



CHAPTER HOW-TO

(last updated July 2025)

Hi! *waves* Thank you for your interest in starting a chapter of Letters to Strangers. We'd love to have you on board! Please follow the directions below, and go to FILE -> **MAKE A COPY** and sign on the copied form instead of this one. Thank you!

How to start your own Letters to Strangers Chapter - in 7 simple steps:

1. **Read through our [overview for chapters](#) and our Constitution** (pages 3-4 of this document). Agree, sign and send the Constitution to contact2shq@gmail.com!
2. **Gather a team.** We need you to have at least three interested members before we can grant you chapter status. This ensures that everything runs smoothly.
3. **Establish your chapter.** Once we grant you chapter eligibility, spread the word and recruit! We have a **media kit** that can help you with publicity, which will be sent to you once you're inducted. Also note that you will need to sign the **chapter founder agreement** on **page 5** and, optionally, the **model release** on **page 6**.
4. **Write letters.** Once your chapter is established, you can choose to follow our **in-Chapter exchange model** (where chapter members anonymously exchange with each other at the same time), **partner site model** (where you collaborate with a third-party organization to exchange anonymous letters), or other format that you work out with us. You'll need to have at least one member or officer **“moderate” the letters**. All of this, as well as moderation tips and guidelines, will be explained in detailed guides that you will receive upon induction. Note that all letters must follow our [letter-writing guidelines](#).
5. **Advocate!** You can seek to advocate for mental healthcare on school campuses, in local communities, or even host letter-writing campaigns to policymakers regarding mental health legislation and reform - though of course, you don't *have* to. Just know we have resources to support you if you *do* want to take on this

additional activity as a chapter! We also recommend running mental health awareness campaigns in your community. In the meantime, stay vigilant and contact headquarters if you see an opportunity for advocacy. Please have your chapter members sign the **model release (pg. 6)** if you end up taking any pictures where their faces are visible, so we can share your letters and events!

6. **Establish peer training/support programs.** You will get free access to the full-color version of the [L2S Guidebook](#) as well as [certification program](#) once you are inducted. While you don't *have* to establish these programs as part of your chapter, many of our chapters enjoy being able to provide more detailed and science-backed support to their members and larger community by utilizing the knowledge gained from our resources. Examples include hosting workshops, such as writing workshops to encourage discussion, empathy, and creative release, or mental health educational workshops. **Note that if you ever want to host an educational workshop yourself, you'll need to pass our free certification test first!** All other forms of training (such as to learn how to conduct a letter exchange) can be done informally by thoroughly reading our various resources and guides for the relevant activities, which we will send to you upon induction.
7. **Stay in contact!** Lastly, remember to always let us know if you're planning on running an event, raising money, organizing a peer training/support session, or anything else related to L2S! We need to hear from you **at least once every two months**. We're here to support each other, so contact us about anything. :)

In Conclusion

- Make sure you read and agree with our **Constitution, Founder Agreement**, and (optional but encouraged), our **Model Release!**
- There are **no membership fees**, yay! In addition, we are happy to do our best to support your initiatives via our **Chapters Initiatives Funding Program**.
- Remember: mental health is a deeply complex issue, so **follow our guidelines**.
- We're called Letters to Strangers, but we *do* encourage and welcome you to **join us in our efforts outside of letter-writing** whenever you can. Any online campaigns or on-the-ground activities will be sent to you in monthly update emails from HQ. Always email contactl2shq@gmail.com with questions or thoughts! :)

Phew! Thanks for reading through all of that. Go you! Now what are you waiting for? Start a chapter, and together, let's make **mental health matter**.

Diana Chao
Founder & Executive Director
Letters to Strangers

Constitution of Letters to Strangers

Must be read, agreed to, and signed by anyone wishing to establish a chapter

Preamble: Letters to Strangers aims to provide a way for the community of students to interact in a positive and inspirational manner. Its purpose is to fight for mental health rights and awareness through letter-writing, advocacy, and peer training/counseling. Specifically, it aims to reintroduce the antique format of letter-writing while allowing for people to motivate and encourage each other through the unburdened freedom of respectful anonymity and the power of words.

