



# Revolutionizing Crisis Care for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Lessons Learned from the Disaster Distress Helpline Videophone for American Sign Language Users

Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 10:15am – 11:15am ET

CrisisCon23



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# Presenters

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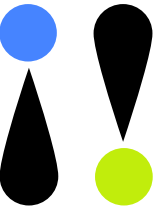
# Agenda

- Overview of the Disaster Distress Helpline
- Accessibility barriers to crisis and emotional care in the Deaf & Hard of Hearing communities
- Disaster Distress Helpline Videophone
  - Training counselors to answer DDH Videophone calls
  - Lessons learned & best practices
  - Case examples
  - Videophone demonstration
- 988 Videophone



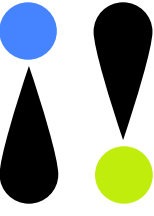


# Disaster Distress Helpline: Overview

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- A national hotline (call or text **1-800-985-5990**) available to anyone in the U.S. states/territories before, during & after natural or human-caused disasters



**Goal: To assist individuals and families experiencing emotional distress related to disaster, in order to help them move forward on the path of recovery**

- 
- **Multi-lingual** interpretation services in 100+ languages; live 24/7 crisis counseling in **Spanish** available via the hotline and SMS (press “2”)
  - Hotline & texting available to **U.S. territories**
  - DDH Videophone for ASL Users (DDH VP)
    - Offers a 24/7 direct connection to trained DDH counselors fluent in
    - American Sign Language (ASL)



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# Additional DDH Resources

- *SAMHSA Website*

<http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Information & resources for providers, risk groups, general public

- *Strength After*

<http://strengthafterdisaster.org>

Online platform for sharing stories of hope & strength during recovery, across disasters

- *Social Media*

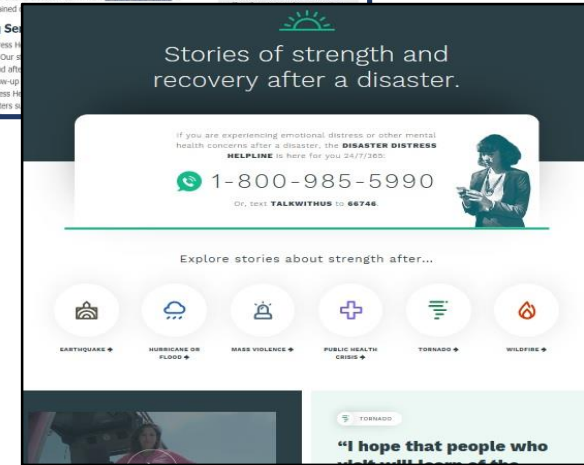
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- *DDH Materials*

- Brochures, Wallet Cards

- English & Spanish





# Accessibility Barriers to Crisis and Emotional Care in the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Communities

- Resources
  - Scarce but slowly emerging as of the past 10 years
- Communication
  - Language needs in the medical, crisis, and mental health areas
- Cultural knowledge
- Technology transformation through the years
  - TTY, Videophone, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.

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# DDH Videophone

- DDH VP launched in May 2021
- Collaborations
  - DeafLEAD, Disaster Distress Helpline, SAMHSA, Vibrant, and Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD)
- Call Events (May 2021 – November 2023)
  - Hurricane Ida
  - International conflicts
  - COVID
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Memorial dates
  - Mass violence events
  - Non-disaster related







# Call Volumes

- 2012-2021: Zero DDH TTY Calls
- 2021 (May – December): 374 calls
- 2022 (January – December): 1,385 calls
- 2023: (January – October): 1,217 calls

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# Training DDH Counselors to Answer Videophone Calls

- SOLVES Platform
- Stress First Aid
- “Just In Time” Disaster Crisis Counseling
  - Disaster Behavioral Health
  - Disaster Crisis Counseling Elements & Steps
  - Disaster Crisis Counseling Principles
- “Just In Time” Training & Resource Alerts
- Clinical Consultation
- Supervision

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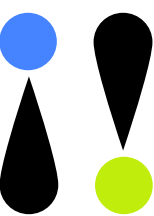
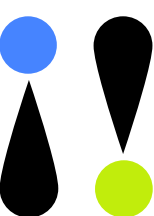

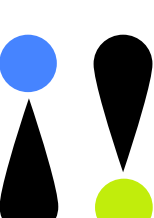
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# Lessons Learned & Best Practices



Traditional best practices for hearing hotlines:  
How does it differ with Videophone?

