

A COLLECTION OF STORIES



FUEL TO OUR FIRE

2024-25
National Student Council

WE'RE STILL HERE

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

— Elie Wiesel





READY

TO

FIGHT



USING OUR STORIES

TOGETHER, WE CAN
STAND STRONG

“It is important to take action and to realize that we can make a difference, and this will encourage others to take action and then we realize we are not alone and our cumulative actions truly make an even greater difference. This is how we spread the Light. And this, of course, makes us all even more hopeful.”

- Jane Goodall

GLSEN's National Student Council is an annual cohort of LGBTQ+ youth from across the country, and bringing with them a unique voice and story.

In this dark political landscape, NSC have come together to share some stories of what motivates their activism, *what fuels our fire.*



Who We Are

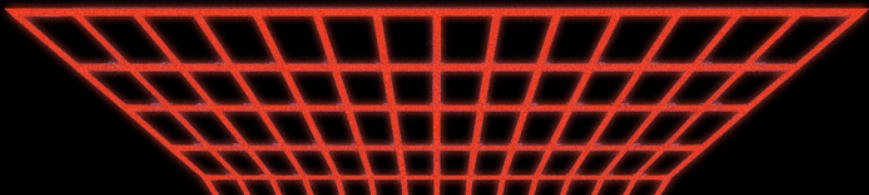
GLSEN's 2024-2025 National Student Council is made up of 16 motivated high-school students between the ages of 14 and 18 years old. The students come from every region of the continental U.S. (and Hawaii) to learn about advocacy methods and create resources for LGBTQ+ youth around the country.

Every member of the NSC was specifically chosen for their courage, passion, and skill in prior activist spaces.

In this zine, NSC tells their stories. The moments that sparked their passion, the way they blend arts and activism, and their tips for readers to get involved in their communities.

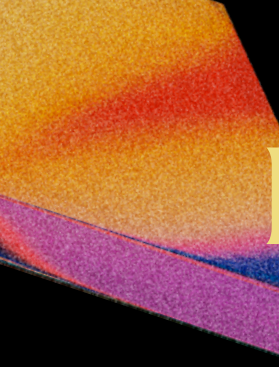
As LGBTQ+ people, as youth, as Americans, and as so many other intersecting identities represented on the council, NSC is horrified by the current state of politics and the blatant disregard for human rights. In a world where the lives of LGBTQ+ youth are thrown around as political fodder, dehumanized, and deindividuated, NSC reclaims their identities and their power through their storytelling. In this zine, GLSEN's National Student Council fumes, cries, and stands in solidarity with other queer youth and allies across the world.

While we cannot know what the future holds, we know that we are ready to fight. We will not give in to hopelessness and we will not roll over. We are angry, powerful, passionate, and driven. Our voices cannot be stifled or extinguished. Now more than ever, it's time to dive deeper into advocacy, using our rage, spirit, and radical joy to fight for our communities.





**MOMENTS
OF
SPARKED
PASSION**



Addison B., CA

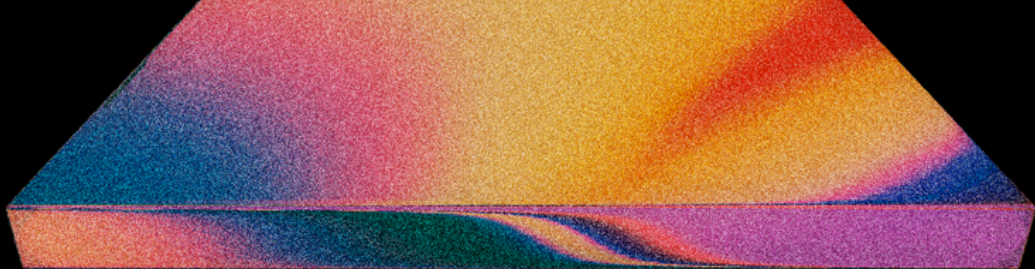
Behind the Statistics

I joined my school's GSA during my freshman year of highschool. Only my close friends knew I was queer. Joining our GSA was a silent protest, and an effort for me to become more comfortable and confident with myself. All of the GSA leadership were seniors, and the fact that I'd shown up each week during the year gave them enough ammunition to nominate me as president of the club once they'd left. This was a job that I fearfully accepted. The next year, I jumped head-first into advocacy. Although I wasn't out to my tennis team, my family, or my childhood friends, I felt like I was entirely and unapologetically myself in advocacy. The more I worked supporting other queer youth, the more I wanted to create safe spaces around the country. so that no kid ever felt scared to be themselves or share their identity.

Safety is a necessity that everyone should have.

Being involved with advocacy can be incredibly challenging, and many times, it can feel as if change is not being made. On a good day My GSA had 15-30 members , and some weeks I felt less inspired than others. At the bare minimum, I wanted to have our GSA be a safe space as a campus. During our weekly Tuesday meetings I wanted any kid regardless of their identity to know they were welcome. I knew that there was room for social change and progress at our campus. For the most part, I felt like our GSA worked, and I loved our community. Everyone was happy to be there and be included.

Two months into my junior year, one of my friends and member of my GSA committed suicide on our school campus. It was as if everything I was doing, and all the work that seemed to mean something, was just void.



For weeks, I couldn't move, or do anything, without thinking about it. Grief can be all-consuming, and for many, there exists a survivor's guilt and intrusive question of what, if anything, could have been done to prevent it. I'd read about and spoken about suicide rates in queer youth many times. I'd given presentations on self-harm, depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies in the community. I thought I knew so much about its impact until I was personally impacted by it.

Mental health and suicide are talked about frequently. Whether it's onboarding training for a job, at the beginning of a school briefing, or after a tragic loss, these subjects are discussed as incredibly brief, taboo, and vague. It includes a distant statistic, a confusing description, and an overall separation between the topic, and the audience.

Losing this friend will forever leave an impact on me. I am not the same person I was before, and everyone who knew her would likely say the same thing. When you read this, try and think past these words, and imagine the person I am talking about. The school I am talking about. The impact I am talking about. This is why advocacy is important, and access to resources is even more important.

The biggest piece of advice I have for student leaders like myself is; even if you don't think there is a need, and cannot see the need; share resources with your friends, GSA, or people you interact with. You may not know, but these resources can save lives.

Statistics aren't statistics, they are people- with lives and a story.

Riots & Pride: 1959 to 2025

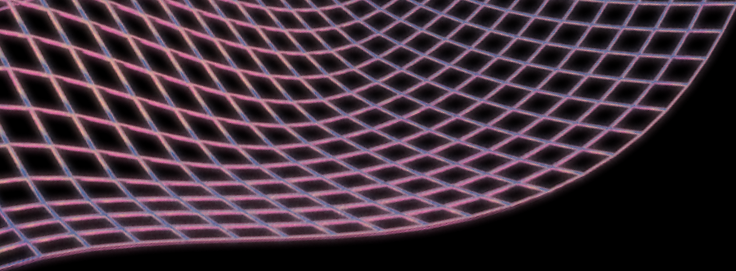
There were many riots prior to the famous Stonewall riots.

One night in May 1959, two police officers sought out to arrest a gay man, two drag queens, and two male sex workers, and were met with pushback. The other people in the bar, Cooper's Do-Nuts in LA, transgender women, lesbians, drag queens, and gay men, flooded the street and threw objects at the cops. Reinforcements were called, but nobody showed up to stop the food fight. The LGBTQ demonstrators won. The crowd and celebration got bigger and bigger, so much bigger that riot police were called to the scene.

Moving eleven years into the future, Compton's Cafeteria Riot, transgender women once again rose up against police violence on the west coast.

In 1968 two gay men were arrested for displaying homosexual acts at a queer bar owned by Lee Glaze known as The Patch. The police ordered Glaze to stop hosting drag shows but he didn't listen and cheered on the shows.

And, of course, The most famous trans and gay rights riots were the Stonewall Riots of 1969 in NYC.



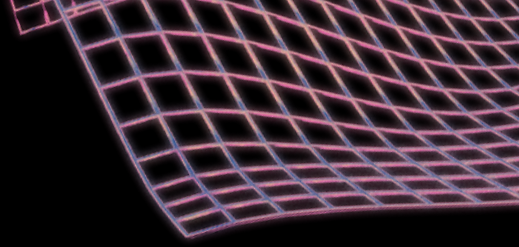
It is often said that Pride started as a protest, which is partially correct; it started as many protests from California to New York. Even small events in the Pacific, as far away as Hawai'i occurred. Doing the time warp (again), we move to our present time and our present Pride. Joyous festivals, rainbows, glitter, and corporations joining in for the month of June.

I attended my first Pride in 2022, Honolulu Hawai'i (it was October but with sun as scorching as June), I walked in the parade and tabled at the festival. I wasn't super interested in frolicking around and taking all the free things from the other booths. I liked watching. Watching people like me be free and enjoy themselves. I attended my second October Pride in 2023 after spending June and July in Madison, Wisconsin where I first learned about introducing myself with my pronouns.

