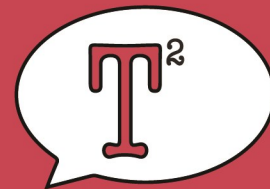


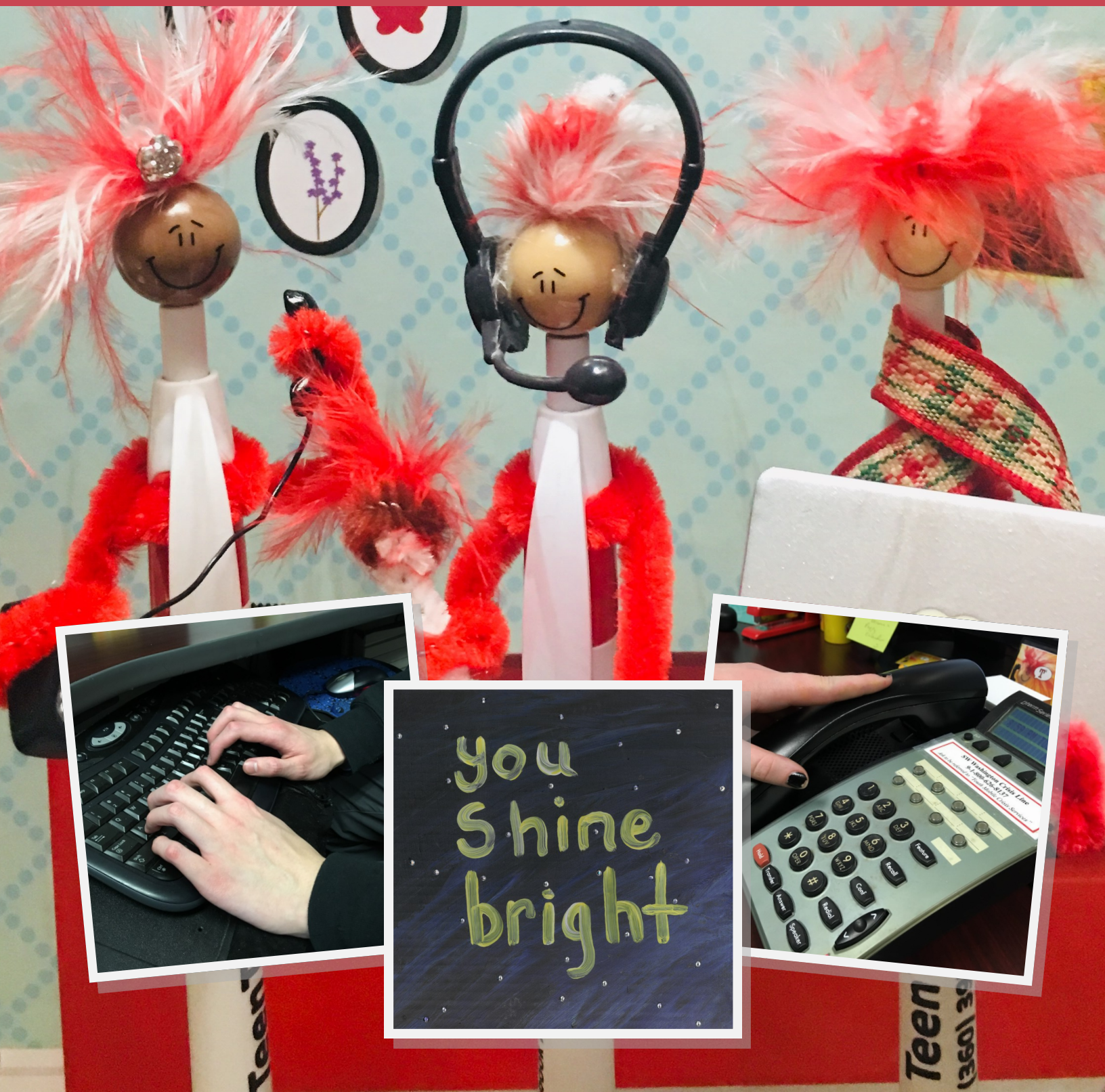


Clark County TeenTalk

*Nonjudgmental support
for teens, by teens*



2021 Annual Report



“When I hear your voice, I feel like I'm talking to an old friend.”
– caller, April

“The energy in our conversations is immaculate.”
– text messenger, May

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We are excited to tell you about our program! With a focus on improving young people's mental health, self-esteem and connection to resources, the efforts we make are ones all of Clark County can be proud of. Thank you for letting us share our story with you.

