



EDUCATOR GUIDE

April 24, 2020

GLSEN[®]



Every April on the Day of Silence,

people in schools across the country engage in silent protest to call attention to the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ people. We need motivated educators, students, and administrators to come together to take action by choosing silence and then breaking the silence to advocate for visibility and affirmation of LGBTQ people.

By virtually preparing for and organizing a Day of Silence, you and your students can break the silencing effects of isolation and loneliness brought on by physical distancing. You can make a difference by addressing the harmful effects of anti-LGBTQ comments that are still happening over social media during virtual school time, and come together to unite with other educators across the country in advocating for LGBTQ community and affirmation in schools.

Educators have a huge role to play leading up to and on the GLSEN's Day of Silence. This planning guide walks you through a few ways that you can help.

Update for Virtual Schools due to COVID-19:

We know this is a challenging time to be an educator, especially one whose LGBTQ students depend on daily. With school closures across the country for an unforeseeable future at this time, GLSEN is here to support the virtual needs of educators like you who are committed to advocacy for LGBTQ people in schools, including rallying your students to participate virtually in days of action. As we stay diligent and mindful in spatial distancing, we can continue to socially connect with each other online and with a powerful message.



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WHAT CAN I DO BEFORE THE DAY OF SILENCE?

Help your colleagues understand the need for Day of Silence by discussing it at faculty meetings and other school community events.

Bring our [Four Supports Resource](#) to administrators and organizers of the Day of Silence to see what supports your school already has and what can be added to better create an inclusive school environment.

Plan a school-wide assembly to end the Day of Silence at a “Break the Silence” event.

Empower participating students by preparing to accept silent or written participation.

Review your curriculum with GLSEN’s [LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Guide](#) and identify ways to break the silence of hidden curriculum by teaching about LGBTQ people and identity.

Teach your students about the history of silent protesting, the silencing of LGBTQ people and history, and the reason for participating in the Day of Silence.

Teach your students about breaking gender stereotypes and different types of families, including those with LGBTQ adults.

Send a letter to your families to let them know that the Day of Silence is coming up, and why you and some of your students are participating.

Order copies of our [LGBTQ History Cards](#) and use the biographies and activity ideas for teaching silently.

Watch this video of [Tips for Educators](#).

Encourage your students to register at www.glsen.org/dayofsilence.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE DAY OF SILENCE AS AN EDUCATOR?

We are encouraging schools who can to celebrate the Day of Silence with us in April. Here's some new virtual ways to participate:

Use our Day of Silence Virtual Guide to plan for virtual participation. Share the guide with your students to see what interests them.

Join GLSEN's National Breaking the Silence Rallies across the Country. [Register here](#) for the instructions on our rallies throughout different time zones! We will have special guests throughout the afternoon that you won't want to miss! Just follow @GLSEN and tune in April 24th at 3:00PM EST where we will Break the Silence together!

Use our Virtual Breaking the Silence Guide for other ideas on breaking the silence in virtual schools.

Although you may be celebrating at a different time in the year, you can [register now](#) to receive updates, planning resources, and the chance to win a free copy of [The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Streets](#) by Gayle E. Pitman.

Follow @GLSEN on facebook, instagram, and twitter where we'll be sharing virtual lesson and activity ideas

Additional Ideas for How to Participate in Day of Silence

K-5

- Tell your students about the Day of Silence before the day and answer their questions before choosing silence on the day.
- Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol when on video calls with your students to remind them why you are not speaking.
- If you have a co-teacher or teaching team, arrange for them to speak while you communicate nonverbally, or remain silent during morning meeting, snack, lunch, or one lesson of the day and during the 3 minutes of community silence at 3:00pm ET.

Middle and High School

- Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol in video calls to remind students why you are not speaking.
- Post or email information about the Day of Silence to your students.
- Have your lesson instructions written out and chat your responses to students if choosing silence.
- Silently facilitate one of the Day of Silence lessons or activities (listed in this resource).

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY STUDENTS ON THE DAY OF SILENCE?

The Day of Silence is still a school day when learning needs to happen. Be creative with your assignments and activities and methods of participation!

K-5

Have your students participate in the community silence and solidarity: 3pm ET/ 2pm CT/1pm PT/11am HT for 3 minutes.

Do a read-aloud for students with social justice picture books and books with LGBTQ and gender-diverse people

Use sharing time or closing circle to discuss how students help people who are being teased for what they like, how they look, or who they love.

Plan a letter-writing lesson where students write to local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to ask them to address bullying and support LGBTQ students and families.

Show an LGBTQ-affirming film, such as Groundspark's [Respect for All Series](#), such as *That's a Family* or *It's Elementary*, and hold a discussion.

Middle and High School

Support students who choose to remain silent during virtual classes.

Print out information on the Day of Silence, other silent protests throughout history, and statistics on anti-LGBTQ discrimination and bullying like from the [National School Climate Survey](#). Have students read and silently write about what they learned and what they can do to make a difference.

Have your students participate in the community silence: 3:00 pm ET for 3 minutes. Discuss the history behind the Day of Silence and anti-LGBTQ discrimination.

Plan a letter-writing lesson where students call on local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to support LGBTQ youth in schools. Use GLSEN's [Four Supports for Inclusive Schools](#) for students to reflect and to advocate for needed support.

Have students read GLSEN's [Gender Triangle Education Guide](#) or teach our [Beyond the Binary](#) lesson. Have students write about actions they can take to be more inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people.

Ask students and colleagues to reflect on LGBTQ inclusion in your school policies, special events, and curriculum.

Teach about Audre Lorde's writings on silence such as: "Your silence will not protect you." Ask students what this quote means to them, and how they can "break" the silence for LGBTQ people.

Look through the [LGBTQ History](#) resources on our website for ideas on bringing LGBTQ visibility into your classroom. Order or teach about the icons and events in our [LGBTQ History Cards](#) and have your students do this [LGBTQ History timeline](#) activity.

IDEAS FOR GSA ADVISERS

Have students complete a silent reflection-carousel where they answer questions about LGBTQ issues such as:

- What parts of your identity feel supported at school? What is being done to support this?
- How is this the same or different in virtual school time? What supports do you need to feel safe and connected?
- What LGBTQ topics or people are missing from your curriculum that you would like to learn about? Why?
- What school rules or policies would help you feel more supported at school?
- If you could design your own supportive class or school, what would it look like?

Encourage them to silently design a guide for your school.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE DAY OF SILENCE?

Get involved: Contact principals, superintendents, and state legislators to demand that they show visible support for LGBTQ youth. Stay connected by signing up for our [Educator Network](http://www.glsen.org/educators) at www.glsen.org/educators.

Create or support a GSA or other LGBTQ student-led group at your school.

Create or support a faculty LGBTQ-affinity or interest group.

Continue the conversation! The Day of Silence should not be the only time you discuss LGBTQ individuals in the classroom. Break the silence of hidden curriculum by using our [Inclusive Curriculum Guide](#) and adding LGBTQ people, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching.