

As we are all moving towards spatial distancing, it is important to stay socially connected. For some LGBTQ students, school is the safest and most affirming space. This resource is to help students and educators navigate online gatherings for GSAs, Day of Silence, and Breaking the Silence Rallies. There are also resources for video call programs such as Zoom and Google Hangouts and companies that are offering free internet.

GSA MEETINGS *(Gender & Sexuality Alliances, Gay Straight Alliances, LGBTQ club etc.)*

We know that GSAs play an important role for many LGBTQ students. There are many resources on GLSEN’s website that can be helpful during this “break” to recenter and refocus your GSA plans in moving to a virtual space for the time being. So here are some tips for organizing online.

- 1** Make sure you have a virtual meeting program like Zoom or Google Hangouts.
- 2** Connect with club members and organize a meeting date and time that works for all.
- 3** Create an agenda. (you can give time limits to each agenda item to keep you on track)

CREATING AN AGENDA

- A** **What is the purpose of your meeting?** (social, education, and advocacy are the top reasons students meet, you can choose to engage with all three or focus on one or two of these reasons)
- B** **Go over group agreements for this space.** Here is a GSA Group Agreements guide that you can share with your club.
- C** **Check-in question** – here are some examples to get the conversation going:
 - i. Share a meme! From the Corona Virus impact to your current mood, there are always good memes out there! Or
 - ii. share ones that you’ve personally created!

Share what you are doing for self care!
- D** **Main Topic** – The main focus of your meeting.
 - i. During the first meeting you can use this space to brainstorm topics you want addressed like organizing for the Day of Silence, making art together, plan your summer retreat, elections for next year’s club officers, plan a virtual graduation, have guest speakers join your call etc.
 - ii. Once you have a list of main topics, schedule them out weekly.
 - iii. Delegate someone for each topic to be in charge of collecting the information, giving the presentation, contacting the guest speaker, facilitating the conversation or activity.
- E** **Finish up the conversation** and close with a question to everyone like “what is one word you are feeling as we close out” or “what is your takeaway from this meeting?”
- F** **Follow up with reminders** of when the next meeting is and any tasks that were delegated in previous meetings.

ORGANIZING AN ONLINE EVENT *(Ex. Breaking the Silence Rally)*

- 1 Pick a Time** on April 24th (or a date that works for your group) Host your specific Breaking the Silence event before or after GLSEN national’s Breaking the Silence event so that you can participate with us!
- 2 Create a schedule.** On a google doc, you can go to the “Insert” tab and select “table” to create your schedule table or copy and paste the sample template below.
- 3 Decide who your host or MC will be for the event.** It’s best if you choose someone who has a lot of energy and is mindful of their language. They should also be someone who can make the space is inclusive for everyone and doesn’t use offensive language. This should be an empowering space.
- 4 Book the talent!** Ask for speakers and plug them into your schedule. You can have musicians or empowering speakers that do things such as a keynote, spoken word, etc. Save the impactful and special guest for last to go out with a bang!
- 5 Schedule a moment** where you everyone is silent together to end the Day of Silence and then Break the Silence together! This could be yelling, saying an empowering word at the same time, singing, laughing, saying the name of someone you were silent for (or your name!).
- 6 Wrap up your event** and thank everyone for coming. If there is time, you can ask everyone to share one thing they are committing to or a take away from the event (you can do this in the chat box if there are a lot of participants).

SAMPLE BREAKING THE SILENCE AGENDA		
3:00–3:15	Open with introductions led by the MC Go over group agreements and how folks can be mindful in the space.	Name of the MC goes here
3:15–3:20	Sample Time Slot: Music performance (it could be one musician just playing a tune they learned, or a singer singing acapella or with a guitar or ukulele)	Name of artist, MC intros
3:20–3:30	Sample time slot: Spoken word or poetry reading	Name of poet, MC intros
3:20–3:30	Sample time slot: Break the Silence together. Example is going around and saying a word to Break the Silence or yelling (be mindful of disturbing the house (like elders or babies sleeping or neighbors)	Name of poet, MC intros
3:20–3:30	Sample time slot: Main speaker	Name of speaker, MC intros
3:20–3:30	Closing event with information for future GSA meetings and other announcements	MC thanks all

THINGS TO REMEMBER

LGBTQ people with disabilities have been leading the way in organizing for centuries. Because our society does not prioritize accessibility, it has often been left to folks with disabilities in the Disability Justice Movements to create those paths for themselves. Most of the tools and resources we are finding in technology were created by people with disabilities to begin with. In organizing any of your events, always ask if folks have any accessibility requests. Video meetings allow for inviting interpreters if needed to help translate the conversation, try adding captions and image descriptions to your online posts as well. You can also utilize the chat box to reiterate things that are being shared throughout the call.

Protect your Privacy! Make your meetings private and send invite links to those on your mailing list. Designate someone on the team to monitor the chat. [Get tips from Zoom by clicking here.](#)

Practice patience, organizing spaces such as these are more importantly about connecting with each other and less about producing work.

Ask how you all can follow up and check in on each other outside of meetings and events.

Any questions or suggestions, please email us at students@glsen.org

REMEMBER – WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!

Take deep breaths, identify something in the house that can recenter you like a family heirloom, a plant, photo, soft blanket, window etc to comfort you. We are also here to support you throughout! Connect with us on social media @GLSEN and our website www.glsen.org