



## Queers in support of Black Lives Matter



On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, [LGBT Health and Wellbeing](#) hosted an online information and activism session in which some of our Black community members spoke about the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement and what it needs in terms of support. They also answered audience questions. This is a summary of the main points made by our speakers. Our facilitator was Claricia Parinussa who works at [LGBT Health and Wellbeing](#) and [Vogue Scotland](#)

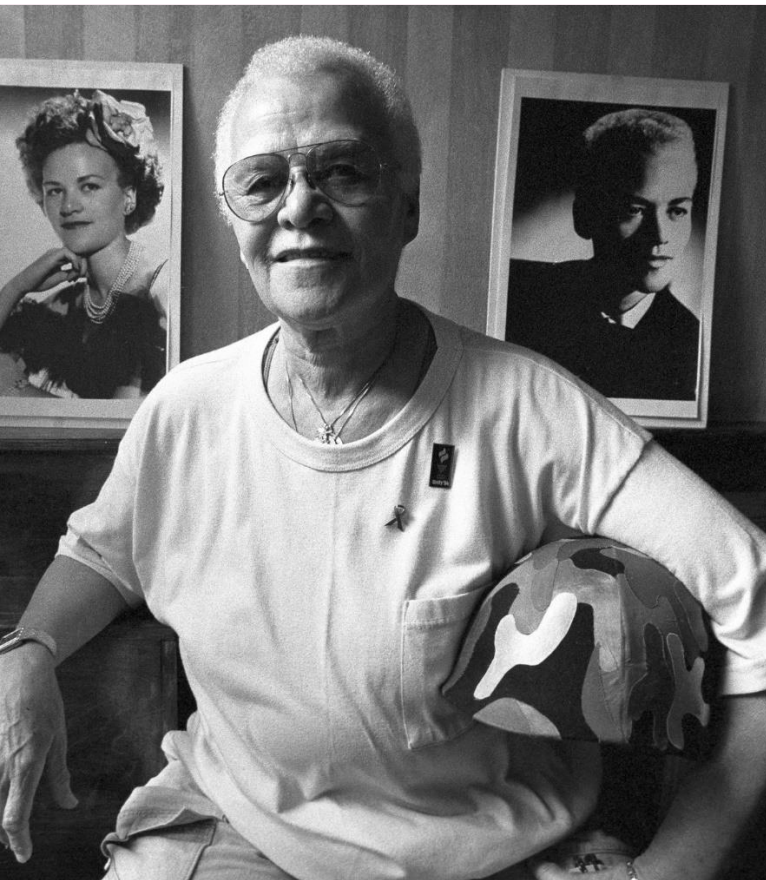
## Speaker 1: Nongee (volunteer with LGBT Health & Wellbeing)



*“In this difficult period, I am looking up to someone that most of you might be familiar with, if you know the Stonewall Riots. Marsha P Johnson: born in 1945 and sadly passed in 1992. She was the first person to throw the first brick, and I felt like that was the first action... the ripple effects of the decision she made then actually brought us our rights. That’s my whole context right now.” – Nongee*

- Why does someone have to die for society to start seeing how Black people feel on a daily basis and for us to start coming together?
- Black people should not be fighting this alone. This movement will only be successful if allies and Black people stand together to fight.
- This is not only about the US. Racism happens in the UK as well, maybe not as obviously, but Black people in the UK still feel discriminated against through words, through small actions. This needs to stop.
- Feeling guilty is not the strategy; people need to rise up and run ahead, not stop and go back.
- The change can start here today, within the people attending this event. When you hear someone say something wrong and you know it’s wrong, say something. That will have an impact on the next generation.

## Speaker 2: Sheriff (volunteer with LGBT Health & Wellbeing)



*“One of the queer icons I’m going to talk about today is Storme Delarverie. She was a butch lesbian. There was a scuffle with the police, it was according to her, and so many eye witnesses, the start of the Stonewall riots. ... She was also known very well in queer spaces in New York. ...she also worked as a bouncer, she was also a singer who goes to various gay bars and clubs ...she would stand up to police brutality and any intolerance... she doesn’t take anything bad towards the Black queer community and every other queer community, she was also known as the guardian of the lesbians in The Village which is really cool. It’s been more than 50 years now since she threw the first punch which ended in a riot, I don’t know why that kind of thing is still happening” - Sheriff*

- In regards to the Black Lives Matter movement, it is sickening to see that Black people are still fighting for their rights to be human in 2020.
- Back where I grew up, I didn’t know anything about racism as everyone is Black there. It was eye opening when I came here and saw that people see and treat Black people differently because of their skin colour.
- Being queer and Black is even worse.
- It’s good to know that so many people are standing up to police brutality. This needs to continue. This is dying down now; people can’t just think about it for one month and then stop. It can’t take another Black person dying to take action. Change needs to continue now.

