



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

*Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
Promoting Recovery, Resilience & Self Determination*

Jill Bowen, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Tierra M. Pritchett, Ed.D. CHC
Deputy Commissioner

H. Jean Wright II, Psy.D.
Deputy Commissioner

Sosunmolu Shoyinka, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

The Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), the Scattergood Foundation, and Little Giant Creative (LGC) are working together to support the wider launch of 988, a national 3-digit crisis hotline for mental health, substance use, and suicide in Philadelphia.

Ahead of the broader share to the larger community, our imperative is to listen. We are in a mental health crisis that is affecting all of us across race, gender, and age. The 988 hotline is a significant step to solving this crisis that — if done correctly — can address the egregious criminalization of mental illness and the resulting tragic outcomes, particularly for people of color.

There is a commitment from the partners to evolve from previous initiatives on how to best disseminate information and develop critical messaging that will instill trust and standard usage of 988 in communities and zip codes that have been historically underserved.

While resources, supports, and measures of comfort have been available in Philadelphia via a myriad of hotlines and warm lifelines, the efficiency for users and projected volume of calls for the 3-digit number is new and somewhat uncharted. Learning from the fraught history of 911 and the coalescing complexities around behavioral health, many challenges will exist around communicating about 988.

As such, a phased approach was identified to fully realize a communication and awareness plan for 988 in the Philadelphia region with intention, sensitivity, and authentic data that is first and always community focused. This central agreement that messaging and the building of the awareness plan will be informed first and foremost by the community underlies the inherent truth that 988 is only as good as the way it serves the larger public and those in need.

LGC will be embarking on an expansive listening course with the larger community and various organizations with the overarching learning goals of:

Communication – How the community is receiving information, seeking out information, and what motivates them to act on information.

Trust – How have/are behavioral health issues been/being socialized; levels of trust and relationships to support networks including 911; perceived challenges of reception to 988.

We are eager to learn. Please contact hello@littlegiantcreative.com if you would like to contribute to the conversation. A response will be provided within 24 hours.

As always, thank you for your vested interest and support in the critical advancement of mental wellness supports and resources for all.

What is 988?

The [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) offers 24/7 call, text, and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Project Partners

Little Giant Creative is a Philadelphia-based minority-owned and operated full-service communication agency with a demonstrated history of successful campaigns girded on meaningful engagement and informed by the diverse ways people communicate, learn, and trust.

The Scattergood Foundation believes major disruption is needed to build a stronger, more effective, compassionate, and inclusive society where behavioral health is central. At the Foundation, we THINK, DO, and SUPPORT to shift the paradigm and practice for behavioral health and recognize the unique spark and basic dignity in every human.