

## Workshop 2: Intersectional Gender Justice (1 hour)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Supplies Needed</i>
Introduction (5 minutes)	A. Briefly read through opening slides B. Ask large group, what are the goals of gender justice? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If needed, offer examples               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To deconstruct social limitations imposed by society</li> <li>ii. To uplift and center marginalized voices</li> <li>iii. End violence against TGNC people and particularly trans femmes</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	Slide 4
History (15 minutes)	A. Gallery Walk (12 minutes) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. We're going to take some time to explore the contributions of trans women of color to social justice movements. Leaders have been placed up around the room. Please take a few minutes to look at each of the leaders and read more about their contribution</li> <li>b. If participants ask about the focus on <i>black and brown</i> trans women of color, it can be helpful to share that we want to highlight how the most</li> </ol>	Slides 5 and 6, <a href="#">Gallery walk handouts</a> , printed and posted around the room

	<p>marginalized are often at the forefront of social change and movements. Additionally, due to structural racism, these are often the folks who are most overlooked. In our quest for justice, it is important to utilize a margin-to-center approach to attempt to address the oppressive dynamics that marginalize communities.</p> <p>B. Discussion (3 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask the large group       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Any responses or reflections?</li> <li>ii. Did anything surprise you?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
<p>Intersectional Movements (30 minutes)</p>	<p>A. The contributions of trans women of color remind us how important it is that our movements be intersectional. This is important so that we can continue to center the most marginalized. Let's strategize on how this can happen.</p> <p>B. Small group discussion (15 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Have folks break up into small groups and take time on each discussion question.</li> <li>b. If possible, time the groups with about 5 minutes per question, prompting them that it might be a good time to move on to the next so that they can have enough time.</li> <li>c. Questions:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Where have you seen intersectionality in organizing/community and how was it successful?</li> <li>ii. Where have you seen intersectionality missing, and how did that cause harm</li> <li>iii. Reflect on your previous work, share one example of a situation where the lens/action/impact could have been more intersectional.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Slide 7, chart paper, pens</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Share out (15 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Going question by question, ask small groups to contribute responses with the large group. Scribe answers to each question on chart paper. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. This could be an important resource for later!</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>D. If time, can ask how folks want to use the insights/strategies they gained today.</li> </ul>	
<p>Closing (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Let's return to the goals we created. Now that we've thought more about intersectionality and how to implement it in our organizing, how are these goals in particular important? (5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Facilitator says, Let's keep these in mind as we move forward in our organizing, as well as the need to have an intersectional lens.</li> </ul> </li> <li>B. As a large group, ask participants to share one thing they're going to do to take care of themselves today. (5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. OPTION: If short on time, have folks share with a partner instead.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Gender Justice goals (created earlier), Slide 8</p>

# Marsha P. Johnson



**Marsha P. Johnson** moved to NYC in the mid-1960s. She faced many hardships as an African American trans woman and even lived on the streets until she broke into the nightclub scene and became a prominent NYC drag queen. She was fearless and bold. Whenever she was asked what the “P” in her name stood for and when people pried about her gender or sexuality, she quipped back with “Pay it No Mind.” Her forthright nature and enduring strength led her to speak out against the injustices she saw at Stonewall in 1969.

Sadly, at the age of 46, on July 6, 1992, her body was found floating in the Hudson River off the West Village Piers. The police initially ruled her death a suicide despite claims from her friends and other members of the local community that she was not suicidal. Johnson’s story is featured in *Pay It No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson* (2012) and *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (2017). She is honored as a Stonewall instigator, an Andy Warhol model, a drag queen, a saint, and a revolutionary trans activist.

## Sylvia Rivera



**Sylvia** was a tireless advocate for all those who have been marginalized as the “gay rights” movement has mainstreamed. On June 27, 1969, the Greenwich Village gay bar was raided by police outside the Stonewall Inn. Rivera was one of the first instigators to throw bottles at the police. This would later be known as the Stonewall riot, an uprising that helped launch the modern gay rights movement. Sylvia fought hard against the exclusion of transgender people from the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act in New York, and was a loud and persistent voice for the rights of people of color and low-income queers and trans people.

She also co-founded STAR (Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries) an organization to help homeless youth. It was originally a building she set up along with her longtime friend Marsha P. Johnson, that provided shelter, clothing, and food to struggling trans people. The two supported STAR by engaging in prostitution to pay rent for the building. In an interview, Sylvia stated she hustled on the streets so the youth population didn't have to.

# Miss Major



**Miss Major** is a black, formerly incarcerated, transgender elder. She has been an activist and advocate in her community for over forty years. She was at the Stonewall uprising in 1969, became politicized at Attica. Miss Major has played an instrumental in organizing nationally, including in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. She was an original member of the first all-transgender gospel choir, and is a father, mother, grandmother, and grandfather to her own children, and to many in the transgender community. Miss Major works to instill hope and a belief in a better future to the girls that are currently incarcerated and those coming home. A documentary titled *Major!* portrays Griffin-Gracy's role as an activist and mentor in the transgender community since the 1960s.



# Bamby Salcedo



**Bamby's** remarkable and wide-ranging activist work has brought voice and visibility to not only the trans community, but also to the multiple overlapping communities and issues that her life has touched including migration, HIV, youth, LGBT, incarceration and Latin@ communities. She has birthed several organizations that created community where there was none, and advocate for the rights, dignity, and humanity for those who have been without a voice. Among many commitments, she is an Executive Board Member of the Translatin@ Coalition.

Her work mediates intersections of race, gender, sexuality, age, social class, HIV+ status, immigration status and more. She speaks from the heart, as one who has been able to transcend many of her own issues, to truly drop ways of being and coping that no longer served her, issues that have derailed and paralyzed countless lives. Her words and experience evoke both tears and laughter, sobriety and inspiration.

# Jennicet Gutierrez

**Jennicet Gutierrez** is an activist for transgender rights and immigrant rights. A founding member of La Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement, much of her activist work supports trans women



detained for their immigration status. June 2015 was when Gutiérrez received national attention after she interrupted President Obama during a dinner at the White House celebrating LGBTQ accomplishments in the previous year. Much of the reaction to this act centered on assessing whether it was "right" or "wrong" to interrupt the President during a reception at the White House. The event highlighted disconnects between mainstream gay activism and transgender and immigration reform activism.

La Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement works at the national and local levels to achieve the collective liberation of LGBT Latin@s by leading an intergenerational movement through community organizing, advocacy, and education. Gutiérrez has been working with the organization hosting demonstrations, rallies, and dialogues, as well as fundraising for the liberation of undocumented transgender women of color facing unsafe environments in detention centers.

# CeCe McDonald



**CeCe McDonald** is a transgender prison-reform activist. In 2011, CeCe and some friends were faced with racial, homophobic and transphobic slurs from a drunken group outside of a bar. CeCe was assaulted and defended herself with fabric shears, the only weapon she had. An assailant died, and CeCe was arrested and imprisoned. After two months in prison, she finally received care for her wounds. She was finally released in 2014 and is now on parole.

Experiencing the inhumane treatment of prisoners firsthand, CeCe began speaking out against the criminal justice system. "Prisons aren't safe for anyone, and that's the key issue," she said. The experience served to strengthen McDonald's character and establish her resolve to become a transgender leader. "Free CeCe," a documentary about her experiences, focused on the issue of violence against trans women of color.



# Janetta Johnson



**Janetta Johnson** is an Afro-American trans woman who was raised in Tampa, Florida. She is a healer through her work at the Transgender Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project and facilitator invested in decolonizing spaces. The spiritual force that drives her to dismantle the violent systems that black trans people are subjected to and oppressed by is one that awakens her.

As a formerly incarcerated trans person, Janetta has faced adversity and this has informed her community work as well as her deep investment in the liberation of all black trans and gender non-conforming people. Janetta works to restore her community's spirit from the confines of the prison industrial complex: she has developed a grassroots reentry program with the focus on recidivism and reentry, she is a member of the Bay Area chapter of Black Lives Matter, and is dedicated to ending capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, and building the organizing capacity of trans and gender non-conforming communities of color as a trans warrior.



# Jacob Tobia



**Jacob Tobia** is a writer, producer, and author of the forthcoming memoir *Sissy* with Putnam Books at Penguin Random House. As a performer, visionary, and internet personality, Jacob helps others embrace the full complexity of gender and own their truth, even when that truth is messy as hell. Jacob wants people to understand that gender truly does exist on a spectrum. "I just want us to take gender from two dimensions and give it so many dimensions," they said in an interview with *Cosmopolitan*.

Originally from Raleigh, North Carolina, Jacob graduated Summa Cum Laude from Duke University with a degree in Human Rights Advocacy. Jacob is an avid Sriracha devotee and has worn high heels in the White House twice (take that Donald!)

# Bhumika Shrestha



Bhumika is a transgender activist who became the first Nepali citizen to travel with documents marked with the country's legally recognised "third gender." She participated in the first Miss Pink Pageant, a beauty contest especially for third gender people. She won! Winning the first Miss Pink Pageant put the country's spotlights

on Bhumika and the transgender community in Nepal. Bhumika's new-found stardom launched her political career. Out of 50 candidates, she was elected as a new member of Nepal's Congress Party to represent minorities.

In the run-up to her election as Miss Pink, Bhumika released a statement on the problems with ID card registration for transgender people. Campaigning by Bhumika and the Blue Diamond Society (an organization in Nepal for the LGBT community) led to a court decision in 2007 that third genders should be allowed to specify their sexuality on their ID card. But unfortunately implementing this at government offices has been difficult.

# Angelica Ross

**Angelica Ross** is an American businesswoman, actress, and transgender rights advocate. Angelica is the founder of TransTech Social Enterprises, a company that empowers trans and gender nonconforming people through on-the-job training in leadership and workplace skills. From the board room, to film sets, to the White House, Angelica Ross is a leading figure of success and strength in the movement for trans and racial equality. She was named, “1st Foot Soldier of the Year” in 2015 by Melissa Harris Perry. A devout buddhist, Angelica walks with compassion and believes that all people have worth — it is only a matter of helping each person find it for themselves.



# Isa Noyola



Isa Noyola is a translatina activist, a national leader in LGBT immigrant rights movement, and the director of programs at Transgender Law Center. She works extensively for the release of transgender women from ICE detention and an end to all deportations. She is a part of the #Not1more campaign team and sits on the advisory boards of TAJA coalition, El/La para Translatinas , and Familia:Trans, Queer Liberation movement. She has organized the first ever national trans anti-violence convening that brought together over 100 activists, mostly trans women of color, to address the epidemic of violence trans communities

are facing. Isa is passionate about building the leadership of transgender communities, especially TWOC who experience high levels of discrimination and violence.



# Raquel Willis



Raquel Willis is a Black queer transgender activist, writer and media maven dedicated to inspiring and elevating marginalized individuals, particularly transgender women of color. She is a National Organizer for Transgender Law Center, the largest organization in the U.S. advocating on behalf of transgender and gender nonconforming people. She is a part of Echoing Ida, a national Black women's writing collective, and Channel Black, a media organizing and training arm of the Movement for Black Lives.

In January 2017, she was a speaker at the National Women's March in Washington, D.C. In May 2017, she was named to ESSENCE's Woke 100 Women, which honored "the women who are blazing trails for equal rights and inclusion for Black people in America." In September 2017, she was named to The Root 100, an annual list of the most influential African Americans, ages 25 to 45. Raquel commands a major social media presence for her analysis on identity, current events and politics.

# Cecilia Chung

Cecilia Chung, Senior Director of Strategic Projects for Transgender Law Center, is nationally recognized as an advocate for human rights, social justice, health equity, and LGBT equality. She was the former Chair of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and is currently serving on the Health Commission.



Chung's life is the inspiration for one of the characters in "When We Rise." The series tells

the story of four San Francisco Bay Area activists and how their lives were intertwined with the fight for LGBT equality. Cecilia has been working tirelessly on the local, national and international levels to improve access to treatment for transgender people and people living with HIV, and to erase stigma and discrimination through education, policy, advocacy, and visibility.

# GSA NETWORK RESOURCE PACKET



gsanetwork



*This annual resource was created by GSA Network*

*For more info please visit [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)  
or email us at [info@gsanetwork.org](mailto:info@gsanetwork.org)*





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# GENDERS & SEXUALITIES TERMS

All terms should be evaluated by your local community to determine what best fits. As with all language, the communities that utilize these and other words may have different meanings and reasons for using different terminology within different groups.

**Agender:** a person who does not identify with a gender identity or gender expression; some agender-identifying people consider themselves gender neutral, genderless, and/or non-binary, while some consider “agender” to be their gender identity.

**Ally/Accomplice:** a person who recognizes their privilege and is actively engaged in a community of resistance to dismantle the systems of oppression. They do not show up to “help” or participate as a way to make themselves feel less guilty about privilege but are able to lean into discomfort and have hard conversations about being held accountable and the ways they must use their privilege and/or social capital for the true liberation of oppressed communities.

**Androgynous:** a person who expresses or presents merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

**Asexual:** having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction nor have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels of sexual attraction and only after significant amounts of time. Many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is “ace,” meaning someone who is asexual.

**Bigender:** a person who identifies with having two genders, which aren’t necessarily man and womxn.

**Biphobia:** the prejudice, marginalization, and hatred of people who are perceived to be bisexual, also experienced by other identities (pansexual, omnisexual, etc.).

**Bisexual:** a person who may be sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.

**Boi:** a person who may identify as masculine-of-center and chooses to use this term as a reference to masculinity outside of cis-hood; a term originating in the black community.

**Butch:** someone who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

**Cisgender/Cis:** a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (eg, man and male-assigned).

**Cisnormativity:** the societal and structural assumption that all people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Drag Queen/King:** a person who performs masculine or feminine gender theatrically. While some drag queens and kings also are transgender, the terms are not used interchangeably.

**Dyke:** a slur historically used against queer womxn, particularly masculine-of-center womxn, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

**Fag:** a slur historically used against queer men, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

**Female-To-Male (FTM), Male-To-Female (MTF):** used to describe a person who has gone through a gender transition, sometimes used to refer to someone who has had gender reassignment surgery.

**Femme:** someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

**Gay:** a person who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender; misused as an umbrella term for the entire LGBTQ+ community.

**Gender:** gender covers a wide range of concepts related to identities that apply to everyone.

- **Gender Characteristics:** characteristics that are used to attribute gender to an individual, such as facial hair or vocal pitch.
- **Gender Confirmation/Affirming Surgery:** a variety of medical procedures that trans people may choose to feel more at home in their bodies; wanting these procedures is not a requirement for being transgender.
- **Gender Expression/Gender Presentation:** the way a person expresses their gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.
- **Gender Identity:** a person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Nonconformity:** not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.
- **Gender Roles:** culturally imposed and expected behaviors associated with gender identities.
- **Gender Binary System:** a social system that requires individuals to adopt a male or female identity according to the sex assigned at birth. This system imposes limitations for how you are educated, what jobs you can do (or are expected to do), how you are expected to

behave, what you are expected to wear, what your gender & gender presentation should be, and who you should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

- **Gender Dysphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of discomfort with one's own assigned sex that results in significant distress or impairment.
- **Gender Euphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of contentedness with one's gender identity, expression and/or presentation.
- **Genderfluid:** describes a gender identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.
- **Genderqueer:** a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (eg, agender, bigender, genderfluid).

**Gender Pronouns:** How people want to be referred to when they are addressed or talked about in third person. Some examples of gender-neutral pronouns are They/them/theirs and Ze/hir/hirs.

**Heteronormativity:** the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.

**Heterosexism:** The societal and structural assumption that all people identify as heterosexual.

**Homophobia:** The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or perceive to be gay, lesbian, or queer.

**Intersex:** an umbrella term that describes someone with a combination of sex characteristics that puts you somewhere outside the binary "male" and "female" boxes.

Visit [interactyouth.org](http://interactyouth.org) for more information about intersex issues.

**Lesbian:** a womxn who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender.

**Masculine:** concept of what is considered traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

**Mx:** a gender-neutral honorific meant to affirm individuals who do not fit in the Mr/Mrs binary.

**Pansexual/Omnisexual:** a person who may experience sexual, romantic, physical or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities and expressions

**Passing:** being perceived as a particular privileged identity/gender, regardless of how the person identifies (straight passing, cis passing, etc.).





**Polyamory:** a romantic orientation and practice of having multiple partners, who are consenting to relationships with varying structures; not inherently queer.

**Queer:** Term originally used as a slur that has been reclaimed; used as an umbrella term to describe someone who does not identify as straight (when used for sexual orientation) or someone who does not identify as cisgender (when used for gender, i.e. genderqueer) or someone who does not conform to sexual or gender expectations or norms. Queer has different meanings to different people.

**QTPOC:** Refers to queer and trans people of color, often used when differentiating the experiences of people of color and white people within the LGBTQ community.

**Sex:** Determined by a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. Assigned at birth based on genitals.

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual identity of a person in relation to attraction and gender. For example someone might identify as gay or lesbian if they are attracted to a person of the same gender.

**Third Gender:** A person who identifies with a gender outside of the gender binary imposed by colonization. Fa'afafine of Samoa, Hijra of South Asia, and the Muxe in Oaxaca, Mexico are some examples of third genders.

**Transgender/Trans:** an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. *'Transgendered' has been noted to be an incorrect term.*

**Transphobia:** The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or are perceived to be transgender.

**Transition:** Refers to the transitioning process transgender people go through when affirming their gender. This can be both a medical procedure and/or social transition, e.g., gender expression, pronouns, different name, etc.

**Two-Spirit:** A modern umbrella term by and for LGBTQ Native Americans to describe a non-binary gender system that existed within many Native American communities before colonization. This term should not be used by people who are not Native American.

**Womxn:** A spelling of "women" that aims to be more inclusive and intersectional, and to show that womxn are not limited to being defined by patriarchy or gender binary.



# GSA MODELS

The three typical functions of a GSA club are to: **support students, build community, and create change.** We break this down into three types of GSA clubs: **Support, Social, and Activist.** Most GSAs are combination of all three.

## SOCIAL

GSAs are social groups. They provide a sense of community & a space for LGBTQ & their ally peers to build a social network where their identity is respected. GSAs often host cook-outs, movie nights, field trips to a local LGBT prom or a pride parade, and attend conferences. GSAs build community at your school & lessen the isolation that LGBTQ students might otherwise experience.

SOCIAL

## ACTIVIST

An Activist GSA is a club that focuses mostly on educating a students, teachers, parents and community members to create a safer and more accepting school for LGBTQ students by changing school rules & policies, training staff & students, and helping to stop harassment and discrimination

## SUPPORT

GSAs can be a support group to provide safety and confidentiality to students who are struggling with their identities or those who are experiencing harassment at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. This type of GSA often provides one of the few safe spaces for students to express themselves.

SUPPORT

ACTIVIST

**WHERE WILL  
YOUR GSA FIT  
ON THIS DIAGRAM?**

**TIP: Some groups decide they want to be a social or activist GSA but also need a space just for LGBTQ folks to still talk about their issues and get support. You can start another LGBTQ+ only group that meets at another time, or alternate your meetings to meet both purposes.**

Remember, if your GSA is at a public school, your GSA has Legal Rights under the Federal Equal Access Act. More legal resources in our Resources Library available at [gsanetwork.org/resources](http://gsanetwork.org/resources).

# HOW TO HAVE A AWESOME GSA

## Establishing Your Club's Purpose

- Decide if your GSA is a **support group, activism club, social group, or a combination.**
- **Mission statement:** What kind of GSA club are you going to be? Address the nature of your club and its goals in an official mission statement. Check out our sample mission statements to get started! To develop a vision and values statement with your mission statement, check out our Visions for Justice and Values for Justice workshops that you can do in your GSA!

## Preparing for Meetings

- **Set the agenda:** make a list of issues/topics to discuss at each meeting.
- **Publicize** the meetings
  - Figure out the best ways to reach as many people as possible at school (e.g. daily announcements, flyers, social media)

## Running a Good Meeting

- **Set ground rules:** To make sure the group members feel safe, establish ground rules.
- **Decision-making:** Figure out how your group will make decisions like majority vote or consensus.
- **Facilitator**
  - Designate someone to keep the group focused on the meeting agenda
  - For more on facilitation, see pg 13.
- **Notes**
  - Take minutes at each meeting for members who couldn't attend
  - Use Facebook groups, google docs or email to share notes. Figure out what works best for your club.



## Creating an Action Plan

- Have a **brainstorming session**
  - Only think of projects ONCE at a brainstorming meeting
  - Set your ideas into a list of priorities and concentrate on the top three
- Set up **committees**
  - Make each project a committee and appoint a leader to organize the specific project
  - Committees help spread leadership
- Set **tentative dates**
  - Put deadlines, dates of meetings, or anything else into official school calendars
  - Follow a schedule and take your deadlines seriously
- **Subcommittee meetings**
  - Committees working on projects should meet separately from the regular GSA meeting and report back to the GSA. This ensures that GSA members not interested in the project still have a place in meetings, while allowing committees to get more specific work completed.



# GSA TREE CHECKLIST

**A strong and well-run GSA, like a tree, is dependent on how well it is maintained. This checklist is meant to help you build your GSA by focusing on the three parts of a strong GSA:**

**THE ROOTS > THE TRUNK > THE BRANCHES**

## The Roots: What Grounds Your GSA

### Establishing Your Club's Purpose

- Pick your GSA's mission:** Decide if your GSA is a **support group, activism club, social group or a combination.**
- Mission statement:** Address the nature of your club and its goals in an official mission statement
- Know your GSA's vision & values:** Have conversations with your GSA about what kind of school you want. Having a vision of what the impact your GSA will have is important because it helps keep your GSA focused.
- GSA Leadership:** Decide how your GSA will be run. You can try having a traditional Officer system with a President, or a Board system with a group of equal leaders.