TeenTalk offers anonymous, confidential and nonjudgmental support for teens by teens. At TeenTalk, you will talk to people your age who may have gone through similar struggles to yourself and can help you find options and give you support. We talk to teens who are going through good times and not-so-good times, or just needing to get things off their chest.

We are ready to talk about

- * bullying
- * breakups
- * school
- * LGBTQ topics
- * emotions
- * self-injury
- * mental health
- * depression
- * family
- * work
- * drugs and alcohol
- * friends
- * suicide
- * relationships

You can even call if you are feeling bored!

Everyone deserves to be heard.

All conversations are kept anonymous and confidential unless you are being hurt, someone else is being hurt, or you are at risk of hurting yourself. If any of these situations are happening, we take all actions needed to get those young people the help they need.

When you feel like no one understands you, call us. Simply telling someone what you're going through can often ease stress.

1

“You don't need to handle it all on your own.”
– Xavier

“I'm glad that you contact us so you have some stability in the chaos.”
– Ruth

“If this line didn't exist,
I don't even think I'd be able
to talk to anyone about this.”
– caller, August

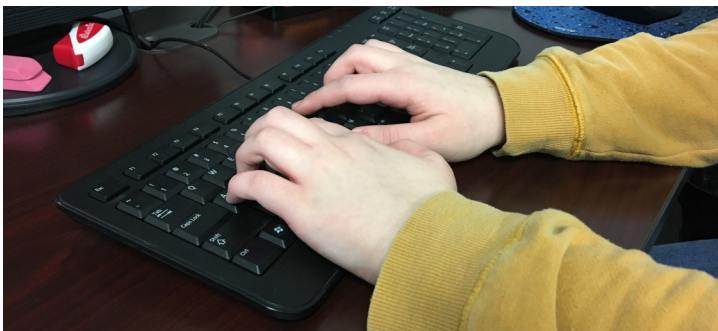
“This is why I love talking to you
about what's going on in my life.
You actually give responses
like you care.”
– text messenger, November



It's really great when the phone rings and we get to talk to you. In 2021, 2 in 5 conversations we had were on the phone, with an average call lasting 19 minutes.



We also like messaging with you. In 2021, 43 percent of the conversations we had occurred through texting and social media.



In 2021, 16.6 percent of the conversations we had occurred through email exchanges.

“You're very strong for being
able to do that, but there's nothing
wrong with needing someone
to talk to and talk things
through with.” – Abby

“But ultimately that is up
to you and I will support
whatever you decide to do.”
– Taylor

What's it like to call?

Well basically, it's amazing. Though, if that's not enough, here's a typical time on the talk line:

You grab your phone and dial 360.397.2428. Within a few rings, one lucky individual will answer your call. The conversation will start like: “TeenTalk, this is James,” or whoever is on shift.

From there, most likely that lucky individual will ask how you're doing, or how your day has been. Though, by this moment, you are in control of the call. Whatever you wish to talk about, you may talk about: school, people, work, hobbies, life in general. Feeling down and wanting someone to just listen to you? We got you covered! Feeling up? We want to know about that too! Want some coping skills? We got a list! Need some answers to those hard-to-answer questions of life like, “Oh no! I don't feel safe. What do I do?” or maybe, “Hey, I'm homeless. Where can I live?” TeenTalk has a whole book of possible answers (literally a whole book) and will even invest time into researching better options and do the very best job to help.

Don't want to call due to embarrassment? Well, we are judgment free, and you might be surprised to hear some of us have been there before. It can be a rough, rough world to grow up in. Consider calling someone who is growing up too, and talk about anything you wish. Hope to hear from you soon!

