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What is a Queer-Straight Alliance?

A Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA) is a student-run club, typically in a high school, which provides a safe place for students to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation, and work to end homophobia and transphobia. QSAs may also be known as Spectrum Clubs, Rainbow Alliances, Gay-Straight Alliances (see below) or many other names. Many QSAs function as support groups which provide safety and confidentiality to students who are exploring their identities as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQQ).

Wait, I thought you were the Texas Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Network. What is a Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA), and how is it different from a GSA?

In an effort to become more inclusive in both word and action, the Texas Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Network is shifting toward using the term "Queer-Straight Alliance" or "QSA" to describe the student-run clubs we support. "GSA" has long been a common term used to describe student organizations that unite and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) students and their allies. Yet "GSA" only acknowledges one letter, the "G," in the LGBTQQ spectrum--leaving out parts of our community that often get forgotten.

"Queer" is a blanket term used to describe the entire LGBTQQ community. While "queer" was originally a derogatory term, it has been reclaimed by LGBTQQ people as a word of pride and power. By calling clubs "QSAs," we acknowledge that they are spaces that welcome and advocate for all LGBTQQ and allied students. We encourage QSAs in Texas to consider names for their clubs that are inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations. This includes "QSA" or other names such as "Spectrum" or "Rainbow Alliance".

In addition to support, some QSAs work on educating themselves and the broader school community about gender identity and sexual orientation issues. They may bring in outside speakers to cover a particular topic such as LGBTQQ history. They may organize a "Pride Week" or "LGBTQQ Awareness Events" and offer a series of educational workshops, panels, and pride celebrations. Some hold Trans Day of Remembrance events, to remember transgender people who have been victimized because of their gender identities and expression. Many participate in the Day of Silence, a day when participants remain silent all day as a way of acknowledging the silence induced by transphobia and homophobia in our society. Some QSAs organize a "Teach the Teachers" staff development day that focuses on teaching school staff how to be better allies for LGBTQQ students. For example, QSA members would present scenarios about discrimination or harassment and get teachers to brainstorm how to respond to those situations.

Other QSAs are activist clubs and have worked to get LGBTQQ issues represented in the curriculum, LGBTQQ related books in the library, and

progressive non-discrimination policies implemented at a district level. For example, many QSAs in Texas are working to insure that their school district adapts a policy that prohibits discrimination in schools on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation. Additionally, many QSAs have participated in activism outside of their school on a city or state level.



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All of these different types of QSAs also provide a social outlet for LGBTQQ students and straight allies. Lots of QSAs organize barbecues or movie nights, go to a local LGBTQQ Prom or a local LGBTQQ Pride Parade, and attend conferences together. QSAs are a great way to build community at your school and lessen the isolation that LGBTQQ students might otherwise experience.

How to Start a Queer-Straight Alliance

1. Follow Guidelines

Establish a QSA the same way you would establish any other group or club. Look in your Student Handbook for your school's rules. This may include getting permission from an administrator or writing a constitution. If you require more assistance with finding out laws that protect your rights to establishing a QSA contact your local Texas GSA Network representative who can come to your school and facilitate a presentation that gives more information about Texas laws.

2. Find a Faculty Advisor

Find a teacher or staff member who you think would be supportive or who has already shown themselves to be an ally around sexual orientation/gender identity and expression issues. It could be a teacher, counselor, nurse, or librarian. Finding someone who has a history of diversity training can help when meeting with administration to explain the purpose of your club.

3. Inform Administration of Your Plans

Tell administrators what you are doing right away. It can be very helpful to have them on your side. They can work as liaisons to teachers, parents, community members, and the school board. If an administrator opposes the QSA, inform them that forming a QSA club is protected under the Federal Equal Access Act. Under this act, denying students the right to form a club results in the closing of all school clubs until the club being denied its formation is granted permission.

4. Inform Guidance Counselors and Social Workers About The Group

These individuals may know students who would be interested in attending the group. They can also link you to LGBTQQA organizations that offer resources and sponsorship for QSA clubs.

5. Pick a Meeting Place

You may want to find a meeting place that is off the beaten track at school and offers some level of privacy. Local LGBTQQA organizations can offer a meeting room for your QSA that offers a safe environment for your members to be themselves around others who share the same experiences. Free counseling, sponsorship, and leadership opportunities are some of the many resources available through such organizations.



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6. Advertise

Figure out the best way to advertise at your school. It may be a combination of your school bulletin, flyers, and word-of-mouth. If your flyers are defaced or torn down, do not be discouraged. Keep putting them back up. Eventually, whoever is tearing them down will give up. Besides, advertising for your group and having words up such as "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning" or "end homophobia" can be part of educating the school and can actually make other students feel safer – even if they never attend a single meeting. If there is a group of students that do daily announcements, make sure that you speak to them about becoming an ally and supporting your organization through school-wide announcements. Knowing that school leaders support your QSA can give other students a sense of security and support.

7. Get Food

This one is kind of obvious. People always come to meetings when you provide food! If your club has no funding, reach out to local organizations to sponsor your QSA meetings. LGBTQQA organizations along with LGBTQQ-friendly businesses are always looking for ways to support QSA clubs to ensure that they continue to prosper and meet the needs of their members.

8. Hold Your Meeting!

You may want to start out with an icebreaker to allow members to build relationships with each other. Follow it with a discussion about why people feel having this group is important. You can also brainstorm things your club would like to do this year. Make sure you allow each member to express their questions, concerns and expectations for the club.

9. Establish Ground Rules

Many groups have ground rules in order to ensure that group discussions are safe, confidential, and respectful. Often, groups have a ground rule that no assumptions or labels are used about a group member's sexual orientation or gender identity. This can help make LGBTQQ and allied students feel comfortable about attending the club. Introduce Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGP's), which assure gender expression and sexual orientation inclusivity (see note on side). Make sure to also promote transgender inclusivity, which is sometimes underrepresented. Try creating a box where members can anonymously voice their questions and concerns.

What are PGPs?

Preferred Gender Pronouns, or PGPs, are simply the pronouns we like used when other people refer to us. There are the feminine pronouns 'she' and 'her' (example: "Tomorrow she is going to visit her friend"), masculine pronouns 'he,' 'him' and 'his' (example: "He broke his glasses today"), and gender-neutral pronouns, the most common of which are 'ze' and 'hir' (example: "Yesterday, ze went on a walk with hir dog to the store"). Other gender-neutral pronouns include 'they' and 'them', or simply referring to someone by their first name.

It is important not to assume another person's PGPs, and to give them an opportunity to identify themselves. Using PGPs shows respect for others' gender identities, and inclusion of gender identities that do not match the male and female, masculine and feminine binaries. It is good practice to start QSA meetings by going around the room and having each person introduce themselves with their name and PGP. Doing this is part of being a club that is welcoming of transgender and gender nonconforming people. Explain what a PGP is for new members, and allow people to pass if they do not want to say theirs.

If you meet someone new outside of a QSA meeting, you might want to practice introducing yourself with your name and PGP, giving the person you are meeting the opportunity to do the same, and you the chance to learn what their PGPs are. Worst case scenario, the person is confused and you have a great opportunity to teach them about PGPs and gender identity!



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10. Plan For The Future

Develop an action plan. Brainstorm activities. Set goals for how you see your QSA growing and meeting the needs of all members. Allowing all the members to play a role in the planning process will give them a sense of leadership and responsibility. Meet with other QSA clubs in your area and build a coalition to assure that the clubs grow and share knowledge. Offer resources to students looking to form clubs of their own at their schools.

11. Lobby Days / QSA Activist Camp

Contact the Network for help organizing your QSA club to participate in the largest Texas LGBTQ youth lobby days at the State Capitol. Send representatives to the QSA Activist Camp, which is a 4-day intensive training for QSA leaders throughout Texas. The purpose of these leadership opportunities is to allow LGBTQ youth the chance to grow as activists and share the knowledge with others in their communities. Visit www.texasgsa.org for more information about activist camp, and to sign up for our newsletter, which will give you regular updates about Texas QSA happenings.

Contact us if you need further assistance, at info@texasgsa.org. Another great resource is the Gay and Lesbian Student Education Network (GLSEN), which offers information and resources for Days of Actions like Ally Day and Day of Silence.

How to Have A Kick-Ass QSA

Establishing Your Club's Purpose

1. **Decide** whether your focus will be a support, activism, or social group. Think about how to incorporate your mission into the club's activities. The focus doesn't have to be limited to just one of these three fields.
2. **Write a mission statement** (see "*Sample Mission Statements*" for examples):
Address the nature of your organization and its goals in an official mission statement. Even if its not required by your school administration, having one will help guide the club through the year and the next generations.
3. **Elect club officers:** Look for students willing to take on the responsibilities of officers, and make sure they understand their duties before they are confirmed. It may help to have job descriptions already decided on and available for people to read before they volunteer.



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Preparing for Meetings

1. Set the agenda:

Prior to every meeting, sit down with your officers and make an outline of issues and topics to be discussed at every meeting. Often, activist clubs leave time for members to set part of the agenda. Mention events ahead of time to prepare the members as well as figure out transportation needs.

2. Publicize the meeting:

Find a way to universally reach out to the entire school body and make announcements (e.g. daily announcements, flyers, posters, organization fairs, setting up a table during lunch). Remember to point out that new members are welcome throughout the year.

Designate a publicity chair to be in charge of all the publicity each week. Having members rotate this position can assure that all members participate in at least one leadership position. This position can also be in charge of networking with other QSA clubs in the area to build a community.

3. Bring Food:

Buy food if your QSA has money already or try creating a club donation jar that you can carry at all events to raise money. You can also contact local LGBTQQA friendly organizations/businesses/restaurants that are willing to sponsor food for your meetings.

Running a Good Meeting

1. Ground Rules:

- Make sure that all members feel safe; establish ground rules such as respect and confidentiality (see "How to Start a QSA" for other suggestions about ground rules).
- Take time during the meeting to allow all members the opportunity to voice their opinion. Be sure to reiterate the ground rules at the start of every meeting for new members, or have them posted in the room you meet in.

