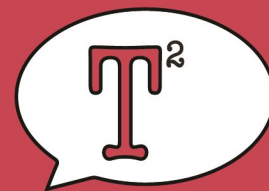




Clark County TeenTalk

*Nonjudgmental support
for teens, by teens*



2023 Annual Report



"I don't think I've ever felt comfortable/safe enough with a random person, I really like this number/text line because I think it helps a lot." – text messenger, March

"It's easier to talk to you than my friends."
– caller, June

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TeenTalk is a support line for teenagers, by teenagers. It is not a crisis line, because people are welcome to talk about ANYTHING—not just crises. Even if it's a seemingly minor issue, we are still happy to help! Instead of a hotline, we're more of a "warmline", as we like to say.

Unlike other similar organizations, TeenTalk is special because all of our volunteers are teenagers, not adults. When talking to us about whatever is on your mind, you are talking with someone who's much more likely to be familiar with your situations and experiences. Teenagehood can be hard, and we understand that firsthand. Your voice is important to us.

With how personal mental health is, we can guarantee that everything done at TeenTalk, stays at TeenTalk. Every call, text, DM, email, or message we receive will remain 100% private. We have strict confidentiality systems and policies in place, so our callers can be confident in knowing that their identities will never be recorded, nor displayed anywhere. The only time we would ever put personal information somewhere, is if we think that somebody needs help immediately, that we are not qualified to give ourselves.

We believe that every teen is deserving of a safe space to be heard, and that's exactly what we're here for. Please don't be afraid to reach out!



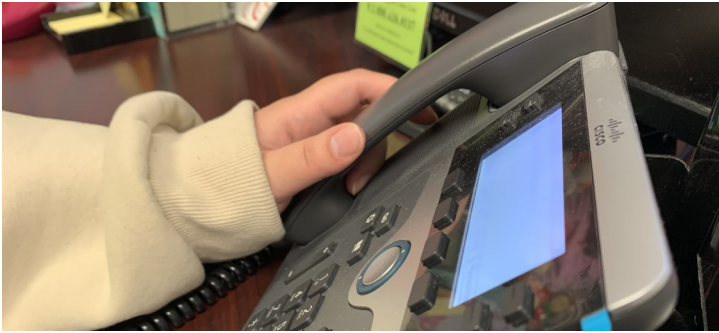
We are excited to tell you about our program! With a focus on improving young people's mental health, self-esteem and connection to resources, the efforts we make are ones all of Clark County can be proud of. Thank you for letting us share our story with you.

1
"Sharing your feelings and thoughts with someone you trust can be a great relief and a source of comfort."
– David

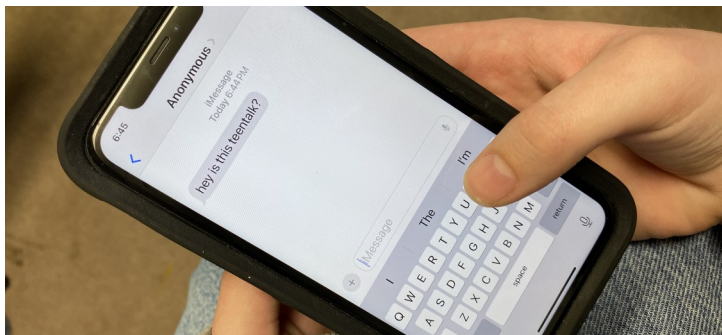
"I'm not you, and can't know exactly how you feel or what's going on in your life, but I'd like to learn more, or just hear about your day." – Ash

“I appreciate you
being in my corner.”
– caller, July

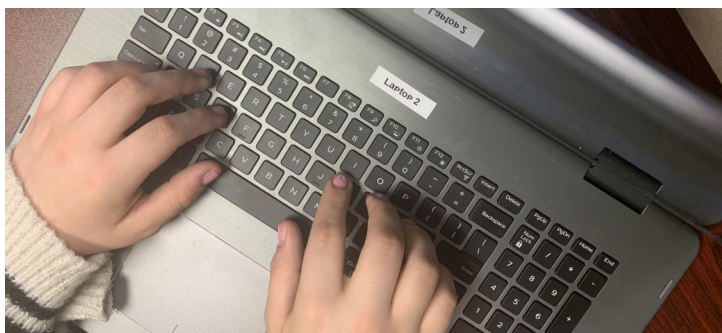
“[TeenTalker] uplifted my mood
before I even realized I was down.
It inspired me.”
– Snapchat messenger, February



It's really great when the phone rings and we get to talk to you. In 2023, about 3 in 10 conversations we had were on the phone, with an average call lasting 18 minutes.



