

# Sharing Communities Activity Guide for GSAs

Building coalitions and working together makes your GSA successful! That's why it's important to find ways to learn more about ourselves and our neighboring communities. This step-by-step activity guide will provide you with the tools you need to organize your own community-building activity with your GSA and another partner club!

For Black History Month we encourage your GSA to partner with your school's African-American student club for a joint learning project. This activity will offer an opportunity for members of your GSA to connect with another community and for another student club to learn more about the community of your GSA!

Each club will ask questions of the members of the other club and will use the answers to learn more about both communities and to build a stronger coalition to work on future projects together.

## Preparation:

### → Select

For Black History Month, consider connecting with a club in your school that supports students of color, such as the Black Student Union.

### → Invite

Talk to a representative or leader of the club about participating in the activity with you. Hand them this sheet of instructions so they know what to expect.

### → Set a Timeline

Work with the partner club to develop a timeline that works best for both groups.

## Be sure to include the following items:

DATE	TASK
_____	Invite club
_____	Exchange questionnaires
_____	Questionnaires completed and returned
_____	All questionnaires read
_____	Meeting to discuss questionnaires (can be same as meeting below)
_____	Meeting to develop presentation (can be same as meeting above)
_____	Joint meeting and presentation
_____	Follow-up

## BE THOUGHTFUL ABOUT HOW YOU ASK YOUR PARTNER GROUP.

While you may have great reasons for inviting the partner club, they may not want to participate in the activity with you. Be careful not to pressure the group into feeling like they're required to participate.

## The Questionnaire

You'll submit questions to the partner club via a short questionnaire. Attached to this document is a sample you can use. If you'd like to create your own set of questions, be sure to follow these guidelines:

- Keep the questionnaire short, about five or six questions. You don't want to overwhelm the respondents.
- Questions should focus on the individual's experiences
- Questions should be open-ended, meaning that they are questions that require more than a Yes or No answer. Questionnaires should be anonymous so everyone feels comfortable answering truthfully.

Deliver the questionnaires to your contact at the partner club. Remember to print enough copies of the questions for each member of the partner club.

### REMEMBER!

- You and other students may belong to both clubs, or be members of both communities represented. It is important to be respectful of how these students want to be involved.
- This activity can be helpful in breaking stereotypes about other groups, *so don't ask questions that ask people to assume what everyone in their community thinks.*

## Preparing the Presentation

### READ THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Here are two ways we recommend:

- If you have a small group and/or a lot of time: make copies so that each person can read every questionnaire.
- If you have a large group and/or not much time: make 2-3 copies of each completed sheet. Assign each questionnaire to 2-3 readers. This way each person only has to read a portion of the questionnaires but each one gets read by more than one person.

### DIGESTING THE INFO

Remember when reading the questionnaires that what you learn will be used as a presentation for the partner club. Think about the following topics when you read and discuss. It will help you prepare your presentation:

- **THEMES:** What types of things do you see coming up consistently throughout all the answers? Are there any common concerns, questions, ideas or phrases being used?
- **DIVERSITY:** What makes your partner club unique? How can your club learn from the differences?
- **COMMONALITIES:** What similarities are there between your club and the partner club? Remember, these may not be plain. What connections can you make between your club's goals and the partner club's goals? How can your clubs support each other in achieving common goals?

### PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

Your presentation should explain to the partner club what you have learned from their surveys. Select a few points from each of the topics above to shape your presentation. Pick two people who will present on behalf of your club, and make sure the presenters have time to practice before the joint meeting!

### HOW TO PRESENT

There are a lot of ways you can present the information to your partner club. You can make hand outs with important, anonymous quotes from the questionnaires you read. If you have access to a projector you can prepare a PowerPoint presentation or a short video. Be creative!

# Presentations and Discussion

## PLAN JOINT MEETING

Schedule a meeting where both clubs will join together to share what each has learned. Make sure to have a note keeper who can take down any important questions or ideas to address in the future. Below is a sample agenda you can use for the meeting

### AGENDA (1 HOUR TOTAL)

- **Ice breaker:** 5 min
- **Introduction:** 5 min
- **Presentation 1:** 15 min
- **Presentation 2:** 15 min
- **Discussion:** 20 min

## FACILITATION

The leaders of each student club should co-facilitate the meeting including the discussion following the presentations.

## ICE BREAKER

An ice breaker can be any activity that encourages attendees to engage and connect with each other. Often, this can be achieved just by asking participants to introduce themselves and answer a common question, like: What color best describes your mood today? What's your favorite class? If you were a flavor of ice cream, what would you be?

## INTRODUCTION

Explain a bit about what the goals of the Dare to Share activity were and the agenda for the remainder of the event.

## DISCUSSION

The facilitators should work to encourage open and honest discussion about what they learned from the presentations. Encourage discussion with some thoughtful questions, like the ones below.

- Did you learn something about the communities by watching the presentations?
- How do you feel about the ways the two groups are different/similar?
- Do you think your groups have more in common or more differences?
- In what ways can both clubs support each other in your common goals?
- Are there any activities or actions both clubs can plan together?

Ask participants to reflect both on how they better understand not only the partner community but their own as well. Try to get both clubs to brainstorm possible activities that your clubs can work on together.

## FOLLOW-UP

Send a thank you to the partner club. Be sure to answer any important questions that came up in the meeting and follow-up on any possible actions or activities brought up during the discussion.



# Questionnaire

<b>Questions by:</b> _____ CLUB NAME	<b>Complete and return by:</b> _____ DATE TO BE COMPLETED
<b>Questions for:</b> _____ PARTNER CLUB	<b>Return to:</b> _____ CLUB REPRESENTATIVE

Please answer each of the following questions with a few sentences. ***Do not put your name or other students' names on the questionnaire or in the answers; your answers will be anonymous.***

1. Why is it important to you to be a member of your club?

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2. What are three things you want people to know about your community?

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3. What are three big issues your community faces in school?

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4. What do you want people in school to learn about Black History Month?

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5. What do you think our clubs have in common?

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