2. Decision Making:

- Figure out how your group will make decisions: Majority vote, consensus, dictatorship?

3. Facilitator:

- Designate someone at each meeting to keep the group focused on the meeting agenda.
- Make sure that no member feels ignored and that everyone is respected.

4. Notes:

- Take minutes at each meeting for members who couldn't attend and also to preserve the history of the organization. Post the notes on a QSA bulletin board, a web page that is accessible for all members to read anonymously or in your QSA binder, kept in your meeting place at all times.

5. Create a box or email for member suggestions, comments, or concerns.



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Creating an Action Plan

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

Sample Mission Statements

There are many different reasons to have a QSA at your school. Some students want a safe place to hang out and feel free to be who they are. Others need a supportive place to talk about what's going on in their lives. Then there are groups that want to create a school free of transphobia and homophobia by including LGBTQQ issues in their education. Many schools require a club to write a mission statement and constitution or a document stating its purpose. Your QSA should decide what type of group it wants to be. Does your club want to be an Activist, Social or Support QSA? Maybe you want to use parts of the different types of QSAs and create your own unique group. Writing a mission statement is an opportunity to create your QSA's identity. It can also help your club figure out what activities it wants to focus on, and down the line can be helpful to consult if your club has a disagreement about something. These are a few sample mission statements to help your QSA get started.

Members of Wagner High School's QSA in San Antonio provided the following sample mission statement:

We aim to provide a safe space to all Wagner students in an effort to promote a wider feeling of tolerance and an understanding of diversity across the (insert name of your school) campus. We promote equality and peace and strive to provide it for all students.

The following samples were provided by the national Gay-Straight Alliance Network:



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Activist Mission Statement (Organize...Creating Change...Action!)

The Bayard Rustin QSA brings together queer youth and straight allies to fight homophobia on campus and in the community. By raising awareness of different sexual and gender identities, linking transphobia and homophobia with other oppressions, and advocating for equal treatment for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities, our QSA will create a school environment free of homophobic and transphobic, sexual, verbal, and physical harassment.

Social Mission Statement (Fun...Hang Out...A Place To Be Free!)

The Fiesta High School QSA brings students of different sexual and gender identities together to meet new people, hang out, eat food, and have fun. We will coordinate outings, dances, movie nights, and other activities. Through acceptance at all our activities we will reduce isolation and depression.

Support Mission Statement (What's on your mind...Let's Talk!)

The Rainbow Connection welcomes all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and straight youth to come and talk about any issues concerning them. Listening is our main objective and members can bring up personal issues they are facing. By using one-on-one or group discussion, we hope to create a safe place to offer support, resources, and alternative outlets for emotion.

21 Ways to Get More Members and Allies

1. Provide food at your meeting! It helps create a comfortable and more relaxed atmosphere.
2. Put out an announcement in the daily/weekly bulletin/assembly or in the morning announcements.
3. Advertise at Club Day--have a booth and pass out ribbons or skittles with a sticker (perhaps with the name of your QSA on it).
4. Participate in Spirit Week at your school!
5. Set up an info table, in an obvious place, at lunch or at special events.
6. Pass out Rainbows! Give out ribbons and QSA buttons to QSA supporters throughout the school.
7. Make flyers and posters about specific meetings (i.e. first meeting, documentary screening day, etc), or events (i.e. National Day of Silence, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Ally Week, National Coming Out Day, etc.).
8. Ask teachers to keep one of your flyers posted permanently in their classroom.
9. Submit an article about your group to the school paper.
10. Hold a "bring-a-friend-day" meeting and regularly advertise new-member-focused meetings.
11. Have an open QSA meeting where you show a movie/documentary or have a guest speaker. Or make all the meetings open!
12. Make presentations at other club meetings about your QSA and invite other clubs and groups to make presentations at your meetings.
13. Send group representatives around to classes to make announcements and presentations to classes about special events and activities that your QSA is putting together.



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14. Put together a panel of speakers for a conference or a similar event.
15. Set up a time to speak to teachers at faculty meetings or help conduct a teacher training.
16. Create a display in your library (i.e. for Queer History Month) or in a display case in the hallway.
17. Practice Guerrilla Theatre: stage a public exchange between QSA members about your QSA and homophobia and transphobia at your school.
18. Participate in National Coming Out Day and the National Day of Silence Project. www.dayofsilence.org
19. If all members feel comfortable, invite teachers, faculty, and staff to a QSA meeting. If members are not comfortable, host a special event or meeting instead.
20. Write a letter to your school board or PTA asking for support.
21. Spread the Word! Tell others about your QSA!

Fun Things To Do With Your QSA

1. Movie Night

Attend a screening of an LGBTQQ film at a local theatre, or if you have a large enough group, consider arranging a special showing. You could also get together and rent movies, that would be a great opportunity for everybody to hang out in a friendly/safe environment.

2. Host a BBQ or Picnic

Involve the other QSAs in your area for a potluck picnic or BBQ. You can have the event in a public park or in some one's backyard. If it has a good outcome, you may want to consider having it once a quarter or semester, or at the end of the school year-start a tradition!

3. Plan a Pride Dance or go to a LGBTQQ dance in your area

Dances can be a great way to bring QSA members together and reach out to the school community, and Pride Proms are the highlight of the year's social activities for many QSAs. Large dances require a lot of planning, so it's a good idea to have several QSAs sponsor and coordinate the event. If you don't want to plan your own, look into a LGBTQQ dance in your area.

4. Plan Outdoor Activities

Meet at a park to play Frisbee, softball, flag football, or whatever sport comes to mind. These sporting activities can be combined with a BBQ, which would be a great way to network, and socialize with other QSAs. You could also get a group together and plan a hiking or weekend camping trip.

5. Get together with other QSAs or student clubs on campus or at a local queer or queer-friendly cafe

It's always a good feeling when you can hang out at a "safe place" and just chat with friends and have fun. It's an even better feeling when you get to make a new friend! Building coalitions with QSAs at other schools or getting together with different school clubs can be a great way to share stories, plan events, learn from each other and just have fun!



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6. Arts and Crafts

Get together after school or during lunch and make your own pride gear, a banner to use in marches, or art to display in the library and display cases. Use your imagination and let your creative side come out, create something that shows your pride and that you can be proud of!

7. Hold a Pride Party (Or any Party!)

Who needs a good excuse to party?! Be creative with food and decorations-there are lots of possibilities.

8. Organize Local Bands or Performers to do a Show

Everybody enjoys music, why don't you host a show in a queer friendly environment? It would give local LGBTQQ members a chance to shine and perform! If you can't hold this at your school, contact a local community college, friendly church (e.g. Unitarian Universalist Church) or synagogue (e.g. Reconstructionist or Reform synagogues), or call your local recreation center and ask to use their space. This event could also serve as a fundraiser for your club.

QSA Leadership

Choosing an Effective Leadership Model:

How will your club's leadership be organized?

What will be expected of club leaders and who will they report to?

First, be sure to check whether your school policies require a particular leadership arrangement.

- **Hierarchy-based leadership**--President (or Co-Presidents), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. This format can be useful for getting things done because it has well-defined roles and designates a clear chain of responsibility.
- **Board-based leadership**--Your club has a "board" of people who lead the QSA. Each board member has a defined leadership role that covers a major area of responsibility (examples: Facilitator or Chair, Outreach/Publicity Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Funding Coordinator, Grade Representatives, etc.). This model tends to be more egalitarian than the hierarchy-based structure; while leadership positions are well-defined, board members make decisions collectively and report/answer to the whole group instead of a President or Co-President.
- **Committee-based leadership**-- specific committees are formed to address particular QSA objectives or needs and are led by committee "chairs" who give individual reports at large-group meetings. Sample committees include: fundraising committee, events committee, publicity committee, visibility and education committee, etc. Usually, this structure works best for larger clubs. To combine this leadership model with the one above, consider having committee chairs also meet as a leadership board.

***Note:** Remember that these leadership structures can be adapted or combined to fit your club. Or, you can develop your own model. If your club uses another leadership structure that works well, let us know about it!*



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Establishing a Meeting Structure:

How often will your club leaders meet?

Will leadership/committee and large-group meetings be combined or separate?

- Some QSA club leaders meet weekly or bi-weekly outside of the large group, and then give a report and present items for vote, etc. Others combine leadership and large group meetings, where officers or board members give reports to the whole club and everyone is involved in discussing important items.
- QSAs that have a committee-based leadership structure sometimes design meetings to include both time for separate committees to meet and large-group presentations/decision-making.

Making Smooth Transitions in QSA Leadership:

- Set up a **mentoring system**. Have future leaders work with current leaders to gradually become more comfortable with leadership positions.
- **Transfer leadership during the year**. Some QSAs transfer leadership at the end of first semester. This way, old leaders can assist new ones.
- **Get trained!** Send QSA members and leaders/potential leaders to the Leadership Trainings co-sponsored by the Texas GSA Network in your area. Encourage the next year's leaders to apply to the QSA Activist Camp, held in the Summer. Go to www.texasgsa.org for more info on Camp.
- Plan a **mini-retreat** for the beginning of the school year or over the summer to develop relationships among your club's current and incoming leaders, build momentum for the next year, and give older leaders a chance to debrief and offer advice.
- Have current leaders keep **clear and organized files, notes, and paperwork** that they can pass along to new leaders.
- Keep an **historical record** of your club to pass along to new leaders!
- Have your current leadership reflect **multiple grade levels**—if your president is a senior, maybe have a vice president who is a junior or sophomore. Or, have a committee leadership structure in which underclassmen can take on the roles of committee leads.

Decision-Making in QSAs

In order to run effective meetings and get things done as a group, your QSA should designate a process for making decisions as an organization. Be sure to be familiar with school policy first -- most schools require major decisions to be approved by the Administration and/or Student Council. Also, you need to decide what (if any) role your club's advisor will play in the decision-making process.

Possible decision-making models include:

Majority or 2/3 vote -- This model usually works best when only club members present at the meeting are given a vote. You may want to publicize the meeting agenda beforehand so people will know what is being discussed. Members will be more likely to show up if they feel strongly about the issue and want to be involved in the decision-making process.



