

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

988 FAQ

A Direct Link for Suicide Prevention and Crisis Support

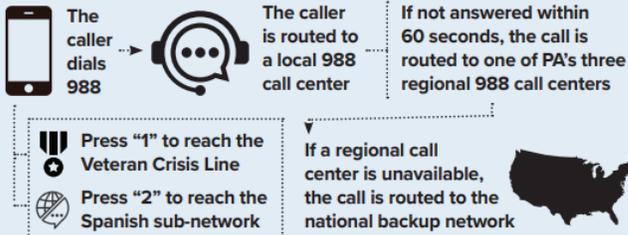
988 is a national crisis hotline for anyone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. Trained counselors answer the hotline to offer phone-based support and/or connections to local resources, at no cost to the caller. In Montgomery County, MCES has operated the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call center since 2014, and now answers calls to 988. *Note: Calls to 988 are routed according to area code and will ring until a counselor answers the phone, meaning that calls placed in Montgomery County may be answered by outside call centers under certain circumstances. 988 went live July 16th, 2022.*

Q: Is 988 available for both mental health and substance use crises?

A: 988 can be used by anyone who needs support for themselves or a someone they know during a suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis — no matter where they are or where they live.



What happens when you call 988?



Q: What is the difference between 988 and 911?

A: Calls to 911 typically result in first responders such as EMS or law enforcement being deployed to address an emergency. Law enforcement response is often not necessary or appropriate for behavioral health crisis situations. 988 is a behavioral health crisis number, and calls are handled by trained counselors.



Q: How do 988 and 911 interact?

A: 988 counselors may transfer a call to 911 if they believe the caller is in immediate danger to themselves or others. There is close collaboration between 988, crisis services, and 911 in Montgomery County to ensure community members access appropriate care as needed.



Q: Is 988 available to children and adolescents?

A: Yes, 988 can be used by anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis regardless of their age.

Q: Will the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-278-8255) go away?

A: Moving to 988 does not mean the 1-800-278-8255 number goes away. Dialing either number will get people to the same services. 988 is intended as an easier-to-remember way for people in crisis to access a strengthened and expanded network of call centers. Additionally, the launch of 988 does not impact access to MCES Crisis Walk In, the Commitment Office, or the hospital program at MCES. All three will continue to be reachable via 24/7 the MCES direct hotline at: **610-279-6102**.

Q: Must I call 988 in Montgomery County to get help if I am in crisis?

A: **NO!** Access Services continues to operate the **Montgomery County Mobile Crisis Hotline**, which can be reached 24/7 at **1-855-634-4673**. Calls to 988 may be transferred to Access if Mobile Crisis, Peer Talk Line, or Teen Talk Line support is needed.

Anyone who wishes to connect directly to the Mobile Crisis Hotline (in particular: schools, first responders, social service providers, and individuals and families already connected to Access Services) is strongly encouraged to call 1-855-634-4673 to avoid the need to have your call transferred or the possibility of a call being answered by an out-of-county call center.