



Making Your GSA Inclusive of Trans Students

Being inclusive means that your student club and its members commit to an ongoing process of education. Your club will need to make an effort to ensure that its activities and advocacy efforts are inclusive of trans people and issues.

A great first step is to have all club members introduce themselves with their pronouns to set the precedent for others to do the same. This avoids singling out trans people, allows everyone to share their pronouns, and helps ensure that trans students are respected.

USE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE.

When addressing a group of people, make sure to use gender-neutral language. For example, instead of saying “Welcome, ladies and gentlemen,” say “Welcome, everyone.” You should also use gender-neutral pronouns when referring to a group or when addressing someone whose pronouns you do not know.

Here is a list of some gender-neutral pronouns that people might use:

- They/Them/Theirs is the most common gender-neutral pronoun.
When they went home after school, Ash poured themselves a glass of orange juice.
- Ze/Hir/Hirs is a common neopronoun.
When ze went home after school, Ash poured hirself a glass of orange juice.

A note on neopronouns:

- Ze/Hir/Hirs is just one neopronoun, but there are many other neopronouns that people may use. If you are unsure how to use a set of pronouns, it is okay to ask. It may take some practice, but it is important to learn how to use someone’s pronouns correctly in order to create a respectful and safe space for all students.

If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun for someone, it is important to apologize and move on. Do not create a situation in which you expect the person whose pronouns you incorrectly used to say “it’s okay” or provide comfort, as they may have felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

Student’s pronouns may change throughout the year. Just like with other identities, many people develop their gender identity through different paths and at different rates. Be supportive of people wherever they are in their own process, and let them know there is no rush in defining or understanding their own personal gender identity. GSAs can be a great space for folks to experiment with different identities, pronouns, and names, so you may want to give space for students to introduce themselves at every meeting, in case they want to explore different ways of expressing their identities.

Do not disclose someone’s identity, name, or pronoun change without their consent. They may feel comfortable with you or in the GSA, but are not ready to tell other people. Outing them to others could put them at risk for harm.

If you want to practice using different sets of pronouns, check out [this pronoun practice tool from Minus18](#). To learn more about respectful pronoun usage, head to the [GLSEN Pronoun Guide](#).



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OBSERVE TRANS-RELATED DAYS OF ACTION IN YOUR GSA.

There are a number of trans-related awareness days throughout the year, including International Pronouns Day (the 3rd Wednesday of October), Trans Awareness Month (November), Trans Day of Remembrance (November 20th), Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st), Non-Binary People's Day (July 14th), and more! You can view the Days of Action and other LGBTQ+ awareness days on our [2021-2022 School Year Calendar](#).

On these days (or any day), you can invite trans community members or activists to come speak at your GSA meeting, host a rally in support of trans-inclusive legislation, invite GSA members to write poetry or create art about their identities, watch a movie or TV show with trans characters, or work together to create and share a list of your favorite pieces of media with trans representation.

SUPPORT TRANS INCLUSION IN SPORTS.

All students have a right to feel safe and included at school. Whether in physical education class or in competitive sports, all students, regardless of their gender identity, have a right to play and feel like they belong. **GLSEN's Changing the Game** is a groundbreaking program that started in 2011 to give resources for educators and students to ensure that physical education classes and athletics are inclusive for LGBTQ+ individuals. Explore and learn our revised and expanded program, which includes updated and new resources, educational training, engagement opportunities, and stories from LGBTQ+ young athletes and their supporters.

GLSEN's Game Plan for LGBTQ+ Student Athletes is a resource guide that includes tips to help trans student athletes and allies navigate school sports. Work with your GSA to share the resource with other athletes at your school so they are equipped to navigate LGBTQ+ issues in sports. You can also share the Game Plans for **Coaches, Physical Education Teachers, and Administrators & Athletic Directors** with the appropriate staff at your school, and encourage them to work to ensure their teams are safe and inclusive for all students. To learn more about Changing the Game and to have access to trainings, webinars, and panels hosted by our team at GLSEN and our sports partners, [sign up to be a Changing the Game Ambassador](#).

IMPLEMENT TRANS-INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Many teachers may want to support trans students, but have no idea where to start. Talk to your school's administration about offering trans-inclusive professional development for staff. If you feel comfortable doing so, your GSA can work together with administrators to create and host a training. You can also connect with [your local GLSEN chapter](#) to bring in a representative to host a free professional development training for your school's faculty. If there is no GLSEN chapter in your area, you can contact other LGBTQ+ organizations near you to see if they offer professional development, or you can [start your own GLSEN chapter!](#)

MORE RESOURCES.

Trans Action Kit

This kit includes a wealth of resources that center trans people, including nonbinary students and educators. These resources share personal experiences and can help students and educators learn about gender diversity, pronoun visibility, trans students' rights, inclusive curriculum, and GSA practices.

Improving School Climate for Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

This research brief illustrates the experiences of transgender and nonbinary students in K-12 schools and explains ways to make schools more welcoming to trans students.

Transgender Youth in Schools Infographic

This poster includes information about the importance of inclusive policies to ensure that trans students feel safe in schools.

Pronoun Guide

This guide is created to help anyone learn how to use people's correct pronouns.

Gender Triangle

This graphic helps explain the elements that make up a person's gender identity.

Separation and Stigma: Transgender Youth and School Facilities

This research report outlines how excluding transgender students from the school facilities that match their gender is not only unnecessary, but profoundly harmful.

4 Ways to Support Trans Students of Color

This blog by a former member of GLSEN's National Student Council is a list of four things people, especially cis-white folks, can do to better support trans students of color.

5 Ways Educators Can Support Trans Students Now

This is a short list of five things educators can do to affirm trans youth.

KEY TERMS.

Trans / Transgender

An umbrella term describing people whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth or by society.

Gender

A set of cultural identities, expressions and roles — codified as feminine or masculine — that are assigned to people, based upon the interpretation of their bodies, and more specifically, their sexual and reproductive anatomy. Since gender is a social construct, it is possible to reject or modify the assignment made, and develop something that feels truer and just to oneself.

Gender Identity

How an individual identifies in terms of their gender. Gender identities may include "male," "female," "transgender," "genderqueer" and many others, or a combination thereof.

Gender Expression

The multiple ways (e.g., behaviors, dress) in which a person may choose to communicate gender to oneself and/or to others. Someone's gender expression does not equate to their identity.

Cisgender

A person whose gender identity is aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Nonconforming

A person whose gender expression does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non Binary

A person whose gender identity does not fully align with a binary gender. Some identities may be "agender," "bigender," "genderqueer," "genderfluid," and "demigender."

Intersex

A person who is born with primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not necessarily align with a binary sex. Some, but not all, intersex people may also identify as trans.

For more information and to check out all of our GSA resources and programming, visit www.glsen.org/gsa. If you have questions or need support, send us an email at students@glSEN.org. To learn more about glSEN, head to www.glsen.org, or find us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter @glSEN.