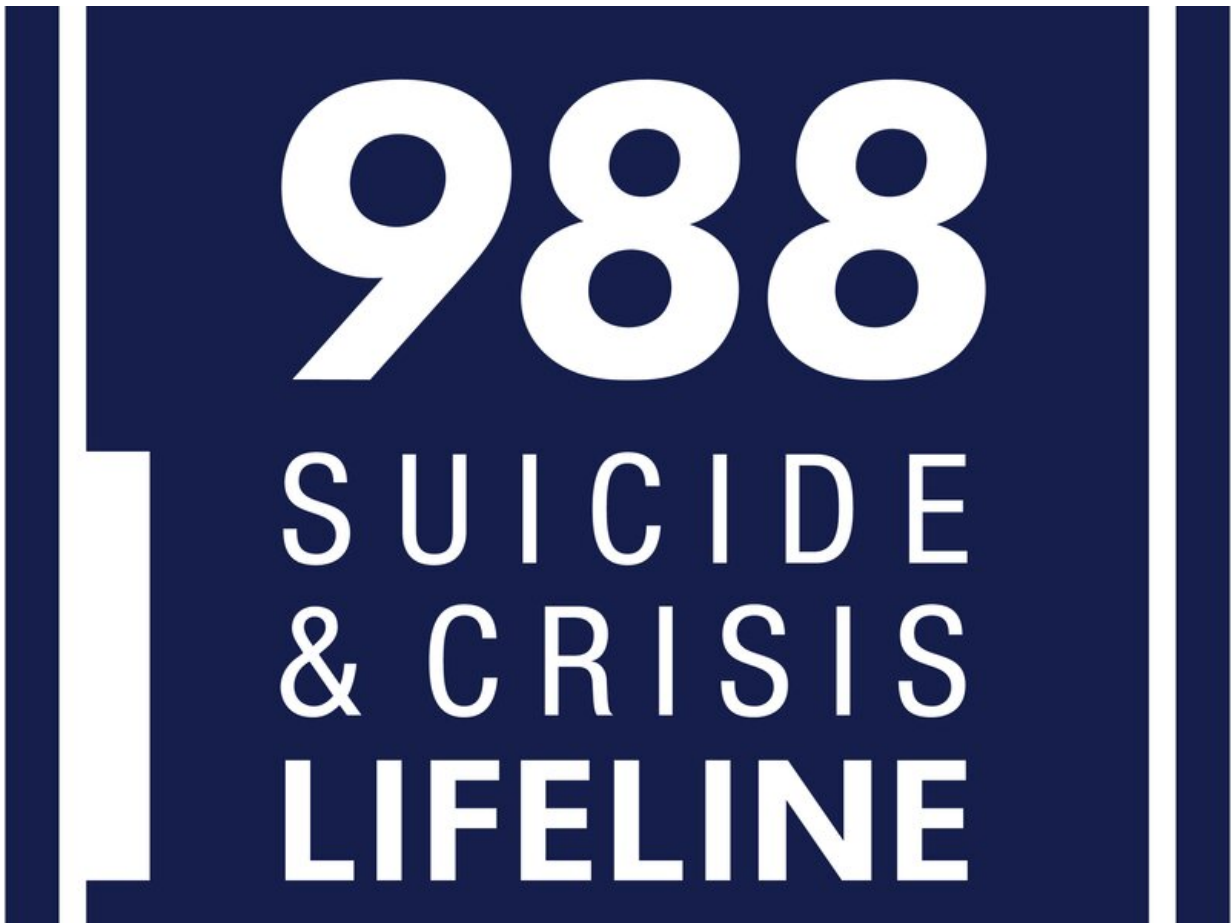


Most Americans don't know what 988 suicide crisis hotline is for, poll shows

May 24 2023, by Cara Murez



Only 13% of American adults understand the purpose of the 988 Suicide

and Crisis Lifeline nearly a year after its widely publicized launch, a new survey from the Pew Charitable Trusts shows.

"There is an opportunity and a need for state and local leaders to launch inclusive awareness campaigns in the months ahead," lead researcher and Pew senior manager Tracy Velázquez said in a statement, CNN reported.

"The federal government's most recent investment into 988 shows a commitment to building a strong crisis care infrastructure in the country—one that is critically important, given the many people experiencing [mental health](#) and substance use issues," Velázquez added.

The 988 line began last year after it was changed from 1-800-273-TALK. It was previously called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Pew surveyed more than 5,000 adults in April, finding that once people knew about the 988 crisis line, about 7 in 10 said they were somewhat or highly likely to use it.

Respondents also had some concerns about where calling the line might lead them. About 2 in 5 of those surveyed worried that calling 988 would lead to police arriving at their home, being forced to go to the hospital, being charged for services they couldn't afford or having other people learn about the call.

Race played a part in the results: Twice as many white people as Black people were aware of the 988 line. College-educated respondents were more aware of the line than those with a high school degree or less.

"We know that there are many individuals in this country who are struggling with suicidal concerns, with mental health or [substance use](#) concerns, who aren't able to access the care that they need. And in many

respects, historically, because of funding limitations or other limitations, the system has let them down," Dr. John Palmieri, deputy director of the 988 line, told CNN in January.

"So, this is truly an opportunity with 988—as a catalytic moment—to be able to transform the [crisis](#) care system to better meet those needs in a less restrictive, more person-centered, more treatment- and recovery-oriented way," said Palmieri, who is also a senior medical advisor at the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Call volume has increased in the past year, with 160,000 more calls, chats and texts in April 2023 than the previous April, which were also answered more quickly than with the previous hotline.

Calls increased 52%, chats increased 90% and texts answered increased 1,022%, CNN reported.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [suicide prevention](#)

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