Article I: Letters to Strangers, as an organization promoting emotional depth and connection, is responsible for making sure that all members remain respectful and open-minded. The anonymity aspect of the organization must not be abused. The organization is also responsible for allowing its members to create content in a free-spirited way, and thus should not hinder the creativity process by implementing an excess of rules, converting the organization to an alternative English class with its own due homework. The same principle of necessary but not excessive oversight applies to the organization and its branches' handling of advocacy work and peer training/counseling sessions.

Article II: Letters to Strangers requires potential members to attend meetings at their local chapter as frequently as possible. Each chapter is responsible for conducting letter exchanges at least once a month or on an otherwise-agreed-upon timeline via HQ. Each chapter must also properly disclose their affiliation with HQ on all communications. If a chapter does not participate in any of the above activities for more than four months, the chapter is subjected to possible revocation of its status as a chapter of Letters to Strangers. Furthermore, if a chapter or its member(s) do not follow the guidelines put forth by headquarters regarding these activities (e.g. following the proper etiquette of Letters to Strangers letter-writing), as well as safeguard the confidential properties of L2S HQ, the chapter may have its status and previous support revoked.

Article III: Letters to Strangers chapters require at least three main officers each year for one year: president, operations manager, and secretary. Chapters are free to determine the method from which their officers are selected. However, any practices that discriminate against anyone for age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and other relevant factors are subject to a detailed examination by headquarters and may lead to revocation of chapter status. The president must understand the purpose of Letters to Strangers and be willing to promote its message and manage all of the executive responsibilities that come with running a chapter, such as hosting meetings, maintaining **bimonthly communication** with headquarters (especially regarding any activities or campaigns the chapter is interested in), planning advocacy events and peer training/counseling sessions, and ensuring that submitted letters follow headquarters' guidelines; the operations manager must be willing to organize any activities associated with Letters to Strangers, such as ensuring that letters are promptly mailed out, handling the logistics behind chapter events, and managing the chapter finances; the secretary must have legible notes and be able to not only take notes well and quickly but also to submit the bimonthly minutes and activities report as well as any reports following a chapter event to headquarters.

Article IV: Letters to Strangers chapters shall have a pre-determined meeting location. At least once a month, members should conduct a letter exchange where possible. At meetings, chapters

should also discuss and plan advocacy and peer training/counseling events. On the occasion that HQ must meet with chapter presidents, chapter presidents will be contacted directly in advance.

Article V: Chapters must make the youth demographic a priority. Chapters may be in communities with older members, but must be student- and youth-friendly.

Article V: Letters to Strangers requires minimal finances. There is a Chapters Initiatives Funding Program by HQ to help with funding where necessary. Otherwise, materials required should already be accessible, such as pencils and paper. If the need to fundraise arises, the operations manager of a chapter should contact headquarters of and for fundraising plans and ideas. All funds raised by a chapter leftover by the end of each financial year must have designated, purposeful usage in the upcoming year(s), clearly communicated to headquarters.

Article VI: All Letters to Strangers chapters must follow the rules and guidelines of the institution at which the chapter is based, if applicable. This includes college campuses, religious organizations, and high schools. Any rules of the institution at which the chapter is based that conflict with guidelines put forth by Letters to Strangers should be immediately brought to the attention of headquarters. Failure to follow the institution's rules and failure to notify Letters to Strangers headquarters of any conflicts is grounds for revocation of chapter status.

Article VII: Letters to Strangers shall only amend the Constitution when a situation arises where its purpose and aim of mental health advocacy and awareness, largely achieved through inspiration and motivation among members and partner organizations via creative, free-spirited, and respectful letter-writing, is compromised. If such a situation should arise, headquarters may amend the constitution. All amendments effective immediately across all Chapters. The change(s) will be presented to all chapters. Any chapters objecting the change(s) are encouraged to directly contact headquarters with their concern, which headquarters must address in some manner. Similarly, if a chapter experiences objections from its members regarding its conduct, policies, or any other relevant qualities, chapter leaders must address the concern in a fair and just manner. Chapter members are invited to reach out to headquarters should any disputes arise. Ultimately, Letters to Strangers and its chapters aim to be as inclusive as possible while following guidelines established to protect against circumstances such as hate speech and abuse.

Article VIII: Chapters that discontinue their HQ affiliation must return a signed cessation agreement provided by HQ or otherwise understand it is enforceable as if it is signed per this Agreement. This stays in effect where programming and contacts remain after the cessation.

