

Letter to the community

At TeenTalk we know that now, more than ever, it's important that we stand with our black community members against racial injustice. While we might look different on the outside, we are all human beings, so we're here to treat you like the family we are. We share 99.9% of our genetics with each other, and while we may at times use that 0.1% to keep us apart, we have a lot of similarities worth celebrating and bringing us together. At TeenTalk we strive to spread love and good will, regardless of the individual. While we can't speak out about the movement or the actions of different groups or individuals, we can say that we support the individuals in our community in their pursuit for unification as well as individualization. While bigotry is unacceptable, we are also a resource for anyone who wants to learn and improve themselves; there's no shame in getting better! We want to be a safe place for youth to talk about the hard questions that come up and to challenge individuals' biases. We understand that many of the unfair stereotypes and assumptions can be made purely because of the ignorance and misunderstanding of where they come from and the inability to identify those thoughts. It is valid to feel overwhelmed and it's important to take time for yourself, and to remember that ignorance is not something that any one person is in charge of correcting. No matter how recent events have affected you, we're here to listen and help however we can. It is up to the community as a whole to come together to help spread kindness and to help shape our society.

"We share 99.9% of our genetics with each other,
and while we may at times use that 0.1% to keep us apart,
we have a lot of similarities worth celebrating and bringing us together."

TeenTalk would also like to acknowledge that while our community's demographics are predominantly white, we want to recognize the diverse range of races and cultures that exist within our society and would like to be a community that says, "I got your back." Everyone is still learning. TeenTalk's mission is not to take on centuries of systemic racism, but to commit to providing a place for youth voice, a sanctuary for all beliefs, a place to be met in response in kind, a safe place to learn, and somewhere you can be your best self. We want to be a supportive group of people who are trying to do something about the injustices of the world. Our volunteers learn about diversity and equity, and receive cultural training, so that they can then go out and help spread awareness and knowledge of these issues, and to become allies. Like you, we also come from many different backgrounds of color, beliefs, gender identities and abilities—All Paths of Life. One of the beautiful parts about TeenTalk is that very little matters when all you hear is a voice, because we are all truly just youth coming to make connections with each other without forming judgements about the appearances of one another.

"TeenTalk's mission is not to take on centuries of systemic racism, but to commit to
providing a place for youth voice, a sanctuary for all beliefs, a place to be met in
response in kind, a safe place to learn, and somewhere you can be your best self."

We want to support those who go out to support the Black Lives Matter movement, while simultaneously encouraging safe, social distancing practices. Minority communities disproportionately have less access to health care systems and it is important to support both their cause and health as we battle two large enemies of the minority community: COVID-19 and hate.

"Minority communities disproportionately have less access to health care systems and it is important to support both their cause and health as we battle two large enemies of the minority community: COVID-19 and hate."

We also want to give support to the police officers who remain moral and hardworking in these difficult times. Having anger and hate towards them weighs heavy on their hearts, and they are currently facing dangerous situations and harassment. We acknowledge that they are also community members that have family as well. TeenTalk wants to be able to support the teens of these police officers, and for them to know it is a safe place for them to talk about how this experience is affecting them. There is also a lot of possible reform that may occur in the police system and we want you to know that it is okay to be scared of change. Knowing that the system that we have grown to know may not be working and wanting change to occur doesn't have to mean that the unknown isn't a looming anxiety for some.

"We also want to give support to the police officers who remain moral and hardworking in these difficult times. Having anger and hate towards them weighs heavy on their hearts, and they are currently facing dangerous situations and harassment."

Whether you see color, or you believe it's best not to see color. Whether you specifically support the Black Lives Matter movement or feel strongly about the intersectionality of color with race, gender, sexuality, disability, mental health or class. Whether you are scared or angry or sad or uncomfortable. We're here with you and we want to show people we want change. We know we can't erase racism, but we want to give minorities who have been oppressed a voice. Peppy Penerson, Clark County TeenTalk, and all of our volunteers want to say that we are here for you. We're listening. We can hear you. TeenTalk is a place where you can let your voice be heard. Our hours are Monday through Thursday 4-9 pm and Fridays 4-7 pm.

"We're listening. We can hear you.
TeenTalk is a place where you can let your voice be heard."