### Preparing for Meetings

- Leadership meetings:** However your GSA is lead, be sure that the leaders of the club meet regularly (at least twice a month) to plan your GSA meetings, take care of any work that has to be done, and keep the GSA's projects moving forward. Many GSA leaders will meet every week after they've had the regular GSA meeting and work on the ideas that came up in the meeting.
- Make an agenda:** Make a list of the topics you're going to talk about in your regular meetings. Assign a set time for each topic so that you don't over schedule. At the beginning of each meeting be sure to give your members a chance to add a topic to the agenda. If additional items come up or if you run out of time, start a "parking lot" using chart paper to make a list for future meetings.
- Make a meeting calendar:** At the beginning of the school year, plan out all of your meetings and make a calendar of for your members.
- Publicize the meetings:** Figure out the best ways to reach as many people in your school. Use daily announcements, flyers, posters, newspaper/TV ads, social media, etc.
- Bring Food:** People are happier when they're fed, so you can raise money from your members through a donation jar, ask for in-kind donations from local businesses, or use other strategies from our Fundraising for Your GSA Resource Guide [see page 11].



## The Trunk: What Keeps Your GSA Strong

### Running a Good Meeting

- ❑ **Use ground rules:** Set ground rules for your meetings so that all members feel safe and that their voices matter.
- ❑ **Decision-making:** Figure out how your GSA is going to make decisions. Will you use majority vote, consensus, secret ballot?
- ❑ **Facilitate meetings:** Be sure to have a facilitator to keep your meetings moving and focused on the agenda. It's a good idea to have different members take a turn running meetings so that more members develop their facilitation skills.
- ❑ **Take notes:** Assign a person to take notes for each meeting. This can be one of your leaders or a member of the GSA. Make sure you record any actions that the GSA or members need to take for the next meeting. Be sure to post the notes so that people can read them, even if they don't come to meetings.
- ❑ **Involve your members:** Your GSA members are what make your GSA possible, so it's super important that they have a chance to have their voices and ideas heard. Be sure you give your members lots of chances to say what they think.



### Staying Organized

- ❑ **Keep good records:** You won't be the GSA leader forever, so be sure to create a GSA binder with good records of everything your GSA does for future leaders. Your binder can have meeting notes, event plans, flyers, group photos, copies of letters/emails to your school administration, etc. Also, include a document that summarizes what the GSA has done for the year. These documents can be almost like letters from one GSA leader to the next leader, letting them know what the GSA did, what goals it accomplished and what things it still needs to work on.
- ❑ **Stay in touch:** Help your members stay in touch with each other by creating a Facebook group page for your GSA. This can help you spread information about events, projects and meetings, as well as let you post the notes from past meetings and agendas for future ones.





# FUNDRAISING

**Your GSA club is making important changes on your school campus, but maybe you need money to keep up the momentum. This resource will help you figure out what works best for your GSA club, its fundraising goals, and the individual strengths of its members.**

## ***Before you get started...***

Find out your school's fundraising policy for clubs! Talk to the Student Government and invite them to a GSA meeting so they can explain the fundraising policy and process to all GSA members. Fundraising policies are different at every school, so be sure to give yourself enough time to get your idea approved.

## ***Who should be responsible for fundraising in my GSA club?***

Every GSA club member should know how fundraising works, not just the club officers. Some of the tools you learn as a fundraiser can be applied to other areas of youth organizing.

## ***We Are Ready to Raise Money!***

### **Step 1: Brainstorm**

As a group, brainstorm and decide what you want to raise money for. Is it to host an event or summit, or travel to an event, T-shirts, or something else?

How much will you need? Once you determine the amount that actually needs to be raised, you will be able to choose the right strategy for your goals.

### **Step 2: Choosing the right strategy for your club**

There are so many activities that you can do to raise money, so talk to your club members about what they enjoy doing and/or what they are good at. Your club's fundraising efforts will be most successful if you choose an activity and strategy that your members enjoy.





## All fundraising activities essentially fall into three main strategies:

**1) JUST ASK!** Most people enjoy making donations to causes that they believe in or supporting local schools and activities. You just need to ask! There are several ways to ask people to make a donation to your cause or project:

- Launch a social media campaign and link to a crowdfunding website (like YouCaring) to create awareness and raise funds. Social media can be a powerful tool that members of your GSA may already be experts in! If people in your networks aren't able to give, ask them to share and spread your message far and wide!
- Create an informational flyer or write a letter that you can send to people, organizations, and businesses in your local community. Tell them why your cause or project is important and explain how their donation will be used as well as the impact it will have on your GSA club or school.



**2) SELL!** Selling items can be fun and send a fun message about your club too. Choose products that are relatively inexpensive to buy and that can be sold at a higher price. Be sure to only buy as much as you will be able to sell, so you are not stuck with unsold inventory. Some popular items among GSA youth leaders are wristbands, pins, stickers, and baked goods (rainbow cupcakes, anyone?).

**3) HOST AN EVENT!** Is there a particular activity or sport that your club members enjoy? Tailor your event to your members interests and your audience to ensure success.

### Step 3: Thank your supporters!

Be sure to show your appreciation to the people who give to your cause. Remember that all supporters should be thanked, no matter how big or small the size of their donation. Here are some ideas on how you can make your supporters feel appreciated:

- Collect email addresses and send out a Thank You picture or short video of your GSA club members expressing their gratitude. Briefly tell them what you will achieve thanks to their support.
- Share a Thank You picture or short video via social media with everyone who supported your campaign.
- Make Thank You cards with handwritten notes. Have all members or the club officers sign the card.
- If selling a product, tie a ribbon with a small thank you tag to the product.
- Take a group photo holding a poster that says “Thank you” and use the photo to post a social media thank you to your supporters, friends, and allies.

# HOW TO FACILITATE A MEETING

## What is a facilitator?

**The facilitator is the person who runs a meeting and moves the meeting along.** Facilitators make sure participants can share their opinions and stories, discuss topics, and make decisions.

### The Facilitator is Responsible for:

- Making sure members agree on the agenda before and during the meeting.
- Ensuring the group keeps to ground rules/community agreements.
- Guiding the discussion and intervening if problems arise.
- Staying neutral, asking questions and suggesting ways to approach agenda items.
- Keeping the group on track and on schedule, particularly when the group goes on a tangent.
- Making sure the group comes to decisions, and dividing work clearly among members.
- Maintaining awareness of the energy level in the room and helping encourage members.
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates.
- Creating a safe, positive, and comfortable environment (protecting people from personal attack).

## Strategies for Keeping the Meeting Running and Orderly

**Checking in and asking GSA members if there is anything they want to add to each meeting's agenda for the GSA to discuss.**

- Ex: Are there any topics that you all would like to add to the agenda? (During the beginning of the meeting, possibly after reviewing the agenda for the meeting.)

**If someone puts an item on the agenda, ask them to briefly cover important background information and what they want done.**

- Ex: Jordan, could you please share a little background information on this topic and what you'd like the GSA to do about it or how you want us to address it?

**Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item. Have another member be a timekeeper if necessary. If time runs out, ask the group to agree to spend more time on the issue, postpone it until later in the meeting, or put the discussion off until another meeting.**

- Ex: Just a heads up, we have 5 minutes left to talk about this topic.
- Ex: We are out of time for this topic and still have some other topics to talk about. Do folks want to make a decision on this now in the next 10 minutes, or do you all want to talk about it more next meeting?

**If a comment, question, or topic is off-topic at the moment, create a list (a "parking lot") for items to be discussed at another time.**

- Ex: That's a great point / idea / question. Let's put it in the "parking lot" for now so we can finish this topic. We can revisit the parking lot at the end of this meeting or in our next meeting.



## Strategies for Encouraging Participation

### Encourage full participation - make sure everyone gets to speak.

- Ex: I've noticed a few people have been saying a lot on this topic. Is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet who wants to say something?

### Try to notice when someone is holding back. Try different ways of discussing topics if you think it will help, like a "Go Around" or "Pair Share."

- Ex: Some people may not want to talk openly about this topic. But it's important that we hear all different points of view, so I encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings.
- Go Around: "I want everyone to have the chance to share their honest thoughts or feelings on this issue. Let's go around the circle / room and have everyone share what they are thinking. You always have the right to pass."
- Pair Share: "To break the ice, everyone turn to the person next to them or find a partner and talk for a few minutes about what you think. Then we'll come back to the big group and some people can share what they talked about."

### Keep track of the list of people who want to speak, and share it out loud so everyone knows the speaking order. Feel free to put people who have not yet spoken first in the list.

- Ex: "Okay, let's have Aleja, Travis, Sanjay, Tran, and then Em for the speaking order."

## Strategies for Facilitating Discussion and Decision Making

### Help people avoid repeating themselves by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven't been mentioned.

- Ex: So far, I've heard the following concerns about moving forward with the gender neutral bathroom campaign. Some arguments in favor are....I've heard different solutions proposed like....
- Ex: Are there any different arguments against or in favor that haven't been mentioned yet?

### If the group has been discussing a topic for a while, move the group towards a decision or agreement.

- Ex: It seems like most people agree that we should talk to the Dean about the harassment that is going on.
- Ex: Seems like there's still a few issues we need to come to agreement on, like.... Let's focus on deciding what to do about those.

**Know when the group has reached a decision.** Also know when a group cannot reach a decision; suggest postponing a decision when the group needs critical information, the group needs to hear from others, or the group is not prepared.

- Ex: I'd like to propose we postpone this discussion because...

### Check briefly for agreement before moving on - make sure everyone understands decisions.

- Ex: Can someone briefly summarize the proposal we are voting on for our Trans Day of Action event?

**It helps if the facilitator tries to remain neutral if possible, so as not to abuse your power! If you want to participate actively in the discussion, ask someone else to take over facilitating the meeting. If you have a quick personal comment, let them know and do not take advantage of being facilitator -- try and wait to make sure others have spoken first.**

- Ex: Speaking as a GSA member, I think...
- Ex: Okay, I want to make a comment as well, after Darren...





# TRANSITIONING LEADERSHIP

As the school year comes to an end, many GSA leaders worry about what will happen to the GSA club once they are gone. It is important to create a strategy for passing the torch of leadership so that your GSA stays strong for future years. Your long-term goal is to keep your GSA active in the fight against homophobia and transphobia in schools. An effective student club needs strong leadership every year. So, regardless of your club's leadership structure (such as officers, senators, executive committee, etc.), you will have a short-term goal every year of finding a reliable and passionate group of individuals to lead the club. Then, you will need to develop a strategy that looks at the situation within your GSA club and at your school, and plan how to best train new leaders.

## Identify Your Resources

What are your strengths? Your challenges? Who is currently involved? Is there a teacher who will be the club's advisor next year? How many graduating seniors currently lead the GSA? What about younger students in lower grades? Are students generally apathetic at your school about the GSA, or do you have an engaged base?

## Identify Your Potential Leaders

Look around your GSA meetings. Think about the participants in your events this year, such as Day of Silence. Are there students who will be at school next year who are interested in a GSA leadership role? Maybe there are students in the GSA who would make great leaders, with some coaching and training, but they feel unsure or unaware of their own leadership potential. Remember that EVERY new member can potentially become a leader of your GSA!

- **Train new members** in the rules, history and projects of your GSA.
- **Spread out responsibility** to all members throughout the school year, not just at the end.
- **Take turns facilitating meetings** so everyone knows what it feels like to be up front and prepare you for a possible leadership role.
- Specifically **ask younger GSA members to facilitate** meetings throughout the year.
- **Network** with other organizations on and off campus.



## Select Your New Leaders Early!

Many GSA clubs select their new leadership in the middle of each school year, rather than at the beginning. The advantage of holding elections at the beginning of Spring semester is that your new leaders can be trained and mentored by your outgoing leaders. And when the new school year starts, your new leaders are already trained and practiced at being leaders.

## Train Your Leaders

Develop a mechanism for your outgoing leaders to train your incoming leaders. Here are some tips:

- Have summer outings to continue the GSA momentum and build connections.
- Have leadership trainings where all resources will be transferred [club constitution, summary of past events].
- Invite all GSA leaders to participate in events, so that everyone knows what's going on.

# INTRO TO CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING

GSA's work to raise awareness, push policies and educate their campuses through workshops, assemblies, days of action and campaigns. When you see student rights are not being implemented, it is our duty to hold our schools and communities accountable and create change. Sometimes you see a little change. Sometimes you see a lot.

## But what are the magic steps that turn your activism from small steps into big impact?

This resource and accompanying tactic guides will help you think through a campaign strategy to win the rights you deserve, like gender-neutral restrooms, restorative justice practices, or anti-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status and race.

## Creating a GSA Campaign Strategy

Before you start your campaign, there are a few key things you should identify. It's easiest to figure out your strategy in conversation -- so we've created a sample text message exchange, where we ask you the questions you need to answer with your GSA. Fill out the worksheet on the next page and, if you have trouble, use the example text exchange on the third page for help. You can also contact GSA Network for support to set up a strategy session with a local organizer near you.



### 1. Identify your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Evaluate, and Readjust goals are precise and clear, rather than overly broad or ambiguous.

### 2. Identify your target.

### 3. Identify your strengths, opportunities, supporters and allies.

### 4. Identify your improvements and threats.

### 5. Identify your tactics

 (Use our Campaign Tactic Guides to choose and plan your tactics).

### 6. Start your campaign & WIN!



First you need to know what you're trying to change. **Do you have a S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal or outcome in mind for your campaign?**

*Think of something you can achieve. If your broad goal is to eliminate transphobia, for example, your campaign goal might be getting a gender-neutral dress code or restroom.*

## 1. IDENTIFY YOUR S.M.A.R.T.E.R. GOAL

**Who is the person that has the decision-making power to change the situation?** Are they on your side, against you, or in-between?

*Some groups choose to use a "Power Map" [see Power Mapping Activity] to determine the best target and landscape of their allies and supporters.*

## 2. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

Great, that should be your target! Now, who are your allies? **Who can help support you to get to your outcome?**

*Allies and supporters can help you achieve your goal. PEOPLE POWER is a great asset in a campaign: the more people you can get, the more power you have when unified.*

## 3. IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORTERS & ALLIES

**What are some of your areas of improvements?** What is threatening your club from succeeding in your campaign?

*Be honest when coming up with your list of improvement and threats. They help you plan to strengthen your club.*

## 4. IDENTIFY YOUR IMPROVEMENTS & THREATS

There are many different ways to pressure your target to achieve your goal, including letter-writing, direct actions, and petitions. **How are you and your allies going to influence your target?**

*Learn about specific tactics and how to plan them as part of your campaign with GSA Network's Campaign Tactics Guides.*

## 5. IDENTIFY YOUR TACTICS

## 1. Start your petition at [unite.gsanetwork.org](http://unite.gsanetwork.org)

### Petition title (Campaign Name)

What's your campaign trying to do? Remember, people won't support something they don't understand. Keep the title short and punch. For example: "Let our GSA Meet on Campus" or "Send Lynn & Whitney to Prom!"

### Whom are you petitioning? (Who is your target?)

Who has the power to give you what you want? Your principal? School board? Superintendent? State Legislator? Senator? The more specific, the better! You will deliver your petition or campaign demands to this person or group -- face to face, if possible.

### What do you want them to do? (What's your "ask?")

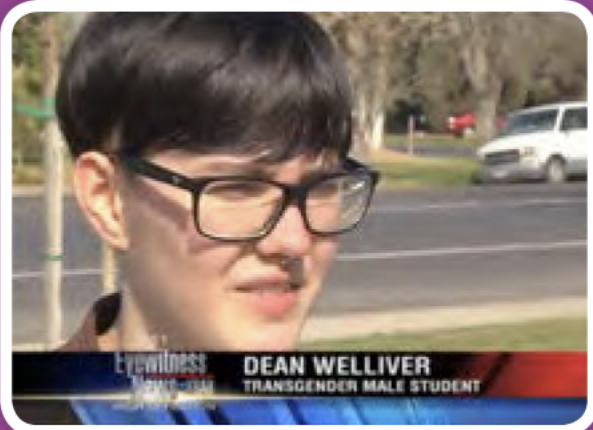
This is what you're asking. Imagine you're writing a letter to your target. For example: "Principal Lewis, please let our GSA meet on campus like all other clubs -- its the law!"

### Why is this important?

What would you say to a friend to explain why you care about this issue? Try to use a combination of facts and emotions. If a mentor of your GSA has a personal story and is comfortable sharing it put it here.

## 2. Review Intro to GSA Campaign Organizing to see how the petition fits into a bigger strategy [see page 16]

- **Identify your goal:** Does the petition "ask" match your campaign goal? Is it doable?
- **Identify your target:** Make sure your petition addresses the decision-maker you've identified.
- **Identify your supporters & allies:** These are the people who can help you get signatures! See next page for tips for sharing with them.
- **Identify your tactics:** The petition is just ONE tactic in your campaign. Think about other tactics that will make your campaign successful. For example, you might want to hold a big event or demonstration when you deliver the petition.



### CASE STUDY:

#### SUPPORT TRANS\* STUDENTS

Dean Welliver, a transgender high school senior from Bakersfield, CA, attended an online school because his district did not know how to support transgender youth. When California passed the School Success and Opportunity Act, Dean decided to start a campaign to ensure the district implemented the law and all future Bakersfield students would have the opportunity to go to school with their friends and graduate.

1. **GOAL:** Have Bakersfield schools put in place clear policies affirming that transgender students can use facilities and participate in sports and activities consistent with their gender identity
2. **TARGET:** Kern High School District Board of Education & Superintendent
3. **SUPPORTERS & ALLIES:** GSA clubs across the district; Bakersfield LGBT group; local educational justice coalitions
4. **TACTICS:** GSAsUnite! petition; direct action [petition delivery]; media activism

*The GSAUnite! petition tool gave me an easy way to share my story, build support, and follow up with supporters since the tool let me email everyone who signed the petition. I asked my friends to share it on social media, and met in person with all of the GSA clubs in my district, giving them printed copies of the petition to pass around school for people to sign, and then I typed the written signatures into the tool. In just 3 months, I gathered 248 signatures, which I presented at the district's next board meeting. I gave a speech about my experience at the meeting too, which was cool because there were reporters there. After that, the district met with me, showed me a written policy, and told me they would implement it!"*



## 3. Get started gathering support!

### Share on social media

//// Share on Facebook

//// Invite your Friends

//// Share on Twitter

//// Share via Email

### Get signature pledges

Ask friends, close supporters, members of your GSA, or other GSAs in your community to pledge a certain number of signatures. People are more likely to support you if they're asked by someone they know. When someone pledges, help them think through who in their life they can ask and the best ways to reach them -- at an afterschool activity? Through Facebook? Email?



### Print your petition and gather signatures by hand

#### COLLECT SIGNATURES

You can grow your campaign by collecting signatures at the school cafeteria, local lunch spot, and other places where people gather. Here are some ideas for offline signature gathering campaigns that you could consider.

Set up a table in your cafeteria or hallway (if you're allowed to!)



Invite friends to a GSA meeting to talk about the issue

Ask other clubs if you can stop by to talk about the petition and get signatures

Use our printable petition form to collect signatures, and then come back to [unite.gsanetwork.org](http://unite.gsanetwork.org) site to quickly enter the signatures that you gather. By adding the offline signatures you collect to the site you'll be able to reach those people via email, grow your total, and easily deliver the signatures to your target.



# YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

## Prior to Starting...

- Challenge your stereotypes about youth and/or adults.
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for youth and adults.
- Ensure that one group does not greatly outnumber the other.

## Building Effective Youth Adult Partnerships

- Evaluate the structure of the organization: Did youth or adults start the group? Who leads the group? Have both youth and adults always participated?
- Prioritize youth leadership and facilitation and focus on leadership training and skill-building for students.
- Follow a specific process for planning events and projects in your GSA. Make sure responsibilities are clearly designated and expectations are well defined.
- Frequently evaluate group dynamics: Do adult advisors and student leaders both feel supported? Do youth members feel they have the power and control in the group?
- If adults tend to outnumber youth or dominate the GSA, consider forming a separate Genders and Sexualities Teacher's Alliance or faculty group.
- If adult advisors wish to be involved in setting meeting agendas (or are required to by school policy), make sure that a youth leader is also involved in the process.
- If adult advisors have concerns about a particular project, have them voice these by asking questions instead of handing down authoritative decisions.

## Youth and Adult Partnership Tips

- **ASK QUESTIONS-** Conflict can easily arise when messages are misconstrued. Communication styles vary from person to person; different communication styles do not imply disrespect or disinterest. Ask questions in order to clarify and keep a common goal in mind to help address conflicts.
- **BE DELIBERATE-** Adults and young people vary widely on content knowledge, development, and willingness to participate. Create a way to hold everyone accountable in the work they do.
- **BE RESPECTFUL-** Everyone comes from different backgrounds and experiences. It is important to respect and recognize what an individual brings to the group.
- **YOUTH TRAINING-** Create learning opportunities for youth to take leadership on important projects. Facilitate growth for young people in a meaningful way such as public speaking, communication, and assertive skills. Build capacities for young people and hold high expectations for youth.
- **BURN OUT-** People have other interests and priorities (friends, families, hobbies, education). Depending heavily on someone can cause them to burn out. Feeling tired, overwhelmed, and overworked is a common reality. Assist youth in recognizing when "no" is an appropriate answer and support their decision.

# GSA NETWORK FAQs

## 1. What is Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network?

Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network is a next-generation LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains trans, queer, and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. In California, GSA Network connects over 1,000 GSA clubs through regional summits and youth councils. Nationally, GSA Network leads the National Association of GSA Networks which unites 40 statewide and local networks of GSA clubs. Founded in 1998, Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network (GSA Network) is the only youth driven organization that networks GSA clubs in California, and networks statewide and local organizations serving GSA clubs across the country.