I had been using they & them pronouns for a while and in Hawai'i adding your pronouns to your introduction wasn't a thing.

But in this program, our nametags had space for us to write in pronouns and every time we introduced ourselves we shared our pronouns. I thought it was cool and interesting but I felt like a monkey in a zoo even though everyone around just wanted to be respectful.

While I was there I had the opportunity to join a Pride club (something I had never heard of). I awkwardly entered the room and quietly sat down as the club members around me openly discussed their experiences with gender and sexuality: coming out to each other and saying the things that were always quietly whispered and never, ever said out loud and in the open. I sat uncomfortably as someone I had never spoken to asked me: "So what's your gender? What about your sexuality?" I was in shock at how comfortable and normal everyone was, I marveled at how safe that space was for everyone else in it and how far behind I was.



I didn't feel comfortable answering any of the questions so I sat in silence throughout the entire meeting.

In the back of my head, the whole time, was a tiny little version of me at a chalkboard with a timeline of all the protests and riots and all the bills about people like me (for or against). All leading up to that very moment of me sitting in a Pride club and later at a Pride festival. All these riots, all these fights, for corporations to write "live laugh lesbian" on a shirt.

I thought about the Pride club and wondered if they knew the history behind our current Pride festivals and maybe if they knew, they'd understand my unwillingness to tear out my insides and have a little show-and-tell of my guts and every personal detail of my identity.

It's crucial that the community is aware of the moments that shape public perception of LGBTQ+ people (lavender scare, the demonstrations mentioned earlier, the HIV epidemic, and more).

All the activists of the past and hopefully the activists of the present and future see the same goal: recognition as equal human beings (and not "sexual deviants"). No matter how joyous your city's Pride festival may be, please remember why we are fighting and why our community used to riot. Your Pride festival bubble is great, but stepping out into the real world won't be. We fight for the right to be seen as equal. No matter how hard existing as a queer person gets, we must keep fighting. I didn't go to the 2024 Pride but as a high school senior who is graduating in May of 2025 (and who is still a little squeamish in safe spaces) I know that it is imperative that we organize and fight as a community with our end goal of equality in sight. This fight has been going on since long before 1959. We will continue in 2025 and for however many years it will be until we have the right to be seen as equal in every aspect of life.

Carmen J., MI

My Experience With Advocacy

The biggest lie bigots tell you is that you can't do anything about the things you're worried about in your community.

One of my sparks was joining my school's QSA. Being the first time I first experienced queer joy and celebration, I wanted to protect this space, and make sure that every LGBTQ+ kid had something like this, no matter who they were.

The main issue at the time was that I was in 7th grade, and we were in the midst of a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 8th grade, when we all came back from virtual learning, I couldn't even go to QSA meetings anymore due to me moving and not being as close to the school as I used to be. I was so distraught. And that dream that I had to help my community stopped. Until suddenly, the stars aligned.

In 9th grade, I rejoined my school's QSA. Now, at the time, there were about 2-3 concurrent members of QSA, and we shared the room we were in with my school's pokemon club. To give context, QSA was one of the biggest clubs before COVID, and now is one of the smallest.

That year, I ran for QSA president, and I got the position! During the time I spent being QSA president, I really tried to bring back the club to its former glory, while simultaneously trying to make my school more inclusive to LGBTQ+ students.

Then, in 2023, the constant anti-trans legislation bills, as well as the general state of the world at the time and currently, reignited that spark in me to make a difference in my community. But the biggest problem. I had no idea where to begin.

Something a lot of activists don't talk about in my experience, is how frustrating it is to begin. I mean, it's not difficult by any means; you look up non-profits and/or politicians that fit the things you want to advocate for, and you join them. But, it's insanely intimidating. One day, I was invited to a Community Violence Intervention Summit, which taught me a lot about how to get started with advocacy, and made me realize how all you truly have to do is start is take the chance. These people weren't politicians, or big activists who have millions of followers on social media,

They were people.

I was talking to one of the main speakers of the event, and he said something that really stuck with me. I was talking about how more politicians and stuff should listen to youth voices, because we're the future, and he looked at me, and smiled,

"The future? You're not the future, you're right now."

That was the spark that turned into a flame.

That experience really ignited my passion again to begin advocating, even if it's just in my town.

Then, in a government class at my school, my teacher invited a bunch of teen activists to speak about their experiences, and helped me think of places to volunteer at and gave me a new passion and understanding.

That flame then turned into a fire, but one I could control and use to make the world a better place.

People believe you have to be a big politician or a well known person to make a difference, but all it really takes is perseverance, and a plan, so I'm here to give you some ideas. First, if you know someone in advocacy work, reach out to them! Honestly, the best way to get into activism is knowing about opportunities, so just letting people know you're available and passionate is an amazing start. Next, if you hear about any protests, fundraises, events, or even open town hall meetings, I highly suggest that you go to them as frequently as possible. I have personally found that most activists tend to be involved in multiple organizations, so you're probably going to be seeing the same people at the events that you go to.

Another thing you can do is contact your local government. If you're able to, join local council youth positions, see if local governments have internships or alike, and even ask local politicians if you can shadow them for a day. Most will be more than willing to.

Finally, I ask you simply to do one thing, and that is to do the work. With the political climate as of late and the insane amount of anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric in the nation, I beg of you to go out and do the work. Because apathy helps nobody, but actually helping the people around you and making a difference, 100% does. So please, don't let bigots get in your way. Don't let them tell you that you cannot make a difference, that you cannot do anything. Anyone can make change, anyone who wants to do something has the ability to if they just put in the effort, even if it takes time.

All it takes is one spark, one moment, one sentence, one word.

As the Roman poet Ovid once said; "Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence."

So I ask you simply,
Do the work. And you'll see the results.





Telia H., NV

I Heard It Too

I was eight years old the first time I learned that people like me weren't meant to exist. I didn't know it then, of course—not in the way I understand it now. Back then, the world was smaller, simpler, and safer, bounded by the walls of my childhood home and the unshakable certainty that I belonged. It felt as wide and bright as the summer sky, endlessly welcoming and unmarred by shadows. I still trusted the universe to play fair. I believed in justice, in kindness, in the idea that everyone had a place and a purpose. Life, to me, was full of absolutes: the sky was always blue, love always triumphed, and people always told the truth.

The discovery came quietly, wrapped in the innocence of a 4th-grade math class. My teacher handed me a sheet of questions and I eagerly scribbled away, my pencil flying over the page. Numbers made sense to me in a way people never did. When I scored a perfect grade, a boy at my table turned to me with

narrowed eyes and said, "It's weird how you're good at math. Girls are supposed to be bad at it."

I didn't know how to respond. I simply blinked at him, confused. The sun streaming through the window seemed harsher now, the warmth I felt a moment ago evaporating. My cheeks burned, not from pride but from an unfamiliar shame. "That's not true," I muttered, my voice barely audible.

He shrugged as if my words were irrelevant. "It's just how it is," he said, turning away.

That night, as I lay in bed staring at the glow-in-the-dark stars on my ceiling, his words replayed in my mind. The certainty in his voice, the ease with which he dismissed me—it unsettled something deep within. What is wrong with me? I wondered. And why did it feel like I had to prove him wrong?

By the time I was in 5th grade, I understood that certain spaces weren't meant for me.

The boy from math class had become a sort of ghost, a specter of doubt that haunted every achievement I made. One day, we were handed another test—this one harder, more grueling. I worked through it furiously, determined to outperform everyone else, determined to prove that I belonged. When the results came in, I had the highest score in the class.

But victory didn't taste the way I thought it would. The boy, still in the same math class as me, refused to meet my eyes, muttering something about how "girls get lucky sometimes." The specter whispered in my ear: What is wrong with me?

I was eleven the first time someone tried to save my soul. I was over at my grandfather's house where he was sitting in his favorite chair, the Bible open on his lap. He called me over, his tone calm but firm. "You know," he began, "what you're feeling—it's just a phase. You're too young to understand these things."

I blinked, trying to process what he meant. I had been careless, and too loud in my admiration for one of my friends at school. I had written her name in the margins of my notebook, a tiny

heart encircling each letter.

"You need to pray," my grandfather continued, "to ask God to take this sickness from you. The world won't be kind to you if you continue down this path."

Sickness. The word hit me like a slap. I wanted to argue, to tell him he was wrong, but my voice faltered. The specter appeared again, whispering its familiar refrain: What is wrong with me?

Later that night, I scribbled a note in my diary: I will marry a girl one day, just to spite him. I underlined it twice.

High school brought new specters. Just last year, I was in my sophomore history class when someone tapped me on the shoulder.

I turned around to see a boy staring at me with a smirk. "You're Polynesian?" he asked as if the idea was amusing to him.

"Yes," I replied, bracing myself.

"You don't look it," he said. "You're too white. And, I mean, Polynesians aren't supposed to be... you know, pretty." He chuckled as though he had just paid me a compliment.

I felt my stomach churn. My skin, which I had always loved for its warmth and softness, suddenly felt like a betrayal. I had never questioned my heritage before, and never felt the need to prove it. But now, the specter was back, its voice louder than ever: What is wrong with me?