“Thank you tho. Your encouragement is making the circumstances seem less daunting.”
– text messenger, July

“thank you. hearing that validation is so fulfilling. It really means a lot to me tbh.”
– text messenger, May

Care kits and You Are Enough bags

Since its inception, TeenTalk has always had a goal of making our outreach meaningful and as personal as possible. At the beginning of COVID-19, we couldn't do a lot of the outreach we usually do, but we noticed a lot of youth in our community were feeling lonely, so we began mailing or delivering care kits. The contents changed over time, but they always included a TeenTalk journal, Peppy Penerson pen, stress reliever squishy, information about mental health topics, and a snack. To keep everyone safe, we assemble each one while wearing gloves. We were so happy to see how much kindness could fit in a padded envelope. In 2021, the care kits were joined by the You Are Enough bags. The contents of the bags and the care kits are very similar—and we have mailed or delivered thousands of them with great pride. In 2021, we mailed or delivered hundreds of care kits and hundreds of gift bags to youth in Clark County.



Each You Are Enough bag is different, but they usually contain a Peppy cheerleader, a snack, information about mental health and TeenTalk, a journal, and coloring pencils and sheets.

Each care kit varies, but the ones in this picture include a TeenTalk journal, a Peppy cheerleader kit, a stress squishy, affirmations, a self-care during COVID booklet, snacks, and more.

“You are more important than a graduation honor, you are more important than any grade, or job, or any other stressors in your life.”
– Valerie

“Don't forget that healing isn't linear so doing your best is the most the universe can ask for!! ... don't feel guilty if you're having a off day :)” – Leslie

“It's good to have a supporter
who doesn't judge me and
let's me be myself.”
– caller, March

“There's so much things
I wouldn't tell other
people except you.”
– caller, January

Our newest stress reliever squishy!

We launched a new squishy that helps relieve stress, holds affirmations, or holds your phone!

Stress balls are good for helping people relieve stress by calming the nervous system, assisting with processing, and “decreas(ing) physical sensations of stress, and other powerful emotions” (Healthline Media, n.d.). And “self-affirmations have been shown to decrease health-deteriorating stress” and lower the amount of times people dwell on negative feels and distress (Moore, 2019).

Healthline Media (n.d.). *The top 10 best stress balls, according to experts.*
<https://www.healthline.com/health/stress-balls>

Moore, C. (2019, March 4). *Positive daily affirmations: Is there science behind it?*
Positive Psychology. <https://positivepsychology.com/daily-affirmations/#benefits>



“If you have to cancel
plans to take care of yourself,
that's totally OK.”
– Monika

“Mental health is a really
difficult road to travel alone, and
I hope you write back so that we
can help be your cheerleader
along the way.” – Scarlett

“I can tell I'm going to be on TeenTalk more than video games.”
– caller, March

“Ever since I talk to you, I feel like I've learned a lot and look at things differently than from a few years ago.”
– caller, September

2021 statistics




499
conversations



Our average call was
19 minutes



40.3%
called us



43.1%
texted us or messaged
us on social media



16.6%
emailed us



29
teen volunteers



Volunteers donated
1,532.75 hours
of their time



Volunteers
contributed time to
Clark County worth
\$51,730.31
(Independentsector.org)

Top 5 topics*

- 63% Connection/feeling alone
- 31% Family
- 28% Mental health
- 24% Friends/social life
- 22% LGBTQ+

*This will not add up to 100% because each person may have needed to talk about multiple topics.

Because of COVID-19, a lot of us lost friends and found it hard to make new ones, so it's easy to see why almost 2 in 3 conversations we had this year happened because teens were feeling alone and were seeking connection and friendship. Connection is important for our mental health and even our physical health. It “can lower anxiety and depression, help us regulate our emotions, lead to higher self-esteem and empathy, and actually improve our immune systems (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2019).

Canadian Mental Health Association (2019, Oct. 17). *The importance of human connection*. <https://cmha.ca/news/the-importance-of-human-connection/>

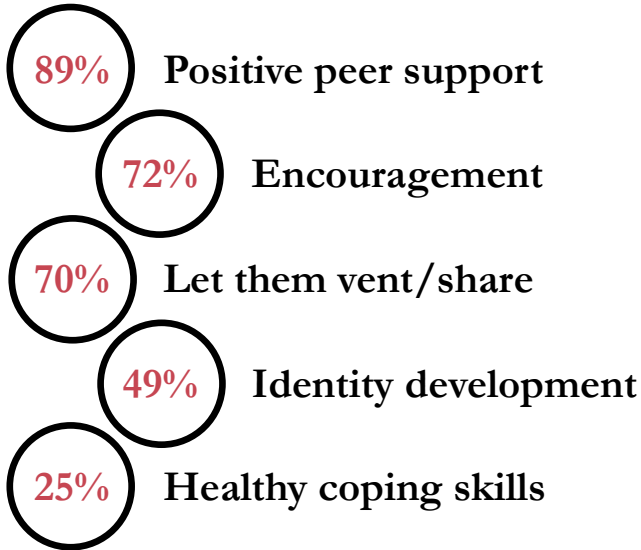
“Sometimes we don't know what help we need until we start talking to somebody.”
– Bri