## 2. What is a Genders & Sexualities Alliance, or GSA?

A Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) is a student-initiated and student-run club in a public or private school or community. The goal of a GSA is to provide a safe, supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and straight allied youth to meet and discuss sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and to work to create a school environment free of discrimination, harassment, and intolerance.

## 3. Who are the members of GSA Network?

Members of GSA Network are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and straight ally youth, school personnel, and supportive community members who value and support trans and queer youth leadership coming together for racial and gender justice. Straight cisgender youth are often members of GSAs because they have lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) family or friends. Since most clubs do not require student members to report information related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, or racial/ethnic information, it is difficult to estimate the exact number of young GSA clubs are also registered as group members of GSA Network.

## 4. Does GSA Network start or sponsor GSAs in schools?

No. GSAs cannot be banned if other non-curricular student clubs are allowed to exist at the school. The Federal Equal Access Act and the First Amendment of the US Constitution establish the requirement of equal treatment for all non-curriculum related clubs regardless of the content of speech at the club meetings. That means any school that receives government funding and has at least one other non-curricular club must also allow a GSA.

## 5. What impact do GSAs have on school climate?

Overwhelming evidence indicates that GSAs improve school climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning students and their allies. GSAs that conduct student and teacher sensitivity trainings typically see a decrease in slurs, name-calling, and harassment following their advocacy efforts. GSAs also create youth-run spaces for students to meet and socialize. The presence of a GSA club on campus is associated with lower levels of youth's self-reports of school-based victimization.

## 6. Is homophobia and transphobia a widespread problem in schools?

Harassment and bullying based on actual or perceived sexual orientation are pervasive. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual reported are three times more likely to feel unsafe at school or on their way to school. Use the data below to show your administration or members of your community that homophobia and transphobia directly impact the health and achievement outcomes of LGBTQ students.

### Centers for Disease Control - Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS), 2015

Some key findings from 2015 are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/smy.htm> and include:

- LGB students are three times more likely to not go to school because they feel unsafe.
- Students who identified as LGB also reported that they were twice as likely to have experienced harassment both online and at school.
- LGB students were twice as likely to report feeling sad or hopeless. And LGB students also were nearly three times more likely to report having considered attempting, made a plan, and attempted suicide.

### GLSEN National School Climate Survey, 2015

Some key findings from 2015 are available at <https://www.glsen.org/article/2015-national-school-climate-survey> and include:

- LGBTQ students who experienced high levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization were twice as likely to report they do not plan to pursue post-secondary education.
- LGBTQ students who experienced high levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization and discrimination had lower GPAs, lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression.
- School-based supports, often still lacking but generally growing in availability, have a positive effect on school climate. LGBTQ students in schools with a GSA or a comprehensive anti-bullying policy experienced lower levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization. Also, LGBTQ students with an LGBT-inclusive curriculum were more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBTQ students (76 percent vs. 42 percent).

## 7. Are there GSAs in middle schools?

Throughout the country there has been a steady increase of the number of GSAs in middle schools that register with local GSA Networks. Harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is also pervasive in middle schools and junior highs and data from the California Healthy Kids Survey shows that it is even more pervasive.

## 8. Where is GSA Network based?

GSA Network is headquartered in Oakland, and has California regional offices in the Central Valley and in Los Angeles serving Southern California. To meet the needs of Southern and Midwestern-based youth, GSA Network opened a Southeastern regional office in New Orleans, Louisiana in 2014 and opened an office in Chicago, Illinois in 2017.











# **FIND US ONLINE** **@gsanetwork**

*Student organizations need to register at [gsanetwork.org](http://gsanetwork.org)  
every school year to receive the most up-to-date resources and tools*

# TRUTH



## NINE POINT PLATFORM

1. WE CALL FOR THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION  
AND CONTROL OF OUR DESTINIES

2. WE CALL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE POLICE, ICE,  
BORDERS AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

3. WE CALL FOR AN END TO DISPOSABILITY POLITICS  
AND A COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

4. WE CALL FOR AN END OF THE CISGENDER  
HETEROSEXUAL PATRIARCHY

5. WE CALL FOR DECOLONIZATION AND REPARATIONS  
FOR ALL INDIGENOUS AND BLACK PEOPLES

6. WE CALL FOR COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION THAT  
REFLECTS OUR HISTORIES AND NEEDS

7. WE CALL FOR AN END TO GLOBAL  
WHITE SUPREMACY

8. WE CALL FOR LAND JUSTICE AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

9. WE INVITE OUR COMRADES,  
ACCOMPLICES AND ALLIES  
TO JOIN US

PROTECT  
EACH  
OTHER

HERE STILL  
HERE

TRANS  
YOUTH

# VIRTUAL GSAS IN ACTION: DIGITAL ORGANIZING TOOLKIT





## INTRODUCTION

**GSA Network is extremely proud to launch Virtual GSAs In Action. This new digital organizing toolkit was inspired by, and designed for, trans and queer youth activists, GSA club advisors and educators, and grassroots organizations across the country.**

In March 2020, GSA Network paused our in-person youth leadership training and events to keep our community healthy and united in the face of COVID-19. History has taught us that the trans and queer movement can be resilient and self-sufficient, particularly when our movement is led by people of color whose intersectional identities inform our approach to organizing, justice, and healing.

As a trans and queer youth driven organization, we've been listening to countless students who had to quickly pivot away from mainstream education and traditional community organizing practices towards virtual learning and digital organizing. Schools also took a sharp turn to adapt the school model to a remote environment. As they prioritized learning and academic achievement, other important aspects of campus life--social clubs, community building, sports, support groups and mental health services--did not survive the transition to the digital world.

School-based GSA clubs, which have already been proven to improve school climate and the experiences of LGBTQ+ students on campus, were a stabilizing force during a time of really rapid change for students. When schools discontinued their club activities, we saw trans and queer young people fight to keep their GSA club members connected. Locally, grassroots organizations stepped up to fill in the gaps when school districts were too strapped to invest in more than video conferencing platforms and online learning software. And GSA clubs began to embrace the potential of becoming a Community GSA to make connections with young people outside of their individual school.

At their core, LGBTQ+ youth and trans and queer young people of color want to build community in this moment. They are searching for places that affirm their identities and experiences, uplift their spirit, and promote self and



*Students from across the state of California came together in the Spring of 2019 to advocate for implementation of the California Health Youth Act (CHYA), new legislation that will ensure that students can receive comprehensive sexual education.*

community care. The Virtual GSAs In Action Toolkit was created to support them to start a Community GSA, take their existing school-based GSA clubs online, create new clubs, and above all, build virtual spaces that can restore their sense of community.

**The Virtual GSAs In Action: Digital Organizing Toolkit's first two resources will provide steps for young people to get started in creating a Virtual Community GSA and take their clubs online. The remaining resources are for young people to go deeper and take their clubs further in their activism for racial and gender justice, and for grassroots organizations to create truly youth-led spaces and provide the necessary support and infrastructure for young people to get connected and practice online safety.**

GSA clubs have been a vital part of building a more just society and advancing the larger LGBTQ+ rights movement. It is our hope and belief that trans and queer youth of color will continue to organize and advocate, both on and off line.

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# GSA CLUBS GO VIRTUAL

**There are many reasons why you may want to take your GSA club online to build community and organize with trans and queer young people in a virtual space. This resource will give you a few things to consider before you take your school-based club online and how to get your members there. If you can't get support from your school, you might want to create a Community GSA.**

## HOW DO I TAKE MY GSA CLUB ONLINE?

If you already have an existing GSA club and club advisor, be sure to check in with them to learn whether there are any limitations related to school clubs meeting outside of campus or in an online environment. Are there issues related to cybersecurity or privacy that you should be aware of? Does the school need to be informed of your club's activities? Your advisor can talk to the school administration to find out more. If you do not have a GSA club yet, or if your school does not allow your school-based GSA club to meet online, consider starting a Community GSA.

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GSA?

Traditionally, GSAs are school-based clubs that bring together students and organize activities on campus. A Community GSA allows students to expand beyond their schools and bring together trans, queer, and allied youth from across their community. Similar to a school-based GSA club, a Community GSA can be a space to socialize, find support, and build your activism. This space can also be what you and those around you want to make it!

A Community GSA can still count on support from an adult advisor, though some clubs might choose to be completely youth-led. If you do not have an adult advisor, we suggest that you only invite students between the ages of 12 and 18 to ensure everyone's safety.

We encourage you and your peers to really explore and define how you want adults to support your Community GSA so that you feel empowered to lead your own space. Here are some tips and suggestions to get things going!

## RECRUIT MEMBERS!

- **Use our search guide** to identify other trans and queer students in your area (see Appendix A of this toolkit) and use the sample texts and emails to start inviting students to participate.
- **Ask yourself:** What GSAs are in your area? Do you know students there? Invite them to attend or help put on your local GSA meeting!
- **Find a supportive adult** to help out, if needed
- **Get your folks in formation!** Collect everyone's name and contact info (txt, email, handle).
- **Set a time and date** for everyone to meet online.
- **Find a co-leader** to help you brainstorm and plan the meeting activities.
- **Check out GSA Network resources** for more ideas, and stay connected to our virtual trainings and digital media opportunities.

# KEEPING IT FUN ONLINE!

Once your club is fully online and members are ready to join, it's important to keep the meeting fun and make sure that everyone feels welcomed and heard! This space should be a place where everyone can contribute their ideas.

## HOW DO WE KEEP PEOPLE ENGAGED DURING A VIRTUAL MEETING?

**Play games** in the beginning to get people comfortable talking and being online. These can also help bring up the energy during a break. Some options include, Scattergories, Pictionary, or an at-home scavenger hunt.

## HAVE A CHECK IN QUESTION!

These questions can be a great way to open meetings. Try to avoid general questions like, "How are you doing?" Instead, ask questions that invite participants to think more deeply, such as:

- What brings you joy lately? Where would you like to travel? Who inspires you?
- Share a rose and thorn (something good that has happened to you this week & something not so good).
- If you have an ongoing Discord or chat group, you can post a Question of the Week.

**Poll it is!** On platforms like Zoom and Instagram, you can use poll functions to keep people engaged during the meeting. This tool is perfect for getting anonymous votes from people who can't or don't feel comfortable sharing during video calls but still want to feel included.

**Chat! Chat! Chat it Up!** Invite members to chat their answers, questions or comments. Sometimes it's not quiet or safe for folks to share out loud in their homes.

**Take a moment to pause!** Use breaks to shake up the meeting. Give people time to get water, move their bodies, or use the restroom. Keeping your meeting flexible will make it feel less like class time.

## HOW DO WE KEEP PEOPLE INVESTED IN THE CLUB?

**Create a social media page for your club** and use it as an opportunity to engage people! You can post fun daily quizzes/polls, reminders for your club on your feed and stories, or ask members questions about what they would like to see and get out of the club meetings.

**Ask club members what they want** to be a part of. Some might like to see more activism, others might need social support. Either way, make this space fluid and adaptable to people's needs and wants.

**Invite presenters**, such as local community organizations or collectives, to lead a virtual workshop. You can find LGBTQ+ and social justice groups via Instagram hashtags like #YouthOrganizing, #YouthPower, #YouthActivism, #LGBTQyouth and #TransYouth, to name a few.

**Invite club members to help plan activities.** Rotate duties, meeting facilitation, and presentations about social justice or LGBTQ+ topics that members care about. Assign someone to host a social event like a club movie night. Vote on discussions that you want to have and ask a member to help plan and facilitate.



## HOW DO WE AVOID LOW ATTENDANCE?

Getting members to return for the next meeting is a crucial part of keeping a strong GSA in person and online. Here are a few tips to ensure that you have consistent participation throughout the school year:

**Create a Doodle Poll or similar tool** that can be used to see what dates and times work best for a majority of members. Call, text, email or direct message people to remind them of upcoming club meetings.

**Use a sign in sheet** to save contact information and send reminders for the next meeting.

**Start every meeting with introductions** to build community and ensure you don't miss someone new.

**Follow up with members after the meeting** so they know you care! You can ask for feedback and invite them to stay connected through social media or group texts.

**Reach out to members individually.** In a time where many students can feel isolated and alone, it's so important that GSA club leaders reach out to members on a 1-to-1 basis. This builds trust and a deeper connection.

**Plan a giveaway!** Keep track of attendance using a sign-in sheet and encourage participation by hosting a raffle or prizes for members with the highest attendance throughout the semester.

## HOW DO WE RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS?

Bringing new folks into a group has its challenges, but with structure, good communication, and clear intentions, you can have a very successful online GSA club! Here are some ways to start reaching out to returning or new members:

**Reach Out to Your Contacts.** Text or message friends who were in the club before. Do they have the contact info of others in the club last year? Do they know someone else who is looking for a place to hang out online with other trans and queer teens? If you have an advisor, reach out to them and ask for the student contact list. They may be able to give you their school email addresses.



*Members of GSA Network's Youth Councils host a series of workshops focused on community organizing, advocacy, and racial and gender justice.*

### Find Contacts Online

If your school has an Instagram page, you can search for posts related to your GSA and find students that were tagged who may have been part of the club. You can also DM folks from your school to get their friends' contact. It is totally normal for you to message someone new online as long as you have clear intentions.

**Get in Touch with Local Schools.** Try reaching out to the leaders of other GSA clubs from past events. If you use Instagram, you can search the local "high school name + GSA" (e.g. #McClymondsGSA, #PortolaGSA, #FremontGSA)

**Look for youth groups in your community!** Is there an LGBTQ+ Resource Center in your area? Oftentimes these centers have youth groups that meet in person. Your GSA can possibly be a resource to them! You can also search for them on Instagram by searching your "city and youth" (e.g. #Oaklandyouth #QueerOakland #YouthOrganizing.

# THINKING ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY: TQ YOUTH IN UNSUPPORTIVE HOMES

For everyone who works to uplift Trans and Queer Youth, social distancing quickly reminded us just how much our activism has overlooked our home life. TQ Youth are at home now more than ever. Here are some ways to adapt, if you find yourself in an unsupportive home.

## IDENTIFY THE SAFE AND BRAVE SPACES IN YOUR HOME.

What does a safe space mean to you? Sometimes your bedroom or bathroom fits this description when you need a little retreat. Can you find peace in a sibling, other relative, or housemate's room? A yard, outdoors, or nature may hold what you're looking for.

## CONSIDER YOUR IN-HOUSE ALLIES.

Is one parent, guardian, or relative more likely to be more affirming and uplifting than the others? Prioritize time with them! Chat or set a date to hang in a safe space. Don't write off pets!

## BRIDGE GAPS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEADPHONES.

Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Skype, Instagram, Twitter, video games, KAST and other apps are great ways to connect with your favorite people outside of your home. Set a daily or weekly check-in schedule. Put on some music in the background and plug-in your headphones for a little extra privacy.

## CREATE INTENTIONAL TIME ALONE.

Are you a safe space for yourself? Are you a self-ally? Find time to go within. Support, solutions, and peace come that way too. Create a music playlist and listen to it. Share it with friends. Journal about your dreams. Meditate with the help of Youtube videos. Take a shower to re-adjust your mood. Immerse your heart, mind and body in a sea salt bath. Build something and tear it down. Make art with what you have at home. Reflect on the thoughts you allow in your head. You're your first support team. If you give love to your internal world, you'll find external love everywhere. Use our Queer & Trans Wellness Pack for additional grounding and healing practices.

**"YOU ARE YOUR FIRST SUPPORT TEAM. IF YOU GIVE LOVE TO YOUR INTERNAL WORLD, YOU'LL FIND EXTERNAL LOVE EVERYWHERE."**

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: DIGITAL ORGANIZING

**Trans and queer youth have rights! This guide is intended to inform youth in California public schools of their legal rights to organize and participate in school or community spaces online, and what to do if your rights are violated.**

All students have rights to a safe and supportive school environment. Here are some questions and concerns we have heard from trans and queer students as their schools and GSAs turned to remote learning.

***Please Note: The majority of the information in this guide is California-specific. We have noted if information is applicable throughout the U.S. We recommend consulting a local legal resource about your state's policies on these following questions.***

## MOVING YOUR GSA ONLINE

### **CAN OUR GSA CLUB MEET WHILE WE ARE IN A REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?**

You have the right to a GSA club, as long as your school allows for extracurricular clubs, and GSAs cannot be treated differently than any other extracurricular club (federal Equal Access Act — 20 U.S.C. § 4071). Remote learning does not change this. Even if other extracurricular clubs are not meeting, it does not necessarily mean that your GSA cannot meet! Many GSAs were able to continue meeting as schools transitioned to remote learning in Spring 2020 and in some schools they were the only clubs that tried to meet online. However, we have encountered several different school policies for school clubs. Ask your advisor, activities director, or school

administration for the school policies for extracurricular clubs so you can make sure your GSA is treated fairly.

***This applies to all public school students in the U.S.!***

### **WHAT CAN WE DO IF MY SCHOOL DOES NOT ALLOW EXTRACURRICULAR CLUBS TO MEET?**

Students have the right to meet and self-organize outside of school forums. You do not need to be school-approved to have a GSA club with GSA Network! We call these Community GSAs. If you are not school-approved, this may create some additional limitations to be aware of. For instance, your club advisor/sponsor may not be able to attend, depending on the school policy or you may not be able to use school forums to publicize your club.

***This applies to all students in the U.S.!***

### **WHAT CAN WE DO IF GSA CLUB MEMBERS ARE HARASSED?**

Some clubs may be worried about promoting the online GSA club meetings while also fending off unwanted attendees or "Zoom bombers" who want to harass or bully GSA members. All students have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression (§200-220). If members are being harassed in meetings, online, or during remote learning, check out our tips below and take a look at our meeting security tips.

### **WE DID NOT GET A CHANCE TO COLLECT OUR GSA MEMBERS' CONTACT INFORMATION BEFORE REMOTE LEARNING STARTED! CAN WE STILL COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION?**

For GSA club leaders, having a private list of GSA members' contact information (emails, phone numbers, or social media handles) can be very helpful for building a club community. Remember that trust and confidentiality are important values for GSAs creating safer spaces for trans and queer students. Do not post this information, and keep it with a club leader who can store the information safely. Check out our safety resource for online security.

How you collect the information may make a difference. Students are generally allowed to share their contact information with other students. Teachers and school staff may have different restrictions on their ability to collect student information. Ask your advisor if this is the case. If you collect information via an online form, youth under the age of 13 may need parental consent to share their email address or phone number (COPPA). Note: This applies to all students in the U.S.!

### **WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT THE PRIVACY OF OUR GSA CLUB MEMBERS!**

We have heard of school policies for online extracurriculars that require leaders or advisors to collect and submit sign-in lists to the school, to record all club meetings, etc. In cases like these, you may be worried about the privacy of your LGBTQ+ members and allies. You have the right to keep your LGBTQ+ identities private. Your school may not out you to other students or staff without your permission except under very limited circumstances. Ask your district about who will have access to the sign-in lists or Zoom recordings and how they plan to store the files. Remind them that without a well-thought out plan for what to do with this information, they may run the risk of violating your right to privacy.

When schools make video recordings that clearly depict students, districts must take steps to protect student privacy. If a recording includes student biometric information, such as students' faces, then the record constitutes protected educational records and can be

## **GSA isn't allowed to meet online**

*Mariah:* My school has a VERY strict administration and no clubs have been allowed to go online, which means emails were the only way we could keep in contact. Even then, kids just don't check emails that often and we lacked that communication and community. Can they do that?

*Organizer Buddy:* That really sucks to hear your administration is not letting any clubs meet online. Technically, your rights are NOT being violated, because it's not just the GSA but all clubs that cannot meet. In this situation, there is no direct bias to any club meeting, rather the school's administration may be enacting a schoolwide guideline that applies to all students.

*But here is what she decided to do...*

*Mariah:* After doing some research and checking in with my GSA members and advisor we thought of two ideas. Either we would write a letter to our school's administration demanding a change to the guideline or we would take our GSA meeting outside of school. In the end, we decided to take our GSA outside of the school and meet with members in our own way. Our advisor supported us and offered support when we needed it.

used only as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This also means that a parent/guardian of a student under 18 years of age in K-12 schools has the right to view the recording. If you are in a situation like this, please reach out to us.



**Note: Though all students in the U.S. have a right to a reasonable expectation of privacy, you may be entitled to additional protections depending on your state. Reach out a local legal resource for more information.**

### **CAN MY GSA CLUB MEET ONLINE WITHOUT PARENT PERMISSION?**

We see this question most often from middle schools. Under the federal Equal Access Act, your GSA club should not be treated any differently than other extracurricular clubs. If your school requires parental permission for all extracurricular activities, you may need to follow these guidelines to have a GSA sponsored by your school. **This applies to all public school students in the U.S.!**

## **TRANS AND QUEER STUDENT RIGHTS DURING REMOTE LEARNING**

### **CAN I USE MY CHOSEN NAME ON A VIDEO CALL OR ONLINE CLASSROOM?**

You have the right to use your chosen name and pronouns (§200-220). Your school should use your chosen name and pronouns on everything possible—your student ID, class attendance rosters, yearbook, online school accounts, video calls, etc. Your legal name should only appear on your official file. You should not need a parent's signature to request the school use your chosen name and pronouns. If you are not out to your parents with your chosen name and pronouns, make sure the school understands what name to use when communicating with parents. If a school staff intentionally or persistently refuses to respect your chosen name and pronouns, that violates your right to be free from harassment at school.