That night, I stared at my reflection in the mirror, searching for the parts of myself that didn't belong. My hair, my eyes, my skin—none of it seemed to fit. The world was too small to hold all of me.

I began to see the world for what it was: a battlefield where every inch of my identity had to be fought for. I was too loud, too opinionated, too queer, too light, too much.

I thought of the boy from math class, the one who couldn't bear to see me succeed.

I thought of my grandfather, who prayed for my soul while refusing to see my heart. I thought of the boy from my history class, who erased my culture with a single sentence.

The anger burned in my chest, but it also lit a fire in my mind. The specter whispered its question again: What is wrong with me? But this time, I answered: Nothing—nothing at all.

Now, at sixteen, I see the world differently. I see its cracks and its flaws, its beauty and cruelty. I see the people who try to box me in, who try to erase parts of me because they don't understand them. I see myself—whole, unbroken, and unashamed.

The specter still lingers, but its voice is softer now. When it asks, *What is wrong with me?* I smile and reply, "Everything you thought was wrong with me is exactly what makes me strong."

I am a kaleidoscope of identities, each one brighter and more beautiful than the last. And when the world tries to tell me I don't belong, I remind myself: I belong everywhere I choose to be.

The truth is, society has never meant much of anything to me, and I've come to learn it shouldn't be a cage that encases your human being. This is my story—it is not a tragedy, but a triumph. And if you've ever asked yourself, *What is wrong with me?* Just know that I heard it too, and I hope you understand the only true "wrong" here is a world that forces people who are different to internalize these questions.



Love A., CA

Republicans, Why Do You Care What's In My Pants?

Despite the right wing narratives portraying the LGBTQ+ community as sexual predators and pedophiles, conservatives seem to be the main people interested in youth genitalia- and we entertain it.

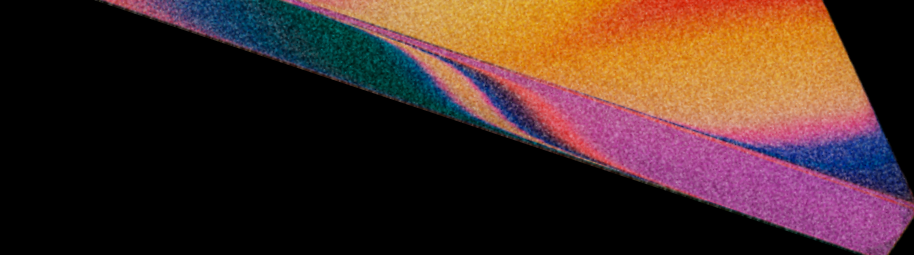
This hypocrisy creeps into the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ youth, including moments that should be safe.

I remember middle school vividly- not just the embarrassment every kid feels, but a specific kind of alienation. I was openly gay, which felt brave at the time, but looking back, I realize I didn't fully grasp how much it would make me a target.

The girls' locker room, rather than a typical place of awkwardness, was where I learned how cruel people could be. It started with the whispers, ones loud enough to hear but quiet enough to ignore. "She's probably looking at us," would escape the mouths of those around me the second I glanced at anything other than the floor beneath me. The implication was clear: I didn't belong, simply because of who I was.

That day, I learned what it felt like to have my existence debated- not in a formal school board meeting, but in the whispers of my peers.

I was 12 years old. My only "crime" was being myself.



And yet, the narrative around LGBTQ+ youth today would have you believe that I was the predator in that room.

These experiences were dehumanizing enough without the fuel of legislative debates and media constantly breathing down the backs of queer youth. But the rhetoric today takes that same cruelty I felt in a middle school locker room and amplifies it across the nation. It's not just kids calling us names- it's politicians, far right activists, and entire political movements.

The right-wing fixation on LGBTQ+ youth, from bathroom laws to bans on gender-affirming care, has always been less about protecting children and more about controlling and shaming those who don't fit their suffocatingly narrow mold of "normal." They hide their prejudice under the guise of concern, but concern doesn't look like questioning the humanity of a 15-year-old girl just because she's trans.

Concern doesn't look like forcing a 12-year-old to defend themselves from sexual allegations in a locker room.

The truth is, these debates aren't about safety or fairness. They're about control. By fixating on what's in our pants, conservatives are trying to paint a narrative on what's in our characters. And I, for one, am done entertaining it.

LGBTQ+ youth deserve better. We deserve privacy, dignity, and the right to exist without being interrogated about our bodies or identities. So the next time a politician or right wing podcaster tries to justify their obsession with the genitalia of kids like me, maybe the real question isn't what's in our pants, but why they care so much in the first place.

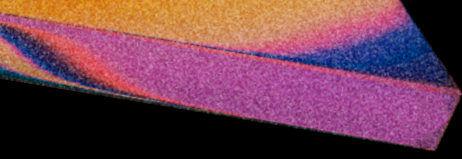
And maybe it's time we stop letting them ask.

Inclusive Athletics: My Experience in High School Sports

Growing up, my family heavily valued sports. Not because we know the rules to any football or soccer game, but because of a belief that kids should be raised healthy and exercising, finding community, and possibly discovering something they enjoy. I played many sports when I was little, and after quitting every one I started, in the 6th grade I landed on a sport that I tolerated and joined a local club swim team. Tolerance turned to joy, and I stayed committed to swimming throughout my middle and high school years. I was even voted to be the co-captain of my high school swim team my senior year.

Achieving goals gave me confidence, which doesn't always come easily during high school.

I made friends that I never would have met otherwise. Truly being proud of teammates and supporting each other created a bond that I haven't found in other settings. Sports are important for youth because of these opportunities to build community and social connections, learn teamwork, and maintain positive physical and mental health. However, transgender students are often impeded from joining athletics.

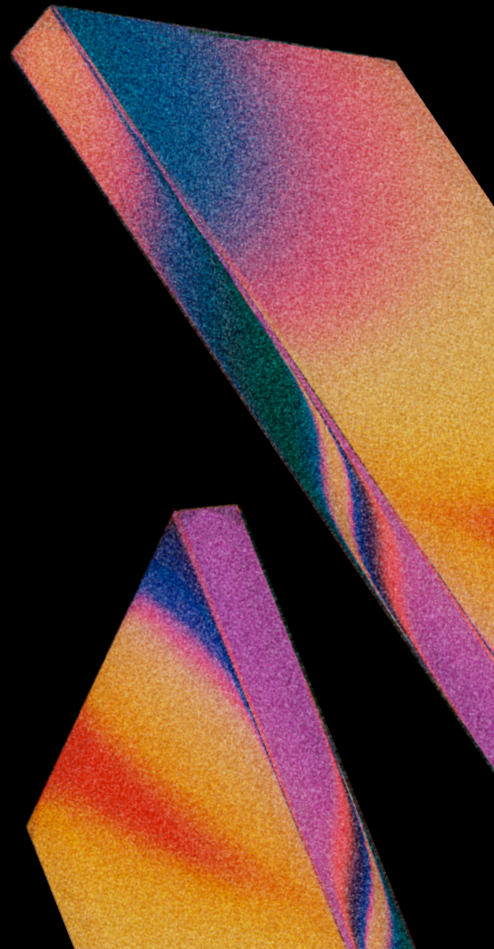


Twenty-six states in the U.S. ban transgender students from participating in school sports that align with their gender identity. The remaining 24 states allow transgender students to play sports that correspond with their gender identity, but these students are often discouraged due to embedded practices that alienate transgender and gender non-conforming students. Exclusive language, such as “boys” versus “girls” teams, sports that are only offered to one or the other gender, such as football or field hockey, locker rooms divided by gender, and non-unisex uniforms can cause a hesitant student to avoid the world of youth sports altogether. I came out as non-binary during the summer of 2022. There were a lot of times I thought about quitting the swim team, especially the year when the mandatory team suit was very revealing, or when my coach only called us “ladies/girls.” I pushed through because I knew that being active helped me feel healthy and strong.

It’s important for any young person to have a good relationship with their body, especially if they’re dealing with gender dysphoria. This can be negatively affected by the lack of inclusive language used by coaches which often causes trans students to no longer participate in sports, or be discouraged to join new teams. We know that language has an enormous impact on the safety of students. “Transgender and nonbinary students had a 70.5% lower likelihood of experiencing discrimination regarding name or pronoun at school if they had a school policy or guideline that covered name or pronoun use, and a 41.0% lower likelihood if the policy or guideline addressed changing school records after a name or gender change” (GLSEN Trans and Non-Binary Research Brief). We must ensure that protective policies follow students into extracurriculars and athletics, since these opportunities are fundamental avenues for finding purpose and connection for so many young people.

