

Minnesota 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – 2023 Summary

988 provides quality support for you and your loved ones

The 988 Minnesota Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988 Minnesota Lifeline) provides support and resources for people in emotional distress. Minnesotans who call, text, or chat with 988 are connected with the 988 Minnesota Lifeline. Four centers answer calls to the 988 Minnesota Lifeline: Carver County Health and Human Services, First Call for Help, Greater Twin Cities United Way, and FirstLink. Two centers answer texts and chats to the 988 Minnesota Lifeline: First Call for Help and Mental Health Minnesota. Each center is staffed by 988 Minnesota Lifeline Counselors that are highly trained to provide emotional support and crisis intervention. Additionally, 988 Minnesota Lifeline Counselors connect help-seekers to local resources including emergency medical care, mental health organizations, and social services. The data below is based on the aggregate reports from each 988 Minnesota Lifeline Center to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

How many people contacted 988 in 2023?

In April 2023, 988 Minnesota Lifeline services expanded to include 24/7 text and chat support. This has increased the accessibility of the line and allows 988 Minnesota Lifeline Counselors to provide support to more people. In 2023, 988 Minnesota Lifeline Centers answered 53,325 contacts (calls, texts, and chats), a 74% increase from 2022.

Why did people contact 988?¹

The content of each interaction is categorized as either non-transactional, informational, emotional support, or crisis support. The 2023 breakdown across these four content categories was similar to 2022, with emotional support as the most common and informational as the least common. In 2023, roughly half of interactions (49%) were emotional support contacts. These types of conversations are with someone in emotional distress, including having thoughts of suicide without a plan or intent. Less than a quarter (23%) of contacts involved crisis support. These interactions involve someone seeking immediate crisis intervention. Approximately 21% of interactions were non-transactional meaning someone contacted 988 for reasons outside of the intended purpose of the line (i.e., wrong numbers, prank calls, testing the line). Lastly, around 7% of contacts were informational in nature. These were conversations where the primary purpose was providing non-crisis referral information or connecting individuals with resources in their community.

What happened when someone contacted 988?²

When you contact 988, a 988 Minnesota Lifeline Counselor will respond and provide support. This support may be connecting you with local resources, safety planning, counseling, or helping you or a loved one de-escalate from emotional distress. In 2023, 11,542 safety plans

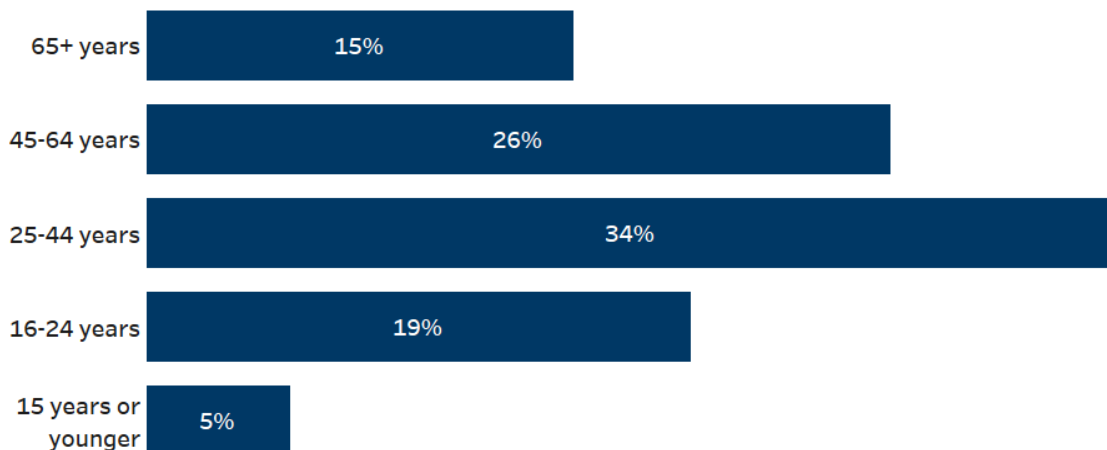
were created, and 6,303 referrals were made. Safety plans assist individuals in increasing their personal safety by identifying coping strategies to manage emotional distress. The majority (60%) of referrals were made to organizations that provide mental health support.

The vast majority of help-seekers that contact 988 are provided the necessary support and services through their conversations with a crisis specialist. In some cases, escalation to a higher-level of care is warranted, particularly when an in-person response is needed. Approximately 6% of 988 calls (excluding non-transactional calls) were transferred to a local mobile crisis team that could respond in-person to the individual in crisis. Escalation to emergency services occurred in roughly 2% of 988 calls (excluding non-transactional calls).

Who utilized 988?²

Contacting 988 can be anonymous, and help-seekers are not required to disclose any demographic information to receive support. Therefore, the demographic information reported by 988 Centers is most likely not an accurate representation of all help-seekers. Roughly 68% of help-seekers provided their gender identity. Among those that disclosed their gender identity, around 61% identified as women/girls, 37% as men/boys, and 2% as another gender identity³. This pattern of more women/girls contacting 988 than other gender identities was documented in 2022 as well. Approximately 47% of help-seekers provided their age. Among those that disclosed their age, the largest age category (34%) was 25 to 44 years (see Figure 1). In order from largest to smallest, the age categories are 25-44 years (34%), 45-64 years (26%), 16-24 years (19%), 65+ years (15%), and 15 years or younger (5%). The age distribution of callers in 2023 is consistent to that in 2022.

Figure 1. Age Distribution of 988 Minnesota Lifeline Callers that Optionally Provided Their Age



Goals for 2024

MDH and the 988 Minnesota Lifeline Centers are continually working to improve 988 across the state. One area of focus is increasing collaboration across the crisis continuum through partnerships with mobile crisis teams and Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The 988 team is prioritizing enhanced trainings for the 988 Minnesota Lifeline Counselors with a focus on providing tailored support to communities with high numbers of suicide deaths and attempts. Lastly, we aim to raise public awareness of 988 through promotional campaigns.

¹The denominator of these percentages is the sum of all four content categories rather than the number of contacts answered, due to some data discrepancies.

²The following data summarizes call data only. MDH and the Minnesota 988 Centers are working to increase the data capacity of the text and chat centers.

³Callers are not asked about their sex assigned at birth; percentages for men and women includes cis and transgender individuals.

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