We also like messaging with you. In 2023, about 4 in 10 conversations we had occurred through texting and social media.



In 2023, about 3 in 10 conversations we had occurred through email exchanges or messages on Ask Peppy, our online message board..

“I can't exactly tell you that
everything will be okay, but I can
tell you that when things are not okay,
I am here to listen- if you are
comfortable.” – Kimberly

“I'm glad you reached out.
Even if you don't go into detail,
it feels better when you know
someone is listening.”
– Makayla

What's it like to call?

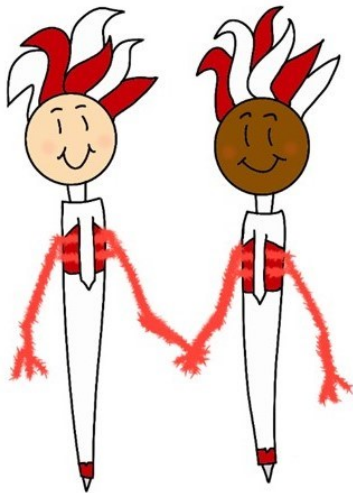
When you call TeenTalk, you can expect a warm, accepting, friendly environment with a kind volunteer on the other end of the phone that can help them through whatever they're feeling. Whether you're stressed about a ton of homework, or just feeling a little down and need someone to talk to, we're here. We as volunteers try our absolute hardest to make every conversation friendly and welcoming, as if you're talking to a lifelong friend. We're also empathetic and understanding toward people of all backgrounds and situations, so no matter your struggles, we're always here for support. Our wonderful volunteer staff is full of exceedingly understanding and caring individuals that aim to help our callers in any way we can.

We understand that putting yourself out there and talking about your feelings to someone you don't know can be stressful, but we try to make the process as easy as possible. Callers can even request to speak to specific volunteers, if they have a positive experience with one in particular. Our goal when someone reaches out is to provide them with whatever help they may need at a given moment, whether it be resources, a positive conversation, or even just some verbal affirmations. We do our best to ensure a positive experience for everyone who decides to contact us. Please feel free to reach out with any questions!

"your the best
i hope we stey friends"
– emailer, April

"I jus really enjoy your
reactions n you've helped me
get out of my negatives to find
joy into what I used to."
– Snapchat messenger, February

Celebrating 20 years of kindness



You are Invited to a
celebration of TeenTalk's
20 Years of Kindness



You are Invited!

What: A recognition of
TeenTalk's 20th Anniversary
When: Saturday December 16th
11:00am

Where: WSUV -Student
Commons and Patio 14204 NE
Salmon Creek Avenue
Vancouver WA

What to Bring : Just you! It
would be marvelous to see you!!!

"That's the best part of this
journey; you get to decide
where you want to go with it."
– Makayla

"Sometimes we can't do
everything on our own,
and that's okay."
– Stella

“Thanks for the laugh.
I really needed it.”
– caller, November

“Thanks for always
supporting me.”
– caller, July

On December 16, 2023, we held an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of TeenTalk. It was a marvelous chance to bring together some of the people who have volunteered with TeenTalk, or supported TeenTalk’s mission in other wonderful ways. Usually the impact is felt and discussed in tiny ways, as we have to keep our conversations with youth confidential. At this event, we got to look back and remember that the last 20 years have held a lot of transformation and magic for a lot of people.

Thank you to the approximately 343 TeenTalkers who have collectively donated approximately **32,328.72 hours*** of their time, supporting teens in Clark County since we launched TeenTalk.



