



# On Pride and Protest

## The Trevor Project's Response to Navigating Corporate Pride Celebrations

June 1, 2020

### The Trevor Project Stands in Solidarity With Black Americans

The Trevor Project acknowledges the deep and long-term effects of systemic racial injustice. We vehemently condemn the senseless racism, unjust discrimination, and lethal violence that threatens the safety of Black Americans, including Black youth, everyday. We must work to create a society that is inclusive of and equitable for all.

We know that racism negatively impacts the mental health of the LGBTQ young people we serve. The Trevor Project is hearing directly from LGBTQ youth across the country about how the recent senseless acts of violence against Black Americans are affecting their mental health and sense of safety. For the Black LGBTQ young people we serve every day, continued exposure to unjust killings and violence in their community can have a detrimental impact on their mental health.

According to a 2018 report published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, black youth ages five to 12 are dying by suicide at roughly twice the rate of their white counterparts. Additional studies published in 2019 concluded that suicide rates of Black young people are on the rise. Among Black LGBTQ youth, 90 percent have experienced racial discrimination. In addition, The Trevor Project's research shows that Black LGBTQ youth are significantly less likely to receive professional care despite experiencing similar rates of depression as all LGBTQ youth.

Our organization takes an intersectional approach to supporting the mental health of LGBTQ youth in diverse communities across the country. In this time of emotional stress and civil unrest, our crisis counselors remain available 24/7 to support Black LGBTQ youth experiencing fear, hopelessness, confusion, and race-based trauma. To help reach Black LGBTQ young people in need of support right now, we published [this blog post](#) to help folks take care of their mental health.

### Navigating Pride as Protests Grow

We consider it both a privilege and a duty to work with partners like you who share our values and stand by our mission to save young LGBTQ lives. As we soberly enter National Pride Month, we remember that the modern-day LGBTQ rights movement began because queer people (many of whom were black and brown themselves) decided to stand up and speak out against police brutality as Black Americans continue to do today.



We believe now is not the time to center Pride but rather the needs, voices, and experiences of the Black community. Out of respect for and in solidarity with Black Americans, The Trevor Project is pausing all Pride messaging and activities until at least June 8, 2020 (unless communicated otherwise).

We acknowledge that much has changed since we first collaborated on a launch plan for our Pride campaign. To help navigate these uncertain times, we've compiled the following recommendations regarding how we can act together to send a strong signal of support to Black LGBTQ youth and Black communities at large. This document is intended to guide your efforts in navigating various approaches to support the Black community and remaining agile as we identify a culturally appropriate time to celebrate Pride together. We will continue to inform you as we shift our approach.

## Step 1: Pause

### **Pause regularly scheduled and Pride Content**

Content that doesn't acknowledge or ignores current events may be interpreted as insensitive, and you may risk losing the hard work your teams have put into your Pride campaigns. We ask that you consider pausing all content, especially on social media and press, that doesn't acknowledge current events.

Many of you are selling products that directly support The Trevor Project on your websites. You may keep these products online; however, we encourage you to take a conservative approach on featuring any Pride products on your external communications. If you can, you may redirect or match funds raised by these or other products to go toward organizations supporting Black communities and the broader movement for racial justice.

Deciding on a timeline for launch is difficult as this situation is constantly evolving. There is no way for us to know when Pride-specific and/or consumer-minded messaging will be appropriate. We will be in touch to let you know when The Trevor Project plans on resuming our Pride content. If possible, we encourage you to hold all content regarding our partnership until that time.

## Step 2: Center the Black Community

It is imperative to center the needs and voices of the Black community and the important conversations happening around racial justice. We recommend the below tactics to participate in the movement:



**Issue a Statement:** Publish a statement of solidarity with the Black community, against police brutality, and toward racial justice that includes actionable steps your company will take to effect change. Our team is available to review statements and other communications that reference the current situation.

**Prepare for pushback; then push forward:** We acknowledge the difficulties of releasing a corporate statement, especially one that may open up your brand to criticism tied to your company's history or previous policies, actions, initiatives, and statistics that have adversely affected Black Americans. This work is difficult. Our role as your partner is to support your commitment to diversity and inclusion, and our partnership is proof that neither of us consider silence or ignorance to be effective policies. Change requires discomfort, and we're here for support. If you get pushback, we suggest looking internally to identify (a) how you have addressed the issue, or (b) how you plan to address it in the future. You may or may not need to use this in additional external communications, however, it is an exercise that will bring about new insights about your role and responsibility in this movement.

**Invest:** There are many organizations supporting the important conversations happening right now. We recommend the following approaches:

- **Local bail funds:** Supporting protesters in the communities in which you operate is a powerful way to show solidarity with those fighting for their voices to be heard. Some of your employees may be participating in local protests.
- **Black-owned businesses:** Supporting Black-owned businesses both in your communities and across the country is an important step toward representation and equity in every industry. Identify local or national organizations that provide resources for Black-owned businesses to thrive.
- **Organizations fighting racial injustice:** We encourage your teams to research and contribute to 501(c)(3)s that support Black Americans. You may have supported similar organizations in the past, and we urge you to continue that support.

## Step 3: Resume Pride Content

We cannot advise what is good for your specific business. We can only suggest launching Pride communications when your organization has seriously considered when it's appropriate to do so. The Trevor Project will be taking daily temperature checks to monitor the situation, and our recommendation for content plans—as of June 1st—is that we will not launch any Pride-specific messaging until the week of June 8th *at the earliest*.

We plan to give you, our partners, at least 48-72 hours notice so you can prepare your communications and any ad spends to promote our partnership. We understand some of you may



require additional time to prepare, we will work with you to coordinate communications as much as possible.

While our partners can certainly launch their campaigns when they choose to, Trevor will not participate in these efforts (i.e. amplify on our social channels, post on our social channels, send emails, etc.) until we feel that we will not detract or distract from the national conversation around the needs of Black Americans. We are asking our partners to be flexible in this ever-evolving situation, and to remember the important roles we all have to play in enacting meaningful change in our society.

If for any particular reason you must launch your Pride campaign earlier than Trevor is comfortable with, please share your plans so that we may navigate this together.

## Step 4: Support Your Black Constituents

Lastly, we encourage working to identify the ways in which your company *is* and *is not* supporting Black employees, business partners, consumers, and more. This may include having some tough conversations about race and racial justice. Your teams can research and partner with 501(c)(3)s that can serve as nonprofit partners to guide your efforts.

We could not be more proud to stand with each of you in this movement. Thank you for allowing us to offer you this guidance, and for leaning on us as true partners. We value the critical resources you provide to organizations like The Trevor Project so we can continue our work to end suicide among LGBTQ youth. Pride looks very different this year, and we understand how challenging it may be to each of you personally and for your organizations. It is in moments like these when we get to practice the very values needed to build a society that believes true justice can be achieved. We will celebrate Pride together this year in the same spirit that started the Stonewall Riots and together with the Black community.