



Behavioral Health Toolkit

***Resources for Individuals with Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities***

June 2025

DEVELOPED BY

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What to Expect When Calling 988

A Guide Created by Whit Downing, Self-Advocate (KCDD)

What is 988?

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a number you can call, text, or chat with when you are struggling emotionally. The person who answers the phone is trained to help you.

What Happens When I Call 988?

1 Dial 988

When you are struggling with your emotions or wanting to hurt yourself, you can pick up the phone and dial 988.

2 Wait for a counselor

- You will hear a message saying that you have reached the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. After that, music will play as they connect you with a counselor.
- You may have to wait up to 3 minutes. Don't be discouraged. They want to help you.
- You can try doing deep-breathing to help you stay calm while you are waiting.

3 Start the conversation

There is no right or wrong way to start the conversation. You can start by just saying, "Hi, I am struggling right now."

4 Talk to the counselor

- This is where you share about what you are struggling with.
- The counselor will listen to you. The counselor may ask you questions to understand your situation. You can also ask the counselor questions.
- The counselor is there to listen and help you understand your feelings.

5 After the call

Sometimes, the counselor may call you back the next day to check in on you.

Questions You May Have about Calling 988

Can I call 988 even if I am not suicidal?

Yes. You can call 988 for support for ANY emotional stress you are experiencing.

Can I text or chat with a counselor instead of calling?

Yes. You can send a text to the number 988 to be connected with a counselor. You can also chat online by going to <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>

Will anyone know that I called 988?

Your call will be private and *YOU* get to decide who knows that you called 988. Your counselor will only contact emergency services *if* they think that your life is in immediate danger. You deserve support.

What if I struggle to find words for how I am feeling?

Your counselor is trained and will be patient with you. You will have time to think about what you would like to say.

You are not alone. Help is available 24/7.

WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

MAY 2024 | BY WHIT DOWNING

Safety plans include what you would do and who may be able to help support you during a mental health crisis, or if you are having thoughts of suicide. In order to be prepared, it is best to make a safety plan BEFORE you reach a crisis point.

Before we get into how to actually make your safety plan, there are a few things we wanted to mention:

- It is okay to ask someone to help you write your plan. You don't have to do it alone, and you deserve support.
- Even if someone is helping, you get to decide what goes into your plan and what you think would work best for you.
- It may help to share your plan with family members, friends, your therapist, or anyone else who helps support you. Sharing your plan with others can help them know how to help you during your time of crisis.



On your safety plan, you should include your **warning signs** which are signs that let you know you're not feeling safe.

A warning sign may be that you are crying a lot more than usual. Another example of a warning sign could be that you are having thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself.

After you list out your warning signs, many people make a list of their **coping skills**. Coping skills are things that you can do to improve your mood and distract yourself. On your plan, you can include coping skills that you do by yourself, or even ones that include other people.

A few examples of coping skills are

- coloring,
- listening to music,
- going on a walk,
- or even talking on the phone with a friend.

If your coping skills are not helping you feel safer, it is good to know **who to reach out to for support**. Your list should include the people you trust and feel safe to talk to about how you are feeling.

Sometimes, you may need to reach out for professional support in order to stay safe. It is okay to need help. A few examples of professional support include calling 988, reaching out to a therapist or doctor, calling 911, or going to the hospital.



Finally, you want your safety plan to include **your reasons to stay alive**. When you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, it is important to have a reminder of why you want to stay alive.



My Personal Crisis Plan

A Guide Created by Whit Downing, Self-Advocate (KCDD)

A mental health crisis is when your thoughts, feelings, or actions become too hard to handle on your own. This plan can help you stay safe and feel better when you are having a hard time.