I have read and agreed to the above Constitution of Letters to Strangers. I will work to uphold the Constitution to the best of my and my chapter's abilities. I will always contact Letters to Strangers with any questions, comments, concerns, ideas, and proposals I may have.

Signature of individual starting L2S chapter

Name of above individual (print)

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Chapter Founder Agreement

Must be read, agreed to, and signed by anyone wishing to establish a chapter

I, _____, agree that as leader of a Letters to Strangers chapter, to inform and update my chapter members of their media rights as part of the Letters to Strangers organization and to ensure the establishment and maintenance of a chapter space in which members are not discriminated against due to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, ableness, and/or other condition that does not impinge upon the rights of any other member. I grant the Letters to Strangers headquarters permission to use any media associated with any events my chapter may partake in or host under the name of Letters to Strangers for promotional purposes, including but not limited to commercial advertising, and I and my chapter members revoke the right to seek compensation for such promotions in any monetary manner.

I understand that I alone am responsible for ensuring that all chapter members understand and agree to the media usage policy of Letters to Strangers as outlined above and the necessity of a chapter space in which members are respected. I understand that I alone must ensure that members complete the model release set forth by Letters to Strangers before any agreed-upon promotional effort, including for the case of any material containing the photographic likeness of any member. If a member changes their mind, I and other Site leaders must notify Letters to Strangers and are solely responsible for ensuring that any media Letters to Strangers distributes does not violate the member's wishes. I hereby release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Letters to Strangers and any of their heir(s), legal representatives, and assigns, and all persons functioning under their permission or authority, or those for whom they are functioning, any liability by virtue of conflicts between chapter member(s), myself included, and Letters to Strangers, in regard to the use of media, including but not limited to photos, copywriting, videos, and designs, by Letters to Strangers.

I understand that I alone am responsible for resolving disputes that may arise from an unsafe chapter space and for establishing clear safety guidelines and rules for any designated health worker volunteer(s) Letters to Strangers may assign to my chapter. I understand that Letters to Strangers headquarters may seek to aid me in the process but that should any conflicts result in serious repercussions such as litigation that I and the parties directly involved in the conflict alone are to be held responsible. I hereby release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Letters to Strangers, and any of their heir(s), legal representatives, and assigns any liability by virtue of conflicts arisen between any chapter member(s), designated health worker volunteer(s), partner site(s), and/or myself, including but not limited to litigation and harm.

Location of new chapter

Date

Printed Name and Signature of New Chapter Founder

Model Release

In valuable and good consideration of my engagement as a chapter member of Letters to Strangers and therefore model (Participant), upon the terms herewith stated, I hereby give to Letters to Strangers (Organization), their heirs, legal representatives and assigns, those for whom Organization is acting, and those acting with their authority and permission:

- a) The unrestricted right and permission to copyright and use, re-use, publish, and republish photographic portraits or pictures (including video) of me or by me that were shot and/or will be shot for any purpose in relation to Letters to Strangers, on any and all media, including but not limited to promotional and personal testimonial purposes, in which I may be included intact or in part, composite or distorted in character or form, without restriction as to reproduction hereof in color or otherwise and in sole discretion of Letters to Strangers, for usage in any and all media now or hereafter for art, promotion, advertising, trade, or any other purpose related to Letters to Strangers, including for display on portable and/or movable platforms.
- b) I also permit the use of any text material in connection therewith, including the text of collaboration, the caption to the image, and/or posts in which Letters to Strangers is mentioned.
- c) I hereby relinquish any right that I may have to examine or approve the completed product or products of an advertising nature that may be used in conjunction with the picture(s) of myself mentioned in section a.
- d) I hereby release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Organization, their heirs, legal representatives or assigns, and all persons functioning under their permission or authority, or those for whom they are functioning, any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of the aforementioned picture(s) or in any subsequent processing and sharing thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel or invasion of privacy. I also release and waive any and all present and further claims, rights, royalties, or any form of compensation related to the use of the image and associated text by Organization.
- e) I have read the above authorization, release and agreement, prior to the execution and/or public distribution of the aforementioned photo(s); I fully understand the contents thereof. This agreement shall be binding upon me and my heirs, legal representatives and assigns. I am also aware that these terms are subject to negotiation, deletion, or addendum, which may be valid if handwritten on this release and initialed and dated by both parties (Organization and Participant) next to the modification or any modification that is typed and signed by both parties. Modifications may be implied by any releases/contracts with my employer or institution, and it is my responsibility to notify Organization of such modifications if no third-party confidentiality clause to which I consented prior to the above agreement prevents me from doing so. Any third-party contracts' clauses conflicting with the above agreement must have both Organization and the Participant's mutual, written consent before its conflicting clauses are considered valid.
- f) If I am living in a locality where GDPR/DPA applies, additional rights are assigned (Schedule 1).

