide support, deescalate the situation, and connect you to additional resources that might help. The Lifeline can respond to any type of mental health crisis or emotional distress. It's free, confidential, and open to a person in crisis **OR** someone calling on behalf of another.

It's an emergency. Should I call 988 or 911?

It is up to you, and this will depend on your situation. When you call 911, you are connected to an emergency dispatcher who will consider whether to dispatch Emergency Medical Services, fire and/or police responders to your location. Often, in mental health crises, law enforcement is the primary service dispatched.

When you call or text 988, you will be connected to a trained crisis counselor who will answer the phone/text, listen to the person, assess the problem, provide support and de-escalation, and connect to mental health resources as needed and as available. Current estimates are that 80-98% of calls to 988 will be deescalated over the phone, text or chat, connecting people to additional resources they can seek in the community. For the remaining 2-20%, people may need an in-person response.

Background

In 2020, Congress designated a new 988 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's network (NSPL), which comprises over 200 locally operated and funded crisis lines across the country. PRS, Inc. operates the local network in our area.

Dialing either 988 or the existing NSPL number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), will connect you to behavioral health care and support 24 hours a day. Virginia continues to be invested in building capacity to enhance community-based crisis services. Further updates will be provided in the upcoming months.

What You Need to Know

- You can call or text 988, or use the online chat at www.988lifeline.org
- Services are for mental health and substance abuse support.
- 988 provides someone to talk to and referrals to other services as needed.
- Presently 9-8-8 routes calls to local support centers based on the caller's area code and not their location in the community. In the future geolocator features will be added for more localized routing.
- 988 is not like 911 in that the dispatch function has not yet been built out. For a life-threatening emergency call 911.

What's Next

National workforce shortages in the field of behavioral health present a challenge to the development of crisis services. The vision for our area is that the Regional Crisis Call Center will serve as the mobile dispatch hub for Northern Virginia's public and private providers of mobile crisis response and provide “air traffic control” type navigation. This will be an evolving process over the next year.

In Arlington, we are working toward the creation of a mobile outreach team with the support of federal funding and an anticipated start-up of early 2023. Arlington DHS is also moving to staff its Crisis Intervention Center 24/7 with an anticipated roll-out of late fall. The CIC offers a place to go for assessment and crisis stabilization in a therapeutic environment.

Additional Crisis Resources-There are lots of ways to get behavioral healthcare support in Arlington:

Community Regional Crisis Response (“CR2”)

Services available: Crisis stabilization and prevention, including screenings, assessments, psychiatric services, case management, post-discharge follow-up, care coordination, and safety planning

Who qualifies: Anyone experiencing a mental health and/or substance use emergency that puts them at risk of hospitalization

How to access: Call **844-627-4747** or **571-364-7390** to access phone, video conferencing, or in-person services

Availability: Operated by the National Counseling Group, and staffed by counselors 24/7

Website: <https://www.cr2crisis.com/>

REACH

Services available: Crisis stabilization and prevention, including include needs assessments, developing crisis or behavioral plans, referrals to ongoing services, home-based support, and 30-day residential stabilization

Who qualifies: Individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down’s Syndrome) experiencing a behavioral health emergency

How to access: Call **855-897-8278** to access phone or in-person services

Availability: Operated by Easterseals and staffed 24/7

Website: <https://www.easterseals.com/NCVA/our-programs/adult-services/va-reach-northern-region-5.html>

Emergency Services

Services available: Rapid assessment, intervention, and stabilization for mental health emergencies, including immediate supportive counseling to relieve distress and prevent the crisis from worsening, development of a safety plan to prevent harm to self and/or others, connection to resources, and peer (i.e., individuals with lived experience) support

Who qualifies: Individuals of any age experiencing a mental health emergency

How to access: Call **703-228-5160**

Availability: Operated by Department of Human Services and staffed 24/7

Website: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/mental-health>

Crisis Intervention Center (CIC)

Services available: Short-term services in a community-based setting, including assessment, observation, 23-hour stabilization, de-escalation, peer counseling, and referral to other supportive services

Who qualifies: Individuals of any age experiencing a mental health emergency

How to access: Call **703-228-5160**

Availability: Operated by Department of Human Services staff and available 24/7 as staffing allows

Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs)

Services available: Small regional facilities providing a diversion or step-down from inpatient psychiatric hospitalization, with services including crisis intervention and stabilization, medical detoxification, medication evaluation and management, psych evaluation, counseling, wellness and recovery activities, assistance with daily living skills, service coordination, and discharge planning.

Who qualifies: Adults experiencing a mental health emergency

How to access: Referrals must be made through Arlington’s Emergency Services by calling **703-228-5160**

Availability: Emergency Services is available 24/7; beds are shared amongst Northern Virginia jurisdictions