

DPH

988 Awareness Campaigns

June 16, 2025



Massachusetts
Department of
Public Health

ARGUS

THINKARGUS.COM

Latino-owned. Woman-led. On a mission to make marketing a force for good.

Hi, we're Argus. We're a marketing and branding agency that makes marketing a force for good.

That's why we exist. We believe in the power of impactful creative, insightful research, smart strategy, and the power of equity to change lives, improve communities, and drive results for our clients.

We are an award-winning consultancy with strategy at our core. Since 1994, we've tackled the toughest communications challenges and changed the narrative for complex organizations, with a specialty in public sector projects. We bring passion, expertise, and an equity lens to every single project. **For us, it's doing work that matters.**

Agenda

- 01 Campaign overview
- 02 The process
- 03 Transcreation expansion
- 04 Media metrics
- 05 Partner toolkit

1.0

Campaign overview

Overview

For three years, Argus has worked in partnership with DPH to develop and launch a statewide campaign about the 988 Lifeline. The goal of the campaign is to **increase awareness of and comfort in using the 988 Lifeline**. The campaign has expanded over time with multiple languages, tactics, and a digital partner toolkit.

2.0

The process

OUR PROCESS

01

Immersion

We dive deep with audiences, stakeholders, and market research to understand the challenges and opportunities.

02

Strategy

The research informs a unique strategy and approach that fits the project's challenges and specifics.

03

Creative

Our creative is always informed by strategy to ensure it aligns with client goals, and the audience's diverse needs.

04

Launch

Whether it's a campaign or a toolkit, the launch is where our work comes to life.

RESEARCH

01

Environmental Scan

Reviewed relevant campaigns by examining their messaging, tone, branding, and campaign tactics.

02

Digital Ethnography

Audited online media including TikTok, Facebook, Reddit, Youtube, and local media to understand consumers concerns and any potential spread of misinformation.

03

Quantitative Research

Conducted an online survey with 601 participants to gauge awareness and current perceptions of what constitutes a mental health crisis and how 988 works.

04

Qualitative Research

Interviewed 10+ stakeholders in the MA mental health space to garner organizational perspective. Conducted 8 in-depth interviews with survey participants from priority populations.

Key Insights

01

There's a lack of awareness of 988—what it is, the purpose it serves, and when to call.

02

People are not sure when to use 988. Most assumed it was only for extreme circumstances.

03

People are open to 988, but most have some concerns, including police involvement and facing judgment.

04

People want to know what to expect when calling 988, and trust is the greatest driver.

BIPOC

- Less likely to have a positive perception of 988
- More concerned about call taker not understanding them, judging them, or giving bad advice; or that situation will escalate
- More likely to report feeling lonely or isolated in the past 12 months

LGBTQ+

- More likely to be aware of free mental health resources and 988
- More likely to have a negative perception of 988
- Less likely to expect call takers to be well-trained and skilled, or calls to be answered quickly
- More likely to have had “challenges with mental health” always or often

Our research uncovered an opportunity to **humanize the 988 experience** in the minds of potential callers, lower the perceived risk/costs of using the service, and encourage a more upstream approach to mental health.

We all
need a
moment,
sometimes

Any of us can find ourselves in need of emotional support. That's why 988 makes it easy to find a real person to talk to — someone who gets what you're going through — at no cost, 24/7. 988 is always there when you need it. Anonymous and completely confidential.

STRATEGY FUNDAMENTALS

GOAL

What DPH is trying to change

Increase the number of people who call 988 before they are in crisis.

ACTION

What we need people to do in order to achieve the change

Call 988 whether you're just feeling off or dealing with a crisis.

AUDIENCE

The main group(s) that we need to sway to maximize impact

Primary: Adults in Massachusetts who need free and immediate support for their mental health—whether they're in a crisis or just need a sympathetic ear.

Secondary: Support systems, including friends and family members.

