

SEASONAL TOOLKIT

Suicide Prevention Month



About this toolkit

Every September, organizations across Oregon come together to recognize Suicide Prevention Month. While each community participates in its own way, the goal is shared: helping more people know that support is available, conversations matter and no one has to face difficult moments alone.

This toolkit was created to support those efforts by providing practical resources, ready-to-use materials and ideas you can adapt for your community.

Whether you're planning a community event, sharing resources with staff, posting on social media or simply looking for a thoughtful way to recognize the month, these materials are designed to help you communicate with confidence. Use them as they are or adapt them to fit your community, your organization and the people you serve.

A few thoughts as you plan your outreach

As you use these materials, you may find it helpful to:

- **Go beyond awareness.** Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity not only to raise awareness, but also to help people better understand how to recognize when someone may be struggling, how to start supportive conversations and where to turn for help, including 988.
- **Lead with hope and connection.** Messages that emphasize support, recovery and the difference people can make in each other's lives can encourage someone to take the next step toward getting help.
- **Keep resources close at hand.** Whenever possible, include information about 988 or other local supports so people know where they can turn if they or someone they care about needs help.
- **Extend the same care to yourself.** This month can bring up personal or professional experiences for many of us. As you care for your community, we hope you'll also make space to check in with yourself and those around you. Taking care of yourself is an important part of doing this work.

Technical assistance

No two communities talk about 988 in exactly the same way—and they shouldn't. Whether you're planning a community event, sharing information with staff, adding 988 to an existing project or simply looking for a thoughtful way to introduce it, we're here to help.

Coates Kokes (CK) provides free communications support to help partners introduce more people to 988, answer common questions and build confidence in using the service. Support is flexible and can be tailored to your organization, your community and the outreach you're planning. Sometimes that's as simple as customizing an existing flyer. Other times, it's brainstorming a new engagement idea or creating materials specifically for your audience.

Support can include:

- Communication planning and outreach strategies
- Community event and activation planning
- Event signage and printed materials
- Graphic design (social media graphics, posters and co-branded materials)
- Video creation
- Translation and transcreation
- Media and messaging support
- Paid promotion (such as social media, digital advertising or local media placements)
- Toolkits, templates and communication resources

How partners have used technical assistance

Technical assistance can look different for every organization. Here are a few examples of how we've helped partners incorporate 988 into their outreach:

- **Youth engagement:** Provided storytelling and communications workshops with youth leaders, helping them build skills to create 988 messages that feel authentic and relatable to their peers.
- **Community outreach:** Designed custom materials, including window clings, vehicle decals, magnets and stickers, to bring 988 into everyday spaces where people live, work and gather.
- **Events and activations:** Helped partners develop signage and educational materials for community events, making it easy to incorporate 988 into existing outreach efforts.
- **Presentations and education:** Created adaptable presentation slides and educational resources that partners have customized for trainings, community meetings and local events.
- **Co-branded communications:** Customized existing 988 materials with partner branding and messaging to better reflect local communities and audiences.

Not sure where to start? We'd be happy to talk through your ideas, even if they're still taking shape.

To learn more or request support, reach out to [Claire Coffey](#), Account Director at Coates Kokes, and [Lauren Palma](#), 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis System Manager at Oregon Health Authority.

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Accessing the graphics

You can access all graphics for Suicide Prevention Month using the link below. These files are stored in a shared Dropbox folder to make it easy to browse and download materials for your outreach.

Once you open the folder, you'll be able to explore what's available and download the files that work best for you. You can select individual items or download multiple materials at once.

If you have trouble accessing the folder or need help finding the right materials, please don't hesitate to reach out.

DROPBOX FOLDER

Outreach materials

This section includes a collection of ready-to-use materials to help you introduce people to 988 during Suicide Prevention Month. Whether you're sharing information through newsletters, schools, community events or printed materials, these resources are designed to support outreach that is informative, approachable and easy to adapt for your community.

