



**CALL  
OR  
TEXT**

**988**

**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
LIFELINE**

**VETERANS TOOLKIT**



**Military service isn't for the weak. You know that more than anyone as a service member, veteran, or family member of one.**

But you don't have to carry the weight of it alone. Caring for your mental health doesn't make you weak either. It's time to shift from stigma.

988 is a three-digit mental health lifeline that connects all Oklahomans with free mental health resources, for themselves or for someone they care about. With each call or text, we're starting conversations that could save a life and giving all ages of Oklahomans permission to talk openly about their mental health. Many for the first time.

Let's start yours.

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**#ShiftFromStigma**

# WHAT IS 988?

**988** is a direct, three-digit lifeline that connects you with trained behavioral health professionals that can get all Oklahomans the help they need.

**GETTING HELP CAN BE HARD.  
SO WE MADE IT EASIER.**

The mental health professionals on the other end of the line are here to help guide you.



## CALL THE LIFELINE

It all starts when you call 988. You'll be connected to a mental health professional to talk you through what's going on and get the resources you need for either yourself or your loved one. About 80% of the time, things can get sorted out with just a phone call. But if you need more help, we got you.



IF NEEDED

## CONNECT WITH A MOBILE CRISIS TEAM

If you or your loved one need more help after your initial phone call, the 988 call center will send a mobile crisis team to assess things and intervene if necessary. About 7 in 10 crises can be resolved at this touchpoint.



IF EVEN MORE  
HELP IS NEEDED

## GET TRANSPORTATION

Some people need more in-depth care. If this is the case, transportation will be provided to help Oklahomans in need safely arrive at an Urgent Care and Crisis Center. In metro areas, transportation will be provided by law enforcement. If the closest center is more than 30 miles away, we'll connect you with a private transportation service to get you the help you need.



## CHECK IN AT AN URGENT CARE AND CRISIS CENTER

For those of us that need higher touch help, an Urgent Care and Crisis Center has your back. These centers are staffed 24/7/365 with licensed local medical professionals, nurses, and peers who have been through it themselves. Every center accepts both drop-offs from first responders and walk-ins.

To learn more about how 988 works, visit

**988oklahoma.com**

@988OKLA





# THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA'S MENTAL HEALTH

**1 IN 5** OKLAHOMANS  
EXPERIENCE  
**A MENTAL ILLNESS**  
EVERY YEAR THAT'S AROUND 789,800 folks.

**58** YEARS OLD IS  
THE AVERAGE AGE  
A VETERAN DIES  
BY SUICIDE

OKLAHOMA'S VETERAN  
SUICIDE RATE IS  
**8.6%** HIGHER THAN  
THE NATIONAL  
RATE.

VETERANS ARE AT  
**50%**  
HIGHER RISK  
OF SUICIDE THAN CIVILIANS

**PTSD** DEPRESSION AND  
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES  
ARE THE MOST COMMON  
**MENTAL ILLNESSES**  
AFFECTING VETERANS.

**80%** OF SUICIDES  
BETWEEN  
THE AGES OF 10-24  
ARE **MALE** ♂

**1 IN 4**  
ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS  
SHOW SIGNS OF A  
MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

**988**  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
LIFELINE

SOURCES: OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS, OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **How can I be sure 988 will understand where I'm coming from?**

As a veteran, service member, or family member of one, you deserve to talk with someone who gets it. When you call 988, press 1 to get connected with a responder trained specifically to military needs through the Veterans Crisis Line. Often, these responders are veterans themselves.

## **Do I need to be enrolled in VA benefits or healthcare to get help from 988?**

No. 988 serves all Oklahoma veterans, service members, and military family members — regardless of insurance status, location, discharge category, or any other qualifier.

## **Will calling 988 affect my career or standing?**

No. Calling or texting 988 is completely anonymous. Reaching out for help will not and cannot affect your military career or ranking.