MARKET

Competing messages and ideas in the media and/or culture

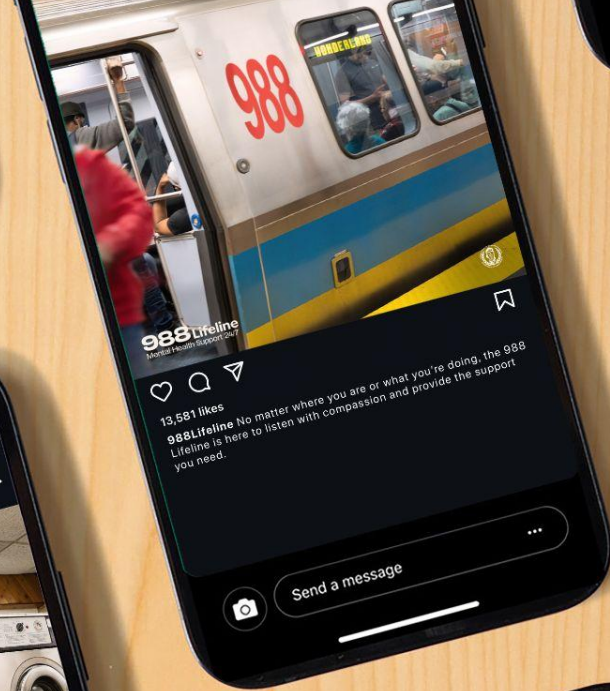
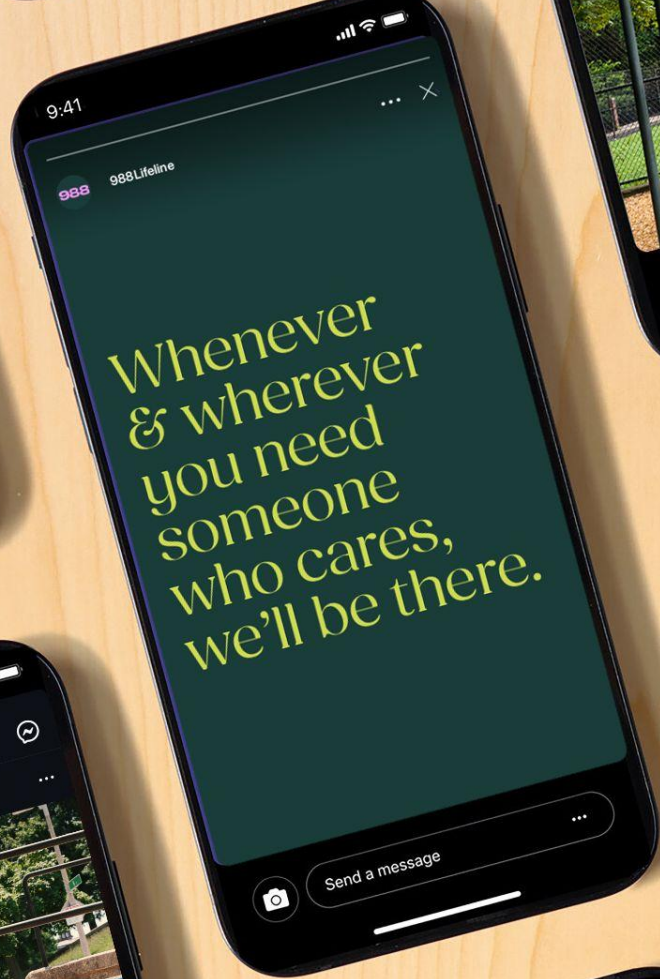
Our research showed that there was a lack of awareness of 988 in Massachusetts as well as misconceptions about the nature of the service, potential outcomes, and even who should be making use of it. Just as important, there was confusion and mistrust in the marketplace that impacts usage of 988—especially among some of the populations that could most benefit from the service. It was time to change the story about 988.

Whenever you
need to talk,
we're here.



988 Lifeline
Mental Health Support 24/7







9

8

8

3.0

Transcreation expansion

Translation

Translation **replaces words in one language with corresponding words in another.** Although it may require reworking certain portions of text, translation is bound by the source text, and stays very close to the original wording and meaning.