Print Name and Signature of Participant

Date signed: ____ / ____ / ____

Signature of Legal Guardian if under 18

SCHEDULE 1

OVERVIEW

The Participant confirms that they are living in a locality where GDPR/DPA applies. The Participant has the right to exercise their rights as a data subject under the DPA/GDPR, including as set out in paragraph 10 of Schedule 1, at any time by writing to the Organization at contactL2SHQ@gmail.com. This will not affect the lawfulness of any processing carried out by the Organization before the Participant withdrew consent. The Organization is the data controller and responsible for the personal data comprising the Photograph and any related personal data of the Participant's. The Organization will (i) ensure that it complies with the requirements of all legislation and regulatory requirements in force from time to time relating to the use of the Photograph and any of the Participant's related personal data; and (ii) process the Photograph and any of the Participant's related personal data in accordance with the privacy notice attached as Schedule 1 to the Model Release Form, receipt of which the terms of the Model Release Form acknowledge by signing the Model Release Form.

Privacy Notice

1. INTRODUCTION

This privacy notice aims to give the Participant (referred as "you", "your" below) information on how the Organization has collected and will process the following categories of personal data about the Participant:

the Photograph (as defined in the Model Release Form between the Participant and the Organization to which this privacy notice is attached as Schedule 1); and related contact details including name, email address, and state or country location (the Related Data).

This privacy notice only relates to how we will process the Photograph and the Related Data. It is important that you read this privacy notice together with any other privacy notice or fair processing notice we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data about you [for example, if you are using our website] so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using your data. This privacy notice supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.

2. IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND WHO WE ARE

Controller

Letters to Strangers is the data controller and responsible for your Photographs and related context given by you to us (collectively referred to as "Organization", "we", "us" or "our" in this privacy notice).

Contact details

We can be contacted at contactL2SHQ@gmail.com and
Letters to Strangers
2058 N. Mills Ave #718

Claremont, CA 91711
USA

3. YOUR DUTY TO INFORM US OF CHARGES

It is important that the personal data we hold about you is accurate and current. Please keep us informed if your personal data changes during your relationship with us.

4. THE DATA WE HAVE COLLECTED AND HOW IT WAS OBTAINED

We will have collected the Photograph and Related Data only per you providing them to us or otherwise publicly sharing them for general use.

5. HOW WE WILL USE YOUR PERSONAL DATA

We will only use your personal data when the law allows us to. We will use your personal data in the following circumstances:

- On the basis of your consent.
- Where we need to comply with a legal or regulatory obligation.

We have set out below, in a table format, a description of all the ways we plan to use your personal data, and which of the legal bases we rely on to do so. References to Specified Activities for the Specified Purpose, Photograph and Related Data are as defined in the Model Release Form or this Schedule 1.

Purpose of Processing Your Data	Data	Lawful basis for processing including basis of legitimate interest (if applicable)
Letters to Strangers publicity purposes and other similar, related activities as exampled in the Model Release Form	Photographs and Related Data	Consent
Managing our relationship with you, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notifying you of changes to our privacy policy.• Storing your contact details so that we can contact you.• Keeping a record of your consent.	Photographs and Related Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Necessary for our legitimate interests ([to maintain a record of your contact details in case we need to contact you regarding the Photograph; to keep our records updated])• Necessary to comply

		with a legal obligation.
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6. DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PERSONAL DATA

We may have to share your personal data with the parties set out below for the purposes set out in the table in paragraph 5 above.

- Internal Third Parties as set out in the Glossary.
- External Third Parties as set out in the Glossary.
- Third parties to whom we may choose to sell, transfer, or merge parts of our business or our assets. Alternatively, we may seek to acquire other businesses or merge with them. If a change happens to our business, then the new owners may use your personal data in the same way as set out in this privacy notice. Note that these scenarios are extremely unlikely given our mission and nonprofit status and we would always notify you in advance before any such changes are to happen so that you can modify your consent as desired.