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Hierarchy -- In this model, club officers have the ultimate decision-making power. The hierarchy model may also include further levels of decision-making power, such as:
Leaders-->President-->Advisor-->Administration

Unanimous -- A process called **consensus** is used to make sure everyone at the meeting agrees on the decision. When everyone is in agreement, a consensus statement can be created to articulate the decision. See below for more info on how to reach consensus at your meetings.

More About the Consensus Process:

Consensus-based decisions are achieved through discussion and must be approved by everyone at the meeting. A consensus statement might be reshaped many times before consensus is reached. Groups that choose to use the consensus process often do so because voting on issues can divide membership and leave some people feeling unheard. Reaching consensus may also increase group members' commitment because everyone is agreeing on a solution. The consensus-building process, however, requires time, discipline, and patience on the part of meeting participants, as well as a careful and attentive facilitator.

If your group is having trouble reaching consensus about a particular issue or question, try these tactics:

- Reword the consensus statement.
- Ask those who disagree to clearly state their feelings and reasons for objecting.
- See if the statement can be modified to accommodate objections while still remaining acceptable to everyone else.
- Try to find a compromise by asking, "**Can everyone live with this decision?**"

Although a very useful and often effective method for decision-making, consensus is not applicable or possible in every case. If you feel that the situation is not resolvable by consensus, don't be afraid to ask the group if everyone is willing to vote on it.

Know Your Rights!

Provided by the ACLU of Texas, aclutx.org

The United States Constitution, federal and state law all protect your rights in public school. Don't assume your teachers and principal always know what the law says—it is up to *you* to learn your rights and stand up for them. To find out about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students' rights to **free expression, privacy, equal protection, access to school facilities**, and your right to **form a gay-straight alliance**, visit the ACLU LGBT Project's *What's Your Problem?* webpage (http://www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights_hiv-aids/whats-your-problem). For more information about these and other rights for Texas students, download a copy of the ACLU of Texas *Youth Rights Manual* (link can be found at <http://texasgsa.org/legal-rights>).



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If you think your public school has violated one of these rights, you can take action by **filing a grievance**. Be careful—many school districts have a strict deadline to file a grievance after your rights are violated, so check to be sure you meet it. Also, keep a copy of any grievance you file and any response you receive. If you need help filing your grievance, contact the Texas GSA Network. If filing a grievance doesn't solve the problem, contact the ACLU of Texas (aclutx.org) or the ACLU LGBT Project (aclu.org/lgbt-rights) to ask if they can help. Legal resources specifically developed for the Texas GSA Network can be found at www.texasgsa.org/legal-rights

Stay Safe!

You have a right to be **safe from harassment** at school. In Texas public schools, harassment can include threats to cause you harm or bodily injury, sexually intimidating conduct, damaging your property, physically confining or restraining you, or other malicious acts like name-calling that are severe enough to substantially harm your physical or emotional health or safety.

Texas law requires public schools to prohibit, and take steps to prevent, student harassment. Several federal courts have also said that when schools know a student is being harassed because he or she is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), that have to take action to stop the harassment. To learn more about your right to be safe from harassment, visit the ACLU LGBT Project's *What's Your Problem?* webpage (http://www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights_hiv-aids/whats-your-problem), and ask your school for a copy of its specific anti-harassment policy (usually called **Board Policy FFH**).

If you have been harassed because of your gender identity or sexual orientation or because of what others *think* your gender identity or sexual orientation is, the first thing you should do is **make sure you are safe**. After that, you should **report the harassment** to your public school. Be careful—many school districts have a strict deadline to file a report after harassment occurs, so check to be sure you meet it. Also, keep a copy of any harassment report you file and any response you receive.

If the harassment continues after you have reported it to your school, contact the ACLU of Texas or the ACLU LGBT Project to ask if they can help.

The ACLU of Texas is the state affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. It is a nonprofit organization that works in the Texas legislature, courts and communities to protect Texans' civil liberties—including LGBT students' rights to be free from discrimination and harassment—under the United States Constitution and federal and state law. For more information about the ACLU of Texas, visit www.aclutx.org.

How to Facilitate a Meeting

What is a Facilitator? The facilitator is the person in charge of the meeting and moving things along.

The Facilitator is Responsible for:

- Getting agreement on the agenda and processes before and during the meeting



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- Conducting the meeting - makes sure the group keeps to ground rules, time limits, etc.
- Guiding discussion
- Staying neutral, asking questions and suggesting ways to approach parts of the agenda
- Making sure the group comes to decisions and work is divided among members
- Keeping the group on track when they head off onto tangents
- Watching the vibe of the meeting and helping to keep energy up
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates
- Creating a safe and positive environment where no one feels personally attacked
- Intervening if problems come up, dealing with concerns
- Creating a comfortable environment - using language that makes everyone comfortable

This could include

- Talking about Preferred Gender Pronoun's (PGPs) before each meeting (*See "What are PGPs?" in the section "How to Start a QSA"*)
- "Ouch" and "oops": A group practice that when something is said that makes someone else uncomfortable or hurt, that person says "ouch," and the person who said it says "oops." If someone in group has "ouched" a term, brainstorm a new term for the group to use
- Have a discussion about "trigger" words at the beginning of each meeting, "things I never want to hear again" (*See "things I never want to hear again" exercise at end of this section*)

Strategies for Good Facilitation:

- Ask the person who put a specific item on the agenda to give a brief introduction on important background information and what they want done.
- Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item. Appoint a separate timekeeper if necessary.
- Put off "off-subject" topics - Create a list (a "parking lot") for items to be discussed at another time. Remember to look over your "parking lot" if you have extra time at the end of a meeting, or before you create the agenda for the next meeting!
- Paraphrase (repeat back in your own words) to check for the sense of the discussion.
- Help people avoid repeating themselves by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven't been mentioned.
- Make suggestions for how to move forward - after a discussion has gone on for a while, try to summarize, look for agreement or sticking points, and come to a decision.
- Ask questions.
- Be positive and encourage full participation - make sure everyone gets to speak, try to notice when someone is holding back.
- Focus on issues, don't let personalities get you off topic.
- Ask someone else to facilitate if you want to actively participate in the discussion.
- Check briefly for agreement before moving on - make sure everyone understands decisions.



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Techniques for making decisions in meetings:

- Brainstorming
- Prioritizing (ranking items)
- Pro's and Con's
- Straw voting (informal poll to see where people are)
- Going around to everyone to check for the sense of the group

This resource sheet was developed with help from CompassPoint Non-Profit Services.

Suggested Wording for Facilitating a Meeting (from the North American Students of Cooperation Cooperative Education and Training Institute)

1. Make sure each agenda item is introduced by the person responsible for it. This way everyone understands why the item is being discussed. The introduction should include: what information everyone needs to know and what needs to be decided, and possibly pro's and con's.

Jane, could you please give us a little background on this issue and tell us what action you are requesting?

2. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

I've noticed a few people have been saying a lot on this issue; before hearing any more from them, is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet who has something to add?

3. Encourage everyone to say what is on their mind. Try to notice when people are holding back, otherwise, it could be difficult for the group to come to a decision later.

I sense some hesitancy from folks to speak openly on this issue; it's important we hear all points of view, so I encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings.

4. Make sure people speak only on the matter at hand. If other issues come up, keep track of them on a "parallel agenda" and let people know that the group will return to this agenda before the end of the meeting.

Joe, you're raising some good points and I've noted them here; we'll come back to them before the end of the meeting, but let's focus more directly on the issue at hand.

5. Encourage people to avoid repeating themselves and others by summarizing discussion periodically.

So far, I've heard the following objections raised... The arguments in favor of the proposal seem to be... I've heard people propose the following possible solutions...

6. Keep the meeting moving along. Remind people of time and appoint a timekeeper if necessary. If designated time runs out, ask the group to agree to spend more time on the issue, postpone it until later in the meeting, or



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put the discussion off until another meeting.

We're about to run out of the designated time on this issue. Is there agreement to spend another ten minutes to get a few more ideas on the table and make a decision now, or should we postpone a final decision until our next meeting?

7. Encourage the group to take a break to restore energy or ease tension.

I'm seeing a few people "resting their eyes." Would anybody object to a five-minute break to get up and stretch and get some fresh air?

8. After a topic has been discussed for a while, start trying to move the group toward agreement by summarizing discussion points, looking for common points of agreement, identifying sources of conflict, etc.

I'm hearing most people agree with...but there seems to be a few points of view on...Perhaps we could focus on how to agree on these last few issues.

9. 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
- the group is not prepared

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

10. Make sure everyone understands the decision.

Could we briefly summarize the proposal that's being decided right now?

11. 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, signal to the group that this comment comes from you personally.

I'm recognizing myself as speaker. (Stand up or take some other physical action to distinguish you are not speaking as facilitator.)

Fundraising for your QSA

Here are some guidelines to follow and cool ideas to use when fundraising for your QSA. If your club has other good tips or ideas for raising money, let us know!

- Become familiar with your school's system for financing student organizations. How do clubs set up bank accounts? Where will donations go? Who will donation checks be made out to? Who has



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the power to sign checks? Talk to other student leaders at your school, your advisor, and an administrator to get ideas and advice.

- Organize a play, concert, LGBTQQ fair, or other cultural event to benefit your QSA and also to increase your clubs visibility and raise awareness about the issues you are addressing. You might also consider donating part of the proceeds to a community organization or charity.
 - Team up with your school's Drama Department to put on a play that deals with issues of transphobia, homophobia and stereotyping in a school setting. You can raise money and raise awareness at the same time.
 - Host an open mic night, or invite an LGBTQQ/ally speaker, spoken word artist, or musician to perform at your school.
 - Silkscreen t-shirts, make buttons, or have a bracelet-making club day and sell these, or sell them in conjunction with a rainbow bake-sale.
- Explore the funding avenues at your school. Ask your advisor, or meet with the financial administrator to see if there are ways your club can get access to school funds or resources (such as photocopying and mailing).
- Have QSA members do individual fundraising among relatives, family friends, co-workers, etc. See end of this section for a sample donation request letter and a script to use when asking for money over the phone.
- Engage in fundraising as a club activity. Have a bake sale or car wash - it's not very original, but it usually works. Or add your own twist - instead of selling just cookies, sell cookies with rainbow chocolate chips.
- Get a local business to help you raise money by donating a portion of their profits (from a given block of time) to your QSA.
- Look into community grant making programs.

