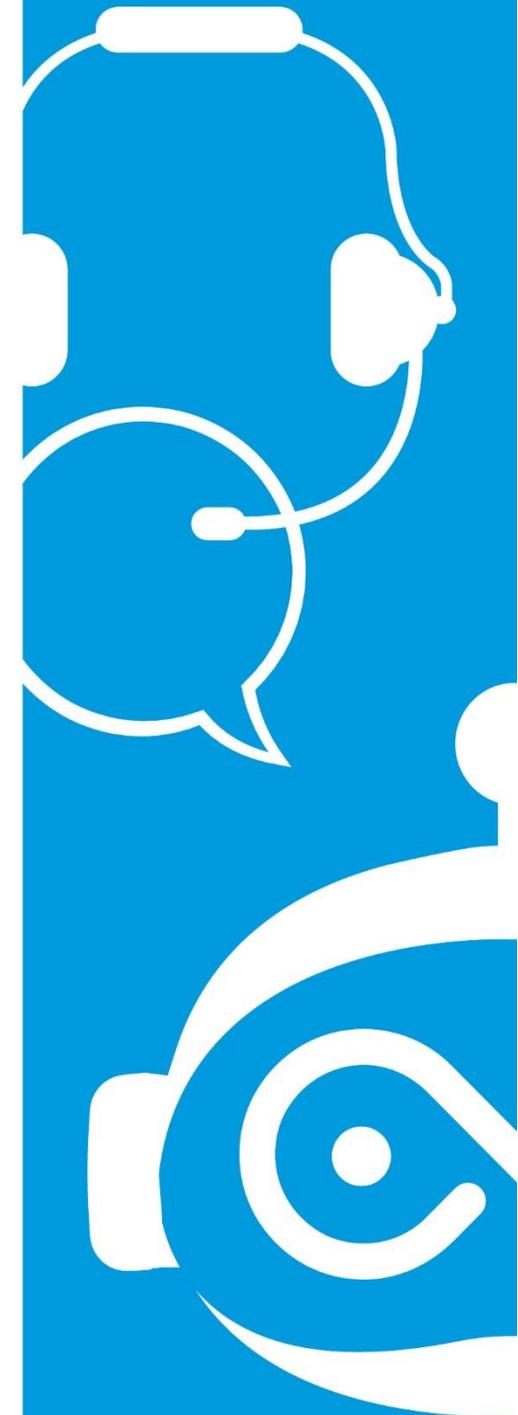




ONLINE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: BLACK LIVES MATTER

What is it?

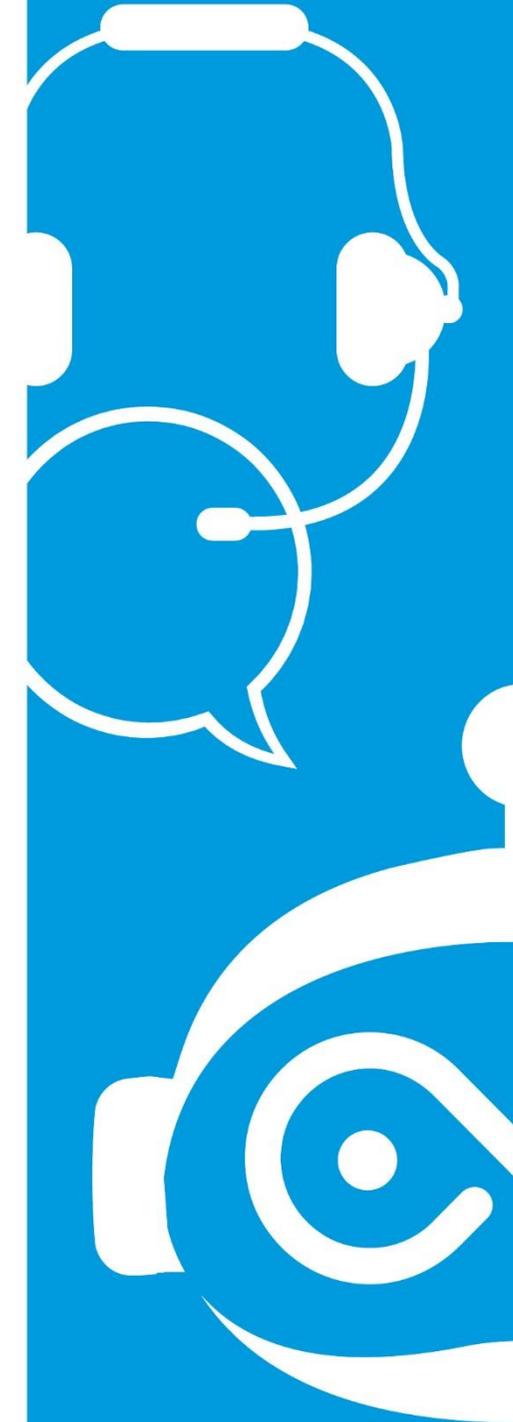
Black Live Matter is a **digital phenomenon** which emerged in 2013 as a hashtag on Twitter (#BlackLivesMatter) after the acquittal of police officer George Zimmerman in the shooting death of teenager Trayvon Martin in the United States of America. Since then, and with the help of social media, the movement has spread to all parts of the world in the form of protests and online awareness, calling attention to the social and systemic inequalities experienced by black and minority ethnic groups.



How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Black Lives Matter is an intersectional movement – meaning it has created space not just for black and minority voices but also those within these groups that identify as LGBT+ and, therefore, experience heightened discrimination due to both their race and sexuality. Using this huge platform, many activists call attention to improving the dignity, equality, and increased visibility of these LGBT+ minority groups, especially trans women of colour that experience significant rates of violence and sexual harm, even in western countries.

In addition, the movement has drawn attention to struggles for reproductive justice experienced by women of colour all over the civilised world. Maternal morbidity and mortality rates of such groups are higher than for other groups. In addition, black women more than others are given inadequate contraceptive and prenatal care, making them more at risk for unintended and complicated pregnancies.



What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

Supporting youth interested in contributing to the Black Lives Matter movement is as simple as:

- Encouraging them to educate themselves on the systemic roots of the issue by reading both academic sources and learning about anecdotal experiences of racism from ethnic minority groups
- Using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media to raise awareness about pressing issues such as reproductive justice and discrimination towards black transgender youth
- Supporting the movement by signing petitions and joining protests, as well as financially by supporting minority-owned businesses and services

Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Misconceptions & misinformation: LGBTQI+ issues
- Online social movements: Women's march
- Online social movements: #MeToo



Further reading:

- Ambitious about Autism. "Understanding Black Lives Matter," n.d. <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/awareness/inclusion/race-and-racism/understanding-black-lives-matter>.
- *BBC News*. "Black Lives Matter: From Social Media Post to Global Movement." July 9, 2020, sec. US & Canada. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53273381>.
- Eichelberger, Kacey Y., Kemi Doll, Geraldine E. Ekpo, and Matthew L. Zerden. "Black Lives Matter: Claiming a Space for Evidence-Based Outrage in Obstetrics and Gynecology." *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 10 (October 2016): 1771–72. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303313>.
- The Trevor Project. "All Black Lives Matter: Mental Health of Black LGBTQ Youth," October 6, 2020. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/all-black-lives-matter-mental-health-of-black-lgbtq-youth/>.

