



**2021**  
**In-Person**  
**Student Guide**

*My Silence, My Story.*

GLSEN's Day of Silence occurs every April where people in schools across the country engage in direct action through a silent protest to call attention to the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ+ people in schools. **This year, GLSEN's Day of Silence is April 23, 2021.**

This year, the Day of Silence theme is *My Silence, My Story*. Where LGBTQ+ people in schools are often silenced and erased, this direct action is a reclamation of that forced silence and erasure. This time LGBTQ+ students are choosing to be silent on their own accord and demonstrate the impact on the entire school community when LGBTQ+ people are silenced and erased. GLSEN's resources will provide opportunities for student leaders to organize their day of action and engage in creative and impactful ways to tell their story especially in incorporating racial, gender, and disability justice. The purpose of this guide is to help students like yourself participate and support folks on your campus to take action and join this campaign on April 23, 2021.

## PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF SILENCE!

In person action takes some prep work! Always take safety precautions by staying at least six feet apart from each other, sit in well ventilated rooms with air circulation, wash your hands, and wear your mask. Here are some other ideas to get your started in planning for your Day of Silence:

- **Meet** with your GSA, LGBTQ+ club, or other students who would like to participate. Identify a supportive adult to back you up on your day of action! This is helpful in case anyone gives you trouble or if you need school staff to sponsor your event.
- **Register for the Day of Silence** with GLSEN! We will update registrants on all new material, celebrity engagements, and opportunities! You won't want to miss out!
- **Connect** with your local **GLSEN Chapter** for support in organizing your event.
- **Hold** a planning meeting with other students. What are your goals for this event? How will this change your school climate?
- **Create** an outreach plan. Tabling a week before or during the week of the Day of Silence on April 23rd is an effective way to get folks to sign up, learn about the event, and take a pledge to participate. Go to GLSEN's Day of Silence page for tabling resources.
- **Make** posters and hang them around school, share on social media, make morning announcements.

**If you are planning a Breaking the Silence event, check out [GLSEN's Breaking the Silence Guide](#) to get ideas of how to host this celebratory event at the end of the day!**

**Over 4 in 5 LGBTQ students don't see positive LGBTQ representation in their curriculum, nearly 9 in 10 experience harassment or assault, and almost a third miss school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). *The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN



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## WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

**Register for GLSEN's Day of Silence** to receive more information for engagement opportunities with celebrity influencers, giveaways, and new resources!

### Social Media Campaign

Change your profile/photo frame to a Day of Silence graphic until 3:00PM your time now until April 23rd. Day of Silence is a silent protest of the erasure and bullying of LGBTQ+ people on school campuses around the country. By changing your profile, you are raising awareness of LGBTQ+ erasure and harassment! Imagine if LGBTQ+ people in schools were invisible, it is a powerful statement that can get folks asking questions and join in solidarity to protect, promote, and empower LGBTQ+ students in schools. Let's paint a message across our online platforms and show them our Silence is Loud!

- **Post a video:** Post a video of you being silent. You can write your own post about Day of Silence and **Why or Who you are being silent for?** \*avoid outing folks and use generic words like "friend, sibling, uncle, etc." You can write your own or use this template:
  - Today is the Day of Silence — a national student-led movement highlighting the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ people. Over 4 in 5 LGBTQ students don't see positive LGBTQ representation in their curriculum, nearly 9 in 10 experience verbal harassment, and almost a third miss school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. I am silent for \_\_\_\_\_. Until 3:00PM #DayofSilence (add image description if possible)
- **#DayOfSilence Challenge!** Post a video or photo and challenge your friends, family, and community to participate. \*Avoid outing folks and use generic words like "friend, sibling, uncle, etc." You can write your own or use this template:
  - Today is the Day of Silence — a national student-led movement highlighting the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ people. Over 4 in 5 LGBTQ students don't see positive LGBTQ representation in their curriculum, nearly 9 in 10 experience verbal harassment, and almost a third miss school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. I am silent for \_\_\_\_\_. I challenge: @\_\_\_\_\_ to join me in The Day of Silence until 3:00PM #DayofSilence (add image description if possible)
- **Join our GSA Day of Silence Webinar** and learn about all of the resources and opportunities GLSEN will be offering this Day of Silence as well as best practices.
  - **Register here for the Day of Silence Webinar** on April 7th at 7:00PM ET/ 4:00 PM PT.
  - The @GLSEN Bulletin on Instagram Live, Monday, April 19th will also be dedicated to Day of Silence. Tune in at 6:00PM ET/ 3:00PM PT.
- **Join the National Moment of Silence** at 3:00PM ET/ 12:00PM PT on April 23rd for 3 minutes of silence

### Visual Representation

There are so many LGBTQ+ young artists and we would love for you to share your gifts! This year's theme *My Silence, My Story* is the perfect prompt for this section. Post your art on your social page and at school, explain the connection to Day of Silence, tag @GLSEN and hashtag #DayofSilence for a chance to be featured on our IG page and story! Work with your school administration on selecting a location to host this art wall.