Applying for a Community Grant:

Be SPECIFIC about what you plan to do with the grant - what activities your group will do and how you will spend the money (research your budget and make it realistic!).

Be clear WHY you want to do the project described in your grant. For example, how will the project benefit your group? Benefit your school? Benefit others in the community? What is the effect your project will have? It is important to describe the activities you will do, but also explain why your group wants to do the project and why it is important.

Be YOURSELF. Don't try so hard to make your application sound "professional" that it doesn't sound like anything you would ever say. The people reviewing your application will usually be more impressed if you keep it real than



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by big words.

Be THOROUGH. Always double-check that you included all the information requested, whether it is filling in a form, writing on a separate sheet, or attaching a list, budget, or other info. When you are providing a phone number/address for a contact person, it is usually helpful to indicate if it is a youth or an adult, and to provide contact info for one of each.

Asking for Donations:

Sample Phone-Call Script:

Hi, May I please speak with _____? Hi, this is _____ calling. I wanted to talk to you about an organization I'm involved with at school, do you have a few minutes?

I'm a member of a student-run club at my school called the _____ [*Name of your QSA*]. We work to fight transphobia, homophobia, harassment and discrimination in our school by educating our peers about sexual orientation and gender identity issues and providing a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth and their allies.

Some of the projects and events we've sponsored in the past include: _____. This year, we'd like to _____ [*Examples: "Increase our visibility around school with posters," "Facilitate a teacher training about confronting transphobia and homophobia in the classroom." Be specific about what kinds of programs your QSA is working on - make it clear to them what sorts of things their money will go toward.*]

We also have weekly meetings at school, where folks come for a safe and supportive environment to hang out, have a snack, plan events, and talk about issues in their lives. I'm calling to ask if you'd like to become a supporter of the _____ [*Name of your QSA*] by making a \$40* donation to our club. [*pause and give them time to think - let them answer before you say anything*]

Note: Ask for an amount that you think is appropriate.

If Yes:

Great! Do you have a pen? You should make your check payable to: _____. You can send the check to: _____. [*Thank them.*]

[In a few days, call them to see if they've had a chance to mail the check yet.]

If Maybe/Unsure: [*If they can't afford the amount, ask if they would be able to donate half now and half next month. If they can't do that, ask them if they would like to make a smaller donation. Don't give up right away!*]

[If they want to know more about the QSA, try to answer any questions they have and offer to send them QSA-related materials if you have any.]



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If No: *[Thank them for their time and move on to the next person. You can't win 'em all. You should expect as many as half of the people you ask to say no, that's normal. People have many reasons for saying no, don't assume it's personal.]*

Sample letter:

Dear _____,

For the past _____ months, I have been involved with a student-run club at my school called the _____ Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA). We work to fight homophobia, transphobia and anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) harassment in our school by educating our peers about sexual orientation and gender identity issues and providing a safe space for LGBTQQ youth and their allies. I am writing to ask you to donate \$40 [or other appropriate amount] to this organization to help make some of our up- coming projects possible.

Homophobia and harassment toward LGBTQQ youth (and those who are perceived to be LGBTQQ) is a very real problem in schools. According to a recent Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) report, 90% of Texas LGBT students experienced verbal harassment in school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, 50% experienced physical harassment and 26% experienced physical assault. *[You may want to give specific examples from your school - If you've done a school survey, offer statistics from the results.]*
 _____ *[Name of your QSA]* was started to help make our school safer for LGBTQQ students, teachers, and staff by educating the school community about homophobia and sexual orientation issues.

I joined my school's QSA because *[talk about why you got involved and what you've learned/how it has helped you]*. Some of the projects and events we've sponsored in the past include: _____. This year, we'd like to _____ *[Examples: "Increase our visibility around school with posters," "Facilitate a teacher training about confronting homophobia in the classroom." Be specific about what kinds of programs your QSA is working on - make it clear to them what sorts of things their money will go toward.]* We also have weekly meetings at school, where folks come to hang out, have a snack, plan events, and talk about issues in their lives.

We can't continue this important work without the support of individuals who really believe in what we're doing to fight homophobia and transphobia in our school and make it safer.

Thank you,

P.S. If you have other questions about the _____ QSA, please call me at:

_____.

NOTE: If you send a letter, it is very important to do follow-up phone calls about a week later. This will increase your success in getting donations.



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How to Plan an Event

Work Plan

When planning events and projects as a QSA, it will be helpful to create a “work plan.” This document will cover the details of the planning process and designate responsibility for different tasks. Taking the time to make one at the outset will help your group stay organized and focused. This document will also address issues that your QSA should keep in mind while planning your event.

Here’s what to include on your work plan:

1. A brief description of the project/event.
2. Dates for the planning period.
3. Date(s) for the project/event.
4. Goals (broad things you are working toward – this project/event is part of that work).
5. Objectives (concrete things that this specific project will accomplish by its end).
6. Strategies/steps for planning the project/event. Be detailed and specific!
7. Dates for each step of the planning process to be completed by – and stick to them! You'll want to create a timeline, and make sure everyone has access to it.
8. Indication of who is responsible for each step. Delegate and spread leadership.
9. List of materials that will be needed for the project/event and who is responsible for them.
10. A description of how the project/event will be evaluated and who will conduct and analyze the evaluation results. Having a survey or evaluation for participants to fill out at the end of an event can help you make it better next time! Also, having clear goals, such as an amount of money you'd like to raise or a number of people who you would like to have attend, is another way you can easily analyze your success.

Once you've collected this information, you have to organize it, so that you can tell your next steps in planning at a glance. This will also help you make sure that all your loose ends are taken care of, and nothing is left undone.

One way of organizing your information is **Backwards Planning**.

Planning an Event Using Backwards Planning:

1. First, take out a sheet of paper, and write your **goal/s** at the top. Some people find it helpful to also write **objectives** - what you want your goal to accomplish - below this. (Example, if your goal is "Have a Dance-Off", then your objective may be "Raise money to make a donation to a local charity")
2. **List** all the items you'll need in order to make your event happen. They don't need to be specific or even in order. It may help to consider this the "**Things We Need**" section. (Examples: Date, Time, Location, Permission, Materials, Publicity)



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3. Go through the list you've made and break the items down into **steps**.
 - *Example:* For "Permission", you would write down the steps you'll need to take to gain permission. This might include talking to your sponsor, talking to your principal, etc. For "Materials" you'll write down the items you need, and the steps you need to take to get them.
4. Once you've gone through and outlined all the steps for each item in your "Things We Need" section, bring out your calendar. Time to set **dates**. Go down the "Things We Need" section and estimate the amount of time each item will take to complete. It's very important to be realistic. After you've done this, look at all of the time commitments and pick dates when each item will be done. Write this at the very top. Put it in bold. Underline it if it makes you happy. Just be **aware** of it.

Note: If the event date is pre-picked, like Day of Silence, Transgender Day of Remembrance, or World AIDS Awareness Day, than take a hard look at the time each item will take and judge if you can realistically complete all of that. If Day of Silence is in a week, and you want to order t-shirts, perhaps that won't work. Sometimes, you have to cut bells and whistles to make it happen in the time allotted. This is perfectly okay.

6. Now, you have the steps, the tentative dates and your goal. Next, **delegate work**. Have each person (or group of people) take at least one assignment and complete it by the deadline. Have a group coordinator to remind people of deadlines and help each person/group, should they need it. Most importantly, make sure every group meets its deadlines. That said, it's very important that the group be able to adjust when something goes wrong. Circumstances change and complications arise. Be flexible and change your plans! Just be sure to set *new deadlines*.
7. Congratulations! You've planned your event. Now go out and follow your plan.

Don't forget to document all of your work (work plan, planning meeting agendas, etc.) and save it in a folder so that future planners can reference it. If you have access to the equipment, you may want to also videotape or tape record the event, not only for future leaders but also for members who couldn't attend the event.

Strategies

Advertising:

When advertising for your project/event, don't just announce it to your QSA. Think about other audiences who may be interested in attending. For example, invite other diversity or civil rights groups on your campus. In addition, keep staff, faculty, and administrators in mind. Your project/event may be something they'd like to help with, or something they'd like to attend and learn from.



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Reach Out:

Joint projects are a great way to develop relationships with other groups and build allies. Approach various groups and see if they want to be involved in putting on a project/event that addresses issues you are both dealing with. Keep in mind that there are several ways for groups or individuals to help cosponsor your project/event. Money is an obvious method of contribution, but groups may also help with flyering, poster making, making copies, or volunteering at the event. Above all, make sure to be fair when distributing the credit – be sure to recognize everyone who participated.

Your group may even want to have a co-sponsored event, where two groups are involved, from planning to the event itself. While the diversity is usually helpful in planning, and the different skill sets can make parts of the planning much easier, the more people and groups involved, the more potential confusion. If both groups are experienced with organizing on their own, it is generally a very good idea. Branch out!

Accessibility

Space/Location:

This one is important for obvious reasons – you want a space where people will feel safe attending your project/event. However, you also want to think about whether the location is accessible to various people. Is it in a place that is easy to find? Can you get there if you don't drive? What about wheelchair accessibility?

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community:

It is important for us to remember that the LGBTQ community includes people from all backgrounds and abilities. Do some research on your campus to find out if there is anyone who knows sign language who can volunteer their time, and be sure that they have the skills to comfortably interpret. You may also be able to find skilled American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter students at a local college that would be willing to volunteer. Having an ASL interpreter at your project/event is an important way to be inclusive of the deaf community. Depending on the event, you may want to get a manuscript of the performance ahead of time to make it easier on the interpreters. If you are showing a video, make sure it has closed captioning.

