

Normalize Help-Seeking WITH NORTH DAKOTA FIRSTLINK

Upon launch of the National Suicide & Crisis Prevention Hotline using the phone number 988, FirstLink was named the call service center to respond to North Dakota dial-ins. However, the national launch of 988 was not the first time FirstLink has responded to crisis calls. FirstLink's 211 Helpline remains a way for North Dakotans to get connected, not just with help in times of mental or behavioral health crises, but also with local resources. Even now, individuals experiencing crisis can call either 211 or 988 to reach support.

For many students, knowing that there are resources to help in times of crisis is far different than actually utilizing those resources. In conversations around mental or behavioral health, it may be beneficial to introduce students to a call with a help center, like FirstLink. Whether use of the helpline is simulated with a whole classroom of students, or in a more individualized approach for a student in need of support, this strategy can help normalize help-seeking and encourage students to reach out for help when they need it.

TO UTILIZE FIRSTLINK'S CALL CENTER WITH STUDENTS, EITHER IN THE CLASSROOM OR INDIVIDUALLY, PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

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Get directly connected with North Dakota's Firstlink by contacting them at the number **211** or **(701) 235-7335**.

- Ask an operator to simulate a lifeline call with you. See what questions they ask, how they listen, and ask how you might best introduce students to the call center.

While there is no need to schedule a call with FirstLink in advance of working with students, it will be helpful to know how FirstLink operators handle a similar conversation.

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Even encouraging students to call on their own, just to see what a call might sound like, may be helpful. All FirstLink staff are equipped to walk through a crisis response situation, should anyone ask to hear what that may sound like.

ND FirstLink also has a text helpline available for youth. This is accessed by texting **ND4ME** to the number **898211**.

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Should you choose to promote use of FirstLink throughout your school, please feel free to utilize these school-specific flyers linked [here](#) and [here](#).