### **I AM TRANS AND SOMETIMES I FEEL DYSPHORIA WHEN I AM ON VIDEO. CAN MY SCHOOL REQUIRE ME TO BE ON VIDEO?**

It's possible. Some students have successfully requested to be able to be off video for this reason and it's possible to request this as a gender-related accommodation. If you are not able to get that support, there may be other ways to mitigate this, such as hiding your self-view on Zoom. Other platforms may have similar options.

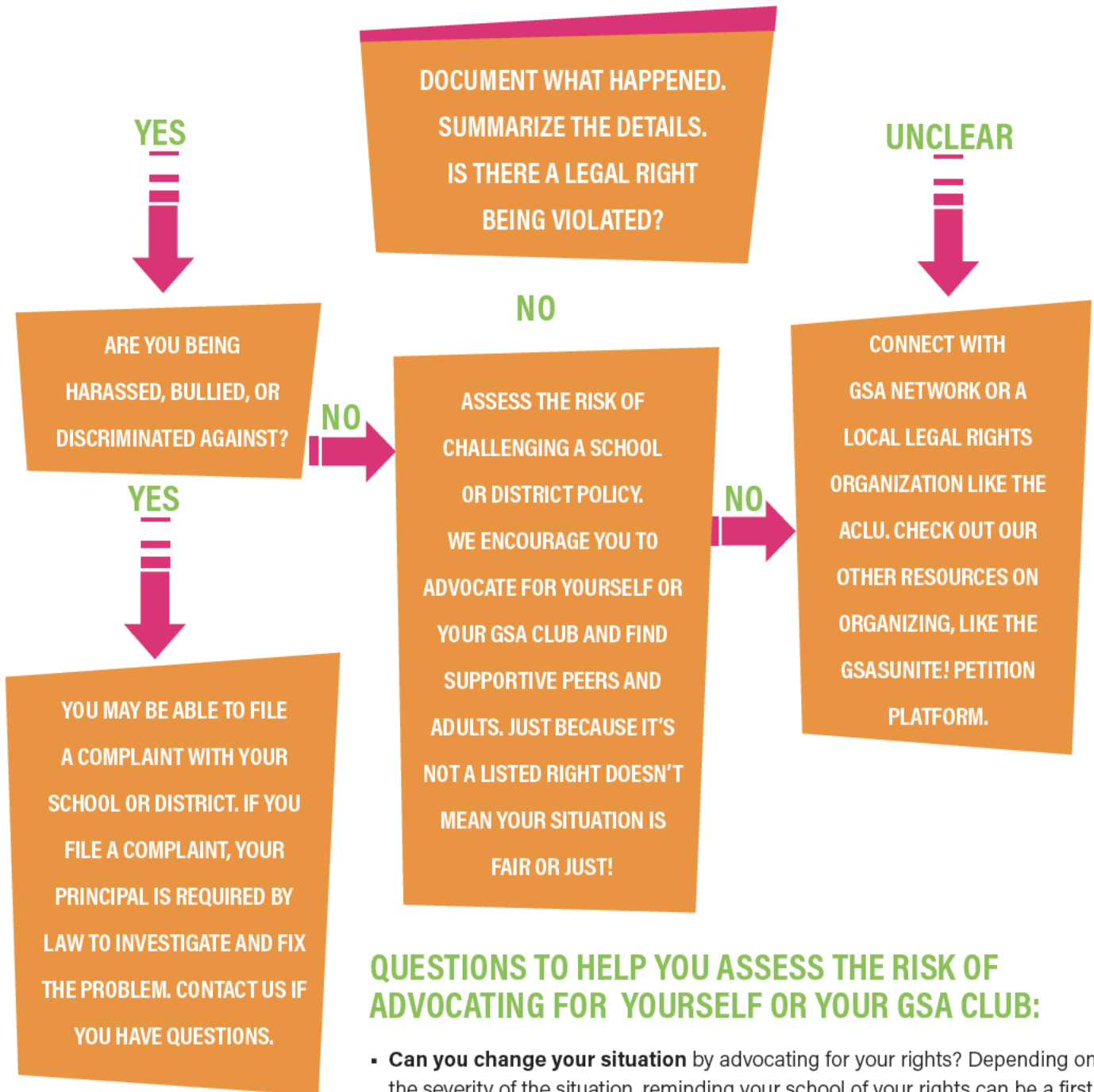
## **School enacts new guidelines for online club meetings**

**Mx Sampson:** When our school shifted to remote learning, they also rolled out new guidelines for extracurricular activities meeting online. At first glance, I understood that some of the policies were meant to protect students from harassment and keep everyone safe, but others—especially recording meetings, requiring students to show their school IDs, and have their video on—seemed like a privacy nightmare.

**Organizer Buddy:** Wow, that is extra and does sound like a nightmare. What did your students say about that? Did the club end up meeting online?

**Mx Sampson:** As an advisor, I wanted to do my best to be an ally to our GSA members. I checked in with our local GSA organizer and researched student rights. I knew from our GSA members that the meeting was very important to them. We decided to meet anyway. Truthfully, we did not follow all the guidelines, but so far our school's administration has not checked on us. If they do, we are prepared to push back and make our case. The GSA members continue to meet and have maintained supportive relationships amongst each other.

# I THINK MY RIGHTS ARE BEING VIOLATED! WHAT DO I DO?



## QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU ASSESS THE RISK OF ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR GSA CLUB:

- **Can you change your situation** by advocating for your rights? Depending on the severity of the situation, reminding your school of your rights can be a first step. Connect with GSA Network or a local legal rights organization.
- **Does the school policy negatively impact** your club's ability to meet and organize? Is there a school policy that could be changed or that needs to be put in place?
- **Identify the changes you want to see in your school** and find supportive peers and adults to help you push for those changes.

## RESOURCES & WHO TO CONTACT

We know that for many students, being your authentic trans and queer self during remote learning can be challenging for many reasons. Please reach out to us if you experience other potential rights violations that are not covered in this resource.

**CALIFORNIA:** [california@gsanetwork.org](mailto:california@gsanetwork.org)

**OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA:** [info@gsanetwork.org](mailto:info@gsanetwork.org)

### ADDITIONAL KNOW YOUR RIGHTS RESOURCES FOR CALIFORNIA STUDENTS

- [My School, My Rights](#)
- [Students Rights in California Schools](#)

### ADDITIONAL LEGAL RESOURCES FOR CALIFORNIA STUDENTS

- [ACLU of California](#)
- [California Rural Legal Assistance - LGBT Program](#)
- [Transgender Law Center legal help des](#)



The National Trans Youth Council (TRUTH) developed a Nine Point Platform that guides their vision and work for liberation. In 2020, they are organizing for the abolition of the police, ICE, borders, and the Judicial System.

## Trans & Non Binary Student Rights Violated During Remote Learning

*Jade:* Some of my teachers are not respecting my chosen name on video calls and my dead name keeps showing up in the online class profile. I had several conversations with my teachers, but felt dismissed when they would tell me it was just the name on the attendance roster they received and that I should handle it with the attendance office. I remembered we had a Know Your Rights presentation at a GSA meeting, and was reminded I can ask for help.

*Organizer Buddy:* You're right! You do have the right to have your chosen name used. Some school districts even have explicit policies supporting transgender and non-binary students to have their chosen name used on all attendance rosters without outing them to their guardians. We can push for that change! Some things to consider: Identify the changes you want to see in your school and find supportive peers and adults to help. Check out our organizing resources, like the GSAsUnite petition platform.

*Jade:* That's so true. After talking to other trans students, we realized that it was not just our school, but rather the district that had no clear process for students to change their name. I can pitch an idea to other GSA club members, ask for their support, and discuss a plan to organize for a name change policy at the district level.

# CENTERING RACIAL & GENDER JUSTICE IN GSAS

**This guide is intended to center Trans, Queer, Gender Non-Conforming / Non-Binary, Black, Indigenous, and Youth of Color in your GSA for a liberated future.**

In a world in need of healing, we have an opportunity to reimagine how GSA clubs can come together and develop our collective liberation. GSA Network is working to strengthen the national movement-building capacity at the intersection of LGBTQ+ youth organizing and racial and gender justice in schools, and to develop the next generation of LGBTQ+ leaders. For a liberated future, we must center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, and youth of color.

In our everyday conversations in our current society you may be aware of the acronym QTBIPOC, which refers to Queer and Trans people who are Black, Indigenous and/ or People of Color. Folks use this QTBIPOC acronym to highlight groups of people who are often targeted and marginalized. Although the acronym is popularly used, in this guide we center Trans, Queer, Non-Binary/Gender Non Conforming, Black, Indigenous youth of color. We do this to be intentional about our work and who we serve: young people who are suspended, expelled, and arrested at higher rates than their cis, white peers because of biased, zero tolerance discipline and policing that lands them in the juvenile justice system. This phenomenon is known as the school-to-prison pipeline.

Research also shows that schools nationwide are hostile environments for LGBTQ+ and gender nonconforming students of color. According to one study, "1 in 5 LGBT students report being bullied due to race, ethnicity, or national origin."

In this guide, we will introduce resources and tools to increase your GSA club's inclusivity and bring to the forefront the voices and individuals who are often left out of our spaces. By doing this in solidarity, your GSA will be joining many other GSAs in leading the LGBTQ+ youth and GSA movement forward. This guide will not have answers to all the unique challenges your club may face as you begin this process. Consider this to be a starting point for important conversations in your club and your communities to lead with principles based in equity as we work towards collective liberation.

## Equality & Liberation

- *Equality* is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.
- *Equity* is the quality of being fair and impartial.
- *Liberation* is the act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression; release.
- *To get started*, you first have to start with doing the self work.



## DOING THE SELF WORK

As we move towards collective liberation with Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color, we must do the self work to analyze how our actions, lack of actions or privileges contribute to the ongoing marginalization of this community. Self work is looking at how we move through the world and our impact on Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color. If we are able to recognize how our actions contribute to the marginalization of these communities, we can begin to disrupt this process and really center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color in all our spaces, including GSAs. In this next section we are going to provide a few recommendations to help you start the self-work conversation with your GSA.

First, look at the privileges we hold and the systems of oppression that create these privileges for us. Privileges are the advantages your identity carries. These advantages stem from systems that are created to uphold power for a certain group of people, called systems of oppression.

In **Appendix B** we will show you groups with systemic power in America today, systems of oppression that give them power, and which groups hold less power within this system. This list is meant to provide you with some examples. It is not comprehensive and you will need to do more research on systems of oppressions to get a better understanding of the concept.

### ***NOW THAT WE HAVE AN INTRODUCTION TO PRIVILEGE, WHAT ARE YOUR PRIVILEGES?***

The next step in doing the self work is acknowledging where you hold privileges and how your privileges can be used to center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color in order to move towards liberation. While these privileges don't always show up in our day-to-day life, focus on the long-term advantages that come from holding this identity. For example: if you are a cisgender person, you might have never considered or thought about how the world perceives you based on your gender presentation.

A Trans or Non-Binary person will always be mindful about the way they move through the world. While you may not agree with the oppression Trans and Non-Binary folks face, you can use your identity as a cis person to uplift Trans and Gender Queer folks when facing oppression, like discrimination at school.

### ***HOW TO START A PRIVILEGE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR GSA***

Doing the self and collective work to analyze how we contribute to the oppression of Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color is tough, but we must commit to dismantling these systems for collective liberation. Take a minute to decide why you want to do the self work. Finding this purpose will help you stay committed to liberation. Remember that self work happens everywhere—not just in a GSA meeting. By doing this, you will be working toward being an ally.

## EDUCATE YOURSELF

### ***I STARTED THE SELF WORK, NOW WHAT?***

The real work of allyship (standing up for an oppressed community you are not necessarily a part of) requires educating yourself about the forms of oppression you need to learn and unlearn to be a better advocate. Let's learn how prejudice and oppression show up for Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color informs discrimination. Beliefs and actions are the foundations that hold up systems of oppression and stop us from dismantling them. In order to create a GSA movement that moves towards liberation, we must acknowledge how privilege shows up in GSA clubs and our group but develop strategies to combat it.

In **Appendix B**, we will show some examples and ask that you dive deep into your own research to learn more. Once you have reviewed how oppression shows up for some, develop a plan to learn more ways that discrimination and prejudice show up in our communities. Developing this plan will help us actively combat systems of oppression and put your GSA on track to center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color members.

## CHECK IN AND TAKE ACTION

### *I STARTED EDUCATING MYSELF AND OTHERS...*

#### **NOW WHAT?**

When the news is filled with heavy headlines about death, violence and protests related to Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous people of color, you can feel lost about what to do, what to say, or how to show up. Here is a short list of ways to check in with them, if and when you're ready:

- **Contact your Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color peers.** Showing that you care, and are aware of what's going on, can make a difference.
- **Affirm that you are there for them** in any way they need.
- **Start and encourage dialogues** across differences.
- **Use your privilege** (and your physical and monetary resources) to support Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous people of color, issues, businesses, and projects.

While we do not have all the answers about what to do, use your best judgement to center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous youth of color. **Taking action is processing this hurt and anger with others like yourself and who differ from you.**

However, do not put emotional labor on those most impacted by hurt and pain to help you process, unless they give you consent to do so. While it is powerful that you are leaning into your discomfort, it's important to understand that those most affected may not have the capacity to help you process this pain. Instead, seek out a local resource that can help you do this.

**Once you feel ready to take on more,** begin to take action with others. Your GSA can bring in guest speakers who are organizing around racial and gender justice issues in your local community or state. They might be able to share how your GSA can get involved or give you more strategies to approach the issue. Check out **Appendix B** where we have included some immediate steps you can

take to make your GSA club more inclusive and center Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color.

## BECOME A GSA FOR JUSTICE

### *YOU ARE CONNECTED AND READY TO TAKE ACTION.*

#### **WHAT NOW?**

Now that you are in a place to take action, you will be joining the many clubs that are not only supporting racial and gender justice but actively fighting for racial and gender justice! Some clubs are also looking inward to their club mission and vision to align with their new values and to be explicit about who they are doing the work with/for. They are using language such as, "fighting for racial and gender justice" and "uplifting Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color leadership." They have also updated their club flyers and invited new people to their club's leadership structure to be reflective of their new mission and values. We encourage you to do the same.

Our [Educational Justice Campaign Workshop Series](#) includes seven 30-minute workshops designed for individual GSA clubs to complete during meetings. Use them to have deeper conversations about what racial and gender justice can look like for your club, school, or community. They will give you a better understanding of inequity across the country and in your own schools. Reimagine how your GSA members can work together and develop what liberation looks like with/for our most vulnerable siblings.

**"IN A RACIST SOCIETY, IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE NON-RACIST, WE MUST BE ANTI-RACIST."**

--ANGELA DAVIS

# YOUTH-LED SPACES IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

**This resource was developed by TRUTH and focuses on creating and facilitating youth-led spaces, and offers staff organizers who support youth programming a working list of tips and practices to keep in mind.**

We understand our work to be a youth-adult partnership, where we as staff organizers get to uplift and support youth leaders as they lead movement spaces and work. Even during a global pandemic, if not especially, youth leadership offers a needed perspective and force in our fight for liberation. As the organizers who oversee youth programs, our role is to find opportunities of all types for young trans and queer people to learn, practice, and grow.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

### WORKING THROUGH THE TECH + TECH ISSUES

- **Call link:** Use email invites to send a participation link. This will establish a place where folks can always find the link (and not have to ask “Where’s the link?” 5 minutes before a meeting starts). This requires folks to know how to use Google Calendar. This will be a good tool to teach folks how to use. Returning youth members can facilitate a quick tutorial on how to use Gmail/calendars for newer members.
- **Expect tech issues:** Keeping five minutes when the call begins to work through tech issues is always helpful and helps to reduce potential stress for when tech issues come up. **Because. They. Will.** Check in with youth members before meetings to ask about their access needs and offer opportunities for folks to skill-

share. Allowing young folks to volunteer to co-run tech support with an adult during meetings can also boost confidence.

- **Safe spaces to call in from:** Conference calls will require folks to be in spaces where they’re safe to discuss queer and trans topics. Support folks who need help planning where to call from. This will be important for all participants and can determine how fully they can engage in programming or not.

## The National Trans Youth Council (TRUTH)

TRUTH is a collaboration between GSA Network and Transgender Law Center. We are a national council that consists of 18 trans and gender non-conforming youth leaders across the U.S. TRUTH is a two-year program with our cohort consisting of new members and returners. This is a list of tips and tricks we’ve learned supporting the virtual space for the TRUTH council to stay connected throughout the program year.

## MAINTAINING A COMMUNITY

- **Youth Facilitators:** It is usually a good idea to support young leaders in facilitating meetings; this keeps folks attentive and offers a peer-to-peer accountability structure during meetings. Meeting before the call 1-3 times to outline the agenda and practice facilitation helps.
- **Check ins:** Start with check in questions and allocate sufficient time for everyone to respond (10-15 minutes). This helps folks focus and feel like they're part of the circle. One volunteer role for the facilitation team could be choosing a question and facilitating a check in.
- **Talking via chat box:** Ask for folks to support in reading messages from folks who are not able to talk. You could ask for a youth volunteer at the beginning of the call who agrees to read chat box comments aloud.
- **Buddies:** Implement buddy programs (Returning/New Members). This system can support folks in connecting with each other and can offer you an "accountability buddy system" for checking in about projects and duties.
- **Energy:** It's important to keep the energy flowing, so the facilitators should be leading that energy. Your team of facilitators (including youth) can encourage folks to participate as they watch their peers energetically lead the conversation.

## PLANNING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- **Create a timeline:** We recommend that staff start planning 4-5 weeks before the event. Give yourselves enough time to recruit and prepare youth facilitators and invite youth participants. The roll of staff organizers is to create the structure but remind the youth facilitators that their work is vital to making youth organizing happen.
- **Recruit youth facilitators:** To ensure spaces continue to be youth led, it is important to recruit youth facilitators. Staff should recruit anywhere from 1-3 facilitators, especially if you meet regularly with a group of youth who would be good to reach out to for a leadership opportunity. Staff should also host weekly facilitation

meetings so that youth presenters feel prepared for the day of the event.

- **Create an agenda:** For staff supporting youth, it is best to create an agenda with time blocks! There is opportunity during agenda planning to include youth leaders and offer them space to truly direct the call's meaning. Remember to include breaks. Youth facilitators should be a part of the process of finalizing the agenda. Ask them to come up with opening/closing activities, ice-breakers, discussion questions, themes, etc.

## DAY OF VIRTUAL MEETING

- **Final reminders:** Make sure youth have the most updated information to participate— including the Zoom link and agenda—the day before the meeting. It would be good for the youth facilitators to send reminders via chat groups or to send out an email reminder to everyone!
- **30 minutes before kickoff:** Staff organizers should schedule youth facilitators to join the call 30 minutes before start time. Make sure everyone is ready to go with Powerpoints and go over any final tech needs.
- **Community agreements:** Whether it is your first time meeting or you have been meeting regularly with the same group, it is important to come up with community agreements for the space. The youth facilitators should offer some agreements and ask others to make suggestions. You can always review and edit your agreements.
- **For adult allies:** Make sure youth feel safe in the space by making sure the space is youth led. Be mindful of your participation.

## KEEPING PEOPLE ENTERTAINED

- **Dress up/theme:** Come up with creative ideas to make your meetings fun! We encourage the youth facilitation team to come up with different themes.
- **Playful backgrounds:** Encourage everyone to use backgrounds on Zoom calls. You can find all sorts of fun Zoom backgrounds online to go with your themes.



- **Icebreakers and activities:** Coming up with interactive activities to do on Zoom is a great way to keep peers entertained and supports in strengthening bonds. Use the 'white board' feature on Zoom and invite folks to play games like Pictionary or Tic Tac Toe. Or host a ball game where participants toss around an imaginary ball while leading introductions. Or invite folks to shake it out where they shake their bodies, counting down from 5-4-3-2-1, 4-3-2-1, 3-2-1, 2-1, 1-1 for their left arm, right arm, left leg, and right leg!
- **Create a music playlist:** Have each person give a song suggestion and create a playlist on Youtube, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. You can play these songs before or after the meeting starts.
- **1 Minute Dance Party:** When youth facilitators feel energy falling, lead a 1 minute dance party playing songs from the playlist you created.



*The Central Valley Youth Council joins together in December 2019.*

# MEDIA CONSIDERATIONS AND YOUTH

## Consider these 7 questions when promoting and planning live, public, or recorded events that may potentially expose youth to broader audiences.

Social media attention is all the rage these days. That's especially true in the virtual world that youth and staff from grassroots organizations are currently navigating during remote learning and social distancing. Still, youth safety should always be a higher priority. It is important to ensure that your organization has policies in place related to the privacy and safety of young people, and protocols to address issues that fall under laws or best practices related to online spaces and virtual communities.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can you limit the ability of strangers gaining access to youth names and social media accounts?
- Who is watching or viewing your content?
- Are you collecting permission forms from minors and their parents?
- Can photo or video angles that limit facial recognition and personal locations be adopted?
- Are you posting content that can over-familiarize strangers and viewers with your youth?

- Do you have a system for identifying and tracking adults and other youth who may use your social media or website to trace the habits, activities and locations of your young people?
- Do you remind young people about the reality of child sex trafficking, how important it is to not meet other young people in private, and to never meet an adult without parental permission?



*A group of GSA youth leaders engage in conversations about racial and gender justice, community organizing, and advocacy during GSA Activist Camp in 2019.*

# LET'S TALK TECH AND GET Y'ALL ONLINE

Here you will find some tips and resources to get your virtual club meetings started, including where to host them, options for GSA members to get the tech equipment they need, and how to make your virtual space accessible.