Other Languages:

Language is a common barrier that students face at their school. Make sure your flyers are translated into multiple languages to reach a broader audience. Collaborate with other clubs on campus to help bring in bilingual speakers or have bilingual students be able to translate at the event. If you are showing a video, make sure it has subtitles in other languages.



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Coalition Building

What is a Coalition?

A coalition is an "organization of organizations" united around a common issue and clear goal(s); however, sometimes the term "coalition" is used to refer to groups of diverse individuals or organizations of individuals who are involved in other groups as well.

What is an issue?

Communicates what you are fighting for; an issue is what activist organizations focus on. If the problem is name-calling and slurs, your issue could be to reduce slurs.

Questions to ask when you are thinking about building a coalition with another organization:

What would your unifying issue(s) be?

What resources could come from this organization? What obstacles might you encounter?

Guidelines for successful coalition-building:

1. Choose unifying issues. The most effective coalitions come together around a common issue. Make sure the development of group goals is a joint process, rather than one or two group representatives deciding the goals and then inviting others to join.

- Look out for "**wedge issues.**" These are issues that are deliberately manipulated to cause a split or drive a wedge between people in a community or group.

***Example:** You and the Civil Rights organization in your school formed a coalition against slurs, and are holding an anti-slur campaign. But, another school club keeps challenging your clubs to a school debate on same-sex marriage. Your coalition members have differing opinions on the issue, and some of them want to ignore the other club's demands and continue working on the anti-slur campaign. Other folks are arguing that the challenge for a debate should be met and want to redirect energy towards that work. Same sex marriage is not your coalition's issue in this case, it is a wedge issue that is diverting the work of the coalition away from its target—slurs.*

2. Understand and respect each group's self interest. There must be a balance between the goals and needs of the coalition and of the individual organizations.

3. Respect each group's internal process. It is important to understand and respect the differences among groups. These differences are often apparent in processes or chains of command for decision-making. Make a commitment to learning about the unique values, history, interests, structure, and agenda of the other groups and organizations.

4. Agree to disagree.



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5. Decide on a clear structure for decision-making (See “Decision Making in a QSA”)

6. Distribute credit fairly. Recognize that contributions vary. Appreciate different contributions. Each organization will have something different to offer. Each one is important, so be sure to acknowledge them all, whether they be volunteers, meeting space, funding, copying, publicity, leafleting, passing resolutions, or other resources.

7. Give and Take. It is important to build on existing relationships and connections with other organizations. Don't just ask for or expect support; be prepared to give it.

8. Develop a Common Strategy. The strength of a coalition is in its unity. Work together with other organizations to develop a strategy that makes sense for everyone. The tactics you choose should be ones that all the organizations can endorse. If not, the tactics should be taken by individual organizations independent of the coalition.

9. Be Strategic. Building coalitions in and of themselves requires a good strategy. Which organizations you ask, who asks them, and what order to ask them are all questions to figure out.

10. To ensure consistency, send the same representative to each coalition meeting. This helps meetings run more smoothly. These individuals should also be decision-making members of the organizations they represent.

11. Formalize Your Coalition. It is best to make explicit agreements. Make sure everyone understands what their responsibilities and rights are. Being clear can help prevent conflicts.

This resource was adapted from the NGLTF's “Comprehensive Manual for Campus Organizing” (Shepard, Yeskel, Outcalt - 1995) and materials from the United States Student Association's Grassroots Organizing Weekend (GROW) Program.

Examples and Possibilities:

Anti-Slur Coalition:

(As above) Form a coalition with the civil rights club, multicultural/diversity club, peer mediation team, student government, a group of concerned teachers/staff members, and/or other clubs or groups concerned with bullying to create an anti-slur campaign. Contact the Texas GSA Network for advice/assistance.

Alternative Prom:

Form a coalition of groups concerned with creating a prom where everyone feels welcome to show up as themselves and with their chosen dates or without a date. You can work with a number of groups that are concerned with the expectation that one bring a date of the “appropriate” gender to prom, and/or concerned with the social pressure to spend money on a limousine and appear in expensive and properly gendered clothing at



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prom. Either focus on making your school's existing prom more inclusive, or throw an alternative prom.

Building Anti-Racist/Anti-White Supremacist QSAs

Multi-issue organizing is a strong and powerful way to incorporate all parts of a community and the people it is made up of. The LGBTQ youth movement cannot survive unless it includes people of color and addresses issues of ableism, sexism, racism, xenophobia, classism, ageism, and environmental injustice. We must link ourselves together to create a multi-issue social justice movement which incorporates the needs and rights of multiple communities.

Unfortunately, Many QSAs struggle with multi-issue organizing because of a lack of internal diversity. If a group is made up of people from multiple communities who face oppression a powerful statement can be made. By separating ourselves, we are only being destructive to our movements. QSA organizers from California's Bay Area came up with these ideas about why many QSAs are disproportionately white:

1. Perception that gay means white: Most mainstream/nationally-recognized LGBTQ leaders and "famous" queer folks are white (e.g. Harvey Milk, Ellen Degeneres), and people of color are often under-represented at LGBTQ events. LGBTQ people of color such as Sylvia Rivera, Audre Lorde and Bayard Rustin are given little credit in mainstream media for their significant contributions to the LGBTQ movement.

Real world example: Following the passage of Proposition 8 in California, a measure to deny the right of marriage to lesbian and gay couples, the idea that the black vote was to blame for letting prop 8 pass became popularized. This idea ignores the fact that many members of the black community are also members of the LGBTQ community, creates a false divide between the black community and the LGBTQ community, and scapegoats another oppressed group, harming both the LGBTQ movement and racial justice movements.

Articles that responded to this idea:

http://www.npr.org/blogs/newsandviews/2008/11/blackgay_prop_8_backlash.html

<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/nov/08/opinion/oe-cannick8>

http://site.pfaw.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues_equality_prop_8_memo

2. Tokenization: If a QSA is already mostly or all white, students may feel that being the only person of color at meetings would put pressure on them to educate the rest of the club about diversity or racism. It is difficult enough to be a person of color, but to be an LGBTQ person of color within an LGBTQ group that is majority white is especially daunting.

3. Language barriers: An all English-speaking QSA is inaccessible to students that do not speak English as a primary language. If your school has a large language barrier, it is possible to bridge this



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gap by creating bilingual, or even trilingual, fliers and by having a translator at meetings. Without this, LGBTQ people who speak languages other than English may feel like they are not welcome or may not feel comfortable to come to your school's QSA.

4. Cultural barriers: Sexual orientation, gender identity, homophobia, and transphobia are understood and acknowledged differently by different cultures. Many organizations that deal with LGBTQ issues are ethnocentric and fail to recognize that sexual orientation, gender identity, homophobia, and transphobia may have different associations and implications for people with different backgrounds. It is important to address this issue by discussing the different backgrounds people come from.

5. Prioritizing identities: Many LGBTQ youth of color have described the alienating experience of having to choose one identity over another. For example, if they've been part of a racial/ethnic club at school they may feel forced to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity. Conversely, if they've attended the QSA, they may feel forced to ignore or "downplay" their racial/ethnic identity.

Here are some strategies that QSAs can use to become multi-issue, diverse, and anti-racist organizations:

Build Coalitions with clubs that address diversity and racism:

- Do a trade-off day. Members of your club go to another club and do a workshop on Healing Homophobia and Transphobia, and the other club's members come to your QSA and do a workshop on their club's focus.
- Organize around health, oppression, public policy, school policy, and other points of multi-issue or coalition-based organizing
- Create a Diversity Club that addresses all issues, or participate in one that already exists in your school. If your QSA takes up most of your free time, then instead of making/joining another club, you can

Educate Your QSA

- Hold anti-oppression discussions at your meetings. Remember to emphasize the fact that all oppression is intertwined and in order to abolish it, we must stick together and attract allies!
- Designate certain days (every other week) to anti-oppression (anti-racism) discussions, workshops, events, etc.
- Invite speakers from QPOCA (Queer People of Color Alliance) at the University of Texas or have LGBTQ students of color speak at your QSA meetings. Other contacts in Texas include Queer Sol (Queer People of Color Collective based in Austin) and ALLGO (Statewide Queer People of Color organization)
- Create a timeline of LGBTQ People of Color history that recognizes the vital contributions People of Color have made to the LGBTQ movement. Display it in a classroom or hallway, to educate the whole school.



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Coalitions unite different organizations around a common issue, such as ending slurs at your school. Coalitions work together to organize campaigns and sponsor activities that help meet common goals. Consider having long-term coalitions with other diversity-focused groups at your school that encourage members to form personal as well as organizational relationships. This will help straight people of color become more familiar with the QSA and not force queer people of color to choose between one club activity or the other.

Other ideas for activities that you can organize as a coalition:

- Hold a voter registration drive for seniors—this will appeal to an entire grade! It could be a great way to create alliances with straight students around your school.
- Bring the AIDS quilt to your school. Get other clubs and students not in your QSA involved.
- It is important to educate your QSA on hate crimes, and once you have built coalitions with other groups around school, you could come together and hold a rally or protest against hate.
- Movie nights are a good way to build community. Host a diversity-themed or anti-oppression film festival, poetry slam, or concert.

By building coalitions with different clubs, you can gain many allies around your school. Always remember that the LGBTQQ rights movement is not the only movement, and by joining with different movements within and outside of your school, you can help each other out and get closer to your goals. Movements to end oppression are related and intertwined, often sharing common goals. It is important to remember that LGBTQQ people have multiple identities. Those identities must be acknowledged and understood. Good luck!

Transgender Inclusivity

Ways to make your group more inclusive and how to increase sensitivity towards the struggles that the transgender folks in our communities face.

Physical signs, such as posters, that state there is opportunity, support, solidarity and overall inclusion of people who are transgender, genderqueer, and those who do not identify with any label (to show that transgender people are inherently part of the Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Queer community)

Clarify. Make it clear, whether through verbal communication, signs or announcements, that Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Queer identities/labels reach beyond "sexual orientation" and include gender identity as well, though sexual orientation and gender identity do intersect. Provide sheets that define the vast sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions that exist within the Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Queer community. Contact the Texas GSA Network if you need help finding these resources!