Inside, you'll find graphics, flyers, school posters, a youth-focused zine and a sample newsletter that can be customized to reflect your organization, audience or local activities. Statistics featured in the sample newsletter, along with additional data and key messages, can be found in the [Talking Points](#) section.

If you have questions, would like to co-brand materials or need something tailored to your community, please reach out to [Lauren Palma](#), 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis System Manager at Oregon Health Authority, and [Claire Coffey](#), Account Director at Coates Kokes.

Graphics and flyers

Visual materials can be a helpful way to share information and make messages about 988 more visible in your community.

For Suicide Prevention Month, these [graphics](#) and [flyers](#) are designed to support conversations about reaching out, understanding what to expect and reminding people that support is available. They can be used in a variety of ways, depending on what makes sense for your outreach. That might include sharing graphics on social media, adding visuals to newsletters or websites, or placing printed flyers in spaces where people gather.

[Flyers](#) can be especially useful for reaching people in everyday settings. You might consider sharing them with:

- Community centers
- Health clinics or waiting rooms
- Libraries
- Schools or campuses
- Workplaces or break rooms
- Local businesses, with permission

If you have questions, need different sizes or are interested in co-branding, contact [Claire Coffey](#), Account Director at Coates Kokes and [Lauren Palma](#), 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis System Manager at Oregon Health Authority.

DOWNLOAD FLYERS

DOWNLOAD GRAPHICS

School posters

Schools play an important role in helping students know where they can turn when they need support. These posters are designed to introduce students to 988 in a way that feels approachable, age-appropriate and easy to understand.

Consider displaying them in spaces where students naturally spend time, such as counseling offices, health centers, libraries, hallways or other common areas. As part of districts' suicide prevention efforts and in connection to their [Adi's Act plan](#), schools can use these posters to complement schoolwide Suicide Prevention Month activities, wellness initiatives or student-led awareness efforts.

If you have questions, need different sizes or are interested in co-branding, contact Claire Coffey, Account Director at Coates Kokes and Lauren Palma, 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis System Manager at Oregon Health Authority.

DOWNLOAD POSTERS

Youth-focused zine

A zine is an easy-to-assemble mini-publication that combines illustrations, activities and bite-sized information into a visually engaging format. This youth-focused zine introduces 988 through relatable content designed to encourage curiosity, conversation and learning.

Consider making copies available in schools, libraries, youth programs, community centers or at community events. The zine can also be incorporated into classroom discussions, peer-led activities or other youth engagement efforts.

DOWNLOAD ZINE

Sample newsletter

Newsletters are a simple way to share timely information with the people you already connect with, whether that's employees, members, volunteers, clients, parents or your broader community.

The sample article below is designed to help you recognize Suicide Prevention Month while introducing readers to 988 and encouraging conversations about support.

Subject line: Suicide Prevention Month is a chance to learn, connect and support one another

Every September, communities across Oregon recognize Suicide Prevention Month. While each community participates in its own way, the goal is shared: helping more people know how to recognize when someone may be struggling, start supportive conversations and connect with resources like 988.

One of the most important things to know is that you don't have to wait for a crisis to reach out. Whether you're worried about yourself, concerned about someone else or simply aren't sure what to do next, 988 is there to help.

When someone in Oregon contacts 988 by call, text or chat, they're connected with trained counselors at local call centers -- [Lines for Life](#) or [Northwest Human Services](#) -- who listen with compassion, help people explore their options and connect them with additional resources if needed. Most conversations are simply that: a conversation.

Suicide Prevention Month is also an opportunity to learn more about how we can support one another. That might mean checking in with a friend, learning the signs that someone may need support, sharing information about 988 or attending a local event focused on mental health and suicide prevention.

Here in [\[your community\]](#), we're recognizing Suicide Prevention Month by:

- [\[Highlight local events, trainings or community activities\]](#)
- [\[Include local organizations or resources available to community members\]](#)
- [\[Share any additional information relevant to your community\]](#)

Whether you're learning about 988 for the first time or sharing it with someone else, every conversation helps build a community where people know they don't have to face difficult moments alone.

