



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

August 2022

A New, Easier-To-Remember Veterans Crisis Line Number

If you're a Veteran having thoughts of suicide or concerned about one, reach 24/7 crisis support through the new Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) number: Dial 988, then Press 1.

This shorter, three-digit number provides an easier-to-remember way to access the VCL. We're working to make sure all Veterans and their supporters know about the new number. Below are answers to some questions you might have about this change.

Why did the VCL get a new number?

The change is a result of the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act. The law authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline). Under the law, all telephone service providers in the U.S. had to activate the number by July 16, 2022.

Because VA administers the VCL through the Lifeline's national network, the service was affected by this transition.

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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now:
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



“If you change your mindset, you have the ability to change your whole world.”

- Damien Thomas

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What Does The New Number Mean For Me?

Since 2007, the VCL has supported millions of Veterans in crisis. This new, shorter number increases ease of access and clarity in times of crisis for both Veterans and supporters.

Like the current number, to reach the VCL, Veterans will press 1 after dialing to connect with VCL responders. Though the number is new, the Veterans Crisis Line dedicated service is still the same. And, you don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

Is The Old VCL Phone Number Going Away?

No. Veterans will still be able to call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to connect with responders. The VCL will also still be available by chat (VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat) and text (838255).

What Happens If I'm Overseas?

The VCL's 800 number is a continental United States (CONUS)-based toll-free number that remains active. Some international calls may incur a charge, depending on the caller's location and network provider.

Veterans overseas may contact the VCL through chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat. If you prefer a phone call, you can request this within the chat venue. A responder will call you at the number you provide at no charge.

Be prepared and save the new number in your phone: Dial 988, then Press 1. Remember, you're not alone. Day or night, the Veterans Crisis Line is here for you.

National Immunization Awareness Month

The Centers for Disease Control says National Immunization Month was founded by the National Public Information Coalition "to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages."

There is no one preventive health measure more important than immunization. As the World Health Organization notes, the international medical community has endorsed the use of vaccines and immunization to prevent and control a number of infectious diseases, as well as chronic diseases caused by "infectious agents." Vaccinating your child can avoid suffering and death associated with afflictions like diarrhea, measles, pneumonia, polio and whooping cough. The American Academy of Pediatrics says vaccines are 99% effective. Every vaccine goes through a series of tests before being approved to ensure safety. Vaccines are necessary to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Vaccines are studied intensively by the FDA, the CDC and many other organizations that vigilantly keep watch over existing vaccines for possible complications.

Check with your doctor about the vaccination needs for your family. Find out how to spread the word about the importance of vaccination and immunization in your community.

Veteran Suicide Prevention

If you're a Veteran in a mental health crisis and you're thinking about hurting yourself - or you know a Veteran who's considering this - get help right away. You're not alone.

How do I talk to someone right now?

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified Veterans Crisis Line responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves. This service is private, free, and available 24/7. To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder anytime day or night:

- Call 988, then select 1.
- Text 838255
- [Start a confidential chat](#)
- If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 800-799-4889

You can also:

- Call 911
- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Go directly to your nearest VA medical center. It doesn't matter what your discharge status is or if you're enrolled in VA health care. [Find your nearest VA medical center.](#)

How can I get ongoing support?

You can get ongoing support through your local VA health care facility or regional office:

- **Specially trained suicide prevention coordinators** - available in each VA medical center across the country - can help you get the counseling and services you need.
- **Vet Centers** can help you - and your family - readjust to life at home after you've returned from serving in a combat zone.
- **Veterans Benefits Administration offices** can help you access benefits for disability compensation (monthly payments), job training, home loans, and more. If you need assistance with benefits please contact our office at (920)232-3400.

[Find these and other resources near you](#)

You can also find information and support on the following websites:

- Get information about suicide prevention and the support we offer. [Visit our suicide prevention website](#)
- Go to the Make the Connection website to get resources and watch stories of Veterans who've overcome depression and other mental health challenges. [Visit Make the Connection](#)

What are the signs that someone may be considering suicide?

Many Veterans don't show any signs of an urge to harm themselves before doing so. But some may show signs of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, or hopelessness. They may also change the way they act. [Get the full list of signs](#)

[Recognize when to ask for help](#)

[Take the Veterans self-check quiz](#)

If you're a family member or friend of a Veteran who's having trouble adjusting to life at home, we can help. Through the national Coaching Into Care program, licensed psychologists and social workers will talk with you by phone, free of charge, to help you find your way around the VA system and figure out the best way to help the Veteran you care about. All calls are confidential (private). To speak with a VA coach, call 888-823-7458, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm ET. To get tips and resources for spouses, parents, and Veterans, visit the Coaching Into Care website. [Visit Coaching Into Care](#)

Upcoming Event

2022 MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT



*Have you served
in the Armed
Forces?*

IT IS OUR TURN TO SERVE YOU
AND YOUR FAMILY



Veteran job and resource fair with
breakout sessions. Benefits &
healthcare provider panel discussions,
as well as suicide prevention training.

TRAININGS OFFERED: VA S.A.V.E, Q.P.R



TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2022

0900-1500

LUNCH FOR PURCHASE
PROVIDED BY AMERICAN
LEGION

Fond du Lac County Expo Center



No registration needed.

For More Information contact: rick.patton@fdlco.wi.gov



CONTACT US

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Visit us on the web at:

www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans



www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO

For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar](#) !