“It's okay not to be perfect, and most of all, it's okay to complain. ... Your worries are valid, no matter what anyone tries to tell you.” – Valerie

“I was really spiraling into irrational thoughts and you helped to pull me out of em and see reality.”
 – text messenger, September

“I wish we knew each other in real life.”
 – caller, January

Top 5 supports given*



*This will not add up to 100% because each person may have needed multiple types of support.

Clark County teens need positive peer support and a chance to vent/share. Research has shown how important it is for people of all ages to have space to process their thoughts and feelings; teens are no different. By being able to vent/share, especially often, you can rewire your brain so, over time, you “become less stressed over something that bothers you” (Ravenscraft, 2020). Although it can be easy to jump into problem solving mode, if you know a young person who is struggling, give them a chance to just vent or share. It can make a huge difference.

Ravenscraft, E. (2020, April 13). *Why Talking about Our Problems Helps So Much*. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/smarter-living/talking-out-problems.html>

“Just know that their response doesn’t make you any less strong or what you’ve done any less incredible.”
 – Ari

TeenTalk materials are now available in other languages!

Hello friend! Ran animm chienei!
 ¡Hola amigo(a)! Привет друг!

We now have a bunch of our materials available in English, Chuukese, Espanol, and Russian! We’re working on getting more things translated, but so far you can order our brochure, business card, and a few fliers and posters in one of four languages.

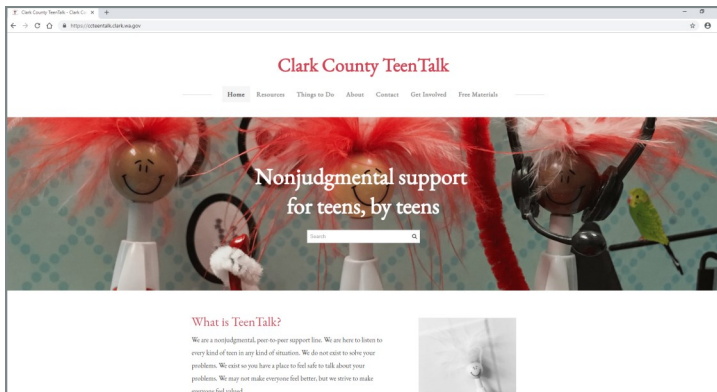
Head over to our website and order some FREE MATERIALS from us and/or download them for free!! <https://ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/free-materials.html>



“I love watching the change from then [when you first called us] to now.”
 – Faith

“Thank you for talking with me.
You're really fun to talk to.”
– text messenger, January

“It was nice to verbalize my
thoughts and figure out where
I'm at. It gave me clarity.”
– caller, September



Ask Peppy

Ask Peppy is a forum where you can go look at messages others have sent in, or submit your own questions or messages. It is an anonymous way to get a response if you do not want to associate a phone number or email with the message. Within 1-2 business days, there will be multiple responses from different volunteers. This provides a variety of differing perspectives on what you sent us. You can select a category to submit your message to and, before being sent to volunteers or posted, any identifying information is removed. From there, volunteers provide kind and thoughtful responses which is then compiled and posted with your message on the Ask Peppy forum page.

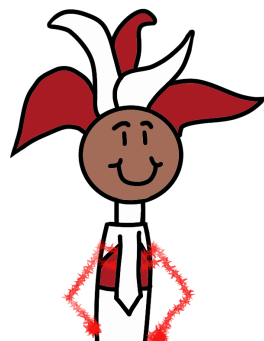
Send us an anonymous message:
ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/ask-peppy



Check out our website

Our website provides one of the best resource guides in the county. It is a culmination of stacks of different pamphlets provided by various agencies, designated to be user-friendly for youth to access. Our website also provides a forum to request materials for providers and supporters of youth in the community to help spread the knowledge about the kindness we share. We also have a message board where you can anonymously post a message for some of our volunteers to respond to. Additionally, you can find which volunteers are on shift and decide based on their bio if they might be a good fit for you to talk to. There are also many components of positivity woven in.