We require all third parties to respect the security of your personal data and to treat it in accordance with the law. We do not allow our third-party service providers to use your personal data for their own purposes and only permit them to process your personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with our instructions in the context of the specified purposes and activities for which you gave consent to data usage.

7. INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

Whenever we transfer your personal data out of the EEA, we ensure a similar degree of protection is afforded to it by ensuring at least one of the following safeguards is implemented:

- We will only transfer your personal data to countries that have been deemed to provide an adequate level of protection for personal data by the European Commission, and/or providers that offer privacy clauses in their contracts which are effective and enforceable in their countries and which will provide the same level of adequate protection.
- Where we use certain service providers, we may use specific contracts approved by the European Commission which give personal data the same protection it has in Europe.

8. DATA SECURITY

We have put in place appropriate security measures to prevent your personal data from being accidentally lost, used or accessed in an unauthorised way, altered or disclosed. In addition, we limit access to your personal data to those employees, agents, contractors and other third parties who have a business need to know. They will only process your personal data on our instructions and they are subject to a duty of confidentiality. We have put in place procedures to deal with any suspected personal data breach and will notify you and any applicable regulator of a breach as soon as we are aware of the details and where we are legally required to do so.

9. DATA RETENTION

We will only retain the Photograph and Related Data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, or reporting requirements.

To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data, we consider the amount, nature, and sensitivity of the personal data, the potential risk of harm from unauthorised use or disclosure of your personal data, the purposes for which we process your personal data and whether we can achieve those purposes through other means, and the applicable legal requirements.

10. YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

You have, in connection with your personal data, under certain circumstances, the right to:

- Request access to your personal information (commonly known as a "data subject access request"). This enables you to receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you and to check that we are lawfully processing it.
- Request correction of the personal information that we hold about you. This enables you to have any incomplete or inaccurate information we hold about you corrected.
- Request erasure of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to delete or remove personal information where there is no good reason for us continuing to process it. You also have the right to ask us to delete or remove your personal information where you have exercised your right to object to processing (see below).
- Object to processing of your personal information where we are relying on a legitimate interest (or those of a third party) and there is something about your particular situation which makes you want to object to processing on this ground. You also have the right to object where we are processing your personal information for direct marketing purposes.
- Request the restriction of processing of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to suspend the processing of personal information about you, for example if you want us to establish its accuracy or the reason for processing it.
- Request the transfer of your personal information to another party.
- Withdraw consent at any time in relation to our use of the Photograph for the Specified Purpose, in relation to which we are relying on consent to process your personal data. However, this will not affect the lawfulness of any processing carried out before you withdraw your consent. We will advise you if this is the case at the time you withdraw your consent.

If you wish to exercise any of the rights set out above, please contact the Organization in writing.

If we receive notification that you have withdrawn your consent to the use of the Photograph for the Specified Purpose, we will no longer process the Photograph for the Specified Purpose and, subject to our retention policy, we will dispose of the Photograph securely. However, this will not affect the lawfulness of any processing carried out before you withdraw your consent.

No fee usually required

You will not have to pay a fee to access your personal data (or to exercise any of the other rights).

However, we may charge a reasonable fee if your request is clearly unfounded, repetitive or excessive. Alternatively, we may refuse to comply with your request in these circumstances.

What we may need from you

We may need to request specific information from you to help us confirm your identity and ensure your right to access your personal data (or to exercise any of your other rights). This is a security measure to ensure that personal data is not disclosed to any person who has no right to receive it. We may also contact you to ask you for further information in relation to your request to speed up our response.

Time limit to respond

We try to respond to all legitimate requests within one month. Occasionally it may take us longer than a month if your request is particularly complex or you have made a number of requests. In this case, we will notify you and keep you updated.

11. GLOSSARY

LAWFUL BASIS

Legitimate Interest means the interest of our business in conducting and managing our business to enable us to give you the best service/product and the best and most secure experience. We make sure we consider and balance any potential impact on you (both positive and negative) and your rights before we process your personal data for our legitimate interests. We do not use your personal data for activities where our interests are overridden by the impact on you (unless we have your consent or are otherwise required or permitted to by law). You can obtain further information about how we assess our legitimate interests against any potential impact on you in respect of specific activities by contacting us.

Comply with a legal or regulatory obligation means processing your personal data where it is necessary for compliance with a legal or regulatory obligation that we are subject to.