Have vocabulary sessions/activities and discussions:

Ask. Why are vocabulary and linguistics vital in QSA's, schools, etc? What defines our community(ies)? Who is part of it?



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Often, common answers will include gay, lesbian and bisexual. Challenge this by asking why "transgender" and "gender non-conforming" are not included as much in the (gay) "movement's" linguistics? Are there separations and oppressions within the "movement?" What does this mean in terms of justice and human rights? Why might a conversation about gender identity be a more difficult one than a conversation centered solely on sexuality?

Other Questions For Discussion:

How many of the "out" students at your school, or in schools in general, identify as "transgender" or "gender nonconforming", in comparison to gay, lesbian, or bisexual? Why might this be?

How might dress code policy oppress, marginalize, or not support transgender or gender nonconforming people?

Note: In fighting for Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Queer justice in your school, include dress code policy as a vital target for transgender and gender nonconforming people.

Why might it be beneficial, though wrong, to the marginalized gay, lesbian and bisexual people to further marginalize transgender and gender nonconforming people within their own group? How does this happen within the Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Queer community with race and ethnicity, class (socio-economic status), citizenship/immigrant status, disabled bodies, appearance, etc.? *Example: Does a white gay-identified male-assigned and identified American-born citizen acquire access and opportunity more easily than a Puerto Rican transgender-identified male-assigned immigrant?*

What disadvantages face the transgender and gender nonconforming community that don't face the gay, lesbian and bisexual community?

Examples: Heteronormativity and stricter, rigid rules of "passing", increase in homelessness, kin/societal disowning, and arrests and prison attendance.

When talking about federal issues facing the Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Queer community, ask about how transgender and gender nonconforming people are included (in bills, vocabulary, etc.)

Example: HRC, a large national LGBTQQ rights organization, originally decided to exclude transgender people from an Employment nondiscrimination bill called ENDA in order to help it get passed in the federal government of the US.

Inclusion:

- Spend, dedicate and/or celebrate certain days, or set aside specific increments of time dedicated to transgender or gender nonconforming people. (Not specifically to members of your group, but to the transgender and gender nonconforming community in general).
- Make a "group commitment" to include and address the transgender community in discussions, announcements, films, activities, etc.
- Include Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGPs) as part of your regular introductions at the beginning of each QSA meeting. (See "What are PGPs?" in the toolkit section "How to Start a QSA")



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- Encourage the inclusion of transgender and gender nonconforming people in the leadership of the QSA.
- Set Goals:
 1. Lay out the different stages that mark the degree of inclusion and participation of transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people in your QSA.
 2. See where you are and discuss why that may be. Note the problems the group faces.
- 22. Set a goal for a higher stage to reach in the next month, semester, or year.

Main Stages

as provided by "Opening the Door to the inclusion of transgender people: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive" by Lisa Mottet and Justin Tanis

Stage 1, Not on the Radar- Organizations in this stage have not yet recognized that they have an exclusively posture and practice regarding transgender people. *Example: they don't have "T" in their name.*

Stage 2, Not in the Mission, but Trans people are welcome- Leaders and members of these organizations may be personally welcoming to transgender people, but the organization itself still has a mission that only mentions sexual orientation or LGB people.

Stage 3, A Trans-inclusive mission and possibly the beginning of trans-inclusive programming and/or advocacy- An organization in this stage has either incorporated transgender people in their mission or they were founded with a trans-inclusive mission originally. However their trans-inclusion may be mostly on paper; there is no action.

Stage 4, The Organization's work is trans-inclusive and there is greater trans involvement throughout the organization- Organizations in this stage have missions that are trans-inclusive and they take this seriously. The work of the organization reflects the needs of LGB and T people most of the time and there are transgender people at most levels of the organization. Committed to policy work that is trans-inclusive.

Stage 5, The Fully Inclusive Organization that prioritizes transgender work- The fully transgender-inclusive organization has trans people involved at all levels, and activities of the organization always reflect the needs of transgender people as well as LGB people. Safe, accessible bathrooms are the norm. Organizations at this stage recognize that there are some activities that need to be done specifically to meet the needs of trans people and it is an organizational priority to get these things done.

What Every Super-Rad Straight Ally Should Know

One of the most unique aspects of the Queer-Straight Alliance model is that it brings together LGBTQQ individuals and straight allies, cisgender (people who identify with the gender assigned to them at birth) and transgender people, to combat transphobia and homophobia. Here are some ways to encourage straight allies (or potential allies) to become more actively and effectively involved in your QSA.

Ten Ways Transphobia & Homophobia Affect Straight & Cisgender People



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1. Homophobia and transphobia force us to act "macho" if we are cisgender men or "feminine" if we are cisgender women. This limits our individuality and self-expression.
2. Homophobia and transphobia put pressure on straight people to act aggressively and angrily towards LGBTQQ people.
3. Homophobia makes it hard to be close friends with someone of the same sex.
4. Homophobia and transphobia often strain family and community relationships.
5. Homophobia and transphobia cause youth to become sexually active before they are ready in order to prove they are "normal." This can lead to an increase in unwanted pregnancies and STDs.
6. Homophobia and transphobia prevent vital information on sex and sexuality to be taught in schools. Without this information, youth are putting themselves at a greater risk for HIV and other STDs.
7. Homophobia and transphobia can be used to hurt a straight/cisgender person if they "appear to be gay" or to not "match" their gender role.
8. Homophobia and transphobia makes it hard for straight/cisgender people and LGBTQQ people to be friends.
9. Homophobia and transphobia along with racism, sexism, classism, etc. make it hard to put an end to AIDS.
10. Homophobia and transphobia makes it hard to appreciate true diversity and the unique traits that are not mainstream or "normal."

For more info, see Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price, edited by Warren J. Blumenfeld, Boston: Beacon Press: 1992.

"Homework": Ways To Fight Homophobia And Transphobia As A Straight & Cisgender Ally

1. Organize discussion groups in class or after school to talk about the "Ten Ways Transphobia and Homophobia Affect Straight & Cisgender People."
2. Always use neutral labels like "partner" or "significant other" instead of "boyfriend," "girlfriend," etc. when writing papers or talking to others.
3. Bring up LGBTQQ issues in conversations with friends or discussions in class.
4. Interrupt anti-LGBTQQ jokes, comments or any other behaviors that make homophobia/transphobia appear OK.
5. Put LGBTQQ-positive posters in the halls and classrooms or wear shirts, buttons, etc. that promote tolerance.
6. Don't make assumptions about peoples' sexual orientations or gender identities. Assume there are LGBTQQ people in all classes, sports, meetings, daily life, etc.



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7. Don't assume that "feminine-acting men" and "masculine-acting women" are not heterosexual or cisgender.
8. Don't assume that "macho males" or "feminine females" are heterosexual or cisgender

Conducting a School Survey

Developing a school survey:

Decide as a GSA how you want to write and conduct the survey. Divide up tasks and set deadlines. If your group is large enough, you may want to form a separate "survey committee."

Pinpoint the specific issue(s) you would like to learn more about through the survey. For example, you might choose to focus on anti-gay slurs or teacher attitudes toward the GSA. Design several questions relating to each of these issues.

Be sure to include demographic questions such as gender, race, and grade. This will help you organize your results later.

Many GSAs have found that including one or two open-ended questions at the end of the survey can be a good way to generate useful and revealing information about people's attitudes. See the included survey questions and results for examples.

Keep the survey fairly short -- it shouldn't take more than 5-10 minutes to fill out.

Getting your survey approved:

- Show your GSA advisor a draft of your survey and ask for feedback.
- Find out how other surveys at your school are approved and follow the same process. For example, some surveys get approved by Student Leadership. At some schools, it is wise to get the approval and/ or endorsement of the principal so that if you run into any trouble with certain teachers giving out the survey you'll have the principal's support behind you. Some schools have simply approached a department chair (e.g. Social Studies or English) to help you distribute the survey through teachers in their department.
- When seeking approval, be able to articulate why you want to conduct a survey, what you hope to get out of it, and how it can benefit the larger school community.
- Develop a feasible plan for conducting the survey. Think about getting a good cross-section of the student population.
- If you don't get approval to conduct the survey in classrooms, consider handing it out at lunchtime. Offer an incentive such as candy or cookies so lots of students will be interested in participating, not just those who support the GSA already.

So we gave out a survey - now what?:

- Tally the results. Write up a report. Include the quantitative results for each question as well as the qualitative comments. You can also write a cover letter or introduction that gives background on why the survey was conducted and what major themes were discovered.



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- Publish! Make a write up of why you did the survey, the results, quotes from respondents and submit it to your school newspaper or local city/town newspaper. Use survey stats to publicize your GSA meetings and raise visibility in your school through announcements, posters, and advertisements. Example: "72% of students surveyed at Austin High said that things need to change to make LGBTQ students safer here. Now DO SOMETHING! Create change! Come to the next GSA meeting, Wednesday at 3:00 in room 100. And bring a friend."
- Identify some of the major issues with your school environment as indicated by the survey results (ie. teachers don't intervene when homophobic comments are made in the classroom) and design projects to address them
- Consider formulating the results so as to compare answers between grade levels and/or males and females.
- Think about giving out another survey at a later date to measure if your school climate is changing

Peer Education Workshops:

Educating your peers about issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, diversity, transphobia and homophobia can be one of the most effective ways to make your school safer for LGBTQ students, and QSAs are a great framework for implementing an anti-transphobia and/or anti-homophobia peer education program. If your QSA is planning to organize and lead classroom anti-homophobia and/or anti-transphobia workshops, keep these things in mind as you go along:

Ahead of Time:

Consider attending a formal training

The QSA Network offers trainings for potential anti-transphobia and anti-homophobia peer educators – we'll tell you everything you need to know about developing and leading classroom workshops. Call our office to set up a training at your school or in your area.

