

Mental Health Crisis Support and Older Adults: Perceptions of the 988 Lifeline

July 2026

www.healthyagingpoll.org



INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE
POLICY AND INNOVATION
**NATIONAL POLL
ON HEALTHY AGING**
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Q1. In general, how would you rate your mental health?

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

Q2. These next questions ask about mental health crises that you or others close to you may have experienced. For some people, such questions can bring up strong emotions. Please feel free to skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.

Three years ago, 988 was launched nationally as the three-digit dialing or texting code for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. 988 offers free 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, and emotional distress. It includes access to the Veteran's Crisis Line.

Prior to this survey, have you heard of 988?

1. Yes
2. No, but I have heard about other crisis hotlines
3. No, I have never heard of 988 or about other crisis hotlines



If Q2 = 1

Q3. Have you ever contacted 988 (by call, text, or chat)? Select all that apply.

1. Yes, for myself
2. Yes, for or about someone else
3. No

Q4. How comfortable would you feel contacting 988 (If Q3 = 1, 2) if you or someone you knew was experiencing a mental health crisis?

1. Very comfortable
2. Somewhat comfortable
3. Somewhat uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

Q5. How likely are you to reach out to the following sources if you were experiencing a mental health crisis?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely	Don't know
A crisis line (such as 988, Crisis Text Line, Trevor Project, Veterans Crisis Line, a crisis line offered by a city, county, or state, or a mental health organization)				
A mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, clinical social worker, licensed therapist or psychiatrist)				
A friend or family member				
My regular healthcare provider (such as a primary care doctor or nurse)				
Someone in my religious community				
911				
Another source				

Q6. In the past year, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply.

1. Had an appointment with a mental health provider (e.g., psychologist, clinical social worker, licensed therapist or psychiatrist) either in-person or by video call
2. Contacted a crisis line by call, text or chat
3. Talked with my regular healthcare provider about my mental health
4. Talked with a friend or family member about my mental health
5. Talked with someone in my religious community about my mental health
6. Used a mental health app on my phone or tablet
7. None of the above



Q7. What concerns, if any, do you have about contacting 988 or another crisis line if you were experiencing a mental health crisis? Select all that apply.

1. Could lead to the police getting involved
2. Could lead to an emergency department visit or hospitalization
3. Potential cost / unable to pay for mental healthcare
4. Don't think it will help
5. Concerned about privacy
6. Wait time until I reach a real person
7. I would feel embarrassed or ashamed
8. Other concerns
9. No concerns

Q8. Which of the following would make you more likely to call or text 988 or another crisis line if you were experiencing a mental health crisis? Select all that apply.

1. Being able to talk/text with a crisis counselor immediately
2. Remaining anonymous when I call/text
3. Reaching someone from my state or local area
4. Getting help in a language other than English, Spanish, or American Sign Language
5. Speaking with someone trained to work with people with specific backgrounds (e.g., Veterans, LGBTQ+, individuals with a disability or neurodiversity, including Autism Spectrum Disorder or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD))
6. None of these

Data Source and Methods

This National Poll on Healthy Aging report presents findings from a national household survey conducted exclusively by NORC at the University of Chicago for the University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. This survey module on 988 was administered online and by phone in September 2025 to a randomly selected, stratified group of U.S. adults age 50–95 (n=2,379). The survey completion rate was 51% among panel members invited to participate. The margin of error is ± 1 to 3 percentage points for questions asked of the module sample and higher among subgroups.

The sample for the Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging included Michigan adults age 50–93 (n=1,265), with 359 from the AmeriSpeak probability-based panel and 906 from non-probability panels. The survey completion rate was 63% among probability-based panel members in Michigan that were invited to participate. The margin of error is ± 1 to 4 percentage points for questions asked of the module Michigan sample and higher among subgroups.

Read past [National Poll on Healthy Aging reports](#) and [Michigan findings](#), explore [poll data](#), and learn [about the poll methodology](#).

National Poll on Healthy Aging Team

Jeffrey Kullgren, MD, MS, MPH
Director

Erica Solway, PhD, MPH, MSW
Deputy Director

Scott Roberts, PhD
Associate Director

Mark Ilgen, PhD
Faculty Collaborator

Kevin Saulnier, PhD
Faculty Collaborator

Matthias Kirch, MS
Data Lead

Nicholas Box, MPA
Data Analyst

Sydney Strunk, MPH
Research Specialist

Emily Smith, MA
Multimedia Designer

The Regents of the University of Michigan

Jordan B. Acker (Huntington Woods), Michael J. Behm (Grand Blanc), Mark J. Bernstein (Ann Arbor), Paul W. Brown (Ann Arbor), Sarah Hubbard (Okemos), Denise Ilitch (Birmingham), Carl J. Meyers (Dearborn), Katherine E. White (Ann Arbor), Domenico Grasso (ex officio)

The University of Michigan is a Non-discriminatory Employer.

© 2026 Regents of the University of Michigan