## WIFI & TECH ACCESS

- If you have the help of an advisor, double check what your school is doing to support getting students hooked up to wifi and access to a computer/tablet. Your school district might have a program and your advisor or teacher can best help you.
- If you do not have an advisor at the moment, you can still ask club members what tech support they might need right now to be able to make the meetings. If you have the support of a parent, download and use Zoom to host the meetings for your club without an advisor.

## MEETING PREPARATION!

### DESIGNATE ROLES

To ensure a smooth meeting, we recommend your group identify at least 3 people to help lead and support. These roles can be reassigned, but we recommend inviting members to step up to learn how to support the meetings.

- **Tech host:** Starts the meeting, presents slides, and shares screen/music.
- **Chat moderator:** Hypes up the chat and helps to answer questions/comments.



*GSA youth leaders from Southern California discuss issues impacting trans and queer students during a peer group discussion in Los Angeles in 2019.*

- **Notetaker:** Takes attendance and captures all important information and next steps for projects.
- **Facilitators:** Lead the meeting, move through the agenda, and serve as #VibeKeepers

If your club has few members, you can adapt your roles accordingly. Remember: hosting meetings online can be hard so learn and adapt with each meeting.

## LIVE TECH SUPPORT FOR ZOOM

- If you are hearing an echo, you might want to turn down your microphone or speakers. That can cause an echo. Headphones also help.
- Invite club members to ask questions in the chat, so that the meeting is more interactive.
- Use the Hand Up feature to allow more members to participate.
- Go over Quick Tools, such as Hand raise; Mute and unmute yourself; Chat box; and Stop video.
- When Sharing screen, take note of Share Computer Sound at the bottom and Optimize screen share for video clip.

## MAKING VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES AND CONTENT ACCESSIBLE

Just as schools accommodate student accessibility needs for in-person learning and meetups, GSA clubs can accommodate members' accessibility needs to build inclusive virtual communities. Many video conferencing and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have built-in tools for users with hearing and visual challenges. These tools can be utilized when posting club content (e.g. flyers, photos, campaign videos, zines, memes, etc.) or hosting video conferencing meetups. Here are basic steps to ensure that your virtual GSA communities are accessible and affirming.

### ADD DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Integrating "alternative text", also known as "alt text", to visual content is one of the easiest ways to ensure that youth who are blind or have visual impairments can still enjoy photos and videos online via screen readers. This type of text differs from photo or video captions or basic descriptions of what appears on screen. As the Center for Persons with Disabilities states: "Rather than providing what the image looks like, alt text should convey what the content of the image is and what it does."

- How to [add alt text to Instagram posts](#).

- How to [add alt text to Facebook posts](#) with photos.
- How to [add alt text to Twitter posts](#) with photos.

**Note that alt text may need to be turned on in your social media app settings.**

### ADD VIDEO CAPTIONING

Whether you are using a video conferencing platform to host a virtual meetup or posting a video to social media, add captions to accommodate youth who are deaf or hearing impaired. This can include closed captioning (video captions that viewers can turn on and off to suit their needs) or open captioning (video captions that cannot be turned off by viewers). Many video conferencing platforms come with built-in captioning tools. Some social media platforms include built-in captioning tools while others require third party apps to add captions to a video before posting it to an account.

- How to add captioning on [Facebook videos](#).
- How to add captioning on [Youtube videos](#).
- How to add captioning on [Google Meet](#).
- How to add captioning on [Skype](#).
- How to add captioning on [Zoom](#).

**Popular third party apps for video captioning Instagram and Twitter videos are [Apple Clips](#), [Cliptomatic](#), and [MixCaptions](#). Learn more about how to make videos more accessible at [Project Hearing](#).**

### CREATE TRANSCRIPTS

Unstable internet connections, tech equipment mishaps, or other accessibility challenges may prevent members from fully participating in a video meetup. Troubleshoot by writing transcripts or detailed recaps of group discussions for members to read later and be in the know. GSA advisors or student leaders can take on the transcriber role using a simple Word document or Google document. Transcription tools are now built into some paid video conferencing platforms (e.g. Zoom), web extensions (e.g. Google Meet Transcripts), or available through third-party apps (e.g. Otter.ai)



## FINDING THE RIGHT VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SPACE

It is important to choose the right meeting platform to keep GSA members engaged and active while building a new virtual community. Whether your GSA is social, support, or activist oriented, there's a wide variety of free or low-cost platforms to stay connected and accommodate various club needs. When choosing the right platform, be sure research privacy and security safeguards to keep members safe.

### VIDEO CONFERENCE CALLS

These most closely resemble in-person meetings by providing space for youth to facilitate and participate in group discussions face-to-face. Platforms include:

- **Google Hangouts (free):** This conferencing platform is accessible for anyone with a personal Gmail account. Up to 25 participants can join a video at once. ([hangouts.google.com](https://hangouts.google.com))
- **Google Meet (free with paid option for advanced features):** This conferencing platform allows up to 100 participants per meeting for free and can be accessed via personal Gmail accounts or Google Classroom. It has higher quality lighting and sound capabilities than Google Hangouts, allows more participants at once, and offers live captioning/subtitles for accessibility. ([meet.google.com/](https://meet.google.com/))
- **Skype (free with paid option for advanced features):** This conferencing platform is owned by Microsoft and allows up to 50 participants per meeting for free. Live captioning is available. This is one of the older and well-known video conferencing options, but it is not accessible via older browsers or devices.
- **Zoom (free with paid option for advanced features):** This youth-friendly conferencing platform allows up to 100 participants per meeting for free and includes a number of interactive features for users, including polls, audio and visual sharing, a group messaging function, emojis, a white board, and customizable backgrounds. Names and pronouns can also be changed to affirm all participants. Live captioning is available. Free accounts have some time limitations.



*Trans and queer youth leaders are organizing*

### GROUP CHATS

Non-video messaging meetups can be used to accommodate GSA members who want to stay connected and participate in meetups but are unable to join video calls due to safety concerns and/or technical hurdles. Members can also use them to communicate and support each other in between scheduled meetups. Platforms include:

- **Discord (free with paid option for advanced features):** This chat platform provides a variety of messaging options, including text, audio, and video chats. While it was created as a gaming chat service, it is increasingly popular with school-based clubs. ([discord.com/new](https://discord.com/new))
- **Google Hangouts (free):** This doubles as a text chat platform that can be used by any user with a personal Gmail account. ([hangouts.google.com](https://hangouts.google.com))
- **Slack (free with paid option for advanced features):** This chat platform allows you to create channels, or chat rooms, for group discussions, member updates,

campaign planning, and sharing resources and media. (slack.com)

- **Q Chat Space (free):** Although GSA clubs cannot organize and facilitate their own chats on this platform, it is a dedicated safe space for LGBTQ+ youth to participate in pre-scheduled group discussions. Every chat is facilitated by well-trained experts from trans & queer youth programs. This platform is ideal for GSA members who need additional community support between club meetups. (qchatspace.org/)

### SOCIAL GATHERINGS

These types of meetups are for GSAs to host fun group bonding activities. They can integrate a variety of streaming and gaming services. Platforms include:

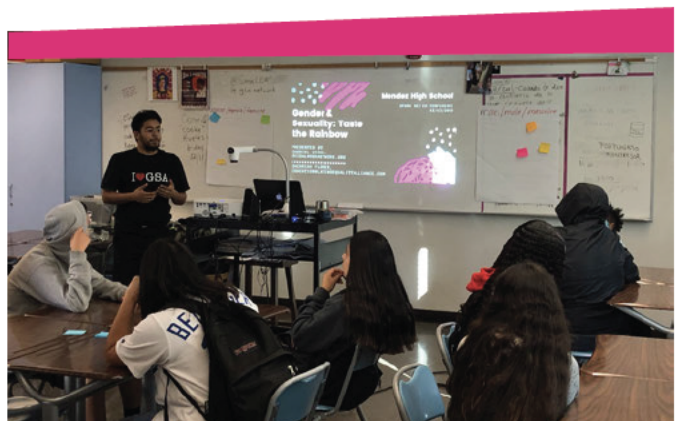
- **Houseparty (free):** Hop on a video call to play new versions of classic party games like Quick Draw (Pictionary), Chips & Guac (Apples to Apples), trivia, or Heads Up! (houseparty.com)
- **Kahoot:** An online, game-based learning platform. Educators have used it to create fun and interactive ways of learning inside the classroom. The platform can also be used to encourage participation during summits or workshops and to host virtual trivia events. There is a free basic education account that allows you to create your own trivia games or select from thousands of pre-designed games.
- **Kast (free with paid option for advanced features):** Host a watch party on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Disney+, Youtube and more by streaming a video and sharing your screen with your entire club. The person who shares their screen does need an account to access specific streaming services (e.g. a paid Hulu account), but members do not need their own to participate.
- **Netflix Party (only free to download):** Watch shows, movies, and documentaries on Netflix as a club. All participants need access to a Netflix account and must use a laptop or desktop to stream. (netflixparty.com)

## FREE AND DISCOUNTED INTERNET SERVICES

The first step in creating an online/virtual space for participants is their ability to connect. For some, access to the internet has only been available at schools, public libraries, and coffee shops. With the closing of these spaces, many have lost their access to internet services.

Many internet providers have offered free or discounted internet to new customers. The options, availability, and cost of these services vary on location and the person or family's particular situation. Some programs support households on income-based government assistance programs and require that documentation. These programs include: National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Public Housing (HUD). Other programs are being offered to the general public with or without being on an income-based government assistance program.

CableTV.com is an online resource that researches and compares TV, internet, and streaming services. Rachel Oaks, a staff writer at CableTV.com, provides an outstanding list of resources for free or discounted internet programs. The blog outlines available programs, the cost of discounted services by company, and a general understanding of low-income internet service options. The blog can be used as a resource guide to share with all participants to review options.



GSA Network staff host a workshop to trans and queer students in Southern California.

# APPENDIX A: QUICK CLUB RESOURCES

Recruiting new club members right now can seem very daunting, but trust that youth are looking to be connected to friends and community right now. Here is a list of recommendations when reaching out to new potential members.

## TEXT MESSAGING

We all know that texting is the most convenient way of getting information to multiple people. If you feel comfortable, use your phone to text your members reminders and other updates. Most students are in a remote learning environment, and it's common to text new people.

### TIPS FOR TEXTING:

- Always introduce yourself. Share how you know them or found their contact information.
- Pitch your invitation. If you do not know the person well, we recommend sending a flyer with the time, date, and contact information.
- When you extend your invitation for them to join, always be concrete. You want to get a sure answer if they can or cannot make it. It's OK if they cannot; just let them know your group is always open.

### CONCRETE QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- "Are you interested in joining?"
- "Is this something you are interested in right now?"
- "Can I invite you to the next meeting?"
- "Can you make that time on Tuesday?"

## Sample Text Message

My name is [Insert Your Name]. I remember that you were part of the [Club Name] last year! I wanted to let you know that we move the club online this year. We are meeting on [Platform] on [Day & Time]. Are you free and down to join us?

For something more discrete (maybe they are not out at home), you can replace the name of the GSA club with the name of your advisor to say something like: "I remember you were a part of Mr. Paton's club."

## EMAILS

Okay, we get it! Emails are old and not the fastest way of sharing information, but for those who aren't out at home, emails can sometimes be the only place kids have privacy. That said, not everyone has access to a computer, so we definitely recommend texting when safe and possible.

We've included a sample email message in the sidebar. This is a medium-length message that can accomplish all of your main communications goals. It includes who you are, how you know them, when and where your club will meet, how to sign up, and some details about what the meeting will look like.

Sharing some details of what they can expect during the meeting can help you draw them in or can give you an idea of what kids are looking to do these days.

Once you have new members ready to connect with you online, ***check out our Virtual GSA's In Action page for workshop ideas.***

## Sample Email

Hello [Student name],

My name is [Your Name]. I hope this email finds you at a good time. I remember that you came to the GSA Club last year, so I wanted to let you know that we are starting up the club again, but this time it's online! ***\*\*share a positive memory if you can\*\****

Our first meeting will be next Thursday from insert time and date. We will be meeting online through Google Hangouts. Here is the link to sign up ***\*\*drop in important links/signups\*\****

It's super important that we stay connected and give each other support. Our meeting will be a space where you can destress, have fun, and hopefully learn some new skills. Is this something you are interested in joining?



# APPENDIX B: SYSTEMS OF POWER

The chart below shows groups with systemic power, systems of oppression that give them power, and groups with less power. This list is meant to provide some examples and is not comprehensive. You will need to do a little bit more research on systems of oppressions to better understanding of the concept.

While this chart is linear, we must remember that we can hold multiple identities. That means we can be impacted by multiple systems of oppressions in different and unique ways. This is called intersectionality. Taking the first step to learn where we live on this chart will help us acknowledge how we might be contributing to these systems and determine ways to stop systemic oppression.

## HOW TO START A PRIVILEGE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR GSA

### PREP FOR MEETING:

- Set up your meeting date, time and agenda.
- Reach out for support from a trusted ally who is familiar with having these conversations.
- Find resources to help people navigate complex

emotions after meeting.

- Be ready to push through discomfort as a facilitator.
- Start and finish the conversation; this will need longer than a lunch period.

### AGENDA EXAMPLE

- Welcome and icebreaker
- Set community guidelines
- Review your club's purpose.
- Discuss privilege, systems of oppression, and brainstorm ways to stop systemic oppression in our GSA.
- Ask tough questions: What privileges do we each hold? What ways might we be systematically oppressed? Do some of these systems exist in our GSA?

GROUPS W/ SYSTEMIC POWER (PRIVILEGE)	SYSTEM(S) OF OPPRESSION	GROUPS W/ LESS OR NO SYSTEMIC POWER (OPPRESSED)
Straight People, Cisgender People, Men	Patriarchy (Sexism & Cisgenderism)	Gender Non-Conforming, Trans, Queer, and Intersex People, Women
White People	Racism, Anti-Blackness, etc.	Black People, Non-Black People of Color
Citizens, Non-Native People	Settler Colonialism	Indigenous, Native People

<b>GROUPS WITH SYSTEMIC POWER (PRIVILEGE)</b>	<b>SYSTEM(S) OF OPPRESSION</b>	<b>GROUPS W/LESS OR NO SYSTEMIC POWER (OPPRESSED)</b>	<b>PREJUDICE (A PRECONCEIVED IDEA ABOUT A GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH NO FACTUAL BACKING)</b>	<b>DISCRIMINATION (THE ACTIONS AND WAYS FOLKS ARE AFFECTED BY THE SYSTEM)</b>
Straight People, Cis-gender People, Men	Patriarchy (Sexism & Cisgenderism)	Gender Non-Conforming, Trans, Queer and Intersex People, Women	Not respecting or believing in the identity of a Trans person the same as a cis person  Queer relationships are not equal to straight relationships	Trans students being misgendered or not having access to facilities aligned with their gender.  Being bullied for not being straight
White People	White Supremacy	Black People, Non Black People of Color	Believing racist opinions of Black People and People of Color.	Higher rates of suspension, expulsion Higher rates of being impacted by law enforcement (Police and/or I.C.E.)
Nationalist-Citizens	Imperialism	Indigenous, Native People	The belief Native People do not exist	Erasure of history; forced to learn history that centers Western colonial history in the classroom, with lack of Indigenous representation. Lack of land acknowledgements in school.

## Keep in Mind

In your GSA, some members in the group might hold privileges others don't. This is not to say that you must shun those who hold privileges and those who don't. This is to help you build trusting relationships and a dynamic that centers the needs of those who are too often left out among your membership, which is oftentimes Trans, Queer, Non-binary / Gender Non-Conforming, Black, Indigenous, youth of color members.

<i>GROUPS WITH SYSTEMIC POWER (PRIVILEGE)</i>	<i>SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION</i>	<i>GROUPS WITH LESS OR NO SYSTEMIC POWER (OPPRESSED)</i>	<i>PREJUDICE</i>	<i>HOW DO YOU CENTER THOSE IMPACTED?</i>
Straight People, Cisgender People, Men	Patriarchy	Trans, Queer, Gender Non-Conforming, and Intersex People, Women	Sexism, Transphobia, Heteronormativity, Heterosexism	Implement the use of pronouns. Respect the pronouns offered. Center conversations around Trans liberation and listen to the Trans community for ways you can take action. Partner with a Trans led club on campus or organizations off campus for activities and workshops, or invite speakers to your club.
White People	White Supremacy	Black People, Non Black People of Color	Racism, Anti-Blackness, etc.	Be proactive about uplifting the Movement 4 Black Lives' demands. Center conversations around Black liberation and listen to ways you can take action from the Black community. Partner with a Black led club or local organizations for activities or invite speakers to your club.
Citizens, Non Native People	Imperialism Settler Colonialism	Indigenous, Native People	Colonialism Racism, Anti-Indigenous	Offer a land acknowledgement and understand why you are giving a land acknowledgement. Center conversations around Indigenous Sovereignty and listen to ways you can take action from the Indigenous community. Partner with an Indigenous-led club or local organizations for activities or invite speakers to your club.

# GSA ADVISOR HANDBOOK





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GSA Advisor Handbook: 2nd Edition, GSA Network, October 2020

*Cover photo: Members of the 2019 National Trans Youth Council*

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# INTRODUCTION

## We Lead with Belonging, Power, and Justice: A Letter from our Leadership

Here at Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network, we believe every student deserves to feel welcomed, safe and free to be their authentic selves at school. We also know that in order to build an intersectional GSA movement for racial and gender justice, we must center the lives and leadership of trans and queer youth of color.

We've succeeded in building a movement led by young people, while still witnessing the continued and evolving violence faced by LGBTQ+ youth, especially in schools. Trans and queer youth, especially youth of color, are experiencing school pushout, basic needs insecurity, police violence, and many other forms of institutional and interpersonal violence.

The resilience of youth leaders nationwide, however, gives us hope for the more just and equitable world we're building - envisioned and led by young people themselves. But the social, economic, and health problems we're facing expose just how much our current systems do not provide real stability or support for youth.

That's why we believe so deeply in our work at GSA Network and the work being led by GSA clubs and leaders nationwide. GSA clubs have been vitally important in shifting the attitudes of the current generation of young people, and we're so proud of all the ways this work has shifted and deepened, particularly in the last decade. We're striving to create belonging, support leadership, and build a long-lasting community in and outside of schools. We believe in the power of youth to shape the world of our dreams through education, organizing, and community building.

We updated our GSA Advisor Handbook to reflect the ways the LGBTQ+ community has grown and evolved in the past decade. We're excited to share resources and tools that will support you - GSA club advisors - to create and sustain thriving GSAs in partnership with students, schools, and communities, as we move closer to our vision of trans and queer liberation.

**"THE RESILIENCE OF YOUTH LEADERS NATIONWIDE ... GIVES US HOPE FOR THE MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE WORLD WE'RE BUILDING."**



Geoffrey Winder & Ginna Brelsford  
GSA NETWORK CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

**Reader Note:** This handbook was primarily designed for advisors and in it you'll access resources and tools for setting up, running, and sustaining a GSA club. You'll learn more about GSA's values and opportunities for aligning your local efforts with our national network. We also encourage youth leaders and other GSA supporters to check out this handbook to access tools and find answers to their questions.

## GSA NETWORK MISSION, VISION, & APPROACH

GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains trans, queer, and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. We offer support, resources, and leadership opportunities to middle and high school GSA clubs and leaders nationwide.

GSA clubs create space for support, organizing, and community building so that trans and queer youth have what they need to be able stay in school, become leaders who can advocate for themselves and their needs, and organize in coalition with other youth and community groups to fight for racial and gender justice.

GSA Network's approach to fighting for racial and gender justice is to work with grassroots, youth-led groups and GSAs, empowering them to educate their schools and communities, advocate for just policies that protect LGBTQ+ youth from harassment and violence, and organize in coalition with other youth groups across identity lines to address broader issues of oppression.

Following the leadership of our state and national youth councils, we launched annual days of action to spotlight our commitment to the intersectional nature of our community. GSA Day for Racial Justice is an annual call to action to mobilize for racial justice and celebrate the multiple identities held by LGBTQ+ youth. GSA Day for Gender Justice is an annual call to action for our people to center trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse people and mobilize for their liberation.

The future that we are working toward is a future where trans and queer young people, and all peoples, are alive



*Youth leaders from the SoCal Youth Council gather in support of safer at schools rally.*



*Youth leaders building with community and leading change at GSA activist camp.*





# RACIAL JUSTICE & GENDER JUSTICE: VALUES THAT GUIDE US

## We believe liberation cannot be reached without trans & queer youth of color.

Trans and queer people of color - particularly Black and brown trans women and girls who are the most impacted in our communities - have long been at the forefront of our movements, shaping change. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera are just two of the countless trans women of color who've led monumental change throughout our trans and queer history.

At GSA Network, our commitment to racial and gender justice means intentionally centering trans and queer youth of color in our work. This means recognizing that when we center the needs of youth existing at these intersections, by extension, everyone's needs are met.

We all benefit from the unique vision and experiences of trans and queer youth of color who are always on the cutting edge of culture, innovating and showing us new ways of being, growing, and showing up for each other.

Our team believes in youth leadership. We recognize youth are already leaders. What they need from us - GSA advisors and other supportive adults - is resources and tools to ensure they can step into their leadership and excel. We are committed to listening to youth, believing in and learning from their experiences, and placing value in youth as experts not only of their own lives but of understanding how their experiences fit into the bigger picture of belonging, power, and justice. We are continuously pushing ourselves to ensure our support for youth organizing is effective and authentic and we rely on GSA advisors to be a partner in this effort.

At GSA Network, we've strengthened our focus on racial justice and gender justice, recognizing that for our trans and queer youth of color to be free, we must work toward intersectional liberation.