### Speaker 3: Solomon Adebayo (community group leader of LGBT Unity)

- There are many things gay people can't do in Africa. For example, people can't hold their boyfriend's hand because they will be killed.
- It is much better in the UK. I didn't know if I could be open about being gay until I came to Glasgow.
- Unfortunately there is racism in the LGBT community.
- I am the coordinator for LGBT Unity; some members of LGBT Unity went to a gay club in the city centre. The security person did not allow them entry because they were Black. They did not know who to report it to.
- There needs to be more campaigning and education about Black people.

### Speaker 4: Thierry (volunteer with LGBT Health & Wellbeing)

- The Black Lives Matter movement is very important. It needs to continue. For this to happen, people need to teach the young generation what the movement is for, how slavery started, what racism is. Introducing education in schools is very important to teach young people how to behave in front of someone who is racist.
- Many young Black people don't know how slavery started and of their own background. They need to know this in order for the movement to continue.
- Parents need to educate their children about racism. The young generation are the ones who will continue the work started now. It is important to educate young children. We need to be peaceful while talking to them about slavery. Then they will be able to contribute to society. And then we will not see any more Black people die in vain.

## Facilitator: Claricia (staff at LGBT Health & Wellbeing)

- As queer people we owe our rights to Black queer people. There wouldn't be a Pride without Black folks. There is no Pride without Black liberation.
- White people decided they're superior: this is an ideology that was made centuries ago and it enabled white people to justify exploitation and abuse of Black people. That system is the basis of the structure that we live in now which is [white supremacy](#).
- We need to unlearn, we need to make a commitment to dismantling the systems of white supremacy and the racism that came from that. The UK is not innocent. There have been [people killed in police custody](#) in the UK and in Scotland and not one police officer has been convicted.
- The current pandemic [disproportionately affects Black and Brown](#) people. The sickness of white supremacy is like a pandemic that has been affecting Black and Brown people for centuries. We need to take personal responsibility for our behaviour and for white supremacy.
- Your privilege is your power to make change, to dismantle structures and redress the balance on whatever small scale you can do today. When you get overwhelmed, stop and start again. Once you see the problem, you can't un-see it.
- All Black lives matter – even in this movement not all Black lives are being prioritised. Intersectionality is important and people belonging to several minority groups will be affected the most.

## Questions and Answers

What are the actions that those of us with no money and are disabled can do to provide support?

- **Thierry**  
[Petitions](#) are usually free and accessible. Sign petitions on education in schools.
- **Nongee**  
You don't have to have a big social media following or influence. When you stand up to someone and others see you doing that, it might influence them to do something similar in the future. Small things in everyday life are very important and everyone should be able to help with that.
- **Claricia**  
There are [youtube videos](#) that generate donations for organisations supporting Black Lives Matter without you having to contribute financially.

What's the best way the reply to people saying 'all lives matter' every time Black Lives Matter comes up?

- **Sheriff**  
I don't have the strength to explain to others why my life matters, it's too exhausting. If they don't know or are not educated about what is happening, that's maybe why they are saying this. I choose to continue repeating that Black lives matter.
- **Nongee**  
This period in time is very sensitive. Racism is a disease: people are

in pain. People are angry. Try to understand the context and situation before saying something.

- **Thierry**

Yes, all lives matter, but if you say that but then don't take responsibility towards acting fairly towards people of a different skin colour than you, then this is not actually true for you. If all lives matter, then you need to respect equally everyone and act accordingly.

- **Claricia**

You could use the ['House on fire' analogy](#): person saying "what about my house". "Your house is not on fire, we need to help the house that is on fire right now".

**What other events would you like to see happen? What topics would you love to see discussed?**

- **Sheriff**

Would be good to talk about racism in the LGBTQ community.

- **Nongee**

What changed in 2020, was there change in the movement. If there was, then I would like to see a celebration of the achievements.

- **Solomon**

Hate crime and the law around it. If people know what the law is, then people might reduce the amount of times they say or do harmful things towards Black people.

- **Thierry**

If you want to take action, you have to start at home. If we start at home, we can impact the world better. The first step is to educate ourselves. It's important to talk to our friends and family.

**Does anyone have any useful resources for safely de-escalating a situation where someone is receiving racist harassment?**

- **Claricia**

In terms of being an ally, it really depends on the situation. But often, just your presence and making the perpetrator aware of your presence will achieve something. If you are in a safe position, you can challenge what is being said or done to them. Also ask the victim if they're okay.

For example, at a protest, you can insert yourself into a situation, put your body in between the Black person and the perpetrator.

Comment: Action on prejudice has a resource called "[speak up](#)" which is a young person's guide to intervening in instances of hate crime.