My name is: _____



How I Feel When I'm in Crisis:

- ☐ I feel scared
- ☐ I feel angry
- ☐ I feel very sad
- ☐ I feel out of control
- ☐ I want to hurt myself
- ☐ I don't know what's wrong
- ☐ Other: _____



What My Crisis Might Look Like:

- ☐ I cry
- ☐ I yell or scream
- ☐ I stop talking
- ☐ I run away or hide
- ☐ I hit things or hurt myself
- ☐ I shut down or freeze
- ☐ Other: _____



Things That Help Me Feel Safe:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ A quiet room
- ☐ Listening to music
- ☐ Hugging a pillow or stuffed animal
- ☐ Talking to someone I trust
- ☐ Holding something soft or fidget toy
- ☐ Other: _____



Who Can Help Me:

Support Person #1:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Support Person #2:

Name: _____

Phone: _____



What I Want Others to Know:

(Write things people should do or say to help you)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



My Comfort Items or Tools:

(Write or draw things that help you calm down)

My Hope or Goal After a Crisis

Even when I have a hard time, I can still have dreams and goals. Here are some things I might want after I feel better:

"I want to understand my feelings more."

"I want to feel proud of myself."

"I want to go back to my daily routine."

"I want to feel calm and safe again."

988 is the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

You can call or text 988 anytime, 24/7, if:

- You feel very sad, scared, or angry
- You want to hurt yourself
- You don't know how to feel better
- You just need someone to talk to

Trained helpers will listen and support you.

Joey's Law

Keeping People with Disabilities Safe

What is Joey's Law?

Joey's Law is a Kansas law that helps keep people with disabilities safe when they have to talk to the police. This law allows people with disabilities to add a special note to their vehicle or driver's record. This note tells police officers that the driver or someone in the car has a disability.

Why is Joey's Law Important?

Understanding

It helps police officers understand if a person might need extra time to communicate.

Prevention

It can prevent misunderstandings between police and people with disabilities.

Safety

It helps keep everyone safe.

How Does it Work?

Sign Up

A person with a disability (or their guardian) can fill out a form to add the special note to their vehicle or driver's record.

Police Get a Heads Up

If an officer pulls over the vehicle, they will see the note and know that someone in the car may have a disability.

Better Communication

Officers can use this information to be patient and communicate in a way that works best for the person.

Who Can Use Joey's Law?

- People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)
- People with Autism
- People with Brain Injuries

How to Sign Up

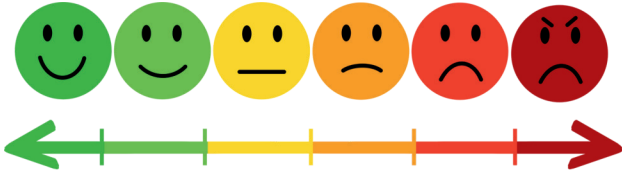





1. Contact the Kansas Department of Revenue (Driver's License Office) or visit their website.
2. Fill out the form to add the note to your record.
3. You may need to provide proof of disability, like a doctor's note.

Tips for Staying Safe During a Traffic Stop

- Stay calm and take deep breaths.
- Wait for the officer to talk to you before reaching for anything.
- You can carry a card or note that explains your disability and hand it to the officer, like the one shown below.

	
<p>NOTICE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS THE DRIVER/ PASSENGER IN THIS VEHICLE HAS A COGNITIVE DISORDER. OUR INTENT IS TO COMPLY WITH YOUR COMMANDS. PLEASE SPEAK WITH A CLEAR SOFT VOICE. YOUR PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING WILL BE APPRECIATED. THANK YOU</p>	

A Guide to Help Me Feel Safe and Supported

Circle how I feel	
How to know I'm struggling (Warning Signs)	<div>I feel _____</div> <div>I do _____</div> 
What helps me feel better? (Coping Skills)	<div>1. Things I can do by myself: <div>_____</div></div> <div>2. Things others can do to help: <div>_____</div></div>
My support team includes:	<div> _____</div> <div> _____</div> <div> _____</div> <div> _____</div>

COMMUNICATION CARD

Have person touch pictures to request wants and needs. If unable, caregiver touches pictures and gets yes/no response from patient. This may be helpful for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or could have a traumatic brain injury, autism, or an intellectual disability.