- 
- Cultural and Linguistic accessibility
  - Visual vs Voice contrast
    - Face-to-face, appearance, attire, environment
  - Procedures for answering calls
    - Safety assessment and callers' responses
    - Professional yet casual approach
    - Body behavior/facial expression
- 
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# Lessons Learned & Best Practices Continued

- Meeting types with crisis counselors
  - Monitoring of Live Calls (supervision & supervision)
  - Debrief
  - Quarterly evaluations
  - Monthly team training to review protocols, feedback, and step by step approach for call types

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# Case Examples

- Voluntary rescue
  - Suicide attempt in progress
- Emotional reactions to wars
  - Ukraine
  - Israel
- Disaster impacts
  - Hurricane Ida, mass violence events, media violence
- Non-disaster
  - Domestic violence, mental health challenges

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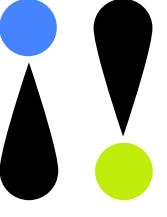
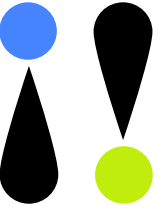
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# How to reach the DDH VP



Two ways to contact the DDH Videophone:

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1. Call 1-800-985-5990 using a videophone-enabled device
  2. Go to [disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](https://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov) and click on “ASL NOW”
- 



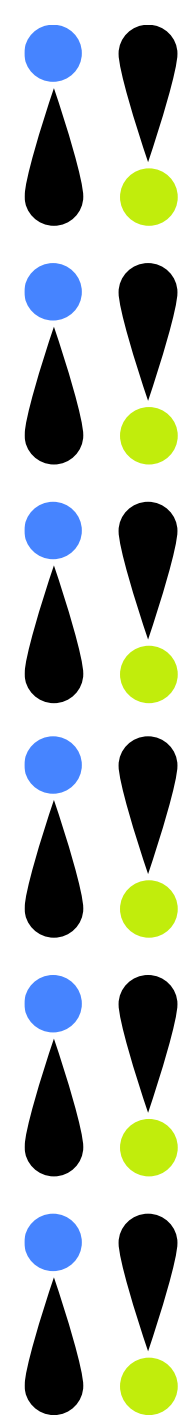
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# Videophone Demonstration



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# 988 Videophone

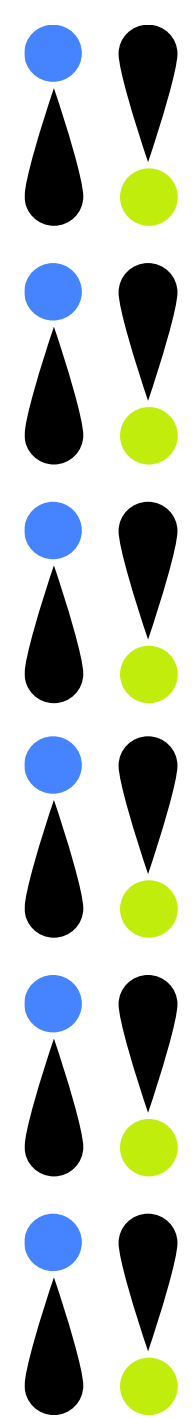
- 988 VP launched on September 1, 2023
- ASL users contact 988 using a videophone or the “ASL Now” button located on the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline website
- Collaborations
  - DeafLEAD, CCSI, Vibrant, SAMHSA, and Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD)
- Call Examples
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Attempts in progress
  - Child abuse with suicidal ideation
  - Severe depression and anxiety

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# Discussion / Q&A

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# For more information:

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# Additional Resources:

- DDH Videophone FAQ in American Sign Language: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/asl-faq>
- DeafLEAD : [deaflead.org](https://deaflead.org)
- 988 Videophone: <https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/for-deaf-hard-of-hearing/>

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## Thank You for Attending!