## **Can 988 help with my transition to civilian life?**

Yes. 988 can connect you with resources in your area, such as a veteran support group, a local counselor, or a VA clinic with specialists in mental health for veterans and service members

## **My colleague or loved one is struggling. Can I call 988 for them?**

Yes. 988 responders can give you pointers on how to help someone in your life and direct you to applicable resources. However, if they need immediate emergency help, such as response after a suicide attempt, please call 911.

## **Can I call 988 while I'm deployed or on active duty?\***

Yes, but the number to call differs depending on your location. If you are stationed in the United States, call or text 988 like normal. If you are overseas, contact the number that applies to you most below:

**Europe:** 00800 1273 8255 or DSN 118

**Korea:** 080-855-5118 or DSN 118

**Afghanistan:** 00 1 800 273 8255 or DSN 111

*\*Depending on your location and network provider, some international calls may come with a charge. If you are overseas and concerned about a charge, you can reach the Veterans Crisis Line through the free chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat). If you'd rather talk to someone on the phone, you can request one in the chat and a responder will call you at the number you provide — at absolutely no charge to you*



# LET'S START

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# THE CONVERSATION

As Oklahomans and service members, talking about feelings isn't our default. But one conversation, even if it's a bit uncomfortable, could be all a colleague or loved one needs to keep going.

Here are a few ways you can start the conversation.

**"I know I don't understand. It's okay to reach out to someone who does."**

**"Do you want to talk about what happened?"**

**"Are you thinking about hurting yourself?"**

**"I've noticed (you haven't been sleeping, you've been drinking more, etc.) Are you doing okay?"**

**"You doing alright? You haven't been acting like yourself lately."**

**"It's fine if you're not ready. But is there anything you want to talk about?"**

# KNOW THE SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is a mental health condition that stems from a traumatic event. For service members and veterans, that can be a lot of things. But PTSD is not the same for everyone. For some, symptoms start within a few days. For others, it's not uncommon for struggles to start years later. Without help, PTSD can be incredibly distressing and cause social, career, and relationship problems. Treatment can help make daily life easier.

### The Signs:

- Intrusive flashbacks
- Upsetting dreams or nightmares
- Severe emotional or physical reactions to traumatic "triggers"
- Avoidance of certain places, people, or activities
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory difficulties
- Feeling detached from family and friends
- Feeling emotionally numb or unable to experience positive emotions
- Easily startled or frightened
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Irritability and aggressive outbursts
- Suicidal thoughts or discussions of death

## Depression

Serving our country or caring for someone who did can take a toll. Depression, or major depressive disorder, is a common mental health condition of service members, veterans, and their families for this reason. Feelings of intense sadness that won't go away can make the day-to-day difficult and the transition to civilian life even harder. Talking it out with a professional or a friend can help lift the weight.

### The Signs:

- Feeling excessively sad or hopeless
- Excessive irritability or anger
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Sleeping too much, or not enough
- Eating too much, or not enough
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Unexplained physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomach pain
- Substance dependency
- Self-harm or self-destructive behaviors
- Suicidal thoughts or discussions of death

If family, a friend, or colleague is showing signs that they could use a hand, **988** is just a call or text away.



# KNOW THE SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Explosions, combat weapons, and certain training exercises can lead to blows to the head, and for some, loss of consciousness. When a blow causes disruption to normal brain function, it can cause a traumatic brain injury, or a TBI. While most TBIs are classified as mild, they can cause long-term effects that impair a service member's career, relationships, and reintegration into regular life. TBIs typically require both mental and physical treatment. Reaching out is the first step.