To learn more about 988, visit 988Oregon.org.

Social media

Social media can be a meaningful way to share information, encourage conversations and remind people that support is available.

Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity to help more people learn about 988, understand what to expect when they reach out and know where to turn if they or someone they care about needs support. Whether you're posting throughout September or sharing just a few messages during the month, every post can help increase understanding, reduce stigma and connect people with resources.

The sample posts below are designed as a starting point. Feel free to use them as they are or adapt them to better reflect your voice, your audience and what's happening in your community.

Consider pairing posts with graphics, videos or stories from local events, highlighting resources available in your community or sharing educational messages about recognizing warning signs, supporting someone who may be struggling and reaching out before a crisis.

A note about posting during Suicide Prevention Month

Conversations about suicide can bring personal stories and strong emotions into comment sections. Consider checking posts regularly, responding with empathy when appropriate and including information about 988 or other local resources whenever you're talking about suicide. If questions come up about 988 or you'd like support responding to comments, we're here to help.

When posting on social media, here are some best practices and tips to consider:

- Tag organizations whenever relevant (use the @ symbol and then type out their name or Instagram handle)
- If a link is too long or messy, you can shorten it using bit.ly
- You don't have to use the image that is auto-populated from a link you're using. We recommend using one of the photos we've provided.
- It can be tough to keep up with posting throughout the month. It's easier to schedule everything all at once at the start.
- The copy that we've provided is good to post, but also, no one knows your communities better than you. Feel free to tweak things as needed if you think your edits make more sense when speaking to your specific communities.
- People may have questions about the campaign and 988 in general. Try to keep track of what's being said and asked in your comment sections and answer as best as you can. Don't be afraid

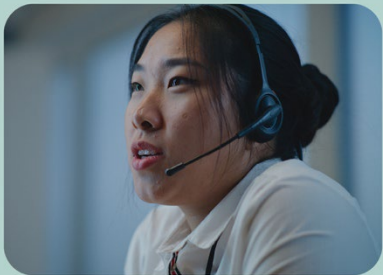
to reach out to us for additional information and clarification.

- We're dealing with very sensitive subjects in this campaign. You'll want to make sure that your posts are places where people can feel safe communicating in. If there are any comments where people are being rude or using foul language, be sure to hide those.

DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA

DOWNLOAD SPANISH SOCIAL MEDIA

Post (copy)	Link	Visual
Suicide prevention starts with awareness. If stress, anxiety, loneliness or life's challenges are starting to feel like too much, 988 Oregon is here to listen. Talking with their trained and caring counselors early can help you navigate difficult moments before they become a crisis. Call or text 988 anytime or visit 988oregon.org to chat online. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	
La prevención del suicidio comienza con la concienciación. Si el estrés, la ansiedad, la soledad o los desafíos de la vida comienzan a ser demasiado, 988 Oregon está aquí para escucharte. Hablando con consejeros capacitados y comprensivos cuanto antes puede ayudarte a afrontar momentos difíciles antes de que se conviertan en una crisis. Llama o envía un mensaje de texto al 988 en cualquier momento o visita 988oregon.org para chatear en línea. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	

Not sure what happens when you contact 988? Swipe left to learn more about what you can expect when reaching out. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	  What happens when you contact 988? ← SWIPE LEFT SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH  Whether you call, text or chat, the first thing you'll hear or see is a pre-recorded message telling you that you have reached 988.  You'll be connected to a real person who will treat you with understanding and respect. 988's trained counselors are experienced, compassionate professionals.
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They will ask you if you're safe, and a few other questions so that they know how to help. This includes your name, so the counselor knows how to refer to you. It's okay to not give your name if you don't want to.



You'll be heard and supported to get through this moment. They may ask for the name of your county, so they can provide local resources. It's okay to stay anonymous if you prefer.