Check out our website:
ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov



“It takes time to find out who
you are and who you want to be
and explore yourself. You
shouldn't feel pressured to be
someone you're not.” – David

“Sometimes it's hard to know
who you are yet and mostly in a
world where being yourself is
starting to be totally accepted.”
– Vanessa

“Thank you so much. I really needed this. I’ve talked to my best friend but sometimes I feel like it’s too biased so I wanted an outside opinion.” – text messenger, February

“It was really nice talking to you. It took my mind off things for a bit.”
– caller, October

Welcome to our resource and information page

Check out 211info to find more local resources:

- visit 211info.org to look up resources based on your age, ZIP code and need.
- dial 211 toll-free on your phone for a live, free and confidential call.
- text your ZIP code to 898211.
- download the 211info app on [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) to look up and see local resources mapped out.

How to use these resources

On this resource page, you can find links to helpful websites and information about various resources local to Clark County and Portland. Each link in our list of topics can take you to groups of resources organized by category, making finding what you want easy. Every resource listed is followed by contact information, if applicable, and a description of what the resource can offer.

Sometimes it can take a few tries to find the resource that can best help you. Don't be afraid to keep calling places until someone can answer your questions or help you out. Remember

Search

Topics

- All
- Anxiety And Stress Relief
- Autism
- Bullying
- Child Abuse And Neglect
- College
- Counseling
- Dating
- Death And Grief
- Depression
- Disabilities
- Drugs And Alcohol
- Eating Disorders
- Food
- Foster Care
- Friends
- Health Care

Order free materials for yourself or youth you know

Teens: Would you like a TeenTalk journal, a Peppy pen, or a card from us reminding you how awesome you are? Let us know. We would love to send you a care package.

Adults: Do you work with teens who can use some support from us? We would love to send you some of the many things we created, such as posters, business cards, journals, resource guides, booklets about different issues affecting teens, and much more.

Find resources for issues you might be facing

Our resources and information section has contact information and a brief description for nearly 300 local, state and national resources and nearly 150 links to websites to learn information about more than 20 different issues affecting teens. We found and collected resources for lots of college scholarships, counseling services, drug and alcohol treatment, food, housing programs and much more. We know how scary it can be to reach out to services for support so we have some tips on our website to help you feel empowered to contact them.

Visit our website and find resources for issues you may be facing:
ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/resources

Visit our website and order free materials from us: ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/free-materials.html. You can also download some of our things directly from our website.

Want free TeenTalk materials? Order here!

We try our best to fulfill requests within 10 business days. Depending on the time of year and what we have in stock, it may take us longer and we appreciate your patience.

Teens Adults

I would like something from TeenTalk (teens)

* Indicates required field

Name *

Email *

Please enter your mailing address if you'd like us to mail you TeenTalk materials. If you'd like us to drop them off at school, please skip the address section and let us know what school you go to and what teacher/counselor we can drop them off with. Please make sure your teacher/counselor knows to expect a package from us.

Address

“You shouldn't have to act like not yourself around other people to be their friend.”
– Tyler

“When you start to be yourself, it's really clear who you are.”
– Maggie

“TeenTalk has helped me through a lot before n I'm super glad that it exists, definitely helps with the 'alone' feeling.”
– text messenger, October

“Whenever i felt life difficult and depressing, i reached you and that helped me alot. Talking to you makes me feel relieved.”
– emailer, March



What's it like to volunteer?

“Being a TeenTalk volunteer has been amazing and TeenTalk has done a lot for me. It's always a joy to talk with TeenTalk coordinators/adult mentors as well as fellow volunteers and make a lot of memories. Despite complications with COVID and Zooming, I've always felt I can be myself during a TeenTalk shift and there's a lot of options to pass the time like talking with each other, playing a game or doing something personal. Being a volunteer on the line is also very rewarding so if you're interested in becoming a TeenTalk volunteer I strongly urge you to apply or reach out.”

– David

“Volunteering for TeenTalk has been one of the coolest experiences I've had in my entire lifetime. Every shift, I talk to people I might've never had the chance to meet in real life, and from every new person I meet, I learn something new! I've come to understand the importance of not only being a listener, but also being a friend. Even though I will probably never meet any of the people I talk to through TeenTalk, the connections we create will always stay with me. There's something so special about speaking to a complete stranger—someone you don't know anything about—and slowly getting to know them as a human being.”