### The Signs:

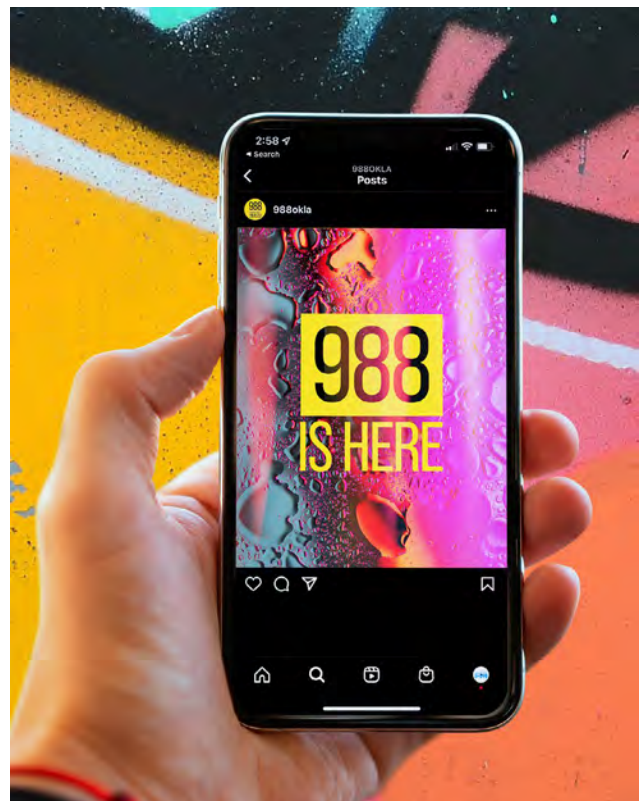
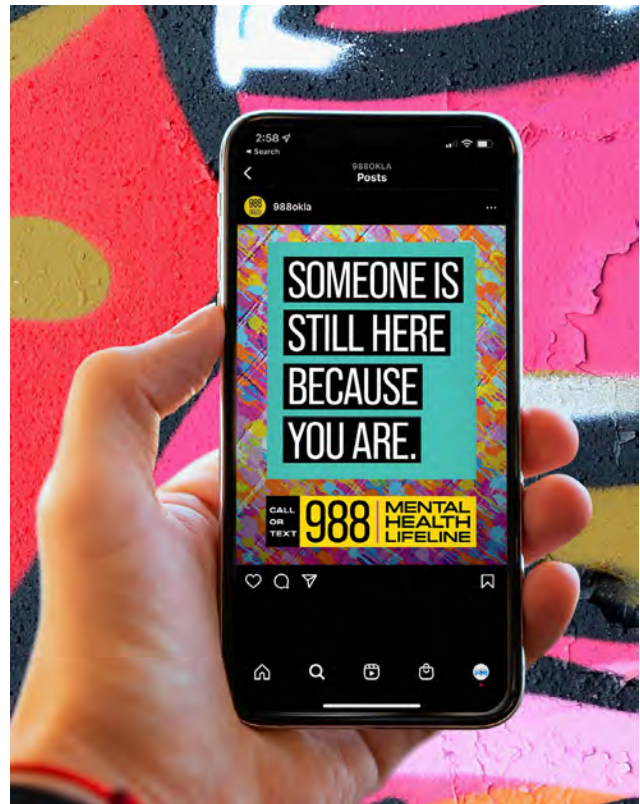
- Memory problems
- Frequent headaches
- Fatigue or drowsiness
- Sleeping excessively
- Problems with speech, such as slurring or slow response
- Dizziness and balance problems
- Sensory problems, like blurred vision or ringing of the ears
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Changes in cognitive skills
- Agitation and combative behavior
- Seizures

If family, a friend, or colleague is showing signs that they could use a hand, **988** is just a call or text away.



# SOCIAL ASSETS

Help shift from stigma with these ready-to-share social posts. One post at the right time could save a life.



[Click to download](#)



# OUTREACH CARDS

These double-sided, print-ready PDFs are an easy way to spread the word about 988.



[Click to download](#)



# POSTERS

Whether it's the VA or a coffee shop corkboard, these free posters could be just the thing someone in need needs to see.



[Click to download](#)



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