An unsupportive coach made me question my decision to be in sports; During my junior year I was lucky enough to have a coach who recognized and respected my gender identity and ensured that swim practice was one place where I didn't have to worry about feeling alienated in sports. "Having supportive school personnel may also enhance LGBTQ+ students' feelings about themselves and their mental health. Students with more supportive school personnel had higher levels of self-esteem than those who reported fewer supportive educators, had lower levels of depression than those who reported fewer supportive educators, and were less likely to have seriously considered suicide in the past year than those who reported fewer supportive educators" (Supporting Safe and Healthy Schools Mental Health Professionals 2019). Coaches play a crucial role in schools, and many people attribute their success to the support and guidance they got from their coaches.

We must make sure coaches receive training on gender inclusivity and the needs of LGBTQ+ students. Otherwise, even in states or schools with supportive policies, LGBTQ+ students will shy away from joining sports and will miss out on the vast benefits of athletics.



The image features a black background with two abstract, geometric shapes in the corners. The shape in the top right is a triangle with a blue-to-orange gradient. The shape in the bottom left is a larger, more complex polygon with a red-to-blue gradient. The text "ART IS RESISTANCE" is centered in a bold, yellow, serif font.

**ART IS
RESISTANCE**

How I Found Joy in My Queer and Trans Identity

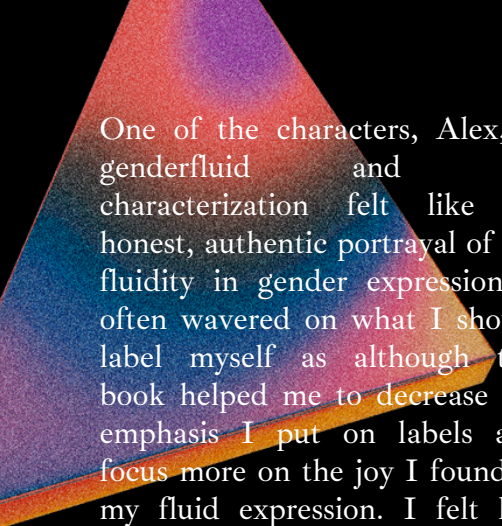
I have lived in Tennessee since kindergarten so it is the only place I truly have memories of. I love some parts of the city I live in, while also balancing the understanding that the South is not a safe or welcoming place for lots of marginalized groups such as immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and more. Coming out was an extremely difficult experience for me and I believe the difficulty was magnified because I lived in the South. I want to share some of the experiences and ways that I was able to accept my identity and find queer joy in the South.

1. Seek Out LGBTQ+ Media

This tip helped me a lot before I came out to anyone. I knew I was queer and trans but I was not comfortable or secure enough in my identity to officially come out to anyone.

At this point, I read a lot of Young Adult (YA) Fiction Books, and I would read books like *The Henna Wars* by Adiba Jaigirdar and *Magnus Chase* by Rick Riordan, both of which have queer or trans characters. Consuming this type of media allowed me to see myself represented in ways that I would not otherwise see. Living in the South, I often felt invisible; I knew of one or two other queer or trans people, so I did not see other people like me before I came out.

Consuming queer media allowed me to see other people like me who had similar experiences. Books like *Magnus Chase* also normalized being trans and fluid identities to me.



One of the characters, Alex, is genderfluid and the characterization felt like an honest, authentic portrayal of the fluidity in gender expression. I often wavered on what I should label myself as although this book helped me to decrease the emphasis I put on labels and focus more on the joy I found in my fluid expression. I felt less like something was wrong with me and more sure that I was simply a unique individual with a unique identity. Some other ways to consume queer media are through music artists or tv shows and movies. Listening to queer artists is a more subtle way of consuming queer media as in my experience, most cis and straight people are unfamiliar with queer artists.

2. Connect With Other LGBTQ+ Kids Who Share Your Lived Experiences

This example was probably the most impactful experience that changed my view of my own queer and trans identity. When I first came out in middle school, I was one of two queer people of color and the only trans person of color in my grade

and I am in a school that is an island of diversity in the South where racism, homophobia, and transphobia are accepted and sometimes encouraged. Despite the supposed inclusive environment my school marketed, I was isolated and excluded because of my identity which encouraged me to hide it in order to have a social life. It was around this time that I first attended a weekly local LGBTQ+ youth support group. The community I found there truly helped me process and accept myself by sharing their similar lived experiences but also by creating a space where being queer or trans was not a reason to exclude me but instead a common connection between all of us. The majority of the people at this youth group were people of color who could also understand the struggle of having multiple marginalized identities. I was able to voice my opinions, worries, and feelings without fear of judgment and find a support system who understood me.

3. Accept Your Situation, While Still Allowing Hope for Your Future



While this can be extremely difficult, it can also be extremely helpful. To me, “accepting your situation” is recognizing the limits you may have based on location, family or other factors. Living in the South, I had to come to realize that I will never be completely accepted or validated in my identity. One part of this is that gender-affirming care is banned in my state. The closest place that had access to it was Illinois which was at least 6 hours away. I knew people who traveled to Illinois to get HRT but that was not a feasible option for me. Based on the limitation of my location, I had to accept that I would not be able to consider receiving HRT until at least college, which was 6 years away at the time. While accepting that was difficult for me, it also allowed me to move past impossibilities and focus on things that I could do like get an affirming hair cut or wear affirming clothes. Another example of this is teachers’ reactions to my pronouns. I use he/they pronouns although I tend to dress more traditionally feminine. Some teachers accept my identity but have not met or interacted with many trans people so they struggle with using my correct pronouns.

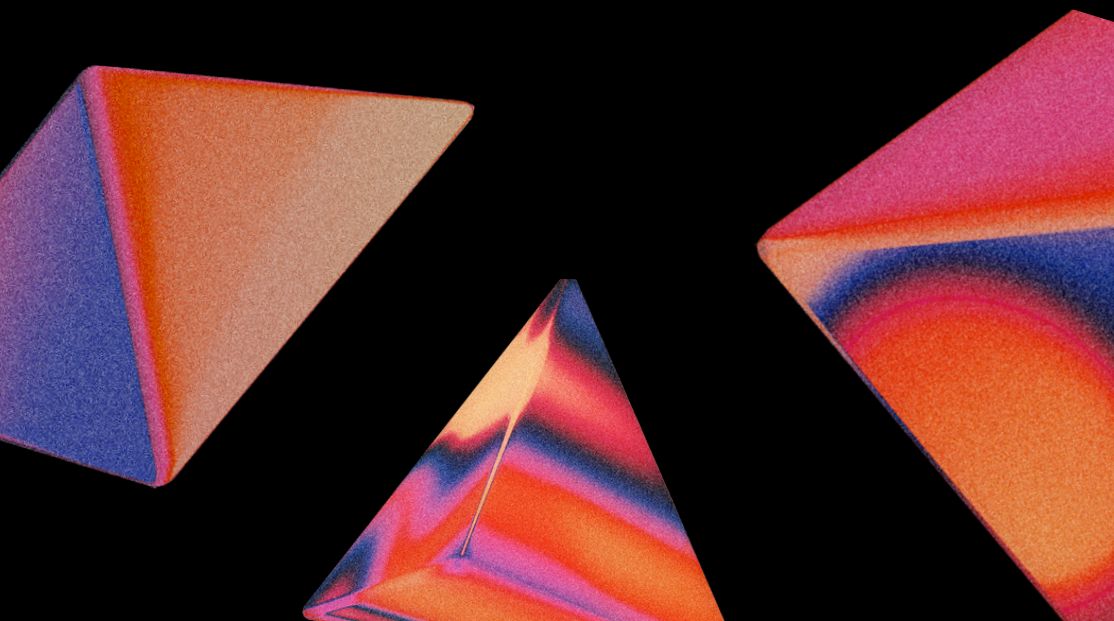
I often settle for effort over results with these teachers. Accepting your situation ultimately helps you move on from things that you cannot change immediately and gives you some peace. Still, I am actively fighting against systems that are anti-LGBTQ+ in order to make things better for those who come after me. I believe that fighting for LGBTQ+ rights is incredibly important, whether that be in schools, communities, or in the government, and that focused efforts towards progress are much more impactful than anger at an individual situation.

Overall, these three things helped me fully accept my gender identity and sexuality and find joy in being trans and queer. Now, I can confidently say I am fulfilled by my advocacy work. Also, it’s important to remember that everyone’s journey is unique and entirely their own so what worked for me might not work for everyone, but I hope that my experiences can help someone else accept themselves and find security and happiness in their identity, no matter where they call home.

Twin butterflies

Grace D., TX

you and I, flitting through these skinny nuttall oaks, playing our game of diabolo until you tackled me, laughing, thick ankles kicking the ground, us tumbling down God's green-grassed knoll, the weeds shivering behind us, your long red hair dancing wildly on the way down, whiskey-warm laughter bubbling from my throat. Your smile was chronic for the summer— beaming back at me through personal devotions, feasts of ma hua, youth worship— even at the boys who would tease me, call me faggot, fairy, their shadows ebbing against our tree trunk. I worshiped our secret with folded hands— hidden glances and mousey giggles underneath a skimpy blanket on the faltering top bunk. What are we, I call to you across the campfire, August's goldenred fire simmering in your eyes— you lean in, breath boiled against my ear— blessed sinners





Alex T., GA

Untitled

For all of my life, I wanted to be an actor. The prospect of seeing myself on the big screen and winning an Oscar always made me excited for my future. To me, being an actor meant you'll have fans who adored you, you'll work with movie stars who you admired, and you won't have to work a "real" job. This idea, even if it may not be reality, sounded perfect to me. I dreamed of playing pretend for a living. But it turns out that that's exactly what I was doing in my everyday life. I was playing pretend. I was acting. I was living a lie.