If you need to talk,
988 Oregon is here for you.

Visit 988oregon.org
to learn more.



¿No estás seguro de qué sucede cuando llamas al 988? Desliza hacia la izquierda para obtener más información sobre qué puedes esperar al ponerte en contacto con nosotros. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	 ¿Que pasa cuando contactas al 988? ← DESLIZA HACIA LA IZQUIERDA MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO  Ya sea que llames, envíes un texto, o chat, lo primero que escucharás es un mensaje pre-grabado que te indica que has alcanzado al 988.  Serás conectado con una persona real quien te tratará con comprensión y respeto. Los consejeros capacitados del 988 son profesionales con compasión y experiencia.
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Te preguntarán si estas a salvo, y otras pocas preguntas para que puedan saber como ayudar. Etas incluyen tu nombre, así tu consejero sabra como dirigirse a ti. Esta bien si prefieres no dar tu nombre.



Vas a ser escuchado y apoyado para que puedas sobrepasar este momento. Puede que te pregunten el nombre de tu condado, para así proveer recursos locales. Esta bien permanecer anónimo si lo prefieres.

Si necesitas hablar,
el 988 esta aquí para ti.

Visita 988oregon.org/es
Para más información.



988 Oregon is free and confidential. You don't have to share your name or personal details to receive support if you don't want to. A trained counselor will listen with compassion and work with you to identify next steps that fit your needs. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 Your conversation with 988 matters. So does your privacy. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
988 Oregon es gratuito y confidencial. No tienes que compartir tu nombre ni tus datos personales para recibir apoyo si no quieres. Un consejero capacitado te escuchará con empatía y trabajará contigo para identificar los pasos a seguir que se ajusten a tus necesidades. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	 Tu conversación con el 988 importa. Al igual que tu privacidad. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO
Every conversation has the power to make a difference. Whether you're feeling overwhelmed, struggling with your mental health, concerned about substance use or just need someone to listen, 988 Oregon offers free, confidential support 24 hours a day. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 You don't have to be in crisis to contact 988. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Cada conversación tiene el poder de marcar la diferencia. Tanto si te sientes como que es demasiado, si tienes problemas de salud mental, te preocupa el consumo de sustancias o simplemente necesitas que alguien te escuche, 988 Oregon ofrece apoyo gratuito y confidencial las 24 horas del día. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	 No tienes que estar en crisis para contactar al 988. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO
Worried about someone you care about? You don't have to carry that concern by yourself. You can contact 988 for guidance if you're worried about a friend, family member, coworker or neighbor. A trained counselor can help you think through the situation and discuss ways to support them. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 You can contact 988 for yourself or someone you care about. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
¿Te preocupa alguien a quien quieres? No tienes que afrontar esta preocupación solo/sola. Si te preocupa un amigo, familiar, compañero de trabajo o vecino, puedes llamar al 988 para recibir orientación. Un consejero capacitado te ayudará a analizar la situación y a encontrar maneras de apoyarlos. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	 Puedes contactar al 988 por ti o por un ser querido. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO

