

**CALL
OR
TEXT**

988

**MENTAL
HEALTH
LIFELINE**

TOOLKIT FOR OLDER OKLAHOMANS

Managing our mental health isn't a solo job. It's time to shift from stigma.

988 is a three-digit mental health lifeline that connects Oklahomans with free mental health resources. With each call or text, we are starting conversations that could save a life — and giving Oklahomans permission to talk openly about their own mental health. Many for the first time.

This toolkit will give you the resources to share 988 in your community and get talking about mental health with your family, your friends, your neighbors, and even yourself.

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#ShiftFromStigma

WHAT IS 988?

988 is a direct three-digit lifeline that connects all Oklahomans with trained behavioral health professionals that can get them 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 OR TEXT THE LIFELINE

It all starts when a person contacts 988. They'll be connected with a trained behavioral health professional to talk through what's going on and connect with appropriate resources.

About 90% of the time, things get sorted out with this initial phone call or text conversation.

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.

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 Recovery Center and Crisis Stabilization Unit.

CHECK IN AT AN URGENT RECOVERY CENTER AND CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT

For those of us that need higher touch help, an Urgent Recovery Center and Crisis Stabilization Unit 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.

THE STATE OF SUICIDE AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN OKLAHOMA

1 IN 4 OLDER ADULTS WHO ATTEMPT
WILL DIE BY SUICIDE.

10,433

OF THE 49,449 SUICIDES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2022 WERE PEOPLE

AGES 65+

WHITE MEN

AGES 65+
FACE ONE OF THE

HIGHEST OVERALL SUICIDE RATES.

42%

OF OKLAHOMANS WHO DIED BY SUICIDE

IN 2023 **50** OR OLDER.

NEARLY EVERY COUNTY IN

OKLAHOMA

LOST AN OLDER PERSON TO

SUICIDE

 **IN 2023.**

SUICIDE

AMONG OLDER OKLAHOMANS IS UNDERREPORTED BY AN ESTIMATED

40%.

988

MENTAL HEALTH LIFELINE

SOURCES: OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH OLDER ADULT SUICIDE

As we age, our risks for developing anxiety or depression may increase for a number of reasons. These developments can cause an increased risk of suicide. While depression is associated with an increased risk of suicide, in most cases, suicide results from a combination of factors and not a single cause.

In most cases, suicide results from a combination of factors and not a single cause.

If you know an older Oklahoman with one or a combination of these factors, keep an eye out and an ear open. Even small changes in behavior could indicate a struggle under the surface. Also keep in mind some risk factors may be long-lasting, like a chronic health condition and while others may be short-lived, like a stressful event or brief illness.

- Loneliness-Feeling alone, unconnected, or that relationships aren't satisfying
- Limited social interaction
- Grief from losing a spouse, friend, or loved one
- Mental health issues, including depression and other mood disorders
- Substance use problems, particularly involving alcohol and medications
- Medical conditions that are painful and/or affect function and autonomy
- Cognitive impairment or dementia
- Relationship problems
- Changes in health (vision/hearing issues), roles (retirement), driving status or independence
- Being timid or hostile
- Difficulties adjusting to change
- Serious financial problems
- Stressful life events
- Access to lethal means, such as firearms or medications
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family member who died by suicide

Sources for the Toolkit Include: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Council on Aging, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

DEPRESSION VS. SUICIDE IN OLDER OKLAHOMANS

A variety of factors can make older Oklahomans especially susceptible to depression and thoughts of suicide. However, these two mental health conditions are not one and the same. Knowing what to look for can make getting help quicker and clearer.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Feeling sad or empty most of the time
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Weight loss or gain from change in appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Noticeable restlessness, agitation, or slow movement
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or extreme guilt
- Concentration or decision making difficulties
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- Suicide attempt

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

These are some warning signs of suicide, the first 3 of which may suggest immediate risk

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Anxious, agitated, or reckless behavior
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings
- Giving away beloved items
- Changing their will
- Neglecting self care, medical regimes, or grooming
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Statements such as:
 - "They'd be better off without me."
 - "Don't worry. I won't be here to bother you much longer."
 - "I can't deal with it anymore. Life is too hard."
 - "I no longer want to live."
 - "Death seems like the only way out."

Depression, substance use issues, and suicidal thoughts are not a normal part of aging. If your loved one is struggling, 988 is just a call or text away.

Sources for the Toolkit Include: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Council on Aging, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

LET'S START

CALL
OR
TEXT

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THE CONVERSATION

As Oklahomans, talking about our feelings isn't always our default. But one chat could be all someone needs.