Transcreation

Transcreation **ensures alignment with the cultural sensitivities, preferences, and values of the audience.** A deeper understanding of the intention of the messaging and of the language and culture are required. The source text is adapted to ensure the message and call to action are approachable and relevant.

Conducted research to better understand current **reactions and attitudes** towards mental health resources, the 988 Lifeline amongst **Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole** speaking residents.

01

The “Always There” concept was motivating and trust-inspiring for Spanish speakers.

02

Mental health hotlines are recognized as a valuable resource amongst Portuguese and Haitian Creole speakers.

03

988 is familiar to Portuguese and Haitian Creole speakers, even more so than the general audience.

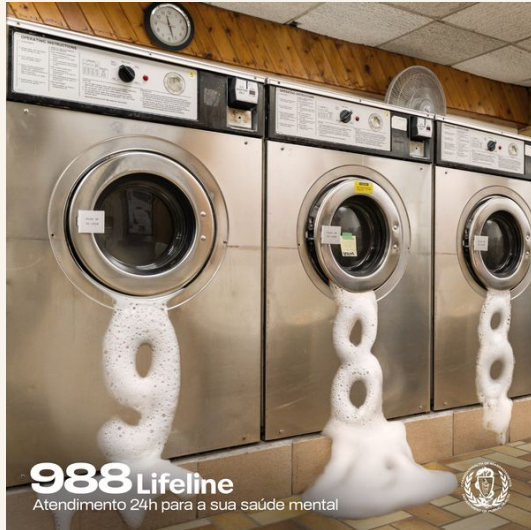
04

988 is viewed as a trusted resource, especially amongst Portuguese and Haitian Creole speakers.

05

The existing creative resonated with Portuguese and Haitian Creole speakers.

TRANSCREATION



PORTUGUESE SOCIAL



HAITIAN CREOLE PRINT



SPANISH DISPLAY

4.0

Media metrics

Targeting

01

Adults Statewide

- Adults 18+
- Statewide reach with digital and OOH placements

02

Key Demographics

- Household income under \$75k
- BIPOC communities
- LGBTQ communities

03

Languages

- English
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Haitian Creole

RUN DATES

2023

JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

August 1 - December 10

English and Spanish

RUN DATES

2024



English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole

RUN DATES

2025



English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
OUT OF HOME IMPRESSIONS	115,880,438	37,909,121	31,933,873*	185,723,432
DIGITAL IMPRESSIONS	16,887,171	18,475,836	8,261,146	43,624,153
CLICKS	96,849	174,504	132,411	481,419
CTR	0.57%	0.94%	1.60%	1.10%
LANDING PAGE SESSIONS	43,034	80,008	50,621	173,663

*Added value currently being evaluated

Standout metrics from over the years:

- **CTR improved from 2024 to 2025** across all channels except TikTok
 - *Notably, PreRoll increased from 1.87% to 6.18% and Meta increased from 1.98% to 4.48%*
- Across 2024 and 2025, **English language ads** were the strongest performers for most channels
 - *Portuguese ads were strongest for YouTube both years*
- Meta saw stronger engagement from the **female audience** all three years
 - *TikTok and YouTube saw stronger engagement from the male audience in 2025*
- Received \$240k in **added value** from TV in 2024

5.0

Partner toolkit

The 988 Partner Toolkit equips community partners—our gateway to the general audience—with guidance on how to effectively talk about 988 and resources to easily promote it.

mass.gov/info-details/988-lifeline-digital-toolkit

01 UNIFIED MESSAGING

Informational handouts provide partners with details about 988
– who it's for and when to use it
– so they can confidently speak about the lifeline.

Includes:

- About 988 + FAQs (print + DL)
- Translation services (DL)

02 PROMOTION MATERIALS

Digital and print materials will be available for partners to display at offices, health fairs, events, effectively raising awareness among their visitors.

Includes:

- Social media posts + tiles (DL)
- Stickers (print)
- Textured stickers (print)
- Tearaway sheets (DL)
- Campaign posters (print)
- Campaign flyer (DL)
- Enamel pins (print)
- Window clings (print)
- Wallet cards (print)

03 SUPPORT RESOURCES

Shareable resources for partners to keep on hand, ensuring materials are consistent with other efforts in place.