The weight of the job isn't always physical. Whether you're stressed, overwhelmed or just need someone to talk to, 988 Oregon is here to listen. You don't have to wait until things feel like a crisis to reach out. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 Whatever you're navigating, you don't have to do it alone. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
El peso del trabajo no siempre es físico. Ya sea que estés estresado, abrumado o simplemente necesites alguien con quien hablar, 988 Oregon está aquí para escucharte. No tienes que esperar a que la situación se convierta en una crisis para comunicarte con nosotros. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregón	988oregon.org/es	 No importa por lo que estes pasando, no tienes que afrontarlo solo. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO
Many of us spend every day taking care of something bigger than ourselves. But our well-being matters too. The work doesn't stop, and sometimes the stress doesn't either. Reaching out before getting to a breaking point can make a difference. Call or text 988 anytime. Compassionate support from their trained counselors is available 24/7. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 Whatever season you're in, support is here. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Muchos pasamos los días ocupándonos de cosas más importante que nosotros mismos. Pero nuestro bienestar también es importante. El trabajo no se detiene, y a veces el estrés tampoco. Buscar ayuda antes de llegar a un punto de quiebre puede marcar la diferencia. Llama o envía un mensaje de texto al 988 en cualquier momento. El apoyo compasivo de sus consejeros capacitados está disponible las 24 horas del día, los 7 días de la semana. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregon	988oregon.org/es	 No importa en qué etapa de la vida te encuentres, aquí encontrarás apoyo. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO
Strength isn't just about working through hard days. Sometimes it means giving yourself permission to reach out for support. You don't have to face it alone. Call or text 988 to connect with caring counselors who you can count on for support. #SuicidePreventionMonth #988Oregon	988oregon.org	 Some days take more than muscle. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
Ser fuerte no solo significa superar los días difíciles. A veces, significa darte permiso para pedir ayuda. No tienes que enfrentarlo solo. Llama o envía un mensaje de texto al 988 para comunicarte con consejeros comprensivos en quienes puedes contar para recibir apoyo. #MesDeLaPrevenciónDelSuicidio #988Oregon	988oregon.org/es	 Hay días en los que se necesita más que un esfuerzo físico. MES DE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO

Earned media

Local news stories can be a powerful way to introduce more people to 988 during Suicide Prevention Month. Whether you're highlighting a community event, sharing a local partnership or helping people better understand how 988 works, earned media can extend your reach and encourage conversations about support.

The guidance below is designed to help you develop and pitch stories that are timely, relevant and meaningful to your community. We encourage you to adapt these ideas to reflect local priorities, partnerships and the people you serve.

A news story pitch is an email tailored to a specific reporter or media outlet that introduces a compelling story idea. The goal is to spark a reporter's interest and encourage them to cover the story. Awareness observances such as Suicide Prevention Month and 988 Day provide natural opportunities to educate the public about 988, highlight local resources and share stories of hope, recovery and connection.

The strongest story pitches are concise and include a clear local angle, a few relevant data points and, when possible, a compelling visual or interview opportunity.

If you're planning to pitch a story during Suicide Prevention Month, consider reaching out to reporters in mid-to-late August or early September. This gives newsrooms time to discuss the idea internally, schedule interviews and plan coverage while the observance is still timely.

Potential story ideas for National Suicide Prevention Month include:

- How to recognize the signs that someone may be struggling with their mental health or experiencing a crisis.
- Stories of hope, recovery and connection from people who have found support through 988 or other local resources.
- Community members, organizations or leaders who are helping normalize conversations about mental health and suicide prevention.
- Resources and support available for youth and young adults, and how families can navigate stress, anxiety and other challenges together.
- How 988 provides free, confidential support for people of all ages in your community.
- Local partnerships, call volume trends or other examples that demonstrate the impact of 988 close to home.
- Efforts to reduce stigma and expand access to support, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

- Organizations and resources serving veterans, older adults, LGBTQIA2S+ communities and other populations that may face unique challenges.

If you'd like additional support in pitching a news story for National Suicide Prevention Month, please contact [Lauren Palma](#).