The BEST way to communicate with me is:



Interpreter



Texting



Writing



Lip Reading



I cannot read lips



Assistive Listening Device

Pain Scale



0

No Hurt



2

Hurts Little Bit



4

Hurts Little More



6

Hurts Even More



8

Hurts Whole Lot



10

Hurts Worst

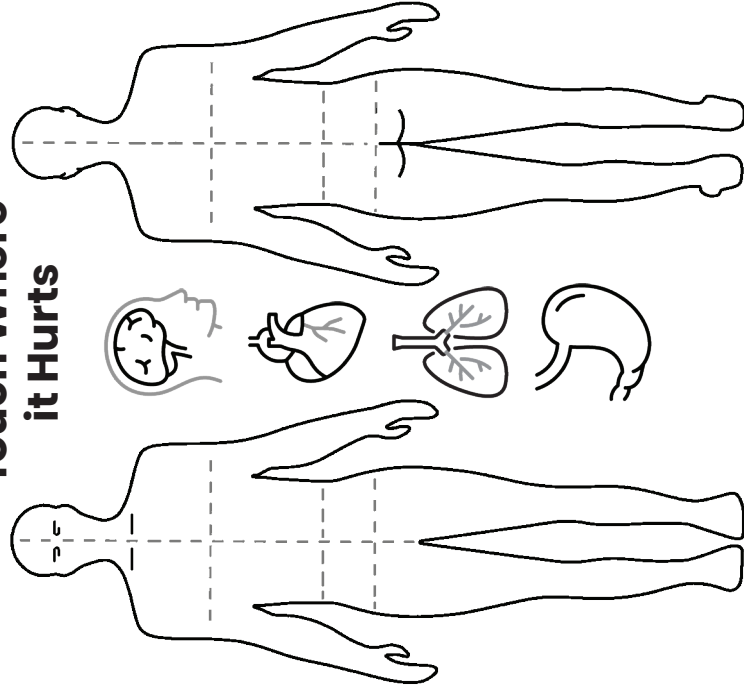
A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q

R S T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Touch Where it Hurts



YES = eyes wide open



NO = eyes closed

HEADACHE	FEVER	DIZZY	CHOKING	NUMBNESS	CHEST PAIN	COLD
CAN'T BREATHE	COUGH	SORE THROAT	NAUSEOUS	AFRAID	ARE YOU IN DANGER?	
ANXIETY / DEPRESSION	SAD	CONFUSED	FRUSTRATED	ANGRY	WORRIED	WANT TO HURT YOURSELF

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Kansas Mental Health Resources

You are not alone. Help is here.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Call or text 988 anytime, day or night.

Website: 988lifeline.org

Kansas Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs)

Every county has a CMHC. They provide therapy, medication, and crisis services.

Website: <https://acmhck.org/about-us/cmhc-directory/>

Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs)

Some mental health centers are also CCBHCs, which offer more services, including care for people with disabilities.

Website: <https://kdads.ks.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/3990/638634607878970000>

We All Matter (WAM)

A mental health support group by and for people with IDD hosted by KCDD. This group meets virtually on the first Friday of every month.

Website: <https://bit.ly/kcddWAM>

Disability Rights Center of Kansas (DRC)

Free help if your rights are being violated, or if you are being treated unfairly.

Website: <https://www.drckansas.org/>

Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (KYEa)

Programs and leadership opportunities for youth with disabilities, including mental health education.

Website: <https://www.kyea.org>

THIS TOOLKIT WAS CREATED TO REMIND YOU:

You are not broken. You are not too much. You are not alone.

You are a whole person who is worthy of care, support, and understanding.

Your feelings are real. Your voice matters. And your life has value.

No matter what you're going through, there is always hope, and there is always help.

You deserve to feel safe, to feel seen, and to know that healing is possible.



**Visit us online at
kcdd.org**