Includes:

- 988 Brand Guidelines (DL)



Brand Guidelines

988 Lifeline

Copy
Logo
Color
Type
Imagery
In use

Dark green 1A3D39 R 26 G 61 B 57 C 84 M 54 Y 66 K 33	Yellow green CCDB2A R 204 G 219 B 42 C 24 M 0 Y 99 K 0	Digital pink FF99FF R 255 G 153 B 255 Print pink C 3 M 41 Y 0 K 0	Off white F7F0EA R 247 G 240 B 234 C 2 M 4 Y 6 K 0
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*When color printing is unavailable, use black and white.

Photography

988 Lifeline photography is focused on familiar environments. [Download a set of 8 photos for print or web use.](#)



"988 Lifeline"

The 988 tone of voice is what brings our brand to life. It reflects our personality and creates emotion around our words. It helps us establish trust and connection with our audience.

VOICE AND TONE

- Our voice is warm and approachable. We speak with care and compassion. We deliver our message in a human, heartfelt way.
- Our tone is personal and inclusive to speak to everyone, not only those in a crisis or emotional distress. We use words that are hopeful, supportive, and reassuring.

EXAMPLES OF CAMPAIGN HEADLINES

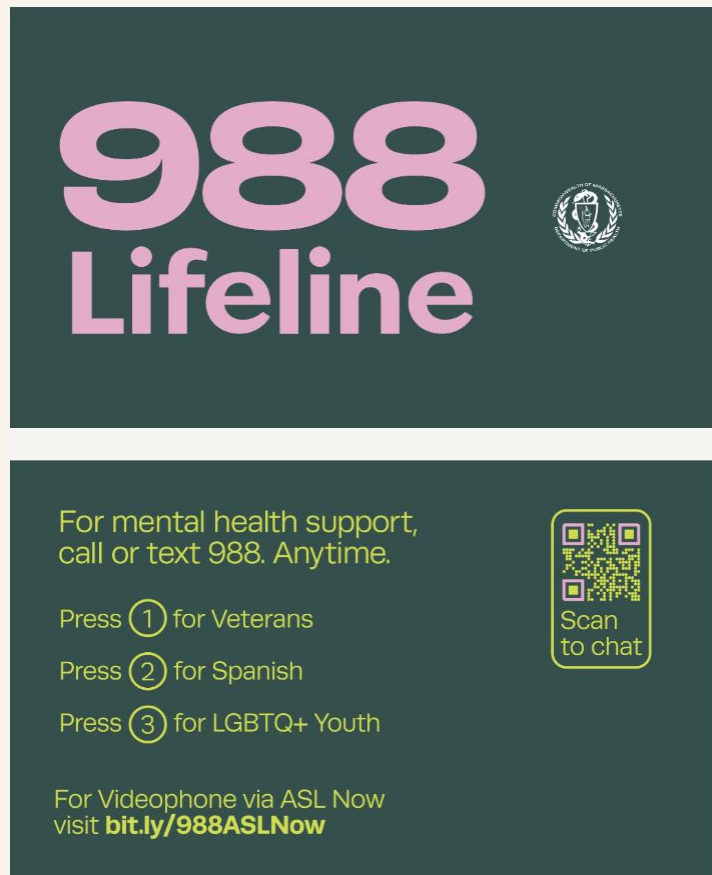
- Whenever & wherever you need someone who cares, we'll be there.
- Feelings show up anytime, any place. So do we.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- Do:
988 Lifeline
Mental Health Support 24/7
- Don't:
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline



Stickers, textured stickers, and window clings



Wallet cards



Lifeline		For mental health support, call or text 988. Anytime.
Lifeline	Whenver & wherever you need someone who cares, we'll be there.	
Lifeline		Feelings show up anytime, anyplace. So do we.
Lifeline	For mental health support, call or text 988. Anytime.	
Lifeline	Whenever & wherever you need someone who cares, we'll be there.	
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Lifeline		Feelings show up anytime, anyplace. So do we.



