

The logo features a large, light blue square centered on a yellow background. Behind the square are several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of green and yellow. The text 'SOLIDARITY WEEK' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the top half of the blue square.

# SOLIDARITY WEEK

**GLSEN**

**November 1-5, 2021**

*Student Guide*

**Here it is! Everything you need to know about Solidarity Week.** This guide will share resources, the history of Solidarity Week, and ideas to use in organizing your school's Solidarity Week virtually! Register to participate and you could receive giveaways, invitations to webinars and speaking engagements with special guests, news, ideas, and resources for organizing this week of action.

Originally known as Ally Week, this program was launched in 2005 by students from GLSEN's Jumpstart program during the week leading up to National Coming Out Day. GLSEN changed this program to Solidarity Week in 2020.

**Solidarity Week is a student-powered campaign dedicated to building collective support for LGBTQ+ students and educators. This week-long program helps people learn about and practice solidarity with different identities.**

Collective organizing for Solidarity Week at your school is a great way to start the year by discovering why and how you can support LGBTQ+ folks at your school.

## Solidarity as a Tool for Liberation

Solidarity is a voluntary collective action by different people based on finding common objectives and solutions. Solidarity work happens when you show up to help and support others experiencing some form of harm by centering their leadership, decisions, needs, requests, and ideas.

You have probably already practiced solidarity in some form, whether using a peer's correct pronouns or signing a petition. Solidarity actions come in large and small opportunities. In the days after the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, students organized the largest single day of protest against gun violence in US history. In June 2020, protests broke out across the country demanding justice for George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by police in Minneapolis, MN. As murders of Black people including Black transgender women increased, young people started organizing their own protests addressing anti-Blackness and racism in their schools. Many of you participated in GLSEN's Day of Silence, the largest LGBTQ+ student-led action to raise awareness around the bullying, harassment and erasure of LGBTQ+ students in schools.

Solidarity work happens in many forms and on many different issues. The important part of understanding solidarity work is that collective action is powerful in enacting change. In fact, solidarity can either be the biggest threat to oppression, or one of the biggest allies in upholding and reinforcing it. How you show up, or don't, makes all the difference.

## Ways to Participate

As a student, you have the ability to bring Solidarity Week activities and discussions to your school, whether you're virtual or in-person. Having knowledge of your school's policies and procedures, you can offer suggestions on how your school as a whole can develop effective Solidarity Week activities that highlight issues impacting LGBTQ+ people and move towards changing your school in a positive way. If your school has a GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) or other LGBTQ+ affirming clubs, you can work with your club to promote the awareness week and different activities throughout the week. You can also encourage other non LGBTQ+ focused clubs or classes like ASB (Associated Student Body) to work in solidarity by lifting up the needs and voices of LGBTQ+ students.

## Do the internal work!

As you engage in solidarity work, it is important to understand and acknowledge your own privileges. When you are aware of the privileges you bring into different spaces (it might shift depending on the folks in the room or environment you are in), you engage with more mindfulness around making space and taking space appropriately. Knowing your privileges also helps you offer ways you can be useful to a demonstration or ask. For example, if you have access to money or food, and know others who can help, you can offer to support resources for mutual aid at your school or in your community.

## Show solidarity by centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression.

Oftentimes, the people we advocate for do not actually get to advocate for themselves because they are silenced. Practice understanding what they need instead of telling them what they need. For example, it would be inappropriate for a cisgender ally to tell transgender people what they need and deciding their priorities. Making assumptions about what is best for people and making decisions for them is just another form of oppression, even with good intentions.

## Work collectively.

Solidarity work is not possible as an individualistic practice. It is a collective action involving more than one person. Start your meetings with space agreements so everyone understands the respectful boundaries of the group. Centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression or harm helps focus on the issues and needs of the people who are impacted the most. Collective work means coming together to make decisions, contributing to the conversations, and valuing all voices. It is important to understand that the financial contributions, the labor and the time one gives does not give this person the most power to make decisions. People should be able to opt in to tasks and committees and should not be assigned. Resist the reproduction of an unjust hierarchy within the movement.

## Identify identities you are in solidarity with.

Allyship and collaboration are not one way streets. There are so many ways we can show up for each other. For example, our first day of Solidarity Week will focus on solidarity with LGBT2SQ+ Native and Indigenous people.