Tips to pitch a news story for National Suicide Prevention Month

- Story pitches are short, tailored emails to reporters with a news story idea.
- Your story pitch should be concise and compelling; 3-5 paragraphs or 200-300 words.
- Share a local success story that others could benefit from hearing.
- Consider how/where the audience you're trying to reach consumes news and information.
- Consider what's in the news and awareness days/months that make the pitch timely.
- Determine if your story idea works best for a newspaper, TV or radio; maybe it's a local blog.
- Research local reporters and who might cover this topic; review their past stories.
 - Consider public health and features reporters.
- Share 2-3 key takeaways or messages that you want the reporter to remember.
- Localize it as much as possible.
- Offer visuals, infographics or video footage to accompany your story pitch.
- Have a local spokesperson prepared to speak.
- If it includes a personal story, coordinate to have that person prepared to be interviewed.
- Have an eye-catching email subject line; localize it so the reporter knows it's coming from someone in the community.
 - Ideally, include "National Suicide Prevention Month" in the subject line.
- Data can be helpful to convey your message; when possible, include 2-3 facts about your community.
- Link to resources or data (e.g., [988 Oregon website](#)).
- Remind journalists covering your story to review best practices for reporter on suicide: <https://reportingonsuicide.org>.
- Follow up! If you don't hear back from a reporter right away, that doesn't necessarily mean they aren't interested. They sometimes get hundreds of emails a day.

988 Oregon talking points

What is 988 Oregon?

- OHA launched 988 Oregon in 2025 to raise awareness about the 988 Lifeline.
- 988 is a free, confidential resource that's available to anyone in Oregon 24/7, 365 days a year, by call, text or chat.
- No issue is too small to reach out, whether you're stressed, worried, feeling down, or struggling with substance use.
- We can destigmatize getting support for mental health and substance use by lowering the bar and addressing these issues.
- If it's on your mind, it matters, and that's a good reason to call.
- People can learn more at 988Oregon.org
- OHA's latest campaign for Summer 2026 launched in June and emphasizes that 988 trained counselors are here to listen, any time, for any reason.

What is National Suicide Prevention Month?

- September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma and remind people that they don't have to face life's challenges alone. It encourages open conversations about mental health and helps connect people with support before a crisis escalates.
- Everyone can play a role in suicide prevention. Whether it's checking in on a friend, learning the warning signs or sharing information about available resources, small acts of compassion and connection can make a meaningful difference.
- National Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity to remind people across Oregon that 988 is a free, confidential resource that's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Anyone experiencing emotional distress, struggling with mental health or substance use, having thoughts of suicide, or simply needing someone to talk to can call, text or chat 988.
- Reaching out for support is a sign of strength, and no concern is too small to deserve care. If it's on your mind, it matters, and help is always available through 988.

What is 988 Day?

- September 8 is 988 Day, a national day of action dedicated to raising awareness about the 988 Lifeline and emphasizing the importance of mental health and suicide prevention.
- 2026 will mark the third annual 988 Day.

- It's focused on spreading awareness, reducing stigma and making compassionate care accessible to anyone in need.

Why is 988 important for people in Oregon?

- Even though much of 988 Oregon's campaign content is aimed at helping people understand they can call 988 for any reason, it is still a resource for people struggling with thoughts of suicide or severe mental health concerns.
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for people under 25, so raising awareness about this topic and breaking down stigma is critical.
- This is a critical resource for our state. In 2024, Oregon had its highest rate of suicide ever, surpassing [900 deaths](#) by suicide for the first time.
- We continue to see people contacting 988 for support
 - Over [93,000 people](#) in Oregon called, texted or chatted with 988 in 2025, an average of 7-8,000 calls per month.
 - Between January-May of 2026, 44,000 contacts were made.
- Suicide prevention isn't about just one moment; it is about continued care over time. Ongoing support and follow-up care builds trust and supports long-term healing and recovery.

Oregon youth and suicide:

- In Oregon, [suicide is the second-leading cause of death](#) among people ages 5 to 24.
- OHA's 2024 Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan (YSIPP) [Annual Report](#) showed:
 - A decrease in age 24 and younger youth suicides in Oregon in 2023. This continues an overall decreasing trend in youth suicide in Oregon since a peak in 2018.
 - Suicide among youth identified as white has declined since 2018, but the number for youth of other races/ethnicities has remained the same or increased. National data shows that American Indian and Alaska Native youth continue to have the highest rates of youth suicide. Also, Black, African, and African American youth suicide rates are increasing faster than any other race or ethnicity.