“... it takes a lot of courage
to speak your truth, so thank you
for your message.”
– David

“In the meanwhile though
I hope you stay and strong
and know that a lot of people
support you, including me.”
– David

“You’ve inspired me to continue to write even @ my lowest - that’s usually when the emotion comes easiest”
– Snapchat messenger, March

“Sometimes I wish I can talk to you everyday.”
– caller, September

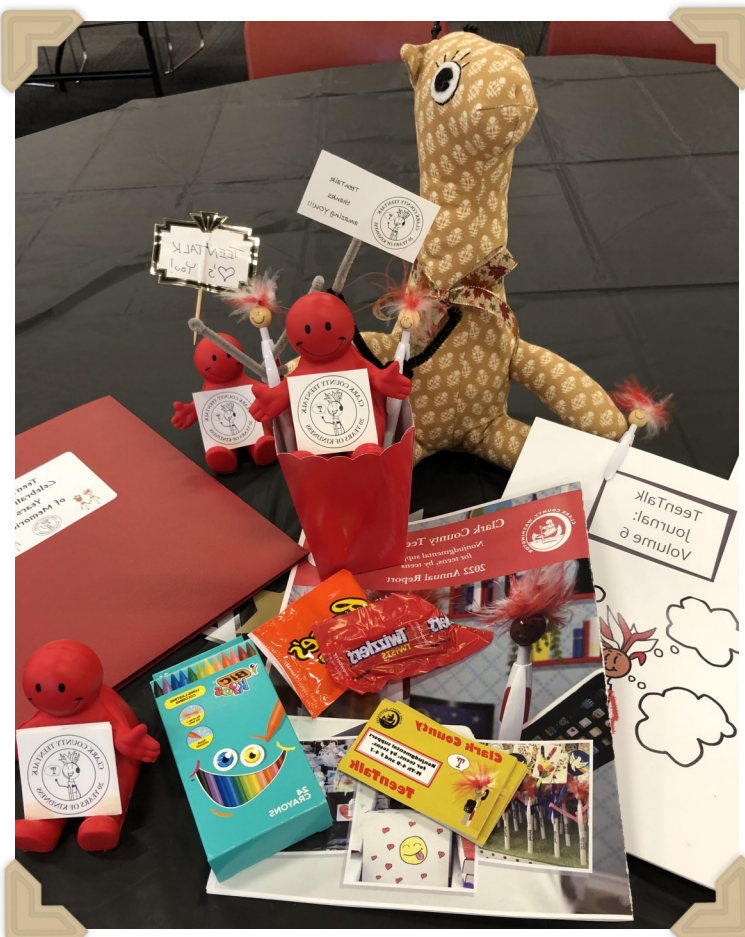
“Listening to the other fellow TeenTalkers talk, I was the one that took the first call all those years ago. I wasn’t driving yet, but TeenTalk was something I was there every single week; it was part of my schedule. I remember how much TeenTalk was an outlet where we were getting so much back, we were learning so much about ourselves, we were giving back to the community, and how it’s shaped us. In listening to what everybody does for a living now; we’re all working with people. ... That was a stronghold for my formative years.”

— *Stephanie C.*



“I was this dark, little emo-y depressed, she-devil of a thing. ... (Kris, TeenTalk’s program coordinator) did present me the idea of ways of healing myself by also helping others. And so, I’m like ‘sure, I’ll give it a try.’ And throughout all my years, it’s true. It really changed me for the better. ... It’s taught me so much. ... And it was some of the most amazing times in my life was being with Kris and helping out with TeenTalk and finding out that I wasn’t alone dealing with a lot of the things I was dealing with.”

— *Stephanie Z.*



“Think about people in your life who make you happy. What would they have to say about you?”
– Ash