Reaching out for mental health support

988 is a three-digit number that connects callers to the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. 988 provides free support to people who are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal thoughts — or are worried about a loved one who is.

Call

Dial 988 to connect to free, confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Your call will be routed to a local call center.

Text

If you don't feel comfortable talking to someone on the phone, you can text 988. You will complete a brief survey before connecting to a group trained lifeline specialists.

Chat

On 988lifeline.org/chat, you will complete a pre-chat survey before being connected with a specialist.

If there is a wait to chat with a crisis counselor, a wait-time message will appear. If demand is high, you can call 988 or access the Lifeline's online resources while waiting.

All calls, texts, or online chats are answered by trained lifeline specialists who provide compassionate, non-judgmental support.

988 specialists will listen to you, work to understand how your problem is affecting you, and share local resources that may be helpful.



How 988 differs from the Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL)

988 is intended to support anyone in emotional distress or having suicidal thoughts and offers free, confidential **emotional support** to all callers. The Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) directly connects individuals and families to the full range of **treatment services** for mental health and substance use offered in Massachusetts. BHHL offers individualized support, clinical assessment, and personalized treatment referrals.

988 and BHHL can both connect you to the services you need. To reach BHHL directly, call or text **(833) 773-2445** or visit masshelpline.com to chat online.

How 988 interacts with 911 and emergency services and mobile crisis services

Collaboration between 988, the Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL), and Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI) provides options for those in crisis to receive right-sized care in their communities. However, when someone is at imminent risk for suicide, meaning that a suicide attempt will occur shortly or is already in progress, emergency medical services through 911 will continue to be engaged, in keeping with current [suicide safety policy](#).

988 Lifeline specialists are trained to talk through emotional distress via phone, text, or chat and provide resources as needed. If the caller or their loved ones are in immediate danger, they should call 911.

Unless a caller is in imminent risk, 988 does not contact or share information with **anyone**, including emergency services such as 911, police, or fire.

988 accessibility and specific services

Videophone and TTY:

The [988 ASL Videophone](#) is available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. TTY users can use their preferred relay service or dial **711** then **988**.

Anyone can chat online to start a conversation on 988lifeline.org/chat.

Service members and veterans:

Call **988** and press 1 to connect to the Veterans Crisis Line, text **838255**, or chat online at veteranscrisisline.net.

LGBTQI+ youth:

Call **988** and press 3. To text, send the word **PRIDE to 988**. To chat online, check the box for LGBTQI+ support in the pre-chat survey.

Interpreter services:

Call **988** and say the name of the language you need. Translation is available in more than 240 languages.

Spanish language:

Call **988** and press 2. To text, send the word **"Ayuda" to 988**. To chat online, visit 988lifeline.org/es/chat.



Support available in 240+ languages

The 988 Lifeline is a 24/7 mental health support lifeline. Call 988 for compassionate, non-judgmental support in over 240 languages. You can also text 988 for support in English or Spanish.

988 specialists will listen to you, work to understand how your problem is affecting you, and share local resources that may be helpful.

- ### English

Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat for support in English.
- ### Spanish