Oregon adults and suicide:

- A 23-year trend shows that the age-adjusted rate for suicide in Oregon (19.4 per 100,000) is significantly higher than the United States rate (14.1 per 100,000).
- The suicide death rate is highest among males throughout the lifespan. The highest is among older men, reaching a rate of 93.7 per 100,000 for men ages 85+.
- The suicide death rate for females increases with age until age 59. The highest rate for women

is between ages 55-59 (17.07 per 100,000). But it declines with age thereafter.

- Veteran suicide rates continue to be significantly higher than non-veteran rates.

What is behavioral health and why this is such a challenging topic for people to address?

- Behavioral health refers to a person's emotional and mental well-being across the lifespan. This includes mental health, substance use disorder, and other addictions, like problem gambling.
- Often mental health issues thrive in isolation and silence, compounding issues if someone doesn't know that help is available or that it is OK to talk about these issues.
- And it's more common than you may think – many people or their family members face mental health struggles. In fact, **approximately 1 in 5 people in America live with a mental illness.**
- We want people to know it's always OK to reach out and get help.
- In fact, getting support for issues that might seem routine may actually help mitigate bigger issues from arising in the future:
 - If people get access to support earlier in life or before it becomes a “crisis,” that can lead to healthier people and better health outcomes
 - 988, specifically, can also help lower health care costs: a free call to 988 and someone recognizing they have the tools to support a loved one or get connected to a local resource or community is always going to be cheaper and less traumatic than going to an emergency room.

What are some of the reasons people may want to reach out to 988?

- 988 is trained to help with whatever you are going through.
- You can call if you're dealing with grief or loss, loneliness, bullying, financial worries, food insecurity, domestic violence, or any other reason.
- And if you're worried about a friend or family member, 988 is here for you, too.
- We also know that there are specific stressors and challenges that people face depending on their identity and personal background.

What types of services does 988 offer?

- 988 answers calls, texts and chats in English and Spanish, with interpretation services in more than 240 languages.
 - People who speak Spanish can connect directly to Spanish-speaking crisis counselors by calling 988 and pressing option 2, texting “AYUDA” to 988 or chatting online at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

- There's also specific support available for veterans and service members. Callers can **press 1** or text **8-3-8-2-5-5** to connect with the **Veterans Crisis Line**.
- People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or prefer using American Sign Language can [connect directly with a trained 988 counselor in ASL](#).
- 988 also offers follow-up calls and referrals to community resources.

What can people in Oregon expect when they call or text 988?

- People will be connected with local, trained crisis counselors at Oregon's two 988 call centers:
 - [Lines for Life](#), which serves people statewide, including here in Portland, and
 - [Northwest Human Services](#), which serves Marion and Polk counties.
- Oregon call centers answer 90% of calls in 20 seconds or less.
- 988's trained counselors will treat you with understanding and respect; you will be heard and supported to get through the tough moment you're experiencing.
- 988 counselors can offer in-person help if a caller needs or asks for it, though 98% of the time the call itself is the intervention with no in-person response.
- 988 works in partnership with our Community Mental Health Programs across the state.

How can friends or family members recognize if someone is struggling and maybe thinking of suicide?

We know that suicide is complex and influenced by many interconnected factors. Knowing the warning signs of suicide saves lives. These may include:

- Trouble focusing or remembering
- Anger, feeling edgy or lashing out at others
- Changes in behavior, like isolation or risk-taking
- Eating too much or too little
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling like you have to keep busy
- Excessive smoking or drinking
- Using drugs, including over-use of prescriptions
- Lack of energy or always tired
- Lines for Life also offers [skills trainings](#) that can help communities and professionals understand and prevent suicide and other mental health crisis.
- It's also important to know that asking about suicide is OK – it doesn't put the idea in their head. In fact, shining a light and directly asking – including sharing resources like 988 – helps take some of the power away from unwelcome thoughts.

- Hope and resilience grow when people feel heard and supported. This can guide people to find strength during tough times, even in their darkest moments.