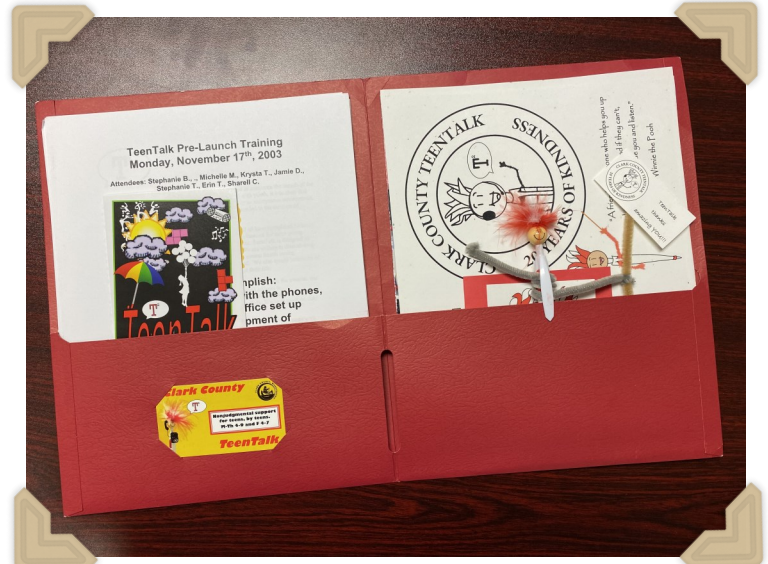
“I just want you to know that I am proud of you. You have been able to recognize a change in yourself and the world around you. You know what you want for yourself.” – Corey

**"You are so wholesome.
I admire the things you do!"**
– Snapchat messenger, February

"I guess that's solved now."
– caller, January

“TeenTalk really gave me a safe space to know it was OK for me to be vulnerable, that I could use my hurt and I could use my pain to make a difference for other youth. And it also helped me to learn that I wasn’t alone. ... I think the biggest thing it taught me was I don’t have to have all the answers to everything, but I am worth enough as I am.”

— *Scarlett*



**"I understand how painful it can
be to feel lonely in a world with so
many people."**
– Dahlia

**"Everything you are going
through is valid. You are so valid.
And it's okay to not be okay. And
most importantly, I believe you."**
– Bri

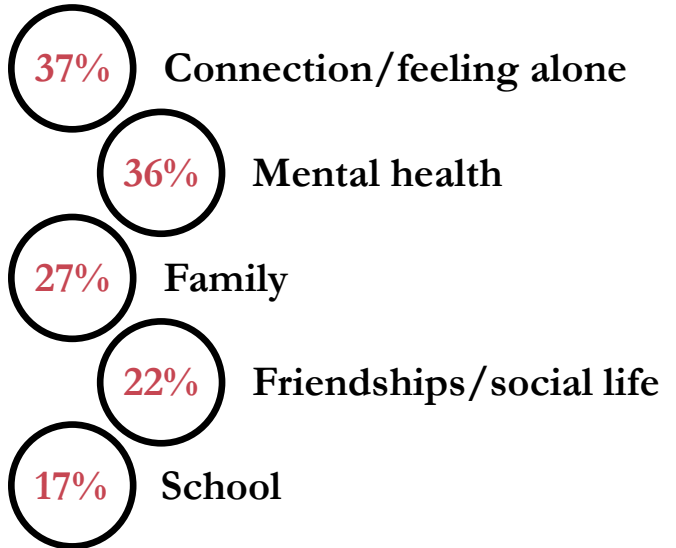
"You helped me understand from a different point of view that it is ok to take as ever much time to heal and to not be afraid to be able to trust someone else." – text messenger, March

"I also have those issues it's nice to find somebody that shares the same troubles with me."
– text messenger, December

2023 statistics



Top 5 topics*



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

Loneliness and mental health can be a double-edged sword: feeling alone can negatively impact our mental health and struggling with our mental health can sometimes make us feel alone. That's why it's important to address both of these together. Feeling connected "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/>

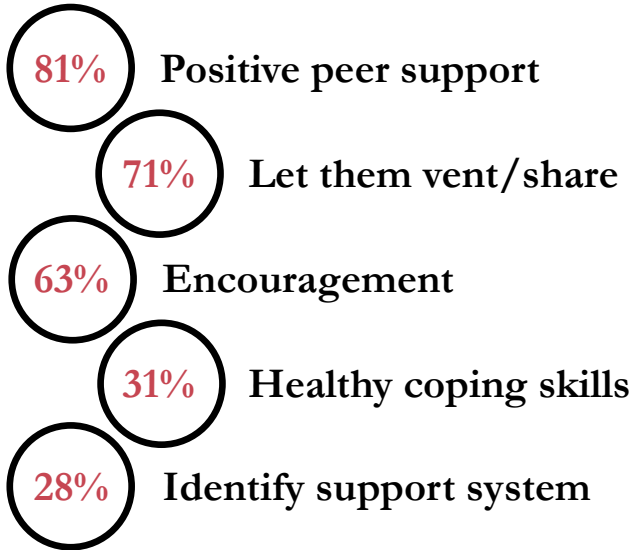
"... it's totally valid to think this way. Life is messy, life is complicated, and life is hard. It's okay to not be okay sometimes - it doesn't make you any less of a strong person." – Maggie