Here is a day by day list of different identities we will be sharing on our social media outlets about:

### Monday, Nov 1: LGBT2SQ+ Native American and Indigenous focus day

- GLSEN Bulletin with the National Student Council
- **Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Native and Indigenous LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools**
- **Beyond the Gender Binary**
- **LGBTQ Youth Explain Why Schools Should Teach About These 17 Native Icons**
- **LGBTQ+ History Card highlights:** Ty Defoe, Candi Brings Plenty, Hinalaimoana Wong-Kalu

### Tuesday, Nov. 2: LGBTQ+ Disability Justice focus day

- **Challenging Ableist Language**
- **I'm a Trans, Disabled Young Person, Not One or the Other**
- **LGBTQ+ History Card highlights:** Frida Kahlo, Chella Man

**Wednesday, Nov. 3: Intersex and Trans Youth focus day**

- **5 Steps to Being An Intersex Ally**
- **8 Ways You Can Be An Ally to Intersex**
- **GLSEN Changing the Game**
- **Gender Affirming Athletic Participation**
- **Trans Action Kit**
- **LGBTQ+ History Card highlights:** Caster Semenya, Chris Mosier, Patricio Manuel

**Thursday, Nov 4: Black LGBTQ+ focus day**

- **Dear My Black Bisexual Freshman Self: You Are Enough**
- **Here's What I Need a Black Queer Student**
- **I'm a Black Queer Student, and My School Needs to Recognize My Entire Self**
- **Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools**
- **Webinar: Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools**
- **Condemning Police Brutality, Calling for Greater Support for Black Lives**
- **4 Ways You Can Support Black, Queer, Trans & GNC Educators Today**
- **LGBTQ+ History Card highlights:** Audre Lorde, Blair Imani, #BlackLivesMatter, James Baldwin, Patricio "Pat" Manuel, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy

**Friday, Nov 5: LGBTQ+ Immigrant Youth focus day**

- **Together, Our Differences Make a Strong and Beautiful Community in School**
- **LGBTQ+ History Card highlights:** Urooj Arshad, The UndocuQueer Movement, Bamby Salcedo

**What are some other identities you could highlight during Solidarity Week?****Hold a discussion group, and ask these questions:**

- What do the letters LGBTQ+ stand for?
- Where do you see LGBTQ+ people in the media? Can you share a time you felt represented in the media and how this impacted you?
- How affirming do you think your school is for LGBTQ+ students? How do you know?
- For those who are LGBTQ+ what other identities do you claim? If you are comfortable with sharing, what do you wish people knew about how you navigate all of your identities?
- When you are navigating a situation and need support, what do you wish more people did to support you?
- What are some issues at your school that can bring people together to create change?

### Solidarity Week activity ideas:

- Call for a meeting with other clubs or programs. Identify something each identity group can contribute to, for example, an inclusive curriculum policy. Draft a letter together with the other students explaining why this is important. Then, ask everyone to sign this petition or letter and deliver it to your school's administration or school district.
- Ask everyone to add their pronouns to their Zoom, Google Hangouts, or email signatures.
- Host a panel! Invite folks in the LGBTQ+ community to join a panel and share what they are comfortable with regarding their identities. You can use the group discussion questions above to ask the panel.
- Fundraise money towards mutual aid support for students on your campus.
- Host a watch-party with your GSA! Watch Netflix's *The Half of It* and check out [GLSEN's \*The Half of It\* Discussion Guide](#), which highlights intersectionality and solidarity in the film. Another film to check out is Hulu's *Love, Victor* and select questions from [GLSEN's \*Love, Victor\* Discussion Guide](#).

### Share on social media!

Don't forget to add image descriptions, alt text, and captions to your post. Join thousands of students and educators across the country by sharing how you practice solidarity.

- Take a selfie or photo and add this comment to your post: "Solidarity for my identity means \_\_\_\_\_ and I practice and engage in solidarity by \_\_\_\_\_. How are you showing up? #SolidarityWeek @GLSEN."
- 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. Sign in the image reads "Solidarity for my identity means \_\_\_\_\_ and I practice and engage in solidarity by \_\_\_\_\_". (Side note: make sure to add an image description to make sure your post is accessible. For more information about why this is important, check out this list of ["Places to Start" from the Disability and Intersectionality Summit.](#))

Remember, there are many ways to organize and be in solidarity! Be mindful of your capacity and be open to different ways to show up. If there is a march happening and you are unable to attend, make signs for folks to pick up and use, or offer to help promote the event, fundraise, or create flyers. Disabled folks have been organizing remotely and have built the foundation for accessible actions. Finally, solidarity work does not stop when Solidarity Week is over. It is just the beginning! This event should help launch other year-round programs and actions. And GLSEN is here to support you!

Email us at [students@glsen.org](mailto:students@glsen.org) for questions or to share some ideas for Solidarity Week!

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[glsen.org/SolidarityWeek](https://glsen.org/SolidarityWeek)