– Maggie

Compassion boxes

Compassion boxes are one of the many ways that TeenTalk reaches out to people that deserve something special. We work with other youth in the community to create a gift for young people that are going through something hard and are receiving support from Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention Services. We include some snacks or candy, a journal, Peppy pens, and a unique card in every box, which are decorated and put together by youth. Every single box is different and has an encouraging quote and message. We want everyone, especially people who may be going through something difficult, to know that TeenTalk is a resource that has a lot to offer. Our volunteers work very hard to use compassion boxes to remind everyone that they are important and that we care!

This year, we made and shared 59 boxes.

“... even if you fall short, that isn't a reflection on you or your character .”
– Ashley

“It's important to validate the progress you make. ... finding that validation within ourselves will always feel the best.”
– Tessa

“Everyone I've spoken to on here has been so nice n supportive, really such a great team”
– text messenger, August

“Ill definitely give you an update! It's been really freeing. I haven't been able to feel this connected with people in awhile. it was really nice!” – text messenger, May

How do I volunteer?

At TeenTalk, we welcome youth from all walks of life; there is no stereotypical TeenTalker. By seeking out diverse perspectives, we gain more insight and experience in issues facing the teens who contact us for support.

- Are you 15-19 years old?
- Do you live in Clark County?
- Are you available for a three-hour shift once a week?

Great! Fill out a brief form on our website (ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/get-involved-teens.html) and we will reach out to you when we start our next pre-service training. The hours you volunteer during pre-service and on the TeenTalk line can count toward your senior project and community service hours.



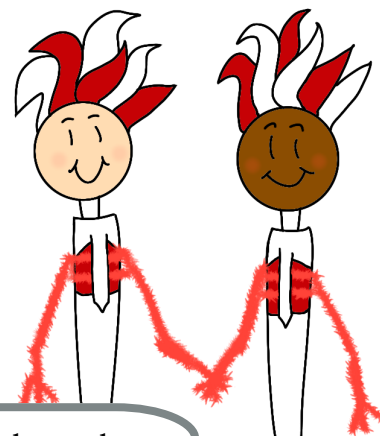
“I'm always here to talk to you and help you feel included and safe.”
– Lacy

Thank you

When TeenTalk launched, long ago, I never would have believed all that was to come.

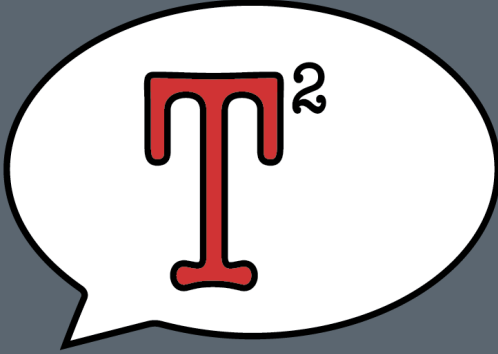
TeenTalk started with one staff person and seven teenagers who sat in a room and talked about what it would look like for support without judgment to go out to our community. We were wide-eyed then, and giddy with limitless possibilities. Now, years down the road, I am still lucky enough to be in contact with 5 of those 7 incredible human beings who were our first volunteers. All 5, not surprisingly to me, are in the helping professions, as are many of the volunteers who followed after them. While we have carefully tracked how many conversations the volunteers have had over the years, I wish there was a way to adequately track and measure incredible kindness. The empathy and compassion have gone out in so many creative ways, I get teary eyed just thinking about it. Given an opportunity and a place to feel safe and valued, young people can do amazing—no, EPIC—things. I feel ridiculously lucky to have been part of this adventure in radical kindness.

Kris Henriksen
Program Coordinator



“I think you'd be pleasantly surprised by the amount of people who genuinely care about you and don't think of you as a burden at all ...” – Leslie

Contact us



TeenTalk offers anonymous,
confidential and
nonjudgmental support
for teens by teens

Monday to Thursday, 4-9 pm
Friday, 4-7 pm



360.397.2428



360.984.0936



ccteentalk1@hotmail.com



ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov



@PeppyPenerson



Clark County TeenTalk



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office
Voice 564.397.2322 / Relay 711 or 800.833.6388
Fax 360.397.6165 / Email ADA@clark.wa.gov