"I have social anxiety and ADHD too so what you wrote reminded me a lot of how I've felt at times before."
– Jen

"Thank you I really needed to get my feels out."
– text messenger, June

"Awww ily thank you so much !!
The things you guys do make me feel so much less alone !!"
– Snapchat messenger, February

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>

"... there are so many bigger things in the universe beyond us, but we are not those bigger things and these "insignificant" problems and woes are proportionally just as important in our individual lives."
– Valerie

"I wish we could give you a hug, that is my biggest grievance with the internet, I would totally send you a virtual hug if I could."
– Bri

Positive Pens Company

In February, TeenTalk was contacted by Marlayna Rinta, who is a phenomenal teacher at Tukes Valley Primary School. She had a Peppy, TeenTalk's feather-haired pen. Her class had a project to create some type of product and business plan for a future sale benefiting a charity. Could they possibly get some more pens? We sent pens and, when we learned they were creating life coach type 'people' out of the pens, we also sent some needed supplies.

Then, on May 24, it was the big day. The students got to cut the official piece of yarn and open for business as the Positive Pens Company, complete with their own logo! There was a line of family and other fans eager to shop! There were pens holding signs, pens working together with other pens, and kits to create your own positive pen. The students were able to raise a lot of money, all of which went to Randall's Children's Hospital. So exciting! Thanks for including us Tukes Valley Primary!!!!



"Yes it really is a lot and I reached out to you all because I can't handle it alone."
— emailer, January

"oh my gosh thank you that is the sweetest thing i've been told in forever."
— text messenger, December

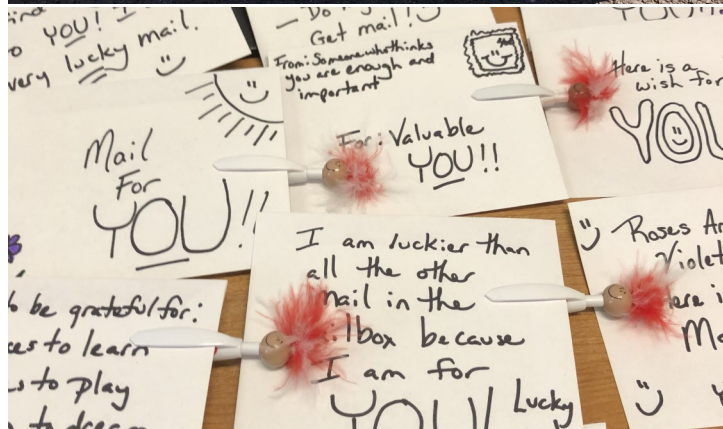
Outreach projects



The Ridgefield High Spudders are always happy to get information from TeenTalk at their resource fair events. We also went to other resource fairs, like NAMI's "Shine Your Light" event at YWCA Clark County.



We were very happy to be a part of the Juneteenth event at Esther Short Park and share these special Peppys with everyone!



We decorated mailboxes and we filled them with supportive messages to take to Skyridge Middle School (top) and Liberty Middle School (bottom). Fun fact: The bottom mailbox was the creation of a past Liberty Lion!

"The only way to escape darkness is with light. Always remember that support is just a call away."
— Stella

"Remember that you don't have to have everything figured out yet. You still have time to get to know yourself."

“Last week when I talked,
I felt much better. I feel
better after talking to you.”
— caller, June

“Thanks for not pushing [... and]
thanks for all your help.”
— emailer, March



We were a big hit at the Teen Takeover event at Rocksolid Teen Center in Battle Ground!



These extra special Peppy pens were popular at the Pride in the Park event.



TeenTalk has enormous admiration for Prevention/ Intervention specialists!



We were part of an amazing class about mental health for teachers at a local conference.



We were so happy to send some Valentine's happiness to two local middle schools.



We were part of an amazing class about mental health for teachers at a local conference.