Here are a few ways you can start the conversation and check in.

"I can tell you're struggling. How can I help?"

"How have you been feeling lately?"

"Are you okay?"

"You haven't seemed like yourself lately. Everything okay?"

"Have you been thinking about suicide?"

"How are you doing? Do you want to talk?"

HOW YOU CAN HELP AN OLDER ADULT

CALL OR TEXT 988

Along with helping people in distress, 988 dispatchers can help you help others. Call or text any time, any day to get connected with a trained behavioral health professional who will listen to your situation and guide next steps.

PROVIDE 988 RESOURCES

The 988 Mental Health Lifeline is a resource for all Oklahomans of all ages. Help make older adults aware by bringing it up in conversation or placing resources in a place they frequent.

CHECK IN

Even if it's a bit uncomfortable, plainly asking how a person is doing could change everything. Whether by call, text, or in person, starting a conversation provides the opportunity to get things off your chest.

HELP THEM CONNECT

Loneliness is associated with higher rates of depression and suicide in older adults. If you can't physically be present, consider regular chats over Zoom or FaceTime. You can also help find social activities, such as book clubs, community centers, faith groups, sporting or other events in the community.

LEARN ABOUT OLDER ADULT DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

Knowing the signs could save a life. Take time to learn about risk factors and warning signs related to older adult depression and suicide, and help spread the word in conversation and on social media. If you're a person who attends doctor appointments with an older adult, knowing the signs can also help you advocate for the right care.

SPEAK UP

If an older adult in your life looks like they could use some support around these issues, consider being their advocate. This could come in the form of encouraging them to talk with their doctor about issues related to mental health, alcohol or medications, encouraging them to seek out behavioral health care, or encouraging them to call or text 988.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO HELP REDUCE SUICIDE AMONG OLDER ADULTS

- Receiving care for mental and physical health conditions
- Connections to others at the personal, family, and community levels
- Friends and family members in whom to confide
- Participation in community activities
- Relationships that create positive interactions and feelings of being cared about
- Sense of purpose or meaning
- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Flexibility
- Skills in coping and adapting to change
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I call 988 for my family member or friend?

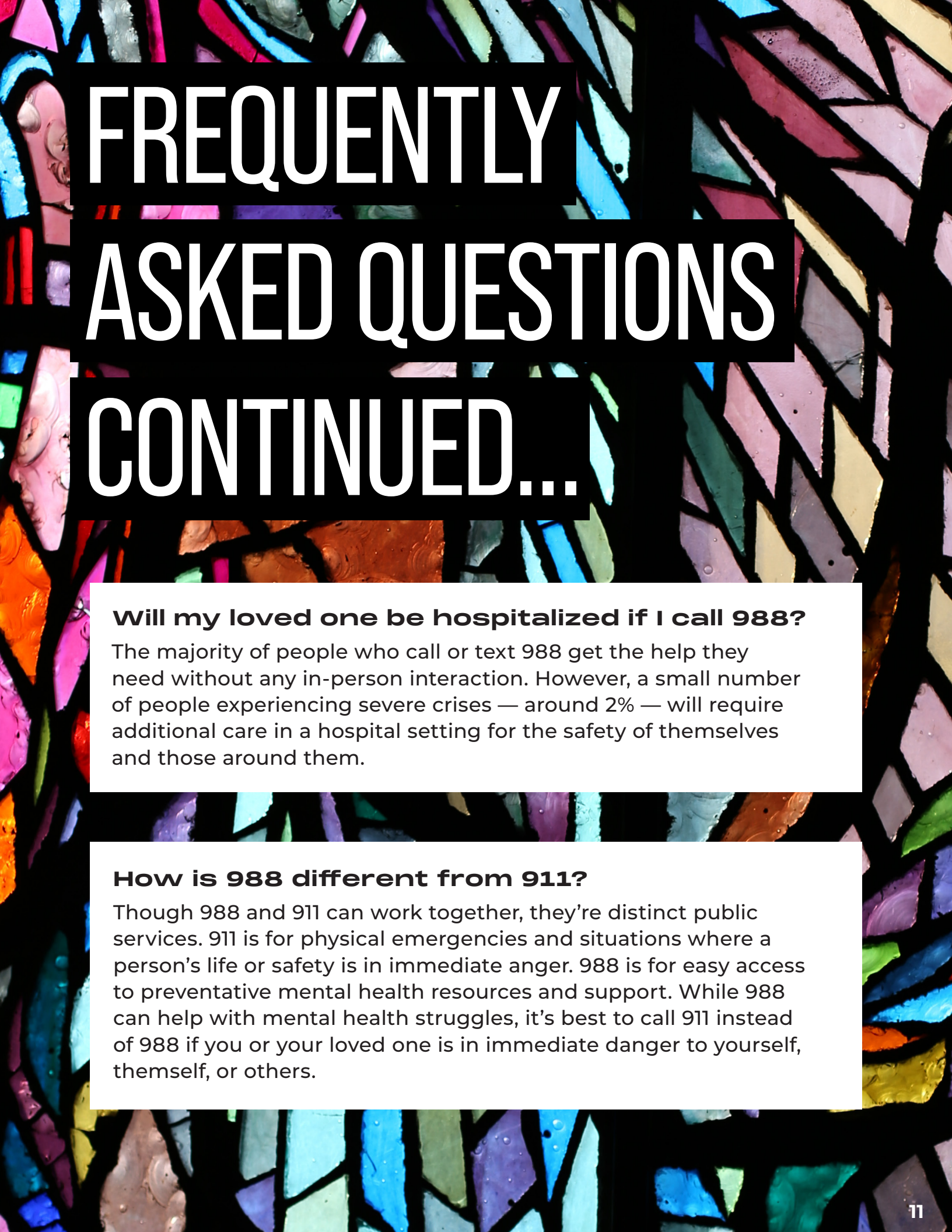
Yes, but only if they consent. 988 dispatchers are happy to give you pointers on how to help someone in your life and direct you to applicable resources. However, you cannot call 988 to arrive on the scene, similar to 911. If the person you're calling on behalf of is in need of immediate emergency help, such as medical response after a suicide attempt, please call 911.