## OUR VALUES INTO ACTION

To put GSA Network's racial and gender justice values into action, we encourage GSA clubs to incorporate organizing and advocacy. Getting involved in the GSA Days of Action is a great way to do this. To access more resources and tools on organizing, check out the [Annual Resource Packet](#).

**"SYSTEMS ARE STRUCTURED TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST US AND HARASS US. WHEN WE CHOOSE TO LIVE OUR TRUTH, WITH SELF CONFIDENCE & SELF LOVE, IT CREATES A RIPPLE EFFECT. I CHOOSE TO LEAD WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION."**

*Curly Dynamite  
National Trans Youth Council*

## #GSADay4RJ

Led by youth leaders of color on our national youth councils, GSA Day for Racial Justice is our annual call to action for GSA clubs and youth to organize in support of trans and queer people of color. They lead in traditional and non-traditional ways, creating opportunities for your students to find what's best for your GSA club.

Join us every February as we organize for racial justice! You can find more information on the next GSA Day for Racial Justice on the GSA Network website leading up to the day of action.



## RACIAL JUSTICE

Our commitment to racial justice is grounded in the knowledge that trans and queer youth of color face distinct challenges for their intersecting identities. We also recognize trans and queer people of color are responsible for leading us to the collective wins of the LGBTQ+ movement in the U.S. and across the globe. That's why we center and follow the leadership of our trans and queer youth of color who hold a bold vision for our collective liberation.

Our framework recognizes white supremacy and anti-Blackness as a social construct that are used to inflict violence on our trans and queer people of color at institutional and interpersonal levels. The school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) is an example of how racialized violence in schools disproportionately harms young people of color. The STPP is a system of policies and practices used by school districts—zero tolerance discipline, policing and surveillance in schools, suspension and expulsion for willful defiance—that push youth of color, queer youth, undocumented youth, lower income youth, and visibly and non-visibly disabled youth out of schools and into the juvenile justice system.

GSA racial justice work is dedicated to dismantling racist structures that push our young people out of schools, to ensure they can instead remain in school, graduate, and be able to pursue their dreams and passions. GSA clubs can use this framework to ensure the work they lead on campus is inclusive of students of color and their experiences.

### TAKE ACTION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE YEAR-ROUND

- **Invite a speaker** to discuss racial justice at a meeting
- **Hold an event** with allied campus organizations (e.g. *Black-led student group* or *NAACP youth chapter*)
- **Participate in campaigns** by national racial justice organizations (e.g. *Movement for Black Lives* or *Dignity in Schools*)
- **Raise awareness and funds for trans and queer youth** impacted by racial injustice (e.g. *publicizing campaigns to free students who have been unjustly targeted by the school-to-prison pipeline*)



## GENDER JUSTICE

Our principles of gender justice are rooted in self-determination. In our National Trans Youth Council's Nine-Point Platform, they opened with this demand: We call for the right to self-determination and control of our destinies. The right to self-determination is critical to gender justice in that we believe youth of any gender should feel safe and supported in living as their authentic selves.

The patriarchy, which most of our society is modeled after, clearly outlines the prescribed definition of gender and its resulting impacts. The gender binary (man on one side and woman on the other, with little wiggle room) has been used to limit us when it comes to our gender assigned at birth, as well as our gender identity and presentation as we grow up. When young people cross these invisible lines, they are often punished and experience violence.

GSA gender justice work is working toward ending the expectations and limitations put on young people to conform to gender roles assigned to them. To do this, our work centers trans and nonbinary youth as leaders and experts in what a gender liberated future looks like.

### TAKE ACTION FOR GENDER JUSTICE YEAR-ROUND

Your GSA club can take action for gender justice year-round. Here are a few ways your club can make gender justice a priority, today and always.

- **Invite a speaker** to discuss gender justice and trans liberation at a meeting
- **Hold an event** with allied campus organizations (e.g. a girls and women's group or sports team)
- **Participate in campaigns** by national gender justice organizations (e.g. *Transgender Law Center* or our own *National Trans Youth Council*)
- **Raise awareness and funds for LGBTQ+ youth** impacted by gender injustice (e.g. *publicizing GoFundMe's for trans folks facing violence*)

## #GSADay4GJ

Led by leaders on our National Trans Youth Council, GSA Day for Gender Justice is an annual call to action for GSA clubs to organize in support of trans and nonbinary students and justice.

In 2018, the National Trans Youth Council published a nine point plan to guide our collective vision for gender justice and liberation. The plan is rooted in our history - taking inspiration from the Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Program, the Young Lord's 12 Point Program and Platform, and the Third World Gay Revolution. Learn more at GSA Network's [GSA Day 4 GJ](#).

Join us every November as we organize for gender justice led by the nine-point platform! You can find more information on the next GSA Day for Gender Justice on the GSA Network website leading up to the day of action.





# GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR GSA

**GSA clubs are primarily school-based clubs where trans and queer students find support, organize for justice, and build community. The clubs can be set up like any other student group, with a faculty advisor and regular meetings. We encourage GSAs to be set up to match particular student needs, which can include the option of setting up a support-based, social-based, and/or activist-based GSA.**

## GSA BASICS

Everyone is welcome—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, queer, intersex, asexual, questioning students, and allies, including students who identify as straight, students with LGBTQ+ families, and students who don't have or need a label for their gender identity or sexual orientation.

### IDENTIFY YOUR GSA MISSION AND GOALS

Begin by determining the goals your student leaders have for creating this space. This will help guide your club's plans and activities. Consider what type of GSA club you plan to have and how it will work to serve your student community.

You should work with student club leaders to address the nature of your club and its goals in an official mission statement. To develop a vision and values statement, check out our [Values for Justice Workshop](#) and [Visions for Justice in Schools Workshop](#).

### SELECT THE TYPE OF GSA

There are three common types of GSAs, with two ways to structure it—based in the school or in the community. Here we focus on school-based clubs; see the section below for information on community-based GSAs.

The three typical functions of a GSA club are to: support students, build community, and create change. We break this down into three types of GSA clubs: Support, Social, and Activist. Most GSAs are a combination of all three.

**Support GSAs** are for youth who want to have a safe space. These GSAs can be a support group to provide safety and confidentiality to students who are struggling with their identities or those who are experiencing harassment at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. This type of GSA often provides one of the few safe spaces for students to express themselves.

**"SOMETIMES WE ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, OTHER DAYS, WE JUST WANT TO HANG OUT AND WATCH DRAG RACE."**

*Emily Grijalva, M.Ed & M.S., Restorative Justice Coordinator/Community School Coordinator, Mendez High School*



*Youth leaders taking a moment of rest and getting ready for another day of growing and learning at activist camp.*

**Social GSAs** are generally helpful for youth trying to meet other trans and queer students and make friends. These GSAs are social groups. They provide a sense of community and a space for LGBTQ+ and their allies to build a social network where their identity is respected. Social GSAs often host cook-outs, movie nights, field trips to a local queer prom or a pride parade, and attend conferences. These GSAs help build community and help students feel less isolated.

**Activist GSAs** are for youth actively working to improve their school and community climate, and fighting for equity and justice. These GSAs focus on educating students, teachers, parents, and community members to create safer, more accepting schools and communities for trans and queer students. They may seek to change school rules and policies, train staff and students, and help to stop harassment and discrimination. Activist GSAs may organize around state or national campaigns. No matter the type of GSA you and your club select, we anticipate your club's activities may change over time to meet student needs.

### **COMMUNITY GSA**

Over the past decade, we've seen the need grow for community-based GSAs that may carry out support, social, or activist activities, but not be directly affiliated with or recognized by a school nor have a campus advisor. This is an important option particularly for trans and queer youth of color who may face greater challenges to being open about their gender or sexuality at school.

Community GSAs carry out the same activities as school-based GSAs and can access support and resources from the national GSA Network, community partners, and/or other supportive adults. If you come across a community GSA in your area, this could be an opportunity to connect your school-based work with youth outside of campus.

### **RESEARCH THE LAW**

Sometimes school administration can be unsupportive of GSA clubs being established, but the law is on your side. Under the federal Equal Access Act (EAA) of 1984, any school that permits non-curriculum related student groups must provide equal access to all student groups, and that includes equal access for GSAs. Be sure to research your federal and state legislation for starting non-curricular clubs and regarding anti-discrimination. If you encounter any resistance while building your GSA, knowing your legal rights to start a GSA and talk about trans and queer issues in school can go a long way to helping you succeed. [Find a GSA Network partner in your state](#) or local ACLU if you have questions or need support. Remember that students have the right to form a GSA!

### **FOLLOW GUIDELINES**

Starting a GSA is just like starting any other school club. Partner with students to get a copy of your student handbook, and look up your school's requirements for student organizations so that you can be sure to follow the rules carefully. If your school doesn't have easy access to a student handbook, be sure to check in with your Activities Director or Associated Student Body Advisor about the rules for starting a club. As an advisor, you can support students to write a constitution or mission statement. Be sure you and your students do everything required according to the school's rules to avoid slowing down the approval process.

## PREPARE AND TURN IN ANY NECESSARY PAPERWORK

Make sure you and your students follow the rules thoroughly and correctly. When you're getting started is the best time to address any potential concerns or arguments from an administrator or a parent.

Some tips as you prepare any paperwork or applications to start your group:

- **Keep dated and signed copies of any forms** or other paperwork turned in for your club application.
- **Keep notes** regarding when you turned paperwork in, and to whom, as well as any conversations you have with school officials about starting the club.
- **Keep record of all documentation** that has been returned to you. This should include responses from administration in writing that have been signed by an administrator.

## INFORM ADMINISTRATION OF YOUR PLANS

It may be helpful to tell administrators what you are working on and including GSA student leaders in that process. It can be very helpful to have an administrator on your side. They can work as liaisons on your behalf with other teachers, parent groups, community members, and the school board. If an administrator is resistant to the GSA, let them know that forming a GSA club is protected under the [Federal Equal Access Act](#).



*Youth leaders building the relationships that will lead to community and power.*

## ROLE OF THE GSA ADVISOR

We're about empowering young people, especially trans and queer youth of color, to lead. This means supporting young people to lead GSAs and cheering them on from the sidelines when they are ready to lead. While we recommend every GSA club have a faculty advisor, we encourage advisors to support students in determining the type of GSA, facilitate and lead meetings, set the agenda, draft plans and activities for the year, and make decisions around campaigns, partnerships, and community building.

The GSA advisor is typically a school faculty member who supports starting, running, and maintaining a GSA club. For community-based GSAs, the advisor may be a supportive adult from the community who can help with records and administrative work. Your level of involvement as an advisor will vary, so staying flexible and adaptive will help you stay connected with the student work.

The advisor may help facilitate discussions where the students talk about what they're interested in working on and what student needs must be met by the school. Advisors can support young people to explore potential campus-wide changes that will support trans and queer students now and in the future.

As the advisor, you will be one of the most constant and stable parts of your GSA. Help the current students think, plan, and act not just for this school year or the next, but also for many years down the road. Working for social justice in our schools takes time and we need strong, well-led and well-organized GSAs to lead this movement. You can help your students build for the future by raising funds for next year, creating strong structures in the club that will ensure consistent and good student leadership, and creating an archive of GSA records, events, campaigns, and stories so that future leaders have access to the history of your club.

## GSA ADVISOR GENERAL ROLES

Roles can include - but are not limited to - the following:

- **Provide regular opportunities** for skill building, leadership, and learning.
- **Teach students** how to navigate the ins and outs of



your school system in terms of laws and policies, and serve as a liaison between faculty and the GSA.

- **Train students** to resolve conflict among officers and within the club if it arises.
- **Support students in fostering a safe environment** for all students to participate, including challenging any language and behavior from within the GSA that may perpetuate discrimination.
- **Assist students** in managing club funds.
- **Educate and support students** to keep records of meetings and decisions and only if need be, keeping records for the GSA.
- **Set students up to succeed**, but allow for little failures as teachable moments that are followed with conversations that help students to reflect and learn.
- **Support changes within the GSA**, which may include shifting goals or the mission of the group or being more than one “type” of GSA.

#### ADVISOR ROLES SPECIFIC TO A SUPPORT GSA

**A Support GSA** works to create a non-judgmental, safe, and nurturing place where students can share their experiences, learn about resources in their school and off campus, connect with others like them, and build peer support. Support GSAs do activities like: movie night, icebreaker activities, board games, trust exercises, sharing circles, arts & crafts, etc. Remember that it is up to the students to decide which type(s) of group they will have.

#### ADVISOR ROLES SPECIFIC TO A SOCIAL GSA

**A Social GSA** primarily works to create a fun, safe, and welcoming place where students can make friends, connect with others like them, and build peer support. Remember that it is up to the students to decide which type(s) of group they will have.

#### ADVISOR ROLES SPECIFIC TO AN ACTIVIST GSA

**An Activist GSA** primarily works to transform their school into a safe and welcoming environment free of harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ+ and ally people. Activist GSAs help educate students, staff, and parents

on the issues facing the LGBTQ+ and Ally communities, change school policies and practices to end harassment and discrimination, and train students and staff on how to be allies. Activist GSAs connect with resources on and off campus to increase the tools and support they have to change their school. Remember that it is up to the students to decide which type(s) of group they will have.

#### THE ROLE OF OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

The most successful GSAs see involvement from a range of other adults from the school and community. This includes peer teachers who may support GSAs through lending their classrooms for meetings, fundraising, or spreading the word; principals and administrators who guarantee the longevity of GSAs and take time to listen to LGBTQ+ youth demands; parents and caregivers who may get involved in planning or chaperoning events; and community partners who support GSA clubs with education, awareness raising, and activism.

*Community partners* are an increasingly important part of GSA club activities. They can be invited in to speak on various topics (e.g. faith and LGBTQ+ activism), to support your club's organizing campaigns (e.g. a local civil rights group), or to offer jobs and internships to your students (e.g. a local LGBTQ+ youth-serving organization). When you invite community partners to speak at your school, be aware of protocols and procedures for having outside visitors (e.g. sign-in procedures, what topics speakers are allowed to cover, need for admin permission, etc).





*Circles are used in workshop to build a space of trust and to make sure everyone is seen, heard, and valued.*

## 'If the space doesn't make us feel safe, it shouldn't be there in the first place.'

Ky Claude laughs and says their entire high school is like one big GSA club. They attend a liberal high school in Columbus, Ohio, where many teachers are openly part of the LGBTQ+ community. While this means LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to access support, trans and queer youth of color face barriers to having their needs met or addressed.

"We've been pushing our administration to become more inclusive of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color," says Ky, who is a member of GSA's TRUTH Council. "A teacher who said the N-word wasn't fired and there have been other incidents, too. You can't say you're an inclusive school when young people are telling you, I don't feel safe here."

To help raise awareness about racial injustice and how it intersects with LGBTQ+ discrimination, Ky led their school's participation in the GSA Day of Action for Racial Justice. They spread the word through social media along with holding 1:1 conversations with their school administration. They raised money to fund these activities and ensure their principal and administration paid attention.

"If the space doesn't make us feel safe, it shouldn't be there in the first place," says Ky. "That's what happens when you don't feel like everybody is included or fitting in."

Ky found GSA Network when they turned to their community to access belonging and resources they couldn't get at their school. "I joined Kaleidoscope Youth Center, and got introduced to GSA. They came to Ohio and I met people from the National Youth Council and got to know their work, especially for gender justice and racial justice.

They continue, "It's beautiful when new people show up at a GSA club and feel supported. I've seen GSAs work in a very collaborative way to make the curriculum focus on racial justice and gender justice, rather than just chill and eat snacks. Young people find their voice through that. Even in one lunch period, having the space to unwind, be yourself, and be supported, can do so much for a student."

Ky recognizes different GSA clubs will face different obstacles. They "encourage students to talk to their administration, or else find a group of adults or other people with authority who will back you up. I had a lesbian counselor and lesbian math teacher who were part of my support system. We may have to act as our own support system sometimes, but it's important to reach out to others in your school or community to get that support, too."

Ky sees the uprising in defense of Black lives creating space for visionary conversations about race and gender. "We're talking about abolition of systems of punishment and incarceration and replacing it with transformative justice. There's space to imagine how things could be. At the TRUTH Council, we're uplifting our nine-point platform, particularly the point focused on abolition. My ancestors fought the same fight -- because of the community that TRUTH brings, I know I'm in this fight with leaders who have become like family to me. It's really fulfilling." **Ky Claude, National Trans Youth Council**

## GSA Youth Rally to Pass LGBTQ+ Resolution in LA Schools

At GSA Network, we believe every trans and queer youth has the right to a quality education that meets their needs. In June 2019, the LAUSD school board unanimously passed a resolution affirming this right to LGBTQ+ inclusive education.

Titled 'All Means All: Enhancing Supports and Resources for Our LGBTQ+ Students,' the resolution calls on LAUSD to take measures to promote and guarantee LGBTQ+ inclusion including: recognizing October as LGBTQ+ History Month along with other key dates of importance to the LGBTQ+ community; increasing competency trainings for teachers, staff, and parents; sharing LGBTQ+ resources and information on LAUSD's website; and conducting surveys and analysis to ensure all-gender bathrooms are safe and accessible across the district.

The resolution also mandates a high school textbook committee to work with the Division of Instruction and include students in the selection process for appropriate and inclusive textbooks, particularly for history and social science courses.

Students from LAUSD, including GSA club members along with the LA LGBT Center, Latino Equality Alliance, GSA Network staff, and ONE Archives mobilized for months to support the school Board resolution. The Latino Equality Alliance's LGBTQIA Youth Council helped develop the resolution. LEA is a core partner of GSA clubs across LAUSD, including at Mendez High School in Boyle Heights.

Emily Grijalva is a Restorative Justice Coordinator and Community School Coordinator at Mendez H.S. who was asked by her students to become their GSA advisor. She supported students in their efforts to pass the LGBTQ+ resolution, noting that despite policies such as the FAIR Education Act, "Not once have we been encouraged to include LGBT writers or history in our curriculum."

Youth leader Axel Tirado worked to pass the resolution, mobilizing students and working with LEA's youth council. "The bullying is a consequence of a lack of education," they reflected. "Learning queer history validates you."



Los Angeles Unified School District students in action for safer schools.



Leaders taking up space and offering knowledge to end the S2PP.



Youth leaders making it clear: Black Trans Lives Matter.

# RUNNING AND SUSTAINING YOUR GSA

## DAY TO DAY

Once you have established your club's purpose and type (e.g. support, social, or activist) and become officially recognized by the school, you can begin holding meetings and determining your day to day club activities.

**Advisor and Student Note:** Many of the day to day activities and guidelines described in this section will be carried out by student club leaders, not necessarily by you, the advisor. Work with students to find the balance that feels good for your campus.

### PREPARE FOR MEETINGS

- **Set the agenda:** Make a list of issues or topics to discuss at each meeting.
- **Publicize the meetings:** Figure out the best ways to reach as many people as possible at school (e.g. daily announcements, flyers, posters, social media).

*Tip:* Fun incentives like snacks or trinkets can be great for publicizing.

### RUN A GOOD MEETING

- **Set community agreements:** To make sure the group members feel safe and heard, establish community agreements and try to keep students mindful of them.
- **Decision-making:** Figure out how your group will make decisions like majority vote or consensus.
- **Identify a facilitator:** Designate someone to keep the group focused on the meeting agenda.
- **Take notes or minutes** at each meeting for members who couldn't attend.
- **Use Facebook groups, Google docs, or email** to share notes. Figure out what works best for your club.

### CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

- **Have a brainstorming session:** Set your ideas into a list of priorities and concentrate on the top three.
- **Set up committees:** Make each project a committee and appoint a leader to organize the specific project. Committees help spread leadership.
- **Set tentative dates:** Put deadlines, dates of meetings, or anything else into official school calendars. Follow a schedule and take your deadlines seriously.

### SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committees working on projects should meet separately from the regular GSA meeting and report back to the GSA. This ensures that GSA members not interested in the project still have a place in meetings, while allowing committees to get more specific work completed.

## HOW TO FACILITATE A MEETING

This will be helpful information to share with student leaders.

### WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?

The facilitator is the person who runs a meeting and moves the meeting along. Facilitators make sure participants can share their opinions and stories, discuss topics, and make decisions.

The facilitator is responsible for:

- **Making sure members agree** on the agenda before and during the meeting.
- **Ensuring the group keeps** to ground rules/community agreements.



## Building Power through GSAs

"I joined my school's GSA during my freshman year. I remember we had an ally day, and I said, a day isn't long enough -- we need a whole week."

Princess Arthur is a GSA National Youth Council member from the Inland Empire who has been active with GSA throughout high school. Her advocacy to expand the ally event from a day to a week was only the beginning. She saw that not all LGBTQ+ youth at her school were able to access the healthcare or mental health support they needed. With her GSA, Princess conducted surveys of other students to find out whether the healthcare they accessed was inclusive or comprehensive.

The club applied the guidelines from the [2016 California Healthy Youth Act](#) that requires school districts to provide students with comprehensive and unbiased sexual health and HIV prevention education in middle school and high school. From the feedback they received, Princess and the GSA talked to their administration about making the school's health curriculum more inclusive. They were able to secure their principal's support, though the pandemic interrupted their implementation plans.

"It's important for people to see themselves in curriculum," says Princess. "I cannot stress enough the importance of inclusive health - we have to promote health for all or it's health for no one."

*Princess Arthur, Inland Empire GSA club*

- **Guiding the discussion**, intervening if problems arise.
- **Staying neutral, asking questions**, and suggesting ways to approach agenda items.
- **Keeping the group on track and on schedule**, particularly when the group goes on a tangent.
- **Making sure the group comes to decisions**, and dividing work clearly among members.
- **Maintaining awareness** of the energy level in the room and helping encourage members.
- **Making sure everyone participates**, no one dominates.
- **Creating a safe, positive, and comfortable environment** (protecting people from personal attack).