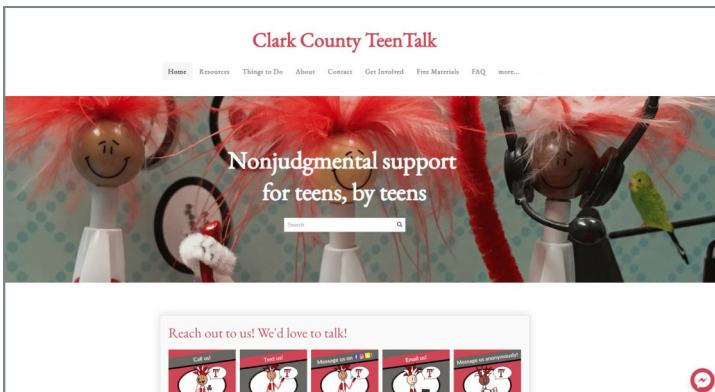
These journals and Peppys, and other great things, went to Washougal High School.

“I think it's really important
to find support and have
someone to be able to talk
with about your feelings.”
— Jen

“If you wanna cry, I'm here.”
— Leslie

"I feel good talking to you,
even when it's about nothing.
I love hearing your voice."
– caller, April

"That's nice, that one of the nicest
things someone has said to me."
– text messenger, August



Check out our website

Check out the TeenTalk website! There are many resources posted on our resource and information page, and it's well organized for easy navigation. There are comprehensive lists of contacts, including tips for those struggling with mental health, websites with healthcare information, locations of food pantries, and more! Our contact information is also posted for those who wish to reach out to a TeenTalk volunteer; we also have a page introducing all of our teen volunteers if you are interested to see who might be the one you talk to depending on the day! You can submit messages through our website to "Ask Peppy", our online message board that aims at providing a safe space for teens who wish to anonymously contact TeenTalk volunteers for help and feedback. There are many free materials posted that you can download and you can even request materials for yourself or a teen!

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

Ask Peppy

Ask Peppy is an amazing way to reach out to TeenTalk volunteers about whatever is on your mind anonymously. Teens who wish to submit their questions can do so at any time, and responses from volunteers will be updated throughout the regular TeenTalk hours. Through Ask Peppy, you are able to receive responses from many TeenTalk volunteers, which can help you gain insight from multiple different perspectives. There are also many other anonymous messages that others have left available online and organized into different categories. This makes it easy for teens to look through them to see if there is anyone else going through a similar situation as them and view the past responses from volunteers.

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



"i wanted to take a second and
acknowledge how much i respect you for
trying to see things from his perspective ...
you still have empathy for him - this is SO
hard to do, and i admire your strength in
being able to do so." – Maggie

"Remember that healing takes
time, and it's okay to take things
one step at a time."
– Stella

“u guys help me a lot”
– emailer, March

“thank you for talking with me
today, it really meant a lot to me.”
– text messenger, July

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

In these pages, 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

Topics

All
College
Counseling
Dating
Death & Loss & Grief
Disabilities
Drugs & Alcohol
Eating Disorders
Food
Foster Care
Friends
Health Care
Homeless
Jobs
Legal Issues
LGBTQ+
Mental Health

Find resources for issues you might be facing

The resource pages offer tips and information about resources local to Clark County and Portland, spanning a variety of different topics. There are resources relating to mental health, health care, homelessness, college, food, and more! Depending on the topic, there will be suggestions for phone numbers to call, address of agencies, and descriptions of linked information. There are also many tips on the main page on questions you can ask when approaching an agency, like “How can you help me?”, “Do I qualify?”, “What are your rules regarding privacy and confidentiality?”

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

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.

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.

If you are an individual or program outside of Clark County, Washington, please understand that, if you want to order a care kit, we are only able to send one at this time. If you happen to order more, we will only be able to send you one care kit.

This form is for adults.

If you are a middle or high school student wanting TeenTalk materials, please [click here](#).