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- **T-shirt design party.** Bring a shirt you can repurpose for Day of Silence and decorate it with words and visuals, then wear it on the Day of Silence.
- **Drawing, painting, graphic design, etc.** This has been the traditional outlet for Day of Silence and Breaking the Silence! And this is an activity you can do together with your GSA! Have a gallery walk of all the pieces submitted or showcase them when you table or your Breaking the Silence event.
- **Poetry and other forms of writing.** Words have power, share and tell your story through creative and expressive writing. The Day of Silence theme My Silence, My Story can be the writing prompt. You can also do this with your GSA or group of friends. Share your work with each other in this silent activity.
- **Dance and movement art.** Body movement in all of its forms is an empowering expressive outlet. This is an opportunity to connect what it means to feel erased, silenced, empowered, resilient through body movement.
- **Zine making party!** Check out the [National Student Council's Zine](#) and share it! You can also create your own Zine as a group while on a video call with each other. Connect with the closest GLSEN Chapter to you and share your Zine! They can share it on their social and if you tag @GLSEN and use the hashtag #DayofSilence and #BreakingTheSilence, you could be featured on GLSEN national's social media outlets!
- **Make Signs!** Create large or mini protest signs for the Day of Silence. Find a slogan that works for you like "Stop Silencing and Erasing LGBTQ+ Students!" or "LGBTQ+ Representation Now!"
- **Make Buttons.** Make Day of Silence and Breaking the Silence buttons to wear and give out to folks participating. If you do not have buttons try printing stickers with the graphic design on the GLSEN webpage.

## ACCESSIBILITY

As for all advocacy work, make sure that your participation and your students' participation is accessible and does not perpetuate or engage in ableist behavior. Here are suggestions on how to participate with mindfulness and centering access needs.

- If you are planning an in-person event, offer all the ways your event will be accessible. For example, offering if the event will have live interpreters, wheelchair accessible, fragrance free for folks sensitive to smells, seating availability prioritized for folks who cannot stand for any length of time or need to be closer to the event for visibility. It is important to center the needs and requests of the folks you are supporting. If an interpreter is needed, ask if they have a preferred interpreter.
- Make a note of who to contact plus contact information if someone has accommodation requests (such as interpreters, live captioning, image descriptions.)
- Some people have light sensitivity so avoid using flashing lights or give a warning if there will be flashing lights at the moment they will happen and give folks a chance to look away. Let folks know when the flashing lights have stopped.
- Use image descriptions for folks who cannot see the image you are promoting or sharing. Here is an example of an image description for a photo. *Image description is of a person with short pastel orange hair in a light blue t-shirt and jeans standing on a stage and passing a microphone to another person with long black hair wearing overalls with flower prints on them.* For more information about why this is important, [check out this list of "Ways to Create Access"](#) from the Disability Accessibility Summit.



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- Make sure folks are using correct names and pronouns by having name tags and encouraging students to add their pronouns.
- Share content warnings for heavy topics such as mental health, death, violence, slurs, etc. should they be mentioned or discussed.
- Invite students to move up to the front but do not force or pressure them. For some students, it may have taken a lot for some students to get through the door, let folks be where they are most comfortable and feel the safest.
- This is the Day of Silence. What this means for hearing folks is using American Sign Language (ASL) or making up gestures like scattergories should not be “entertaining”, funny, or used as a substitution for you not speaking. American Sign Language is a complex and effective language of communication for Deaf and hard of hearing communities. It is ableist and offensive to try and make up gestures to communicate. If you or your peers need to communicate, using the chat feature is the best practice.

## ACTIONS TO TAKE AFTER GLSEN'S DAY OF SILENCE

- Join us at the Virtual Breaking the Silence Rally on Friday, April 23rd at 7:00PM ET/ 4:00PM PT. Join GLSEN's National Student Council, Zachary Quinto and other celebrity influencers as we Break the Silence together and spend the evening and afternoon celebrating our identities and in gratitude for our magnificent LGBTQ+ identities.
- After the Breaking the Silence Rally, the National School Climate Survey will be live! Share your story by taking this groundbreaking survey that captures the experiences of LGBTQ+ students in K-12 schools. Your story helps draft affirming bills for LGBTQ+ students like you and has helped change policies at schools.
- Continue organizing! Bring your dreams and visions together to shape what a safe and liberated school environment looks like for you and you classmates. Brainstorm what is needed to get there and start building. Use this [#SafeToBe Vision Board](#) activity to get you and your GSA started.



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