Figure out what you need to do to get the workshop(s) approved by the school

Talk to your advisor and meet with administrators and/or other faculty members. Present them with a potential workshop agenda and be able to tell them why you think this is an important thing to do.

Find a teacher

Find a teacher who is supportive and who thinks their class would be receptive to your presentation. This may be a teacher who attends QSA meetings or one you know is supportive in other ways. Often, health teachers and social studies teachers are interested in having this topic discussed in their class. Talk with them about how they can support you and discuss how they will handle any disruptions that might occur.

Gauge the climate of the classroom

Talk with the teacher or give a pre-workshop survey to find out what folks already know, what they have misconceptions about, and what they want to learn.



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Practice!

In the Classroom:

Draw Connections

Try to draw connections between your workshop and what the teacher is teaching. (Psychology is obvious, as is Health/Family Life. A less obvious one would be History, and tying it into civil rights studies... etc.)

Invite an administrator or another teacher

Invite a supportive Administrator to see your workshop if you'd like to do it in other classes. Also, other teachers might like to see what you propose doing in their classes, so feel free to invite them.

Make it clear that you do not speak for the entire LGBTQ community

Make this disclaimer known at the beginning of the workshop. You do not speak for every LGBTQ individual in the world, and you shouldn't be expected to represent your entire community. You can only speak from your personal experience. (Use "I" statements.)

Define and clarify the terms you use

Not everyone will be as versed as you in LGBTQ issues and language. You should define the terms you use, such as "sexual orientation" or "gender identity," to make sure that everyone understands what you mean. If you decide to use words such as "queer" or "dyke," you should also discuss what they mean to you and why you are choosing to use them when others may not.

Not everyone will agree with you

The entire reason you are doing the Anti-Homophobia workshop is to increase awareness. People will disagree with you, and that's okay as long as they are not disruptive to the workshop. Listen, and if you feel prepared, respond respectfully to others' beliefs.

Stick to your purpose

You are there to do an anti-homophobia and/or anti-transphobia workshop, not a sex education workshop. Unfortunately, for many people the instant you mention "gay," they think sex. In Texas, because of our abstinence-only education laws, it is particularly important for the security of your club that you make your purpose clear and stick to it. An anti-homophobia and/or anti-transphobia workshop is about making schools safer – free from harassment and violence.

Be Honest.

Above all else, be honest about what you know. If you don't know an answer, that's okay – just tell them that you don't know.

Afterward:

Learn from your evaluations.



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Make sure you give folks enough time to fill them out, and be open to constructive criticism. Don't let the overly negative ones get you down, though.

Sample Classroom Anti-Homophobia Workshop Agenda :

I. INTRODUCTION (10 min)

- A. Personal introduction (name, age, club affiliation, title of the workshop, and why you're doing this workshop, etc.)
- B. Purpose of Workshop
 1. Increase awareness of the impact that anti-LGBTQQ harassment, homophobia and transphobia have on students at the school
 2. Increase awareness of what homophobia and transphobia are
 3. Create a safe space for people to ask questions about LGBTQQ issues
 4. Discuss how students can be better allies for LGBTQQ people in schools
- C. Ground Rules/Agreements/Norms
 1. Why is it important to have agreements? (So that people feel safe, comfortable and respected, and are able to say what's on their minds; so that everyone gets heard...)
 2. Put up Ground Rules: (let the class help generate these if you have time)
 3. Read off each agreement and ask participants if there are any to add (if you already generated the list)
 4. Ask everyone to agree to the Agreements/Norms/Ground Rules

II. TERMS & DEFINITIONS (5 min)

- A. Go over basic LGBTQQ terms – (Remember not everyone will be comfortable with these and many won't be familiar with "transgender" or "queer," this is an opportunity for you to raise awareness, and answer questions)
- B. Ask for slang terms (you can discuss origins of the slang terms if you know them and have time)
- C. Ask for stereotypes (if you have time)



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III. ACTIVITY (Do an activity, such as LGBTQQ Bingo that covers basic concepts and gets into the issues. Come up with your own activity, or contact the Texas GSA Network for help! Make sure that your activity sheds light on the diversity within the LGBTQQ community) (10 min)

- A. Say the name and purpose of the activity in your own words.
- B. Explain instructions.
- C. At the end of the exercise, ask for reflection from students on how it felt to participate in the activity.

IV. PERSONAL SHARING (2 speakers) (20 min)

- A. Explain that the presenters are going to share personal stories.
- B. Mention that these personal stories are not necessarily representative of every LGBTQQ person's experience.
- C. At least one of the speakers should identify as LGBTQQ, but straight allies with friends or family members can also share personal stories.
- D. Each speaker gives a 5-minute highlight of their story, then allows 10 minutes to answer questions.
- E. Possible story highlights:
 - When did you know you were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?
 - What is it like to be a transgender, bisexual, lesbian, or gay youth in high school?
 - When you came out, were you supported by your friends? Family? Others?
 - What made it easier for you to come out?

If you are a straight ally, talk about your experience in relation to homophobia:

 - How have you experienced homophobia because you have friends or family members who are LGBTQQ?
 - How does homophobia affect your friends and family members?
- F. Ask for questions from the group.

V. RESOURCES AND EVALUATIONS (5 min)

- A. Resource materials to hand out:
 1. Resource sheets such as "What Every Super-Rad Straight Ally Should Know,"* or make one of your own. Say something like: "We hope that at the end of this workshop you will be more interested in becoming an Ally for LGBTQQ people at our school, or more comfortable with your peers if you yourself identify as LGBTQQ."



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2. Information on community resources, such as LGBTQ youth centers, hotlines, groups, etc.
3. Information about your QSA.

B. Ask the students to complete the evaluation.

If you have more than 50 minutes...

1. Consider making the panel discussion longer

For many students this may be their first chance to hear LGBTQ people speak about their experiences. Give more time for questions. Or have another panelist. It is always nice to have a Straight Ally talk about why they find it important to be an Ally.

2. Do an agree/disagree activity (20 mins +)

This is an excellent activity to get the class thinking. You should make sure you have at least 20 minutes to get the most out of it.

- A. Divide the room into four corners, and label them the “Strongly Agree” corner, the “Agree” corner, the “Disagree” corner, and the “Strongly Disagree” corner. Try to arrange it so that someone could stand between “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, or “Agree” and “Disagree”.
- B. Ask everyone to stand up—you are going to want to make sure there is enough space for people to move to the corners. Tell the group that you will be reading statements, and that they should go stand in the part of the room that best represents how they feel about each statement.

Sample Statements:

- Everyone should be treated respectfully in school.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students should feel safe in school
- Transgender students and others who don’t conform in terms of gender should have the option of using a gender-neutral bathroom
- Anti-harassment rules need to explicitly protect LGBTQQ students
- I would feel uncomfortable if a close friend of mine told me that they are Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
- I would feel comfortable if someone I had thought was a boy came to school wearing makeup.

Tailor your statements to your community, the questions above are only suggestions. This is an excellent activity to get the class thinking.

- C. After each statement, have one person from each corner explain why they are standing in that corner.
- D. Have everyone sit down, and facilitate a brief discussion about peoples’ experiences in the activity.

Why Are Immigrant Rights A Queer Issue?

QSAs are a powerful tool to make your peers and community aware of the oppression and discrimination in our society. There are many groups that are discriminated against, like religious minorities, people of color, people who are or are perceived to be low-income, people with disabilities, and queer people, among many others.



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Immigrants often fall under at least one of these categories, and are also easily victim to the xenophobia that occurs in the United States fairly regularly.

But why are immigrant rights a queer issue?

Although maybe not obvious at first sight, immigrant rights and LGBTQ issues are closely connected. At the most basic level, there is a connection simply because many people share both identities. Thus they often face multiple forms of discrimination, not only based on their immigrant status but also due to their being LGBTQ. There is also a lot the two movements can gain from each other, if collaboration occurs on a larger scale.

Both groups

- live under laws that say they are less human
- are a scapegoat for society's problems
- are afraid for the security of their families
- feel vulnerable and unsafe because of policies, institutions and attitudes that keep them on the margins

Immigrants in the U.S.

The United States is a nation of immigrants and has always promoted itself as a country where everybody, no matter where they are from, gets a chance to live the "American Dream." With the exception of Native Americans, all of us are in this country as voluntary or involuntary immigrants or as the descendents of immigrants. Immigration has built the political, economic and cultural environment of this country from colonial days to the present. Yet, virtually every group of newcomers has faced discrimination, hostility and stereotyping from those already here. Particularly in times of economic difficulty or fear about "homeland security," immigrants are blamed for the problems of our society and are viewed with anger, suspicion and fear. Racial, religious and cultural prejudice have fueled hostility toward each wave of new immigrants.

For example, look up the Immigration Act of 1924, which barred all Asians from immigrating to the United States and only allowed 2% more of the current racial groups already living in the United States. Almost every racial group has faced discrimination based on their race in the United States, starting with the Native Americans in 1492, to the African Americans in 1526, immigrants from England (1760s-1776), Scotland (1850), China (1924), Germany (1914-1918), India (1923), Italy (1941-1945) and Japan (1913, 1941-1945) and Mexico and Latin American countries today, just to name a few. Many of these biases have stuck around even now, long after the official legislation was repealed or expired.

The reasons immigrants come to the U.S. are manifold – to reunite with family, escape persecution in their country of origin, or to find better employment opportunities. In many cases, U.S. policies are responsible for devastating the economies of other countries, forcing workers from those countries to migrate to the U.S. just to be able to support their families, thus often separating them from their families for years. Meanwhile, corporations continue moving millions of jobs out of the U.S. in search of cheaper labor.

Both LGBTQ people and immigrants are victims of injustice.