Self love is hard to obtain when society tells you that you should hate a part of yourself.

"You're a boy. You're not supposed to act like this," they would tell me. "You should like more manly things."

"Why do you talk like that?" they would ask me. "Why aren't you like the normal boys?"

These questions never made sense to me because, in my head, it sounded like they were asking, "why are you being you?". Because ultimately, that was what I was doing. Being myself.

I never played Mortal Kombat or obsessed over comics because I wanted to "act like a boy." And

I never played with Bratz dolls or listened to Britney Spears because I wanted to "act like a girl."

I did these things simply because they made me happy. But I eventually realized that me being my authentic self didn't make other people happy.

Instead, I made people uncomfortable, angry, or confused. So what did I do? I became an actor. I

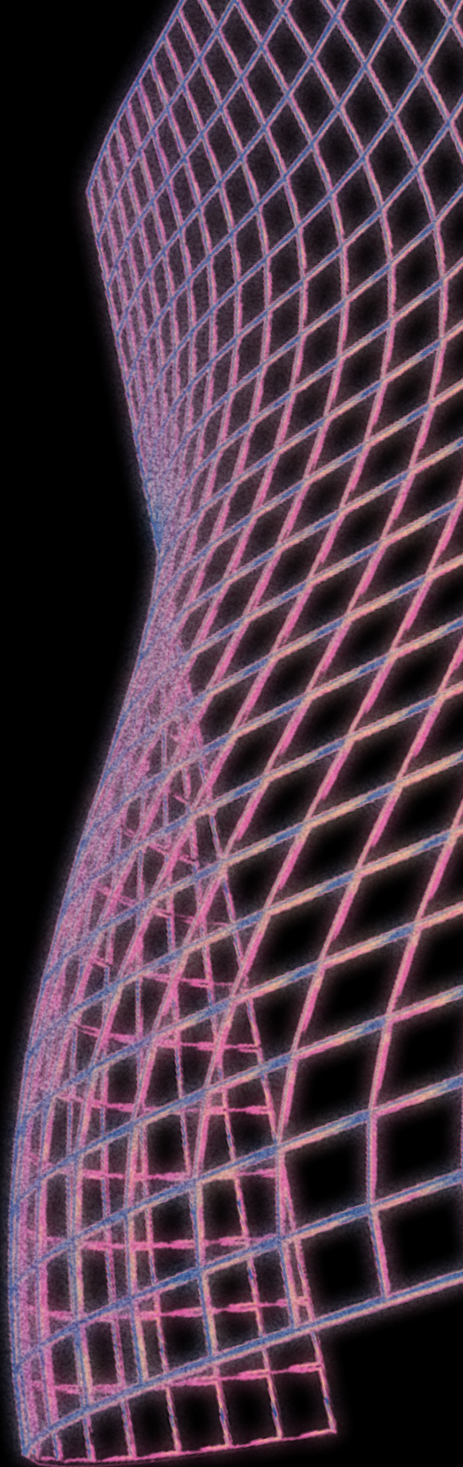
put on a mask and tried to hide all of the qualities that people did not like about me. I played pretend and prayed that the fake would become real.

I suppressed every single thing
that made
me me until I didn't even know
who I was anymore.

When you're living a life that
isn't yours, you aren't really
living. And because of this, I
felt empty. However, there is a
positive thing about emptiness:
you're always going to have the
opportunity to fill it. When you
have nothing, you have the
ability to make something — a
fresh
start.

Being an actor is overrated.
Instead of being an actor, I want
to tell my own story. From
now on, I'll choose to be the
writer, the director, and the
producer. I want to take my
emptiness
and fill it. I want to turn my
nothing into something. Because
I believe in control. I believe in
authenticity. And no ignorant
person or outdated social
construct could ever stop me
from being

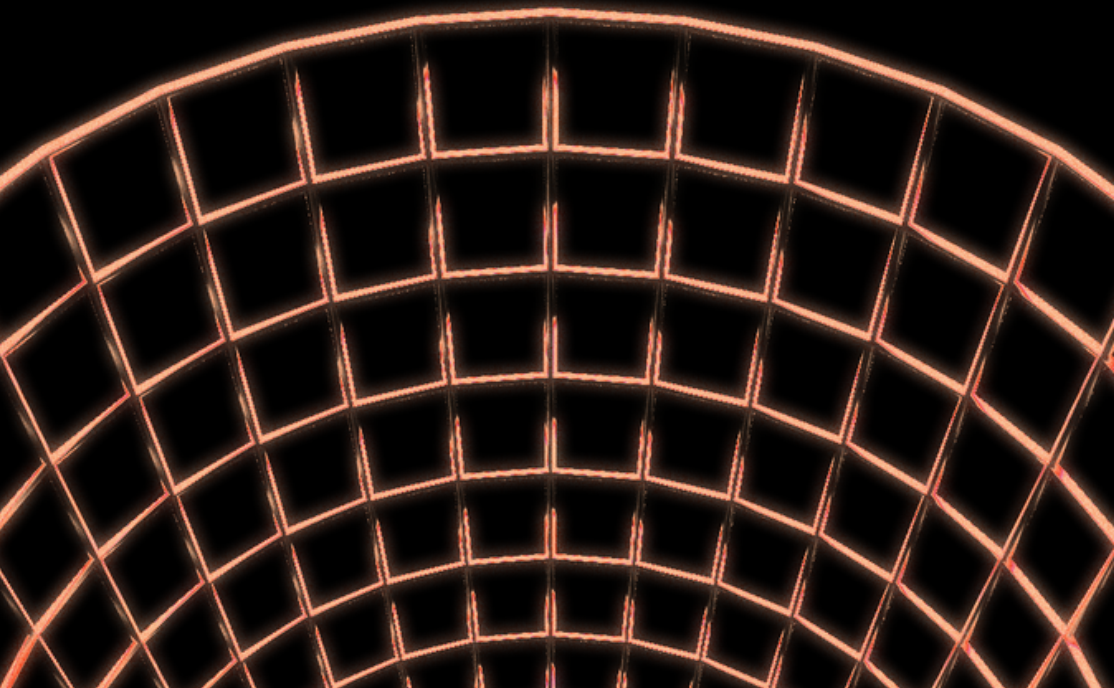
100% me — 100% black, 100%
gay, 100% non-binary, 100%
Mortal Kombat lover, and 100%
Britney Spears fan. I will always
be me, I will never conform, and
I won't let other people define
who I am.



Community

Desi N., NY

In shadows deep, where sorrows lay,
A hand reached out to light the way.
In times of strife, when hearts were torn,
A community of hope was born.
Together, we will face the darkest nights.
With shared strength, we found the light.
In unity, we healed and grew,
Finding solace in bonds so true.



Madeline L., CA

Never Stop Fighting: 5 LGBTQ+ Books That Will Inspire You to Take Action



Despite the disheartening results of the 2024 election, the queer community has remained resilient. All over social media and in their local communities, activists continue to advocate for queer rights, make safe spaces for youth, and debunk harmful stereotypes. This thoughtfully curated list of five books centering around queer activism will encourage you to join the movement, pay homage to past activists, and remain strong and confident in your identity.

1. Like A Love Story by Abdi Nazemian

"You are not alone and never will be, because you have a beautiful, constantly evolving history full of ghosts who are watching over you, who are proud of you."

This touching story features two boys growing up in New York City during the AIDS/HIV crisis. They both rebel against their conservative parents by becoming involved in ACT UP, one of the largest AIDS activism organizations. Art, who is a photographer, helps raise awareness by documenting the victims, while Reza, an Iranian immigrant, must learn to reconcile his cultural values with his queer identity.

2. Come Out and Win: Organizing Yourself, Your Community, and Your World by Sue Hyde

Aimed at young activists who are just beginning their work, this book provides a comprehensive introduction to fighting for LGBTQ+ rights. From starting a Gay-Straight Alliance to lobbying political representatives, Hyde's accessible, easy-to-understand writing will help guide you through your activism journey.

3. Making Room: Three Decades of Fighting for Beds, Belonging, and a Safe Place for LGBTQ+ Youth by Carl Siciliano

"For when the structures that govern our lives treat any group of human beings as disposable, the very act of affirming they are worthy of love becomes a birthplace of resistance."

This inspiring memoir follows Carl Siciliano's journey as he founded the nation's largest housing program for LGBTQ+ homeless youth and the lessons he learned from meeting thousands of queer teens who continued to fight despite their many hardships.

4. Music From Another World by Robin Talley

"I'm getting out of this place, Harvey. Even if I only manage to do it in my head."