### STRATEGIES FOR RUNNING A GOOD MEETING

- **Checking in** and asking GSA members if there is anything they want to add to each meeting's agenda

for the GSA to discuss.

*Ex: "Are there any topics you all would like to add to the agenda?" (During the beginning of the meeting, possibly after reviewing the agenda for the meeting.)*

- **If someone puts an item on the agenda**, ask them to briefly cover important background information and what they want done.

*Ex: "Jordan, could you please share a little background information on this topic and what you'd like the GSA to do about it or how you want us to address it?"*

- **Give 5 minute warnings** when moving on to another agenda item. Have another member be a timekeeper if necessary. If time runs out, ask the group to agree to spend more time on the issue, postpone it until later in the meeting, or put the discussion off until another meeting.

*Ex: "We are out of time for this topic and still have some other topics to talk about. Do folks want to make a*





Workshop leaders being creative and keeping youth leader attention through storytelling and building connection among participants.

*decision on this now in the next 10 minutes, or do you all want to talk about it more next meeting?"*

- **If a comment, question, or topic is off-topic** at the moment, create a list (a parking lot or bike rack) for items to be discussed at another time.

### STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

- **Encourage full participation:** make sure everyone gets to speak.

*Ex: "I've noticed a few people have been saying a lot on this topic. Is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet who wants to say something?"*

- **Try to notice** when someone is holding back. Try different ways of discussing topics if you think it will help, like a "Go Around" or "Pair Share."

*Ex: "Some people may not want to talk openly about this topic. But it's important we hear all different points of view, so I encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings, if you feel safe."*

- **Keep track** of the list of people who want to speak, and share it out loud so everyone knows the speaking order. Feel free to put people who have not yet spoken, first in the list.

*Ex: "Okay, let's have Aleja, Travis, Sanjay, Tran, and then Em for the speaking order."*

### STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION AND DECISION MAKING

- **Help people avoid repeating themselves** by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven't been mentioned.

*Ex: "Are there any different arguments against or in favor that haven't been mentioned yet?"*

- **If the group has been discussing a topic for a while**, move the group towards a decision or agreement.

*Ex: "It seems like most people agree that we should talk to the Dean about the harassment that is going on."*

- **Know when the group has reached a decision.** Also know when a group cannot reach a decision; suggest postponing a decision when the group needs critical information, the group needs to hear from others, or the group is not prepared.

- **Check briefly** for agreement before moving on – make sure everyone understands decisions.

- **It's best if the facilitator can remain as neutral as possible**, so they do not abuse their power. If the facilitator wants to participate actively in the discussion, they can ask someone else to take over facilitation. If the facilitator has a comment to add, they should say so and add themselves to the speakers list, and not simply speak and take advantage of being the facilitator.

*Ex: "Speaking as a GSA member, I think..."*

*Ex: "Okay, I want to make a comment as well, after Darren..."*

## FUNDRAISING

Your GSA club is making important changes on your school campus, but you and your students may require funds to keep up the momentum. Here we share ideas to help your club figure out what works best, your fundraising goals, and the individual strengths of your members.

### BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Find out your school's fundraising policy for clubs. Potentially have a student club leader talk with Student Government and invite them to a GSA meeting so they can explain the fundraising policy and process to all GSA members. Fundraising policies are different at every school, so be sure you and your students give yourself enough time to get your idea(s) approved.

### WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDRAISING IN MY GSA CLUB?

Every GSA club member should know how fundraising works, not just the club officers. Some of the tools your students learn when fundraising can also be applied to other areas of youth organizing.

### ONCE YOU ARE READY TO RAISE MONEY

#### Step 1: Brainstorm

With your student club members, brainstorm and decide what you want to raise money for. Is it to host an event or summit, or travel to an event, T-shirts, or something else?

How much will you need? Once you determine the amount that actually needs to be raised, you and your students will be able to choose the right strategy for your goals.

#### Step 2: Choose the right strategy for your club

There are so many activities that a club can do to raise money, so talk to your student club members about what they enjoy doing and/or what they are good at. Your club's fundraising efforts will be most successful if you choose an activity and strategy that members enjoy.

All fundraising activities essentially fall into three main strategies:

1) **JUST ASK!** Most people enjoy making donations to

causes that they believe in or supporting local schools and activities. You just need to ask! There are several ways to ask people to make a donation to your cause or project:

- **Launch a social media campaign** and link to a crowd-funding website (like GoFundMe) to create awareness and raise funds. Social media can be a powerful tool that members of your GSA may already be experts in. If people in your networks aren't able to give, ask them to share and spread your message far and wide.
- **Create an informational flyer or write a letter** that you can send to people, organizations, and businesses in your local community. Tell them why your cause or project is important and explain how their donation will be used as well as the impact it will have on your GSA club or school.

2) **SELL!** Selling items can be fun for students and send a fun message about your club too. Choose products that are relatively inexpensive to buy and that can be sold at a higher price. Be sure to only buy as much as students will be able to sell, so they are not stuck with unsold inventory. Some popular items among GSA youth leaders are pins, stickers, and baked goods (rainbow cupcakes, anyone?).

3) **HOST AN EVENT!** Is there a particular activity or sport that your club members enjoy? Tailor your event to your members' interests as well as your audiences to ensure success.

#### Step 3: Thank your supporters!

Be sure the club shows appreciation to the people who give to the cause. Help students to ensure all supporters are thanked, no matter how big or small the size of their donation. Here are some ideas on showing appreciation to supporters:

- **Collect email addresses and send out a Thank You** picture or short video of your GSA club members expressing their gratitude. Briefly tell them what the club will achieve thanks to their support.
- **Share a Thank You picture or short video** via social media with everyone who supported the club's campaign.
- **Make Thank You cards** with handwritten notes. Have

all members or the club officers sign the card.

- **If selling a product**, tie a ribbon with a small thank you tag to the product.
- **Take a group photo** holding a poster that says “Thank you” and use the photo to post a social media thank you to club supporters, friends, and allies.

## ADVERTISING

Inevitably, the question comes up: “How do we get more students to come to our GSA club?” Here are ideas to boost attendance and participation; you can brainstorm additional ideas with your students:

- **Provide food** at your meetings
- **Put an announcement** in the daily e-bulletin or other daily communication to students
- **Advertise at club day** - have a table (virtually or in-person) and, funds permitting, pass out fun collectibles like stickers or pins with the name of your GSA
- **Participate in school pride** or spirit week at your school
- **Set up an information table** at lunch or special events in a visible place
- **Reach out to cisgender and straight allies**, peer teachers, and/or community partners who may be interested in engaging
- **Pass out colorful pride ribbons** or GSA buttons to GSA supporters
- **Make flyers or posters** about specific meetings, topics, or events - post around campus and share digitally
- **Ask peer teachers** to permanently post your group's general flyer in their classroom
- **Send representatives to classes** to make an announcement about your group's meetings and activities and/or invite student club leaders to make an announcement to your class
- **Create a digital account** where you and student club leaders can post all your information and activities; e.g.

TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, website, or other online/social media account

## VIRTUAL TOOLS

For a multitude of reasons, virtual meetings may serve your GSA club needs at one time or another. This section will offer tips on how to successfully run GSA activities from our screens.

**Advisor and Student Note:** Many of the day to day activities and guidelines described in this section will be carried out by student club leaders, not necessarily by you, the advisor. Work with students to find the balance that feels good for your campus.

### HOW TO HOST A VIRTUAL GSA MEETING

#### Getting Started

- **Pick a platform:** Select a digital platform based on the type of GSA meeting you want to host. Club leaders, including advisors, should research platform features and prices before making a decision.
  - Video call: Zoom, Google Hangouts, Google Meet, Skype
  - Group chat: Slack, Discord, Q Chat Space
  - Movie party: Netflix Party, Metastream, Kast, Squad, TwoSeven
  - Game party: Houseparty
- **Choose a meeting date and time.** Encourage members to RSVP.
- **Promote your meeting:** Club leaders should work with their advisors to determine the safest way to contact members. Be discreet and mindful of people's privacy.
  - When calling youth, it may not be safe to mention “GSA club” or another trans or queer reference. Alternatively, club leaders can say they are from a student leadership program at (insert school name).
  - Do not share meeting or registration details publicly. Send that information directly to GSA members via email, text/phone, or direct messaging online.



## SETTING YOUR AGENDA

Once club leaders know what type of meeting they want to have, make a schedule of activities and topics to cover. See Sample Virtual Meeting Agenda below.

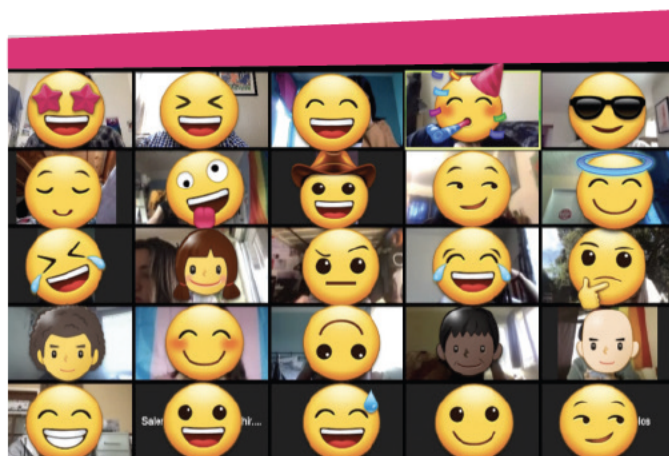
- **Introductions and check-in:** Share names, pronouns, and responses to an icebreaker question.
- **Housekeeping:** Explain how the digital platform works and review community agreements for meetings.
- **Optional wellness activity:** Share a tip or resource to stay grounded and healthy.
- **Political education or group discussion:** Introduce a topic of the day. Lead a workshop or pose a discussion question related to that topic. See sample workshops on our [Virtual GSAs in Action page](#).
- **Closing:** Finish the meeting with club announcements, including the next meeting date and time, ways to stay connected while physical distancing, and additional resources.

## RUNNING A GOOD MEETING

Similar to in-person meetings, facilitators should keep the group on schedule and encourage member participation.

- **Get to know the platform:** Prior to meeting day, facilitators should take time to familiarize themselves with the chosen virtual space. Read the platform's instructions and/or find a video tutorial.

- **Day-of setup:** Facilitators should spend 15-30 minutes before the meeting to make sure the digital space is ready for members. If there are special features (*chatboxes, polls, breakout rooms*), they can practice using them).
- **Make space:** Ask members if there is an item they want to add to the agenda.
- **Stick to the community agreements:** Make sure that members follow your GSA's agreements.
- **Keep the energy up:** Be aware of the energy level and make adjustments to the agenda as needed.
- **Center community care:** Members may be overloaded with stress, fear, dysphoria, and anxiety during this time. Be prepared for them to bring their feelings to the virtual space.
  - **Before the meeting,** it's important for facilitators' to check in with themselves and make sure they are in the mindset to hold these types of spaces. Support them to recognize their boundaries and what they are able to help with.
- **If someone feels comfortable sharing,** listen respectfully. If they need additional support, feel free to contact GSA Network for resources. Please refrain from giving members advice. You would not want to put a friend in jeopardy.



Making the best of zoom calls can sometimes look pretty silly, but is always worth it.



Youth leaders share knowledge and actively listen to their workshop partners.



# SAMPLE IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

## 1. CHECK-IN (5-10 MINUTES)

Share your name, pronouns, and your quarantine nickname (your mood + the last thing you ate).

## 2. OPTIONAL ICE BREAKER (10 MINUTES): ANIMAL SHOWDOWN

Make sure players have their videos on and set to a view mode to see everyone. Choose a starting ringleader from the group. Name 4 animals (ex. bunny, dragon, bear, snake) and match them with different hand signals. On the count of 3, players reveal their animal sign. If players choose the same animal sign as the ringleader, they are eliminated. The ringleader role can rotate from person to person.

## 3. HOUSEKEEPING (10 MINUTES)

Briefly explain the main features of the digital platform (ex. how to turn the microphone or video on and off, breakout rooms, etc.)

Review your club's ground rules and community agreements (ex. What's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here.)

## 4. OPTIONAL WELLNESS ACTIVITY (5-10 MINUTES)

Play a funny YouTube video or a song that you have on repeat.

Lead a quick group stretch.

## 5. POLITICAL EDUCATION OR GROUP DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES): CLIMATE JUSTICE

Introduction: Show a video of a youth-led climate strike.

Discussion questions: What have you seen or heard about young people fighting for the environment? What do you think climate activism can learn from trans and queer communities?

Resource: [Climate Justice & Queer & Trans Liberation \(podcast\)](#)

Resource: [Why Indigenous Youth Were 2019's Climate Warriors](#)

## 6. CLOSING (5-10 MINUTES)

In the chat box, share a word for how you're feeling right now or a takeaway from the conversations you had.

The next meeting will be next Wednesday at 4pm.

What recommendations do you have for future discussion topics or activities? What did you like or dislike about this digital platform?

**ADDITIONAL VIRTUAL GSA TOOLS CAN BE [FOUND HERE](#)**

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP

**As the school year comes to an end, many GSA leaders worry about what will happen to the GSA club once they promote or graduate. Let's plan proactively!**

## TRANSITIONING LEADERSHIP

It is important to create a strategy for passing the torch of leadership so that your GSA stays strong for many years. Your long-term goal is to keep your GSA active in the fight against anti-trans and anti-queer violence in schools. An effective student club needs strong leadership every year. So, regardless of your club's leadership structure (such as officers, senators, executive committee, etc.), you will have a short-term goal every year of finding a reliable and passionate group of individuals to lead the club. Then, you will need to develop a strategy that looks at the situation within your GSA club and at your school, and plan how to best train new leaders.

### IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES

What are your strengths? Your challenges? Who is currently involved? How many graduating seniors currently lead the GSA? What about younger students in lower grades? Do you have an engaged base?

### IDENTIFY YOUR POTENTIAL LEADERS

Look around your GSA meetings. Think about the participants in your events this year, such as Day of Silence. Are there students who will be at school next year who are interested in a GSA leadership role? Maybe there are students in the GSA who would make great leaders, with some coaching and training, but they feel unsure or unaware of their own leadership potential. Remember that EVERY new member can potentially become a leader of your GSA!

Some ways you can support building student leadership include:

- **Training new members** in the rules, history, and projects of your GSA.
- **Spreading out responsibility** to all members throughout the school year, not just at the end.
- **Taking turns facilitating meetings** so everyone knows what it feels like to be up front and prepare you for a possible leadership role.
- **Specifically asking younger GSA members** to facilitate meetings throughout the year.
- **Networking** with other organizations on & off campus.

### SELECT YOUR NEW LEADERS EARLY

Many GSA clubs select their new leadership in the middle of each school year, rather than at the beginning. The advantage of holding elections at the beginning of Spring semester is that your new leaders can be trained and mentored by your outgoing leaders.

### TRAIN YOUR LEADERS

Develop a mechanism for your outgoing leaders to train your incoming leaders. Here are some tips:

- **Have summer outings** to continue the GSA momentum and build connections.
- **Have leadership trainings** where all resources will be transferred (club constitution, summary of past events).

## YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP

Students working with their GSA advisor, other supportive adults at the school, and/or adult community partners will be a core part of the relationships they will build when you run a successful GSA. Here are some things to consider for adults and youth working together.

### PRIOR TO STARTING

- Challenge your stereotypes about youth and/or adults.
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for youth and adults.
- Ensure that one group does not greatly outnumber the other.

### BUILD EFFECTIVE YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

- **Evaluate the structure of the organization:** Did youth or adults start the group? Who leads the group? Have both youth and adults always participated?
- **Prioritize youth leadership and facilitation** and focus on leadership training and skill-building for students.
- **Follow a specific process** for planning events and projects in your GSA. Make sure responsibilities are clearly designated and expectations are well defined.
- **Frequently evaluate group dynamics:** Do adult advisors and student leaders both feel supported? Do youth members feel they have the power and control in the group?
- **If adults tend to outnumber youth** or dominate the GSA, consider forming a separate Genders & Sexualities Teacher's Alliance or faculty group.
- **If adult advisors wish to be involved** in setting meeting agendas (or are required to by school policy), make sure that a youth leader is also involved in the process.
- **If adult advisors have concerns** about a particular project, have them voice these by asking questions instead of handing down authoritative decisions.



*Youth leaders take center stage when there is an opportunity for young voices to shine.*

### YOUTH AND ADULT PARTNERSHIP TIPS

- **ASK QUESTIONS-** Conflict can easily arise when messages are misconstrued. Communication styles vary from person to person; different communication styles do not imply disrespect or disinterest. Ask questions in order to clarify and keep a common goal in mind to help address conflicts.
- **BE DELIBERATE-** Adults and young people vary widely on content knowledge, development, and willingness to participate. Create a way to hold everyone accountable in the work they do.
- **BE RESPECTFUL-** Everyone comes from different backgrounds and experiences. It is important to respect and recognize what an individual brings to the group.
- **YOUTH TRAINING-** Create learning opportunities for youth to take leadership on important projects. Facilitate growth for young people in a meaningful way such as public speaking, communication, and assertive skills.

## Starting a GSA Club with Adult and Community Support

"I'm a community kid," says Curly Dynamite, a queer youth leader from southern California who identifies as nonbinary. Curly found out about GSAs from a mentor, while they were figuring out their gender and sexuality in high school. Curly saw how LGBTQ+ people in their school and neighborhood experienced harassment and discrimination. They got in touch with GSA staff to access resources and support to start a GSA club at their school to create community among LGBTQ+ youth, particularly trans and queer youth of color.

Curly worked with other students to organize and promote GSA club activities including educational as well as community events like a successful Rainbow Extravaganza event with music and art. They applied for a grant with the support of a teacher which helped them afford t-shirts to promote belonging while also raising the club's profile around campus. Their advisor offered them a regular room for their meetings, and they were able to grow to 30 members, with 16 students becoming active members. Their principal also supported their club, particularly when other teachers pushed back against the club.

"We need to learn for ourselves who we are," says Curly. "We need to learn LGBTQ+ history in this country, learn our history in other countries. Even if we're immigrants or the child of immigrants, this history still matters and impacts us."

*Curly Dynamite, LAUSD GSA club*

## GETTING INVOLVED

GSA clubs build power for a growing movement of trans and queer youth and we actively support youth through training in leadership, organizing, and advocacy for racial and gender justice. At GSA Network, we empower trans and queer youth to educate their schools and communities, organize in coalition with other youth across identity lines, and advocate for just policies that protect all youth from harassment and violence. In addition to offering support to young people for the work they lead on their campus, we also invite youth leaders to take advantage of various opportunities we offer through our own staff programming.

### GET TRAINED

- **Leadership Trainings & Summits:** Day-long trainings teach the basics of community organizing, school-based campaign strategy, and student rights advocacy.
- **Activist Camps:** Intensive 3-day summer camps provide deeper training on racial and gender justice, students' legal rights, gender identity activism, and curriculum inclusion advocacy, among other topics.
- **Conferences:** Day-long conferences include a series of workshops focused on local organizing and skill-building to start GSA clubs, civic engagement and activism, sexual health and healthy relationships, and teaching students about their education rights. Adult tracks are offered at select conferences.

### BECOME A GSA LEADER

- **Youth councils:** Build your GSA activism, help guide GSA Network's youth organizing campaign strategy, and become a youth trainer. Apply to one of our [Regional California](#) or [National Youth Councils](#).
- **National Trans Youth (TRUTH) Council:** Our TRUTH Council was created with public education at its core, intending to challenge the pre-existing narratives media had of trans youth, and work with communities to push for a shift. TRUTH is a place where young people can connect with other trans youth and find inspiration in their stories, and also find resources and support in



thinking through their goals as a storyteller, how to stay safe when sharing their story publicly, and how to share their story authentically and effectively for their goals. Learn more about their work at [ourtranstruth.org](http://ourtranstruth.org).

- **Queering Brotherhood Fellowship:** Provides leadership training and development to up to 20 GBT boys and men of color through our work with [Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition \(BSS\)](#).

### **BUILD THE GSA MOVEMENT**

GSA Network is accelerating the growth of a national youth-led GSA movement. We strengthen the ability of trans and queer youth of color to envision and create sustainable communities where they can live authentically, and we support community-based organizations across the country that are making a local impact.

### **LOCAL STRATEGY, NATIONAL IMPACT**

GSA Network seeks to strengthen national movement-building capacity at the intersection of LGBTQ+ youth organizing and racial and gender justice to end school push-out, and develop the next generation of LGBTQ+ leaders, particularly low-income youth and youth of color, in those regions of the country where youth face the greatest isolation and the least amount of access to resources: the Southeast and Midwest.

GSA Network Southeast was launched in 2014 followed by GSA Network Midwest in 2017. We also operate GSA Network of California. Through our Regional Organizing strategy, we infuse staff capacity and technical expertise in these regions in order to strengthen local organizations and increase trans and queer youth of color leadership development and engagement. Each regional office is staffed with dedicated Organizers from the regions to provide youth leadership training, capacity-building, and technical assistance, as well as support youth in carrying out national organizing campaigns.

### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GSA NETWORKS**

Launched in 2005, the National Association of GSA Networks is a group of state organizations that represent at least 3,500 GSA clubs across the country that work together to align our national and regional organizing strategy for racial and gender justice. The goals of the

National Program are to:

- **Convene the National Association** of GSA Networks to accelerate the growth and impact of the GSA movement nationwide.
- **Provide training and technical assistance** to state and regional networks of GSA clubs across the U.S.
- **Create a GSA network in every state** by replicating GSA Network's successful youth leadership and GSA organizing model.