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Did you know that:

- While U.S. citizens and their foreign heterosexual partners can easily claim spousal status and the immigrant rights that it brings, U.S. citizens with foreign lesbian or gay partners find that their relationship is considered non-existent under federal law. If they want to live together, they either have to leave the U.S. and move to another country or the foreign partner has to stay in the U.S. illegally.
- All immigrants, regardless of status, will pay on average \$80,000 per capita more in taxes than they use in government services over their lifetime. The Social Security system reaps the biggest windfall from taxes paid by immigrants who are not in a position to claim benefits.
- In 31 states of the U.S., it is legal to fire someone for being lesbian, gay, or bisexual; in 39 states, it is legal to fire someone because they are transgender.
- In some parts of the U.S., local ordinances order all public officials to check immigration papers — even teachers, nurses and librarians. They are forbidden to help anyone lacking them.

What Can Your QSA Do to Fight for Immigrant Rights?

1. **Discuss.** Bring in newspaper articles and books about (LGBTQQ) immigrants. Discuss them in your QSA.
2. **Get informed.** Look up information on immigration regulations regarding LGBTQQ immigrants (see resources below). Compare them to regulations applying to heterosexual immigrants. Put your results on a poster!
3. **Find out about cases of LGBTQQ immigrants** (see resources below), like the case of Victoria Arellano. Create posters, flyers, etc. telling their stories.
4. **Build coalitions.** This issue provides the opportunity to form coalitions with other student groups who work on issues around racism, human rights, etc.
5. **Organize an event.** Invite a guest speaker (e.g. ask one of the organizations listed at the links section below), create a photo exhibition, make posters telling immigrants' stories. You can also use the workshop suggestions of Basic Rights Oregon or the Queer Immigrant Rights Project (see resources below).
6. **Embrace cultural differences.** Just as you don't assume that heterosexuality is the norm, appreciate diversity and embrace all cultures without giving preference to the American culture.
7. **Language is a common barrier** that students face at their school and immigrants face in their everyday life. Make sure your flyers are translated into multiple languages to reach a broader audience.

Resources

Websites:

- Immigration Equality (formerly Lesbian Gay Immigration Rights Task Force) www.immigrationequality.org
- Queer Immigrant Rights Project www.quir.org
- Lambda Legal www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/issues/immigration-and-asylum/
- NCLR Immigration Project www.nclrights.org
- Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org/reports/2006/us0506/index.htm#Report
- Basic Rights Oregon www.basicrights.org



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Movies:

UNVEILED, Angelina Maccarone, dir. (2005). The story of an Iranian immigrant seeking asylum in Germany after being persecuted in her home country due to her lesbian relationship. But then she falls in love. . .

Cases:

- Victoria Arellano, 23, a Mexican transgender woman, died in the intensive care unit of a hospital in Los Angeles' San Pedro district. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials detained the undocumented immigrant in May 2007 after she entered the country for the second time. Victoria, who was HIV-positive, died after she was denied medication by Immigration Enforcement officials.
- Chet, 67, and his Taiwanese partner Wei, 59, have been committed partners for two decades, during most of which Wei has lived in the U.S. undocumented: "We have lived together and been devoted to each other for the last twenty years and have tried every way possible to get him permanent residence... Every possibility has been a dead end because of immigration laws against gay partners."

Reading List

The following lists are a short, uncomprehensive book list of LGBTQ literature, manifestos, and fiction, in English y espanol. Una corta lista de los libros LGBTQ.

En Espanol

Ficcion:

Bayly, Jaime (2004). El huracan lleva tu nombre. Barcelona, Espana: Planeta,

No Ficcion:

Marcus, Eric (2001). Se elige? 300 preguntas y respuestas sobre la homosexualidad. New York: Random House Espanol.

Riesenfeld, Rina (2000). Papa, mama, soy gay. Una guia para comprender las orientaciones y preferencias sexuales de los hijos. Mexic: Grijalbo: Hoja Casa.

Fernandez-Aleman y Andres Sciolla (1999). Marquitas y marimachos: guia completa de la homosexualidad. Madrid: Nuer.

Castaneda, Marina (1999). La experiencia homosexual: para comprender la homosexualidad desde dentro y desde fuera. Mexico: Paidos.



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Whitlock, Katherine (1992). **Puentes de respeto: creacion de apoyo para la juventud lesbiana y homosexual.** Santiago, Chile : Comité de Servicio Chileno Cuáquero.

Non-Fiction

Anzaldua, Gloria (1987). **Borderlands/La Frontera.** San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Baez, Joan, Jennifer Howd, Rachel Pepper, et al (2007). **The Gay and Lesbian Guide to College Life: A Comprehensive Resource for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students and their Allies.** New York: Random House.

Bass, Ellen & Kaufman, Kate. (1996). **Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth and their Allies.** New York: HarperCollins.

Bechdel, Alison (2006). **Fun Home.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Bernstein-Sycamore, Matt, ed (2006). **Nobody Passes: Rejecting the World of Gender and Conformity.** Berkeley: Seal Press.

Bernstein-Sycamore, Mattilda, ed (2008). **That's Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation.** New York: Soft Skull Press.

Berzon, Betty, ed. (2001). **Positively Gay: New Approaches to Gay and Lesbian Life.** Berkeley: Celestial Arts.

Bornstein, Kate (1998). **My Gender Workbook.** New York: Vintage Books

Bornstein, Kate (1994). **Gender Outlaw.** New York: Routledge.

Bornstein, Kate (2006). **Hello, Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks, and Other Outlaws.** New York: Seven Stories Press.

Bruhm, Stephen and Natasha Hurley, eds. **Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children.** University of Minnesota Press.

Carlin, Deborah and Jennifer Digrazia (2003). **Queer Cultures.** Prentice Hall.

Chernin, Kim (1997). **My Life as a Boy.** Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books.

Eugenides, Jeffrey (2002). **Middlesex: A Novel.** New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000). **Sexing the Body.** New York: Basic Books.



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- Fuss, Diana, ed (1991). Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories.* New York: Routledge.
- Halberstam, Judith (1998). Female Masculinity.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Hemphill, Essex (1991). Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men.* Boston: Alyson Publications.
- Huegel, Kelley (2003). GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer and Questioning Teens.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Hutchins, Loraine and Lani Kaahumanu, eds (1990). Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out.* Boston: Alyson Pub.
- Kumashiro, Kevin K. (2004). Restored Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian/Pacific American Activists.* New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Lorde, Audre. (1984). Sister Outsider.* New York: The Crossing Press
- Lorde, Audre (1982). Zami: A New Spelling of my Name.* Massachusetts: Persephone Press.
- Mallon, Gerald P (1999). lets get this straight.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldua, eds. (1984). This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.* New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.
- Muscio, Inga (1998). Cunt.* Berkeley: Seal Press, 1998.
- Namaste, Viviane (2000). Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transexual and Transgender People.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nestle, Joan et al. (2002). Genderqueer: Voices from Beyond the Sexual Binary.* Los Angeles: Alyson Press.
- Pascoe, C.J (2007). Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School.* Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007.
- Roscoe, Will (1988). LIVING THE SPIRIT: A GAY AMERICAN INDIAN ANTHOLOGY.* New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Sedgwick, Eve K (1990). Epistemology of the Closet.* Berkley: University of California Press.
- Singer, Bennett L, ed. (1994). Growing Up Gay/Growing Up Lesbian: A Literary Anthology.* New York: New Press.



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Sonnie, Amy (2000). **Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology.** Boston, MA: Alyson Pub.

Tobias, Andrew (1973). **The Best Little Boy in the World.** New York: G.P. Putnam Sons

Trujillo, Carla, ed (1991). **Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About.** Berkeley: 3rd Woman Press.

Wilchins, Riki (2004). **Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer.** Los Angeles: Alyson Books.

Windmeyer, Shane L (2006). **The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students.** New York: Alyson Publications, Inc.

Fiction

Baldwin, James (1988). **Giovanni's Room.** New York: Dell Publishing.

Bauer, Marion Dane, ed. (1994). **Am I Blue? Coming Out From the Silence.** New York: Harper Collins.

Brown, Rita Mae (1988). **Rubyfruit Jungle.** New York: Bantam.

de la Pena, Teri (2000). **Margins.** Berkeley: Seal Press.

de la Pena, Teri (1993). **Faults.** Boston: Alyson Books.

Feinberg, Leslie (1993). **Stone Butch Blues.** Ithaca, NY: Firebrand.

Garden, Nancy (1982). **Annie On My Mind.** New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

Garden, Nancy (1996). **Good Moon Rising.** New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

Hartinger, Brent (2002). **The Geography Club.** New York: Harper Tempest.

Howe, James (2003). **The Misfits.** New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.

Johnson, Maureen (2004). **The Bermudez Triangle.** New York: Razorbill.

Kerr, M.E. (1994). **Deliver Us From Evie.** New York: Harper Trophy.

Levithan, David (2003). **Boy Meets Boy.** New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers.

MacLean, Judy (2003). **Rosemary and Juliet.** New York: Alice Street Editions.



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- Peters, Julie Anne (2003).* **Keeping You a Secret.** New York: Little, Brown.
- Peters, Julie Anne (2004).* **Luna.** Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.
- Reardon, Robert (2007).* **A Secret Edge.** New York: Kensington.
- Salat, Cristina (1993).* **Living in Secret.** New York: Bantam.
- Selvadurai, Shyam (2005).* **Swimming in the Monsoon Sea.** New York: Tundra Books.
- Sanchez, Alex (2001).* **Rainbow Boys.** New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Silva, K.E. (2006).* **A Simple Distance.** New York: Akashic Books.
- Sinclair, April (1994).* **Coffee Will Make You Black.** New York: Hyperion.
- Tea, Michelle (2006).* **Roses of No Mans Land.** San Francisco: MacAdams/Cage Pub.
- Trujillo, Carla (2003).* **What Night Brings.** Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press.
- Eugenides, Jeffrey (2002).* **Middlesex.** New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Hardy, Mark (2008).* **Nothing Pink.** Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Front Street, 2008.
- Lisa C. Moore, ed (1998).* **Does Your Mama Know?: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories.** Washington D.C.: Redbone Press.
- Pearson, Felicia "Snoop" with David Ritz (2007).* **Grace After Midnight: A Memoir.** New York: Grand Central Publishing.
- Woodson, Jacqueline (1995).* **From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun.** New York: Scholastic.



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