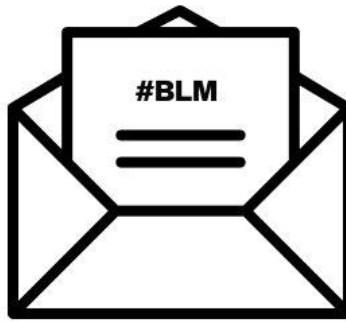




Please read our Code of Conduct before joining our Slack channel (linked at the end), it is here to help us take care of everyone.

Letters for Black Lives Community Code of Conduct

This code of conduct governs the Letters for Black Lives (LFBL) community. We create it not because we expect bad behavior, but because laying out our values and obligations to each other reinforces our bonds of solidarity and having a code provides a guidestar for when we stumble.

The Short Version

- We are committed to taking care of each other.
- We are committed to being collaborative.
- Listen and learn. Respect people's identities and life experiences, they will be different from yours.
- No harassment. We *will* take appropriate action against harassers.
- Sometimes we do not live up to our best, even when acting in good faith. If you do, apologize, learn, and move on.
- Understand that when you hurt someone and apologize, they have no obligation to forgive you. It is up to you to change, not them.
- This Code of Conduct applies to all Letters for Black Lives spaces (including our working Google Docs, [Slack Team](#), and in-person events).

A note to journalists and researchers: You are very welcome in our Slack channel, but please note that the messages in this Slack are **not** on the record unless explicitly stated so. This is a space for us to plan, discuss, and organize. Please ask people's permission to reprint their thoughts.

Scope

This code of conduct applies to all Letters for Black Lives spaces, including our collaborative Google Docs, public channels, private channels and direct messages, both online and off. Anyone who violates this code of conduct may be sanctioned or expelled from these spaces at the discretion of the administrators.

Some Letters for Black Lives spaces (such as social media communities, meetups, etc.) may have additional rules in place, which will be made clearly available to participants. Participants are responsible for knowing and abiding by these rules.

Values

Letters for Black Lives started as a collaborative community that grew from a shared sense of responsibility. We are committed to that responsibility and will look out for and support each other in our shared goals.

We wanted to write a letter—not a think piece or an explainer or a history lesson—because changing hearts and minds in our community requires time and trust, and is best shaped with dialogue. We also want to do our part to normalize support for Black Lives Matter.

This project was always intended to be as decentralized and open to public input and contribution as possible, while maintaining momentum towards the goal. Many hands wrote the letter, and many more are translating it and working on outreach. Everything is loosely organized around the twin principles of maximum transparency / DIY—if you have an additive idea, you should run with it or create space/resources for other people who will. If you want to change or reorganize something, start a discussion in a comment thread to give people the chance to weigh in.

We <3 spinoffs, remixes, respectful conversation between our peers. We </3 infighting, internet asshole behavior, centering ourselves in a conversation that is about anti-Blackness. Our hope is to make it easier for people to start difficult conversations, build empathy and understanding, and move us forward to real change.

Expected Behaviors

Letters for Black Lives is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for everyone. Every member of the community is expected to be considerate of and respectful towards others.

The injustices we are all here to try to right are complex and multi-faceted, no single person will have perfect knowledge, that is why we must all come from a place of openness so we can all succeed in our goals.

Be supportive. We are here because we share the goal of improving racial discourse and racial justice in our families and communities. We will often have similar experiences, but not everyone's story will be shared. Above all else, try to listen and understand before questioning and judging.

Be collaborative. Letters for Black Lives started as a collaborative, public, Google Doc. We strive to involve anyone and everyone who is making an honest effort to contribute. The strength of our work is in each other, do not be afraid to ask for help or feedback. Don't succumb to imposter syndrome (your particular experiences and knowledge are unique to you, and are welcome), or [blowhard syndrome](#).

Be engaged. You do not need to have a deep understanding of intersectional justice or the history of Eurocentric supremacy, but you do need to appreciate that justice for all communities of color are intertwined, and much of the progress we've had so far is fundamentally because of black activists.

Be generous, kind, and humane. Be polite and friendly. Communicating is hard, especially online where we lack many nonverbal cues. If you may have misunderstood something, gently ask for a clarification. Respect others when they do the same.

Meet people where they are. Not everybody knows as much as you do in your domain of expertise and we all have much to learn from one another. (Willful ignorance, however, is violence and will not be tolerated.)

Respect people's privacy and will to self-determination. If someone wishes to be left alone, please respect that. We all make mistakes, if you have wronged someone, take care to make amends, but do not always expect it to be accepted. Acceptance and forgiveness can only be given freely, they can not be taken.

Take time to care for yourself, respect when others do, too. Social justice is hard, tiring work. And this is a marathon, not a sprint. Know when you need to step away and let others share the load for a while, and look out for each other, in case they do, too.

Unacceptable Behaviors

We do not tolerate harassment of participants in any form.

Harassment Includes (but is not limited to)

- Offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental illness, neuro(a)typicality, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion.
- Unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment.
- Deliberate misgendering or use of "dead" or rejected names.
- Physical contact and simulated physical contact (eg, textual descriptions like "hug" or "backrub") without consent or after a request to stop.
- Threats of violence.
- Incitement of violence towards any individual, including encouraging a person to commit suicide or to engage in self-harm.
- Deliberate intimidation.
- Stalking or following.
- Harassing photography or recording, including logging online activity for harassment purposes.
- Sustained disruption of discussion.
- Unwelcome sexual attention.
- Pattern of inappropriate social contact, such as requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others.
- Continued one-on-one communication after requests to cease.
- Deliberate "outing" of any aspect of a person's identity without their consent except as necessary to protect vulnerable people from intentional abuse.
- Publication of non-harassing private communication.

Letters for Black Lives prioritizes marginalized people's safety over privileged people's comfort. The administrators will not act on complaints regarding:

- "Reverse"-isms, including "reverse racism," "reverse sexism," and "cisphobia".
- Reasonable communication of boundaries, such as "leave me alone," "go away," or "I'm not discussing this with you."
- Communicating in a "tone" you don't find congenial.
- Criticizing racist, sexist, cissexist, or otherwise oppressive behavior or assumptions.

Reporting

If you are being harassed by a member of Letter for Black Lives, or have any other concerns, immediately contact an admin or organizer.

(You can contact the organizers with the `/admin [your message]` command in Slack.)

In order to protect volunteer organizers from abuse and burnout, we reserve the right to reject any report we believe to have been made in bad faith. Reports intended to silence legitimate criticism may be deleted without response.

We will respect confidentiality requests for the purpose of protecting victims of abuse. At our discretion, we may publicly name a person about whom we've received harassment complaints, or privately warn third parties about them, if we believe that doing so will increase the safety of Letters for Black Lives members or the general public. We will not name harassment victims without their affirmative consent.

Consequences

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If a participant engages in harassing behavior, the administrators may take any action they deem appropriate, up to and including expulsion from all Letters for Black Lives spaces and identification of the participant as a harasser to other Letters for Black Lives members or the general public.

Acknowledgements

Many of the best ideas in this Code of Conduct come from the codes of conduct for [Women In Tech chat](#), [LGBTQ in Tech](#), and [Vox Product](#).

[Join the Letters for Black Lives Slack Team](#)