**"WHEN I WENT TO THE GSA YOUTH COUNCIL ACTIVIST CAMP, IT WAS AMAZING BEING AROUND OTHER YOUTH WHO EMBRACED WHO THEY WERE -- I COULD FEEL THE POWER IN THE ROOM. IF THEY COULD DO THIS FOR ME, I WANTED TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS FOR SOMEONE ELSE."**

*Princess Arthur  
Inland Empire GSA Club*

There are currently 20 states represented in the National Association of GSA Networks. Each organization has made a commitment to work towards more youth leadership, deeper analysis, and strategy to address white supremacy, and create adequate support systems to address gender justice. We work with local partners to develop new curriculum, programs, and models that better fit the various communities our local partner organizations work with. Association members are now intentionally working with trans and queer youth of color, bringing an intersectional lens to their existing programming with LGBTQ+ youth. Members are invited to participate in National Gathering, an annual convening of the National Association of GSA Networks, to share skills, strategize, and train organizers from member organizations and youth on various topics that impact our schools and communities.

# STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR GSA

In this section we offer resources for ensuring your GSA club has a strong foundation that can be sustained for years to come. The road to trans and queer liberation can be a difficult one, and people may have questions about GSA's purpose or in some cases be unsupportive of trans and queer youth. We hope these resources can support your club as well as your role in being an adult ally champion.

## TALKING POINTS TO PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT GSA

- Anticipate concerns, questions, and possible resistance.
- Be prepared to educate about what a GSA is and does (refer to "GSA Basics" section of handbook), and to address potential misconceptions that they might have about GSAs.
- Emphasize the skills and abilities that GSA membership can help to foster in its members: organizing, social justice, facilitating, inter-group dialogue, conflict resolution, interpersonal intelligence, event planning, public speaking, etc.
- Know your school's/district's policies that either implicitly or explicitly support GSAs, and be able to direct parents/guardians/families to more information.
- Know the laws in your state around students' privacy rights and what you do and don't have to tell parents/guardians/families. This is important so you don't inadvertently out a student as a member of the GSA.
- Have parent/guardian/family-specific resources available for GSA members' families in a variety of languages (Family Acceptance project, PFLAG, COLAGE, Somos Familia, etc.). Note that in many cases, it is not required that parents/guardians know that students are part of a GSA.
- Invite supportive families to a GSA meeting or event.



*Trans youth leaders showing up and out for national gathering.*



Youth leaders pose for a quick selfie near an all-gender restroom. Big smiles for safer schools.

### TALKING POINTS TO ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND OTHER STAFF

If you need to talk to administrators or other teachers, keep these tips in mind:

- **Be clear what you're asking for** and make sure that you're asking the right person. For example, you might need to talk to the Student Activities Coordinator regarding an issue with the GSA. It might not be necessary to ask the principal directly for a GSA because activities are not in the principal's purview.
- **Do you have assumptions** about how an administrator, counselor, or teacher will react? Even homophobic or transphobic administrators may want to learn more about trans and queer issues or allow a GSA. They may care about bullying/harassment but do not know a lot about trans and queer issues.
- **Work to find common ground.** Stressing the need to create a safe and accessible school for all students can help create common ground between you and other parties.
- **Bring trans and queer 101 materials with you,** including local resources. Bring a proposed mission statement. Check out our GSA Network resources pages for some possible supporting documents to bring with you.
- **Find adult allies** affiliated with the school and ask them to attend the meeting with you.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is normal and sometimes inevitable. Which is why it is important to have plans in place to address conflict, rather than avoid it or hope it doesn't arise. The conflict outcome is affected by the way the people involved in the conflict resolve the situation. There is different potential for conflict in GSAs: conflicts between students, between you and students, or between the GSA club and other people inside or outside of your school. Here are some tips to address conflict:

- **Access peer mediation resources** available to you. A lot of schools have peer mediation resources and a counselor trained in this skill.
- **Many schools also offer restorative justice practices** to address and resolve conflict. Determine whether your school has access to restorative practices and/or check out RJ resources [available here](#).

**Scenario:** *Tiger (GSA President) and Jason (GSA Vice President) have a conflict because of a mutual friend's Facebook post about immigration. They have not been coming to meetings and the GSA has suffered because of their conflict.*

- Ask to meet both students privately at the same time.
- Allow each student to share their side of the conflict. Make sure that each student uses "I" statements and has the opportunity to feel heard.
- Your role as GSA Advisor is to explain their impact on the GSA and other students.
- Help the students find common ground. You can agree to disagree and make sure to value all opinions.
- Bring it back to group agreements and encourage the youth to follow those group agreements.
- Brainstorm solutions and next steps to solve the conflict together. Agree on which next steps the group will follow.



## JOB AND LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Whether you're a state or private employee, your protections as a GSA Advisor, staff ally, or as an LGBTQ+ individual might differ from state to state and even from school district to school district. Below are some recommendations for making sure that you are protected:

- **Start with your state's policies.** Does your state offer anti-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity for public and/or private employees? Check out your state government's website or check out Lambda Legal's state-by-state guide.
- **Your state might not provide job protections,** but your municipality might. Check your local government's website or contact a city or county official to find out.
- **Check your district's policies.** You should be able to find out about these on the district's website, but you should also check in with your union representative. Find a union representative that you trust, and inquire not just about existing policies, but about any other instances of how your district supports (or doesn't support) GSAs and their advisors. If you don't feel comfortable talking to a local union representative, contact your union's national headquarters.

In many cases, there might not be job protections for actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. This can be a difficult place to be and we honor your courage to continue to sponsor the GSA club. If you choose to organize in the face of adversity and do not have policies to protect you, you can try to organize in the community or have the club meet outside of school. Build coalitions with other teachers and student groups or try to have multiple advisors. And you may need to step aside and let your students do the bulk of the work.

## PROTECTING YOURSELF

Document any noteworthy incident, based on what you observed. A noteworthy incident is one that you think may be important later on; might have significant consequences that affect students, staff, or the school; violates school policy; triggers your mandatory reporting status. Even if you didn't witness the incident, but it was reported to you, document that it was reported to you and by whom.

Your documentation should be as detailed as possible (names, dates, times, places, content), and should be kept in a safe, secure place. If you share the record, be sure to share a copy and keep the original, noting when and with whom you shared it, as well as any follow-up that occurs. Keep in mind that, as a school employee, your records—even anecdotal ones—belong to your employer.

## CONFIDENTIALITY BEST PRACTICES

- Never promise blanket confidentiality.
- Let your students know the limits of your confidentiality (based on your mandatory reporting status).
- If you err in a confidentiality-related issue, err on the side of safety.
- Exceptions to confidentiality (when mandatory reporting is triggered) usually include abuse, danger to self, and danger to others.
- Rules and regulations differ from circuit to circuit and state to state, and levels of confidentiality are usually much higher for school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and home visitors, than for teachers. Find out what the confidentiality rules are for your area and job title.
- If pushed into a corner on a confidentiality issue, make sure that your actions are based on your intent to protect and assist a student, and do not reflect an "intent to harm".
- You may have a "right to know" certain information about a student during the course of your work. Do not share this information with anyone who does not have the same right to know, and be sure that others do not overhear you sharing the information.
- Confidential material can be subpoenaed; make sure your documentation contains only factual, observable information.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## STORYTELLING

Stories are incredibly powerful to help you build community, get the word out about your GSA club, and lift up the leadership of LGBTQ+ youth. Here we share a couple opportunities for storytelling with your GSA club.

### *ARCHIVING YOUR CLUB'S STORIES*

Throughout the year, consider capturing the stories of LGBTQ+ youth participating in your GSA club. Secure the permission of student leaders beforehand, and archive these stories online, potentially in a password-protected Dropbox or Google Drive where only you and student club leaders can access them. Creating an archive like this will allow your club to capture not only the vibrant stories of what your club accomplished throughout the year, but these stories can also be lifted up to show the impact of a club which can be helpful for advertising, fundraising, and organizing and advocacy.

### *TRUTH: TRANS AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING YOUTH STORYTELLING MOVEMENT*

TRUTH, a collaboration between Transgender Law Center and GSA Network, is a national trans and gender nonconforming youth leadership and storytelling program that aims to build empathy, understanding, and a movement for youth to share their stories in their own words and in their own way.

Encourage your students to go to [Our Trans Truth](#) to share their story, find resources, and hear from trans youth across the country.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *WHAT IS GSA NETWORK?*

Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network is a next-generation LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains trans, queer, and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. In California, GSA Network connects over 1,000 GSA clubs through regional summits and youth councils. Nationally, GSA Network leads the National Association of GSA Networks which unites 40 statewide and local networks of GSA clubs. Founded in 1998, Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network (GSA Network) is the only youth driven organization that networks GSA clubs in California, and networks statewide and local organizations serving GSA clubs across the country.

### *WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF GSA NETWORK?*

Members of GSA Network are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, queer, intersex, and straight ally youth, school personnel, and supportive community members who value and support trans and queer youth leadership coming together for racial and gender justice. Straight cisgender youth are often members of GSAs because they have trans and/or queer family or friends.

### *CAN MY SCHOOL BLOCK OUR GSA FROM EXISTING?*

GSAs cannot be banned if other non-curricular student clubs are allowed to exist at the school. The Federal Equal Access Act and the First Amendment of the US Constitution establish the requirement of equal treatment for all non-curriculum related clubs regardless of the content of speech at the club meetings. That means any school that receives government funding and has at least one other non-curricular club must also allow a GSA.

### WHAT IMPACT DO GSAS HAVE ON SCHOOL CLIMATE?

Overwhelming evidence indicates that GSAs improve school climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex students, and their allies. GSAs that conduct student and teacher sensitivity trainings typically see a decrease in slurs, name-calling, and harassment following their advocacy efforts. GSAs also create youth-run spaces for students to meet and socialize. The presence of a GSA club on campus is associated with lower levels of youth self-reports of school-based victimization.

### HOW DO GSA CLUBS DIFFER IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS ACROSS THE U.S.?

Different geographic locations across the U.S. may view and interact with GSA clubs differently. GSAs located in bigger cities with more visible LGBTQ+ populations may have a slightly easier time forming and sustaining their GSAs because the school community may be more comfortable with LGBTQ+ youth being visible and active. But even in those communities, students may encounter challenges with their gender or racial identities.

Students from smaller towns may see less visible representation of their LGBTQ+ identity in their community, but may still find advisors or other supportive adults to form or sustain a GSA club. Whatever community you work in, this Handbook can support you to start, run, and sustain a successful GSA.

### HOW DO WE WELCOME PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT FAITH BACKGROUNDS TO FEEL SUPPORTED IN OUR GSAS?

The relationship between faith and LGBTQ+ identity continues to evolve in our schools and communities. Part of your role as an advisor is to talk openly about religion and faith in order to promote a positive and welcoming school climate that surfaces questions and tensions, rather than denying that they exist. Inviting discussion and creating space for it can help break down stereotypes that say students must choose between practicing their faith and identifying as LGBTQ+.

Options for creating dialogue and discussion include:

- Invite faith-based community partners who can speak to the relationship between faith and LGBTQ+ identity

- Watch a movie or read a book that speaks to how faith and LGBTQ+ identity can affirm each other and hold a discussion about the movie or book
- Explore co-hosting events or programming with faith-based groups on campus
- Refer students to affirming places of worship in the community if they express interest in learning more or speaking to a faith-based leader

### HOW CAN OUR SCHOOLS SUPPORT LGBTQ+ YOUTH WHO ARE UNDOCUMENTED?

Undocumented TQ youth face a unique set of challenges and required targeted support to ensure they are safe in schools and communities. Organizations like United We Dream can provide access to legal and advocacy resources for undocumented LGBTQ+ youth. See their [LGBTQ Justice program](#). [Undocuqueer](#) is another resource that shares voices and art from undocumented queer youth.

**"OUR GSA CLUB HAD GREAT EXPERIENCES BRINGING IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING. WE'VE HAD RELIGIOUS LEADERS COME IN, A LESBIAN PASTOR FROM A NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH AND A TEACHER ON STAFF WHO IS MUSLIM. IT HELPS OPEN THE DOOR FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE GRAPPLING WITH THEIR FAITH AND QUEER IDENTITY. WE'VE SEEN TRANSFORMATIVE RESULTS AFTER. IT'S THEIR ONE SAFE SPACE TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING REALLY DIFFICULT."**

*Tygue Luecke  
12th Grade English & LGBTQ+ Liaison  
Oakland International High School*



**GSA Network Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Sunday, February 4, 2018 / 9 AM to 11 AM Pacific**



Directors	Directors	Management & Staff
Sam Alavi she/her	Malia Jenkins they/them or ve/ver	GINNA BRELSFORD, Co-Executive Director she/her, they/them
Kristen Burzynski (secretary) she/her	Danny Orsburn (treasurer) he/him	Geoffrey Winder, Co-Executive Director he/him
Sophie Fanelli she/her	Malik Robinson they/them	Guests
Maddy Fischer she/her	Ollie Venzon he/him	Various pets
Amanda Goad (co-chair) she/her or ze/zir	Sterling Waldman they/them	
Logan Henderson he/him	Monroe Yeung (co-chair) she/her	
Kristi Jackson she/her		

Time	Lead & Topic	Notes/Decisions
9:00AM (25 min)	<i>Monroe &amp; Amanda</i> Opening Call to order, roll call/ attendance, welcome, agreements, & agenda  Check-in question: What will you miss the most after capitalism falls?	
9:25AM (10 min)	<i>Kristen</i> Secretarial Moment Consent Agenda: 1) approval of minutes from December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Approve December minutes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Motion to approve: Sophie</li> <li>○ Second: Monroe</li> <li>○ Approved Unanimously</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
9:35AM (15 min)	<i>Ginna &amp; Geoffrey</i> Program/ Organizational Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ginna:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalized leadership team charter, finalizing it soon. Excited about it! :)</li> <li>○ Rhina Ramos, Director of California programs is leaving! Vacancy in top California position.</li> <li>○ Reorganizing organization based on vacancies (national program director role was never replaced).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cathy Chu stepping up into more of a program leadership role (but it won't be split CA/non-CA in the way it used to be). This will mean hiring a new person to fill Cathy's old role as manager of SoCal programs.</li> <li>○ Opening new position of director of nat'l policy and partnerships after it's announced at staff meeting</li> <li>○ New person starting as organizer in NorCal on Feb 12th.</li> <li>● Geoffrey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schools campaign is up and running!</li> <li>○ GSA Day for racial justice, February 23! #GSADay4RJ Theme this year: incarcerated and detained LGBTQ young people. There are some resources up on our <a href="#">website</a>, and some suggestions of what to do for the day (Art!), but it's up to individual GSAs to organize local activities..</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>9:50AM (50 min)</p>	<p><i>Every committee's designated reporter</i> Committee Reports</p>	<p>Appreciate the current and planned work of each Board committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Executive Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Executive committee is unique, comprised of the elected officers plus others who choose to join. You can become a bonus member!</li> <li>○ <u>Basic Responsibilities</u>: Plan full board meetings, handle things that come up between meetings and figure out if it should be brought to the full board, and how to do that.</li> <li>○ <u>Primary Goals</u>: Run good meetings that are efficient, safe, supportive, and productive.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Amicus Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Kristen and Monroe are chairs; Kristen, Sterling, Maddie, Monroe.</li> <li>○ <u>Basic Responsibilities</u>: Evaluate and respond to amicus requests, bring recommendations to the full board.</li> <li>○ <u>Primary Goals</u>: Take time to evaluate, submit thoughtful, responsible amici!</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Finance Committee:</b></li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Maddy and Danny are chairs;</li> <li>○ <u>Basic Responsibilities</u>: Review finance policies (supposed to review every year).</li> <li>○ Within the finance committee, there's also the audit committee which is responsible for the annual audit. Others outside of finance committee can join. Ginna points out it is best practice to have at least some participation on audit committee from folks not on finance committee, else it starts to look like checking your own work . <b>Danny moves to create audit task force. Kristen seconds. Approved.</b> Amanda to check in with the lawyers and proto-lawyers of the board about possibly pitching in on Audit Cmte.</li> <li>○ <u>Primary Goals</u>: Going through formal RFP for auditors. As part of that process, we need to send RFP document to audit firms. Board will be asked to vote on auditors committee proposes. Also review finance policies.</li> <li>● <b>Evaluation Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Maj and Sophie are chairs; Sterling, Maj, Sophie</li> <li>○ <u>Basic Responsibilities</u>: Create a plan to evaluate co-EDs, board, and individuals.</li> <li>○ <u>Primary Goals</u>: Debrief of last year's process; ensure we have careful discussions on how we evaluate co-EDs; self-evaluation as a board; finish final report by May.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Resourcing Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Ollie and Kristi are chairs; Ollie, Kristi, and Logan.</li> <li>○ <u>Basic Responsibilities</u>: Set annual fundraising goal; tracking and reporting individual director fundraising/resourcing; review annual outcomes</li> <li>○ <u>Primary Goals</u>: Develop list of non-monetary resources; put out final report in August, 2018.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Board Development Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Descriptor</u>: Sam and Kristi are chairs; Sam, Kristi, Maj</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		<p>September 14th! Formal save the date messages will go out soon. We will have an in-person board mtg the next day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kristi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Suggestion to split ethnicity and race categories for demographic survey (i.e., white/non-hispanic is not inclusive of white folks of hispanic descent.) Amanda suggests: also need the ability to make multiple choices under gender. Maj suggests: ability to specify more than one race/ethnicity...this year's version forced you to just check "mixed race" which could reflect many different perspectives.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>10:45AM (5 min)</p>	<p><i>Monroe, Amanda, Ginna, Geoffrey</i> Travel booking reminder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amanda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey to ensure everyone's on track to make it to the March in-person meeting! If not, contact Eli!</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>**Various dealing with frat boys and/or cats in the background!**</b></li> </ul>
<p>10:50AM (10 min)</p>	<p><i>Amanda &amp; Monroe</i> Debrief &amp; closing</p>	<p>Share impressions of this board meeting and identify things to try doing differently next time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Good:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some folks had an easy time connecting;</li> <li>○ Liked that we could see each other;</li> <li>○ Committees were prepared to share plans and on track for 2018!</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>Delta:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make sure link is correct in invite/email [Amanda copied from an old one, will make sure to base March off February]</li> <li>○ Internet was hit or miss for several folks</li> <li>○ Geoffrey would appreciate more questions about GSAN work from board during program updates</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Amanda thanked me for taking notes! How nice, y'all!</li> </ul>



**Board Values Statement**

We, the board of directors of GSA Network, value the diverse voices of the LGBTQ youth communities we serve. By engaging the community and those impacted most directly in the decisions about the direction of the organization, we work to ensure that GSA Network continues to be a leading social justice organization for LGBTQI+ youth.

As members of the community, we are committed to a board and organization that reflects the diversity of the LGBTQI+ youth we serve and all their collective experiences and skills that make our movement so rich.

As board members we are committed to personal work to embody the values of the organization and vision of a just future.

It is our duty to not only bring our lived experiences as students, alumni, activists and community members, but also approach our decision-making process through a broad intersectional lens along race, gender, sexuality and class lines.

As board members, we recognize and celebrate the history and communities -- particularly women, trans folks and people of color -- that have led us to these spaces and this movement as we continue to build the next generation of LGBTQI+ youth leaders.

**Individual Director Behaviors**

Introduce yourself and your preferred gender pronouns

Stay away from saying "you guys" in favor of gender-neutral terms like "you all" and "y'all"

Disciplined preparation for meetings, focus on the meeting, active engagement

Try on

OK to disagree

No attacking/ blaming of others

Practice self-focus

Practice "both/and" thinking

Assume good intentions

Notice process and content

Maintain confidentiality

Be aware of intent and impact



Be respectful  
Make space/ take space  
One mic/ one diva  
Quiet Coyote  
Shake not shout  
Leave the drama for your mama

**Board Behaviors**

Collective, not individual decision-making  
Sense of group responsibility – speaking with one voice  
Support for board decisions, irrespective of personal positions  
Strategic and generative leadership, not administrative detail

Re-election of Directors

Terms (reminder):

[under construction]


**Board Meeting Attendance**

[to be reinstated]

From the By-Laws

Directors shall be subject to automatic removal if, within any twelve-month period, they accrue ONE unexcused absence or TWO absences, whether excused or unexcused, from a Board meeting. For purposes of this section, “Board meeting” means a regularly scheduled in-person meeting and shall not include any additional, ad hoc, phone or Board committee meeting. An “excused” absence means providing a valid reason (including illness, family emergency or unavoidable work, school or family conflict) to the Chair or Secretary in advance of the meeting. If advance notification of an absence is not provided, the absence shall still be considered “excused” if there were unforeseen circumstances that were serious in nature (including a death in the family, accident, or family-related emergency or prohibition from attending) and that would have prevented a reasonable person from providing advance notification.

Upon facing automatic removal, a director may obtain automatic reinstatement to the Board by appearing in person at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Automatic reinstatement shall only be available once to a director. In addition, a director may petition for discretionary reinstatement by

appearing in person at any Board meeting subsequent to removal and explaining why reinstatement is warranted, after which the Board shall vote on the director's reinstatement petition. The attendance policy shall begin anew for any reinstated director, starting with the subsequent Board meeting (not the meeting at which reinstatement occurred). Removal and reinstatement shall not affect or forestall any term limits which may apply to a director.

At the beginning of every Board meeting, the Secretary or a designated individual shall (1) record attendance, (2) state all excused and unexcused absences for the present meeting, (3) state which directors, if any, have one excused absence within the past twelve months, and (4) state which directors, if any, are subject to automatic removal. Reinstatements, whether automatic or discretionary, shall immediately follow the Secretary's attendance report. The Secretary shall keep a log of all reinstatements.

COMMITTEE LIST lives [here](#).