Will people view me differently if I call 988?

The 988 Mental Health Lifeline is a completely confidential, free, and supportive service that is here to support all Oklahomans with behavioral health needs. No one has to know if you contact 988, and your call or text will not be reported to anyone.

Can 988 help me learn how to help my loved one?

Yes. As a caretaker, neighbor, or concerned family member, you can call or text 988 for guidance and resources. Dispatchers will listen to your situation and help create a safety plan you can use to assist your person.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED...

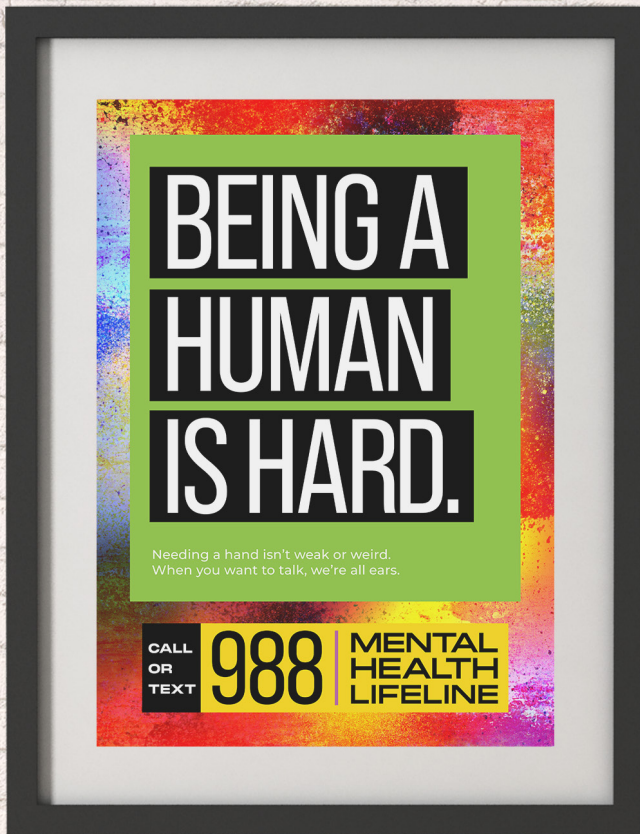
Will my loved one be hospitalized if I call 988?

The majority of people who call or text 988 get the help they need without any in-person interaction. However, a small number of people experiencing severe crises — around 2% — will require additional care in a hospital setting for the safety of themselves and those around them.

How is 988 different from 911?

Though 988 and 911 can work together, they're distinct public services. 911 is for physical emergencies and situations where a person's life or safety is in immediate danger. 988 is for easy access to preventative mental health resources and support. While 988 can help with mental health struggles, it's best to call 911 instead of 988 if you or your loved one is in immediate danger to yourself, themselves, or others.

FREE DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES



Scan here!

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#ShiftFromStigma