In this powerful queer historical fiction novel, two closeted girls are struggling to survive the intense anti-gay political and religious campaigns of the 1970s. However, they miraculously meet through a pen pal program and soon become each other's closest confidantes regarding everything from punk music to Harvey Milk. This striking story of resilience and hope will remind you of the immense bravery it sometimes takes to simply be yourself, and how important it is that queer youth stay safe yet remain confident in their identities.

5. How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

"Always ally yourself with those on the bottom, on the margins, and at the periphery of the centers of power... in doing so you will land yourself at the very center of some of the most important struggles of our society and our history."

The Combahee River Collective was a group of radical Black lesbian feminists that formed in the 70s and played a pivotal role in amplifying the often-excluded voices of women of color. In this book, modern-day activists and founding members of the collective share their thoughts on its legacy and the current state of feminism and queer rights. Reading the inspiring oral histories of these radical activists will expose you to new ideas about Black feminist liberation and remind you of the importance of intersectionality in activist movements.

THE HEAVY BLUES, A FUNNY FEELING
LOCKING ITS ARMS AROUND MY
WOUNDED HEART
I THOUGHT I WAS OVER
THIS BY NOW...



I FEEL THE WAVES CLOUD MY
VISION.
MY LEGS PULLED DOWN BY
THE WEIGHT OF THE DEEP BLUE
EVERY TIME, I ASSUME I'D
NEVER RISE FROM THE BLUE



BUT A LIGHT BEGINS
TO FLICKER IN MY EYES.
I RECALL THE WAYS I ALWAYS
SURPASSED MY WAVES
I KNOW NOW



EVEN IF SOME BLUES
MAY BE STRONGER THAN OTHERS
I SHALL TREAD ON, TIME &
TIME AGAIN
BECAUSE JUST LIKE MY
WILL



THE SUN
WILL RISE!

Surround Yourself With Love

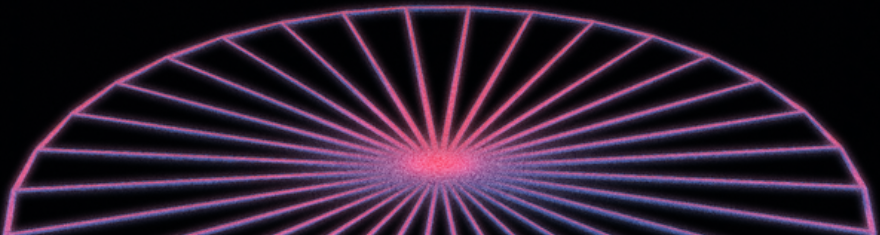
Grey P., TX

Losing Friends to Homophobia

We sneak out at night,
living amongst the shadows,
a light in darkness.
other lights follow,
other lights lead.
some lights dim
and some lights go out.
every light
that is no longer as bright
we mourn.

I've got a place for you, even
if I don't know you

Hey, love,
are you awake yet?
have you given up
the bright lights?
don't worry,
I'll be here for you,
when you're ready to come
home.
I've already got the hot
chocolate on the stove,
the fireplace roaring and
blankets piled up,
this worn home I built ready to
take you in.

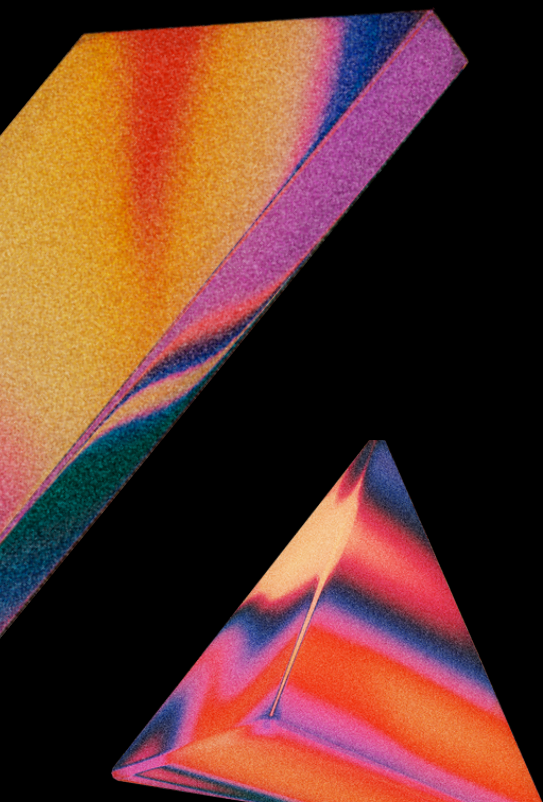


I'll make some easy silence for us

i know this is just the eye
and soon it will go away,
leaving us to fight.
this static silence—
we will miss it when we leave.
for now,
we'll try to survive
and i'll leave a light on for you
once you decide to go back out
into
the hurricane we named Protest.

Fields of Flowers

When you get tired
of the fighting and screaming
and crying,
I'll be your caretaker.
I'll lay you down in
the fields of lavender,
giving you rest from the rains
and holding you close.
And when you begin losing
hope,
I'll lay you down in
the fields of lavender
to watch the sunrise
and call the butterflies to
whisper sweet nothings.
And even if you last longer than
I,
you'll lay down in
the fields of lavender
and tell me the stories of
your triumphs
that will make me bloom again.



Maiden, Mother, Crone

I think we all go through these stages.

I've memorized them like a sacred tome,
tasting their bitter-sweet moon blessings at times.

I used to be the innocent Maiden—
weren't we all,
before we discovered who we are?—
making daisy chains
and blowing dandelions out into the wind.

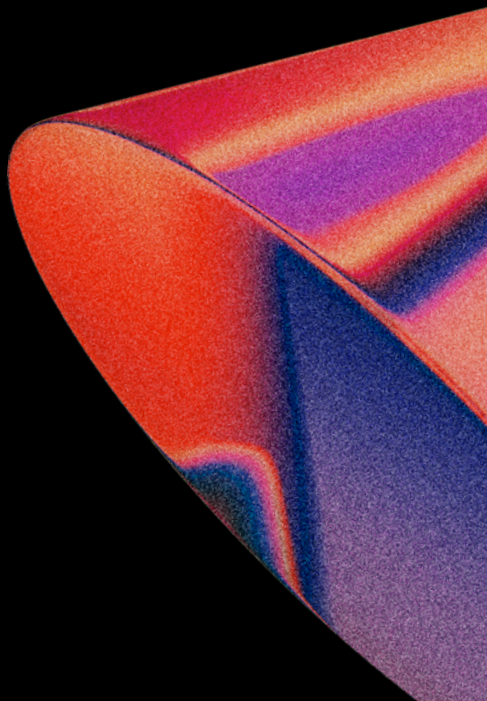
I'd like to think that now I'm the Mother—
do you ever feel that way,
like you're a tired mother of a thousand?—
but I don't think
any of us should let ourselves burn out like that.

I may be the Crone—
do we all become this way
after we spent so much time
screaming ourselves hoarse?—
old, withering, jaded
instead of the carefree faery child
I once was.

I wonder if we all
can be these three at once?
shakespeare said something like
that once.

“we three shall meet again,
in thunder, in lightning, and in rain”

but what if I don't want it to be
storming anymore?
what if I want the rainbow
without the rain?
what if I'm done being
the innocent maiden, the
overwhelmed mother, the
exhausted crone?





OUR TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM



Alex P., WA

Being a Star in a Dark Sky

This new era we will be entering can be scary and overwhelming, and you may not know how to approach activism. The most powerful thing you can do is use your voice and they can never take that away!

What is an activist? Is there one action that one must do before being considered an activist? No way! Activism comes in many forms; there's no such thing as too little or too big regarding activism. Anything that helps you get your voice out to help yourself or help others. That shouldn't be belittled or said that it's too much. Your voice matters in every way possible so even if you're only posting things online, rioting in the streets, or learning your rights. You are still an activist.

Activism doesn't require being on the steps of the Capitol to make a difference; it can begin right in your own school district.

One effective way to engage is by checking if your school district has a student council or advisory board that you can join. By doing this, you can make more changes on a district level. You also could be making more connections to rise in your activism career.

You can also start your own queer or diverse club and make a safe space in your own school. You can start one of these by reaching out to a trusted teacher or advisor to help run your club (if needed) making posters around your school letting others know it is a safe space and spreading education within this club can help others use their voice. In my personal experience, after creating a diversity club at my middle school there's a change in the atmosphere at my school, in which younger queer kids were coming up to me and trying to get to know me because they knew I was a safe person.

Our club worked hard to educate more people within our school, so there was less hate and homophobia.

The key to being an effective activist is to reach out—never hesitate to send an email. If you're unsure of someone's contact details, you can often find it by looking up their name alongside their role or the area they work in. Personally, I've found that emailing has opened countless opportunities for me. If your town hosts a local pride event, for example, reach out to the organizer and offer to help or share your experiences to inspire others to find their voices. That is one of the main ways I have been able to speak at pride events in my town for multiple years now. It's because I am always emailing them asking if I could speak or if they need help. I am constantly putting myself out there.