Some people might hear about 988 and be concerned about reaching out. Is there a difference between 988 and 911?

- It's important to note that 988 and 911 are two separate emergency service systems.
- 988 provides access to immediate support for emotional, mental health or substance use concerns.
- 911 focuses on dispatching emergency medical services, fire and police as needed. In the case of an overdose emergency, people should call 911.
- 988 counselors can offer in-person help if a caller needs or asks for it, but 98% of the time the call itself is the intervention with no in-person response.

How are 988 call center staff trained?

- 988 call center staff are required to either have a bachelor's degree in a related behavioral health field or a combination of education, training and experience that meets the requirements for what's called a [Qualified Mental Health Associate](#).
- All newly hired 988 crisis center staff receive 200+ hours of training.
 - Training includes clinical skill building, learning the crisis intervention model, procedural information, technological learning, skills assessments and direct observation.

Can you call 988 for someone else?

- Absolutely – and many people do reach out to 988 on behalf of a friend, family member or loved one.
- If you're a counselor, a coach, a teacher, or anyone who provides support to youth and young people, a better understanding of this resource could be helpful – that's one of the key reasons we want to spread awareness of 988.

Community activations

Community activations are localized events, experiences or outreach efforts designed to spark conversations, draw attention to 988 and create opportunities for people to engage with the message in meaningful ways. They can be as simple as incorporating 988 into an existing event or as visible as a public art installation or community-wide awareness effort.

How we're activating communities in 2026

Every year brings new opportunities to connect people with 988 in creative and meaningful ways.

Below are a few examples of the activations we're creating this year. Some may be adaptable to your own community, while others may simply spark ideas for outreach that fits your audience.

- **Connecting through trusted organizations**

We're exploring opportunities to partner with industry associations and community organizations across Oregon to share Suicide Prevention Month resources, introduce partners to the 988 toolkit and expand awareness of the free technical assistance available to support local outreach. By working through trusted networks, we hope to make it easier for organizations to incorporate 988 into the work they're already doing.

- **Amplifying authentic voices**

We're inviting members of this year's campaign cast and crew to share behind-the-scenes moments from the production process, reflect on why the work is meaningful to them and encourage their audiences to learn more about 988. Through authentic, trusted voices, this effort aims to introduce the resource in a way that feels personal and relatable.

- **Meeting people where they gather**

Throughout the summer and fall, the campaign will place 988 messaging in select rodeo arenas and other community gathering spaces, helping introduce the resource to rural audiences in familiar, trusted settings where people naturally come together.

Planning your own activation

Every community is different, and there's no single approach that works everywhere. As you think about ways to incorporate 988 into your own outreach, here are a few considerations that partners have found helpful.

- **Build on what's already happening:** Community activations don't always have to start from scratch. Existing events, celebrations, trainings and community gatherings often provide natural opportunities to introduce people to 988.
- **Think about where people naturally gather:** Schools, libraries, workplaces, sporting events, fairs and community festivals can all provide welcoming spaces to share information and start conversations.

- **Keep learning at the center:** The most effective activations help people leave with something new, whether that's a better understanding of what 988 is, what to expect when they reach out or how they can support someone who may be struggling.
- **Make the next step clear:** Whenever possible, include information about how to contact 988 and where people can learn more. The easier it is to take the next step, the more likely people are to remember the resource when they need it.
- **Create opportunities for partnership:** Community activations are often strongest when organizations work together. Consider collaborating with schools, local businesses, community organizations, health care providers or other trusted partners to expand your reach and connect with new audiences.
- **Remember the experience:** Suicide Prevention Month can be deeply personal. As you plan activities, think about creating welcoming spaces, using hopeful and supportive messaging, and making resources available for anyone who may need them.

If you have questions or want help brainstorming or implementing a 988 community activation, contact [Claire Coffey](#), Account Director at Coates Kokes and [Lauren Palma](#), 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis System Manager at Oregon Health Authority.