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## Lifeline Crisis Chat and Text **Locating a Lifeline Chat or Text Visitor**

This document highlights the process for locating 988 Lifeline Crisis Chat and Text visitors for involuntary emergency intervention. Remember that involuntary emergency intervention should be used as a last resort after other less invasive interventions have been attempted.

### **Definitions**

- **(IP) Internet Protocol Address.** This is the unique virtual address for each device on an internet network
- **(ISP) Internet Service Provider.** This is the company that provides the internet connection (like Comcast, T-Mobile, Verizon, etc.)
- **(VPN) Virtual Private Network.** A secure connection an internet user logs into that can mask their actual location and ISP information.
- **Malware.** This term is short for malicious software. Malware can take many forms, including viruses, worms, trojan horses, ransomware, and spyware.
- **(PSAP) Public Safety Answering Point.** Responsible for receiving 911 calls and processing those calls to get the appropriate responder out to a location, also often referred to as “dispatch.”

### **Follow-up**

As detailed in the 988 Lifeline Suicide Safety Policy, emergency service contact with the individual in crisis must be confirmed.

**Remember:** Even with all the technology available today, we will not be able to locate every individual we believe is at imminent risk. This is one of the most challenging parts of crisis work and it's critical that training content and supervision best practices at your center prepare crisis counselors for this possibility (and support them if it does happen).

## Lifeline Text Interactions

Crisis counselors sometimes feel better prepared to handle potential emergency interventions on text interactions versus chat interactions. The main reason for this is that the crisis counselor has access to the visitor's phone number which gives them a better indication of where they might be located based on their area code. A dispatcher at a PSAP is also likely more familiar with an emergency services intervention that has a phone number attached to the request.

### **Recommended Process**

1. Remain on the interaction as long as possible, providing support and attempting a collaborative intervention.
2. After consulting with a supervisor, if an emergency intervention is decided upon, obtain the necessary information.
  - a. The chat and text platform will give you a general location and carrier information based on the visitor's phone number.
  - b. The pre-text survey asks for zip code.
    - i. When this information has been filled out, we recommend using this information to identify the PSAP using the PSAP look-up tool on the Network Resource Center.
    - ii. Contact the PSAP and explain the situation.

### **Limitations**

Location based on the zip code provided in the pre-conversation survey should not be assumed to be 100% accurate and should be given to PSAPs as the text contact's assumed location unless otherwise confirmed by the contact.	Location should also not be assumed to be 100% accurate based on the visitor's area code. Individuals can move to another state and keep their original phone number as well as use internet based platforms to send messages making it appear that they are contacting us from a location other than their home.
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## Lifeline Chat Interactions

### Recommended process

1. Remain on the chat when possible to continue de-escalating the situation.
2. Gather the IP address and ISP information from the Visitor Information in the chat and text platform.
  - a. This is in the section with their pre-chat survey information.
  - b. Gather the Interaction ID (just the last set of letters and numbers after the hyphen [12 digits]) to provide to the PSAP dispatcher in case they need to follow up with your center or Vibrant about this.
3. Look up the phone number for the legal department at the Visitor's ISP. This will need to be provided from Lifeline to the PSAP.
  - a. Most can be found at <http://www.search.org/resources/isp-list>.
4. Using the PSAP Lookup on the Lifeline's Network Resource Center, find the number of the appropriate PSAP location. You can do this two ways:
  - a. Using the **zip code** the chatter provided on their pre-chat survey (preferred unless clearly incorrect) or
  - b. Using the **zip code** on the Possible Location tab in the chat and text platform.
    - i. NOTE: This *Possible Location* should **not** be assumed correct **nor** given to PSAPs as the chatter's exact location (even though it may appear to provide a specific address). It is using general, publicly available information to approximate the location.
5. Contact the PSAP and explain the situation.

### Limitations

<b>IP and Location</b>	<b>VPNs</b>
An IP address does not always track back to a specific location or individual user. They may get you in the general vicinity of your chatter, but you should never rely on an address or coordinates as fact. You should always tell dispatchers that a location is an approximation. This is why it's ideal and always the goal to earn cooperation from the person in crisis.	When users are on a VPN, the listed ISP is their VPN provider, not the internet service they're actually on. For example, if someone is using Verizon FIOS as their ISP then logging onto a VPN through GoDaddy, the chat platform is going to list the ISP as GoDaddy. A PSAP can also contact a VPN's legal department but they may not be able to share location information like a traditional ISP.

## **Security Considerations**

While free resources are few and choice is limited, it's critical that you review each link your team uses to ensure it is safe and legitimate. Many sites that purport to help you locate individuals install malware and other viruses on your computer.

## **Example PSAP conversation**

**Crisis Counselor:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from [center], we're part of 988 Lifeline. I'm speaking with someone online over crisis chat who is at imminent risk of suicide and I'm hoping you can send someone out.

**Dispatcher:** What's the address?

**Crisis Counselor:** Unfortunately, they were unwilling to provide one but do need emergency services right away. All we have is the IP address, but I can tell you how an officer can get a physical address from that.

**Dispatcher:** I can't do a welfare check on someone without an address.

**Crisis Counselor:** Yes, and we can get one for this person. As part of the 988 Lifeline, we use this process many times, every day with PSAPs all over the country. It works, and all you have to do is make a phone call to their internet service provider, [name of company]

**Dispatcher:** Um, ok...what do I do?

*\*(note: the Crisis Counselor will get the company contact information by looking it up at <http://www.search.org/resources/isp-list>.)*

**Crisis Counselor:** Great, thank you for your help! You'll be calling [ISP's name] at [phone number]. That's who they're using for internet service. You'll need to tell them that someone using that IP address is at imminent risk for suicide and we need their location due to this being an emergency situation. Then you'll give them the IP address which is [IP address]. They may also ask what time the chat took place. It was [time and time zone]. From there they should be able to give you a physical address. I'd like to also give you the interaction ID from our end that you could refer to if you ever end up needing to follow-up or call us back about this, it's [Interaction ID: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX].

**Dispatcher:** OK, please hold.

**If the PSAP dispatcher states they cannot contact the ISP**

- **Speaking to a supervisor** might help move the intervention along. You can ask to speak to someone higher at any point in the conversation.
- **If that doesn't work**, we recommend saying and noting the following so you can properly document the attempted emergency intervention:
  - *"Okay, I understand. I'm required to document that I called and was unable to get emergency assistance for the person at imminent risk of suicide. May I have your name and operator ID for my report, please?"*
- **A last route could be contacting a nearby PSAP.** They can sometimes help directly or help communicate with the original PSAP.
- **Establish a relationship with the PSAP** before an emergency services intervention takes place. A supervisor or program director can reach out to explain 988 Lifeline's process for emergency interventions with chat and why they might be reaching out. This connection can help with communication if an emergency intervention takes place in the future.