If you are truly passionate about something that is going on within your community, one of the best things you can do is email. Even if in the end you never get a single response, your voice is still spreading. Email everybody you can get your hands on. Superintendence, representatives, mayor, and governors.

Your voice is important and they cannot just ignore it. Keep emailing them, keep telling them that change needs to happen. Your voice cannot be silenced.

Another important step is to seek out and apply for opportunities. If you're in a safe environment where you can apply to organizations such as GLSEN's National Student Council or a local teen council, take that leap! Engaging in these activities can lead to fulfillment and connections with amazing people who will support you on your activism journey.

Lastly, digital activism can be so impactful and should not be taken lightly. Even if just posting an article about something going on with your community. Reposing and educating the people around you can go very far in the long run.

You might not realize it, but building human connections can have a big impact on people you barely know. It's important to engage in meaningful conversations. These conversations allow you to hear how other people experience the world.

This knowledge can help you to better advocate for them.

The news right now can be very overwhelming, but it's important to stay with it and to know what's going on within your country, town and district. Educate yourself no matter what.

From my personal experience, one of the most impactful ways I have affected my community is to continuously educate myself, and at least try to educate others. I seek out trying to learn new things if that's just reading a new book about something. I don't know that well or just reading a new article once a week. That still consider activism. I've tried my best to reach out to people and tell them I will fight for them. Ever if I never get a response, I will email people and tell them that something is wrong or that I would like to volunteer. I have started GSA's and done piles of paperwork to get grants and books into my school. Along with that, trying to apply to every school council, I can get onto so my voice can echo through my district.

"Students being part of our District Committees has not only engaged students in the education system but also provides a point of view that is often underrepresented."

-Kerri Helgeson (school board member)

"Activism is not just about marching, holding signs, or organizing large events. It's also about creating safe spaces for those who have been historically harmed by existing systems and policies. Activism also happens in the quieter, more personal moments—in conversations that may be uncomfortable but are necessary to raise awareness."

-Erica Knapp (school board member and small town activist)

"Listening to, and learning from students helps our district develop and adopt policies and procedures that truly support the learning needs of students academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. It fosters authentic collaboration where relevant solutions are developed."

-Dr. Chrys Sweeting (School Superintendent)



Jay R., CA

A Trans Teen's Guide to Activism

My name is Jay, and I'm a transgender teen from California. I came out as trans in 2023 just as America was beginning to take notice of trans people — and consequently, just as sweeping anti-trans legislation was implemented in states nationwide. I was lucky to live in a blue state with strong LGBTQ+ rights protections, but all over the country I heard stories of trans kids unable to access the medical care they needed. Still in 2024, there are nearly 4 times as many anti-trans bills across the nation as there were just 2 years ago.

I'd always had a passion for social justice, which led me to queer activism. I got involved with LGBTQ+ civil rights organizations and formed a Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at my school.

When I talk about activism with other trans students, the biggest response I get is, "I could never do that." But what I've realized is that the biggest challenge in activism isn't the process of actually enacting change, but putting yourself out there in the first place. Not many youth are willing to speak up for something they believe in — so when we do, people listen.

In this guide, I'll be going over the most common types of anti-trans policies, ways to deal with them, and how to get involved in fighting for transgender rights in your community. In 2024 alone, states have introduced over 600 bills targeting transgender rights.

Gender-Affirming Care (184 Bills in 2024):

In recent years, the landscape of transgender rights has become a battleground in American politics, with laws and policies directly targeting the lives of trans youth. 26 states have enacted laws that ban or restrict gender-affirming care for minors, including puberty blockers and hormone therapy. These policies can prevent trans teens from accessing critical care, even if they've already started treatment. If you live in a state that bans gender-affirming care, there are options:

1. Partial Gender-Affirming Treatment

Although 26 states have some transgender healthcare restrictions in place, that doesn't mean all gender-affirming care is banned. Resources such as this [state-by-state legislation map](#) are helpful for researching which types of medical treatment are restricted in your state. For example, some states ban gender-affirming surgery for minors, but allow hormone treatment and puberty blockers.

2. Out-of-State Care


While effective, this option can be expensive and time-consuming.

Many transgender kids have to travel for hours to reach their clinic, and out-of-state clinics often have long waitlists. However, if you have the means to do so and live near a transgender-inclusive state, this is the best way to ensure you receive full gender-affirming care.

Neither of these solutions are perfect — which is exactly why it's so vital to raise awareness about the issue. When arguing for trans healthcare, it's important to remember that we have the medical community on our side. Every major medical organization in the United States agrees that gender-affirming care is safe and medically necessary for trans kids. By reminding people of these laws' tangible impact on peoples' lives and spreading science-backed medical research to combat misinformation, we can enact meaningful change.

Education (199 Bills in 2024):

Just like gender-affirming care, 26 states have forms of restriction around transgender students in schools.



Common policies include sex-based bathroom restrictions, forced disclosure of pronoun changes, and legally allowing teachers to deadname and misgender students. GLSEN's National School Climate Survey reported that 3 in 5 trans youth have been forced to use bathrooms that don't align with their gender identity, and that 83% of trans youth feel unsafe at school because of their gender identity.

School-based policies allow trans students to make meaningful changes. For example, schools could implement harassment protections or inclusive bathroom policies. To start, it's often helpful to form an LGBTQ+ affinity group, such as a GSA club. Not only are these a great way to meet other LGBTQ+ students, but they are also a useful tool to influence the school administration by showing them the number of queer students affected by their policies.

Next, find a rule that you believe is most damaging to trans and gender non-conforming students at your school.

After gathering support from your school community, draft a change petition to your school administration.

This may seem like a daunting task, but remember that you're not alone. GLSEN and the GSA Network have a multitude of resources for queer student activists, including a full guide on transgender-inclusive school district policies. You don't have to change everything all at once — just one meaningful policy change can clear the way for larger, meaningful change over time.

Transgender Advocacy

The current political climate may feel daunting, especially if you're a trans youth experiencing the effects of these policies. Unfortunately, it is likely that national restrictions on transgender rights and autonomy will continue to increase under the Trump Administration.

However, it's crucial to remember that the American government is fundamentally based on a system of checks and balances — the idea that no one leader should have absolute power.

Pro-LGBTQ+ organizations like GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and countless others will continue to fight for our rights. Advocacy is an ongoing battle, and history has shown us that even in the darkest times, progress is possible.

Consider the gay rights movement, which faced decades of systemic discrimination, from the AIDS crisis to the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Even when things looked hopeless, activists didn't give up, and today we can see the products of their resilience. From marriage equality to the right to serve in the military to federal anti-discrimination protections, the gay rights movement triumphed, becoming a prime example of the change-making power of perseverance and collective action.

Trans advocacy is following a similar path, and young people are leading the charge. Many young trans activists have successfully driven movements to overturn discriminatory laws at the state and local levels.

Take 17-year-old Ash Whitaker, who sued his Wisconsin school district for barring him from

using the boys' bathroom and won a groundbreaking court decision. Remember that even as a teenager, your voice can bring about meaningful change. If you want to get involved in trans advocacy, there are countless ways to take action. Organizations like GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), and the GSA Network offer opportunities to connect with other queer youth activists and receive training to lead initiatives in your community.

It's also vital to take care of yourself while advocating for change. Support organizations like the Trevor Project, Trans Lifeline, Gender Spectrum, and the It Gets Better Project offer critical mental health resources for queer students struggling with their mental health. This is a difficult time for trans youth in America, and it's completely natural to seek support as we look to the future.

Advocacy is about creating a future where trans teens can live freely, confidently, and safely. Though the road may seem long, we must remember that even in the face of an uncertain future, past movements have triumphed, and so too shall we.