I would like something from TeenTalk for youth I know (adults)

* Indicates required field

Name *

First Last

First Last

Email *

Phone number *

“I understand that (your friend) is going through a tough time, but that doesn't mean that your issues aren't just as valid...”
– Mia

“Healing takes time and it's okay to seek help and lean on others during this challenging period in your life.”
– David

“While you are waiting for that someone to come into your life remind yourself to be kind to yourself and to take care of yourself.”
— text messenger, December

“We have to write about a person of the year and I was wondering if it'd be OK to write about you.”
— caller, January



Compassion boxes

Compassion boxes are a way for TeenTalk volunteers to help encourage and support youth who have contacted the Crisis Line. These boxes are decorated by hand with encouraging messages and drawings, and then filled with things like resources, Peppy pens, snacks, or anything to brighten up someone's day. Each box is uniquely decorated and filled. These boxes are given to the Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention Services Team to give to the youth who have contacted the Crisis Line. Not only do TeenTalk volunteers make these boxes but many other youth also make these through other non-profit groups or as their own volunteer work. If you would like to help make compassion boxes, please visit the “Get Involved” page of our website: ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov.

In 2023, we made and shared 96 boxes.

What's it like to volunteer?

Being a TeenTalker, has surprised me greatly. Being a very introverted and rather shy person, I was really nervous. However, as soon as I entered the room, all of my nerves went away. I was welcomed with open arms, but to the point where it was overwhelming. Volunteering has also better prepared me to deal with struggles I or people close to me face in my life, which is something I truly appreciate and grow from. Being a part of TeenTalk, I feel like I am really giving back the same things that helped me through tough times. There's nothing like the feeling of helping someone, even just a little bit, and being a TeenTalker gives me that every time I volunteer. — *Eric*

TeenTalk is on a hybrid schedule, and I volunteer from home. Volunteering at TeenTalk through Zoom still feels as if I hold a responsibility and make a difference in the community. What I do every day depends, but volunteers make social media posts every weekday as a way to welcome someone who may want to reach out, and also as a way to share with others some positivity. Volunteers usually get “Ask Peppy's” which are anonymous messages, but they also get calls, or messages through other platforms. Sometimes future volunteers join to complete their training by doing roleplays with the TeenTalk volunteer/s. — *Dahlia*

“While you are waiting for that someone to come into your life remind yourself to be kind to yourself and to take care of yourself.”
— Dahlia

“I just want to let you know that you aren't doing something wrong and the fact that you're trying to do better shows that you're not a horrible person.” — Leslie

“The things you volunteers
do is so inspiring.”
– emailer, February

“Could u check on me tomorrow?”
– Snapchat messenger, March

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.



“It's OK to have down days,
it shows true strength
when you can overcome.”
– Makayla

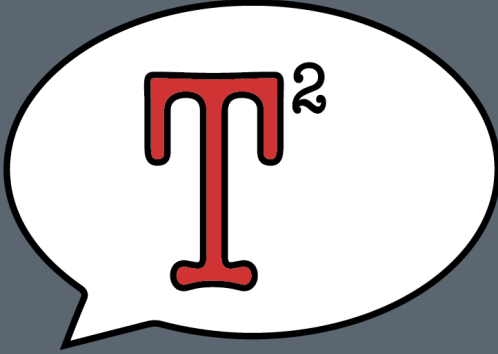
Thank you

2023 was a year full of memories and kindness at TeenTalk. As you have seen in this report, we had a celebration event to mark the 20th anniversary of TeenTalk. I remember clearly, 20 years from now, reading about a job needing to be filled that described working closely with youth to create a support program for Clark County. I was absolutely overwhelmed with excitement. At my interview for the job, two thirds of the people interviewing me were teenagers, and I knew from the first moments that this effort was about youth voice, inclusion and compassion. I remember finding the original group of volunteers, they were each so different from each other, but the one thing they had in common was that they wanted people (including themselves) to be nicer to each other. To judge less and listen more. I remember clearly the first phone call that came into TeenTalk, and how electric it felt to be sharing time and understanding with someone who was very much in need of both.

Saying thank you is far from adequate to express the feelings of gratitude that envelop me after 20 years. So many young people who have volunteered on the line, or volunteered with projects. So many ‘grown ups’ saying what your group is doing is important and awesome, how can I help? I am literally overwhelmed by it when I think about it cumulatively. I hope this report has given you a sense of what we do, and how immensely proud we are to do it.

“You seem like such a caring person,
that is really special. Reminding
yourself of your amazing qualities is
so important for your mental health.”
– Corey

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