

2021 Here Black and Queer Panel

Discussion Guide

Go to glsen.org/HereBlackQueerPanel to view the discussion.

GLSEN's Here Black and Queer campaign highlights the intersections of being LGBTQ+ and Black. This year for Here Black and Queer, Black students of GLSEN's National Student Council created a space where Black students and adults could have an open conversation about their experiences, thoughts, and opinions. The conversation was guided by questions written by National Student Council member Nic Oke, a Black bisexual Junior from Maryland.

PANELISTS



REGGIE EATON (They/Them) • 12th grade, Plover, Wisconsin

Howdy all, my name is Reggie! I use They/Them pronouns and I am a Trans-masculine Non-Binary Senior from Central Wisconsin. I am a Queer, Black, Filipino, Japanese, nerdy person who will overshare about flamingos when given the chance. I am the founder of the Stevens Point Area LGBTQ+ Center and I want to make working with LGBTQ+ youth my passion and career. I work with my school board member to ensure our schools and community is anti-racist and inclusive in their education.



FREDDIE TAHARKA (He/Him/His) • 12th grade, Clermont, Florida

Hi! My name is Freddie Taharka, and I am a rising senior in high school. I live in Clermont, Florida. I LOVE to travel, be active, and be spontaneous. I've learned in my years that knowledge slays ignorance and makes empathy easier to embrace, so I will forever keep learning and help to educate others. Growing up in rural Georgia, I recognized my family's needs were not always at the forefront of the legislative body, especially being a biracial child and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. So that lit the fire in me to speak out for change, to make a difference for all marginalized communities, and to raise awareness to issues that impact working class people all across the country.



BREA RICE (She/Her)

Brea Rice pronouns she/her/hers. Received her Masters of Social Work from Wichita State University in 2019. She has held the role of intern at GLSEN Kansas for 3 years. It is Brea's passion to create safe and inclusive spaces for today's youth to reach their full potential.



JAMOND FOREE (He/Him)

Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, Jamond has spent the past decade working to improve cognitive, physical, and social-emotional outcomes for young people from cradle to career. As a master trainer and skilled facilitator, Jamond has worked across the country helping organizations, school districts, and municipalities build capacity and develop strategies to ensure diversity, inclusion, and equity for all. In addition, Jamond is a multidisciplinary artist and has worked professionally as a costume designer, actor, and writer. When he is not trying to save the world, he is busy working his most important job: Dad.



MELANIE WILLINGHAM-JAGGERS (She/They)

Melanie Willingham-Jaggers (They/She), is the incoming Interim Executive Director at GLSEN, a national non-profit that works to ensure K-12 education is safe and affirming for all students, including LGBTQ+ youth. Her vision for the next chapter of GLSEN's work is rooted in the belief that education can and should be an experience that is safe, affirming and liberating – and that we can achieve that goal only when we build in racial, gender and disability justice into our education system as a key indicator of success.

DISCUSSION

- **When Jamond is talking about what Black history month means to him he speaks about the difference between the lack of representation he experienced when he was younger and the representation his daughter now has access to in various media. One example he shared is that there are more books with people who look like her on the cover wherever they go.**
 - Why do you think representation is so important?
- **When Melanie is talking about the work GLSEN is doing to better serve Black people they talk about creating a “Liberated Education System that is free from harm.”**
 - What does liberation in education look like to you?
 - > What are some harmful practices/experiences at your school?
 - > What actions can you take to make your school a liberated space?
- **When asked about how non-Black people can show solidarity with Black people, both Brea and Freddie talk about “leaning into being uncomfortable.”**
 - What do you think they meant by that?
 - > Do you recall any particularly meaningful instances where you or your allies have leaned into a new concept around identities and experiences? What was the result?
- **Brea said that even in a room full of Black people some Black people may not feel safe. She was referencing the intersections of the identities of Black LGBTQ+ people.**
 - Why is it important to acknowledge the intersections of identity?
 - How should that influence your solidarity?
- **Reggie talks about their hope with the new changes in presidency; they also talk about their concerns about people becoming complacent in the political system and idolizing the politicians who were elected.**
 - Why is it important to engage in constructive criticism and dialogue when discussing issues impacting your local community and the country?
 - > How can you engage in keeping elected officials accountable to equity and justice?
- **When the panel is talking about liberation for Black people they envision:**
 - Liberation looks like the ability to genuinely rest.
 - Liberation looks like loving who you love without question.
 - Liberation looks like having equal opportunities.
 - Liberation looks like being able to embrace Black culture and be respected.
 - Liberation looks like playing--spending time without purpose or performance.
 - Liberation looks like the freedom to just be without explanation or defense.
 - > If you are a Black person what does liberation look like for you? If you are a non-Black person, how can you work in solidarity with Black people to aid in achieving liberation?

For more support, questions, and comments, email students@glsen.org.

Visit glsen.org for more resources and material on how to support Black LGBTQ+ students.