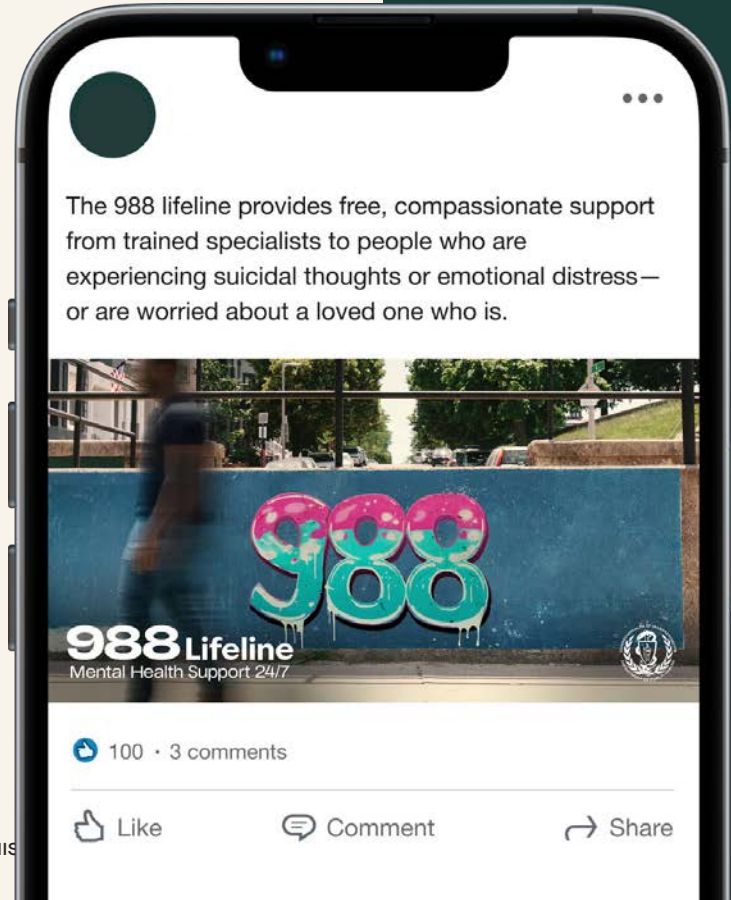
Call or text 988 for support in Spanish. When calling, dial 988 and press 2 for Spanish. This line will direct you to a center with Spanish-speaking and bilingual staff. When texting, type "Ayuda" to connect with a Spanish-speaking counselor. You can also chat in Spanish at 988lifeline.org/es/chat.
- ### Other languages

Dial 988. Once connected to a call specialist, request a specific language. The specialist will bring in a third-party translator in the language you requested.

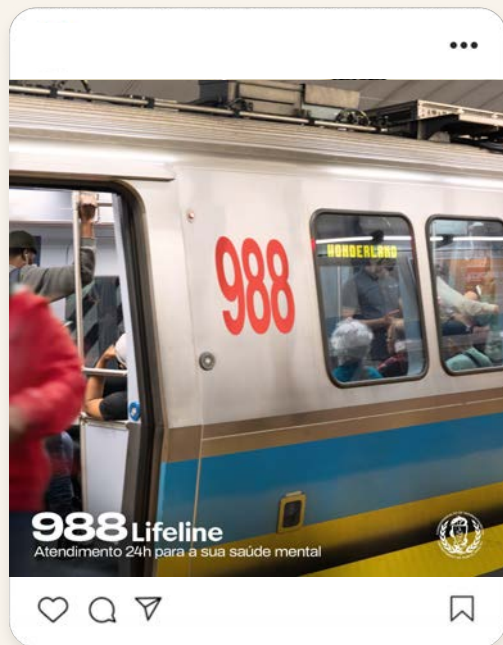
SOCIAL

COPY:

The 988 Lifeline provides free, compassionate support from trained specialists to people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts or emotional distress — or are worried about a loved one who is.



SOCIAL



Portuguese

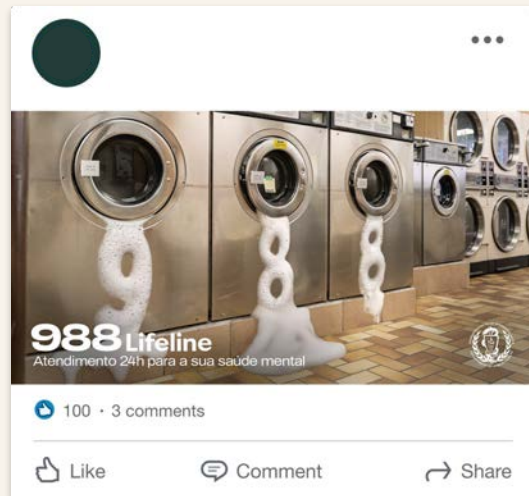


Haitian Creole

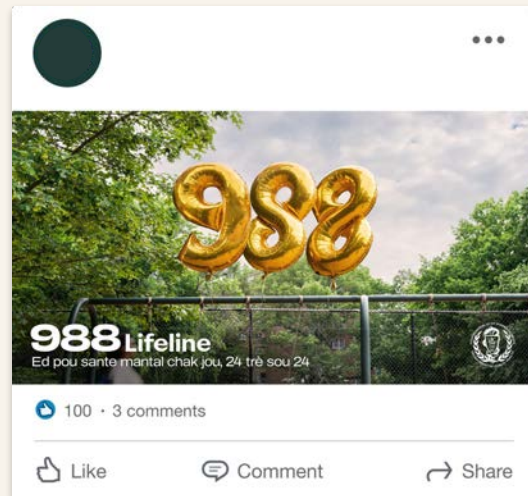


Spanish

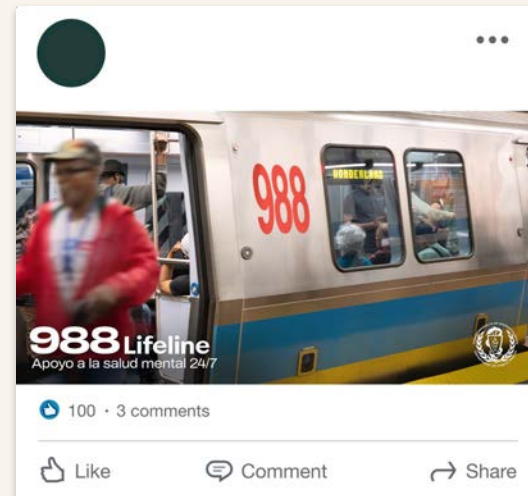
SOCIAL



Portuguese

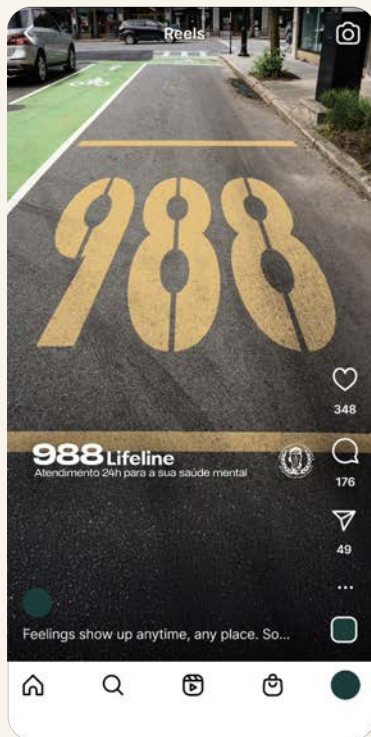


Haitian Creole



Spanish

SOCIAL



Portuguese



Haitian Creole



Spanish

To order or download free materials

1. Go to mass.gov/MaClearinghouse
2. Scroll down to Topic Areas and click “Injury Prevention” or search “988” in the search bar
3. Click on the item you’re interested in and download or order materials at no cost!

Topic Areas			
Adolescent Health	Gambling	Mental Health	Sexual & Reproductive Health
Alcohol & Other Drugs	HIV / AIDS	Mosquitoes	Sodium
Asthma	Handwashing	Nutrition & Physical Activity	Stroke – Act FAST
Behavioral Health	Harm Reduction	Oral Health	Suicide Prevention
Blood Pressure	Health Equity	Organ Donation	Ticks
COVID-19	Hepatitis C	Oxygen Safety	Tobacco
Cancer	Home Heating	Parenting & Child Health	Tuberculosis
Community Health Workers	Immunization	PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)	Veteran Resources
Diabetes	Infection Control	Rabies	Workplace Health & Safety
Down Syndrome	Influenza (Flu)	Relationship Health	Zika Virus
Early Intervention	Injury Prevention	STDs/STIs	
Emergency Preparedness	MA Children at Play Mentors	School Health	
Environmental Health	Mass in Motion	Sexual & Domestic Violence	

SPECS

Item Number: IP2952
Available In: English
Format: Window Cling
Audience: General audience
Size: 5" x 5"
Limit: 100 per order
If you'd like to order more, add a note during your check out or contact us.

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