Eddi R., NJ

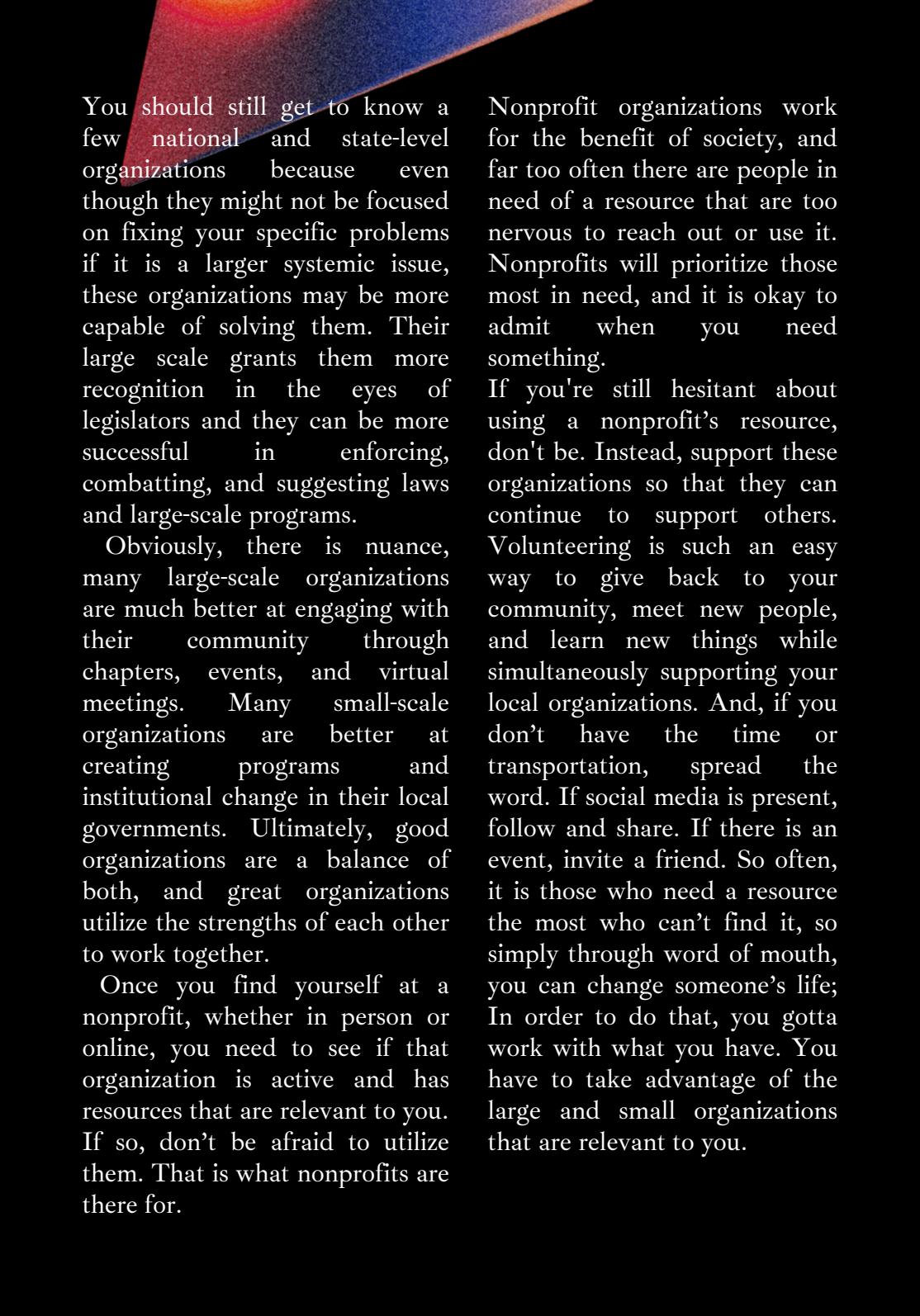
Taking Advantage of Nonprofits 101

As we enter a new stage of American politics we need to understand not just that the LGBTQ+ community has resources, but how those resources are formed, and how to utilize those resources. All nonprofits are businesses that, instead of working really hard to make a profit, work really hard for a collective good. However, not all nonprofits are made equal, that is not to say that some are better than others, but rather that they all work on different scales depending on who they are serving. Some organizations work with more people than others.

Ultimately, the scale of an organization changes how its resources are utilized. In order to best take advantage of a nonprofit's resources, it is important to know how to approach them based on your or your community's needs.

First, It is helpful to know the smaller, local organizations in your community. Smaller-scale organizations like your local town or county pride alliances can deal with relevant problems and concerns that are specific to your area. Because these small-scale organizations have a much more narrow demographic they are much more capable of working with you directly. Their smaller scale allows them to provide you with direct pathways to the care you need. However, you should also get to know some of the larger organizations that work in your state or on a national level.

Some organizations are less concerned with the specific problems of people and are more focused on making institutional change.



You should still get to know a few national and state-level organizations because even though they might not be focused on fixing your specific problems if it is a larger systemic issue, these organizations may be more capable of solving them. Their large scale grants them more recognition in the eyes of legislators and they can be more successful in enforcing, combatting, and suggesting laws and large-scale programs.

Obviously, there is nuance, many large-scale organizations are much better at engaging with their community through chapters, events, and virtual meetings. Many small-scale organizations are better at creating programs and institutional change in their local governments. Ultimately, good organizations are a balance of both, and great organizations utilize the strengths of each other to work together.

Once you find yourself at a nonprofit, whether in person or online, you need to see if that organization is active and has resources that are relevant to you. If so, don't be afraid to utilize them. That is what nonprofits are there for.

Nonprofit organizations work for the benefit of society, and far too often there are people in need of a resource that are too nervous to reach out or use it. Nonprofits will prioritize those most in need, and it is okay to admit when you need something.

If you're still hesitant about using a nonprofit's resource, don't be. Instead, support these organizations so that they can continue to support others. Volunteering is such an easy way to give back to your community, meet new people, and learn new things while simultaneously supporting your local organizations. And, if you don't have the time or transportation, spread the word. If social media is present, follow and share. If there is an event, invite a friend. So often, it is those who need a resource the most who can't find it, so simply through word of mouth, you can change someone's life; In order to do that, you gotta work with what you have. You have to take advantage of the large and small organizations that are relevant to you.

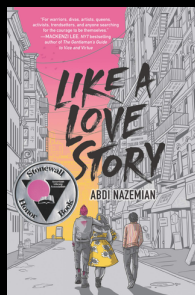
LGBTQ+ Books Mentioned by NSC Members Throughout this Zine



The Henna Wars
Adiba Jaigirdar



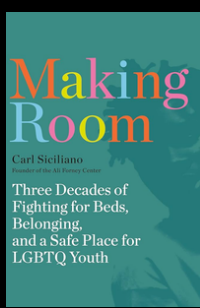
Magnus Chase
Rick Riordan



Like a Love Story
Abdi Nazemian



Come Out and Win
Sue Hyde



Making Room
Carl Siciliano



*Music From
Another World*
Robin Talley





How We Get Free
Keeanga-Yamahatta
Taylor

NSC's Group "Queer Joy" Spotify Playlist



NSC Queer Joy

#	Title	Album	Date added	
1	 Add Up My Love Clairo	Charm	Oct 15, 2024	3:25
2	 American Lana Del Rey	Born To Die - The Paradise Edition	Oct 15, 2024	4:09
3	 Casual Chappell Roan	The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Prince...	Oct 15, 2024	3:53
4	 Silk Chiffon MUNA, Phoebe Bridgers	MUNA	Oct 15, 2024	3:27
5	 Thermodynamic Lawyer Esq, G.F.D. Will Wood and the Tapeworms	Everything is a Lot	Oct 15, 2024	3:40
6	 Classy Girls The Lumineers	The Lumineers	Oct 15, 2024	2:46
7	 B2b Charli xcx	Brat and it's completely different bu...	Oct 15, 2024	2:59
8	 THE BADDEST (BADDER) (feat. Ayesha Erotica) Joey Valence & Brae, Ayesha Erotica	THE BADDEST (BADDER) (feat. Ayesha Erotica)	Oct 15, 2024	2:24
9	 Laplace's Angel (Hurt People? Hurt People?) Will Wood	The Normal Album	Oct 15, 2024	4:02
10	 Heat abnormal (feat. Rei Adachi) Iyowa, Rei Adachi	Heat abnormal (feat. Rei Adachi)	Oct 15, 2024	4:00
11	 Sadness As A Gift Adrianne Lenker	Sadness As A Gift	Oct 15, 2024	4:19
12	 Knuckle Velvet Ethel Cain, YAH WAW	Golden Age	Oct 15, 2024	3:22
13	 Bedless Pierce The Veil	Misadventures	Oct 15, 2024	4:45
14	 Garden Party Maddis Buckley, Mia Asano	Garden Party	Oct 15, 2024	3:12
15	 She's Thunderstorms Arctic Monkeys	Suck It and See	Oct 15, 2024	3:55
16	 DAMN SHORTY (feat. Sexy Red) Chief Keef, Mike WILL Made-It, Sexy Red	DIRTY NACHOS	Oct 15, 2024	3:07
17	 My Name Is Dancing Sarah Kinsley	Escaper	Oct 15, 2024	3:03
18	 Açaí Bowl Dominic Fike	Açaí Bowl	Oct 15, 2024	2:57
19	 Guess featuring billie eilish Charli xcx, Billie Eilish	Guess featuring billie eilish	Oct 15, 2024	2:23

Links and Other Resources

Helpful

Organizations:

[GLSEN](#)

[The Trevor Project](#)

[GSA Network](#)

[PFLAG](#)

[HRC](#)

[Trans Lifeline](#)

[Gender Spectrum](#)

[Queer Youth Assemble](#)

[It Gets Better Project](#)

[Audre Lorde Project](#)

[Point of Pride](#)

[GLAAD](#)

[Lambda Legal](#)

Hotlines:

988 National Suicide Hotline

911 Emergency Response
Hotline

Crisis Text Line - Text
HOME to 741741 to connect
with a trained

crisis counselor 24/7

[LGBT National Help Center](#)

The Trevor Project Hotline:
(866) 488-7386

[The LGBT National Youth
Talkline](#) (youth serving youth
through age 25):

(800) 246-7743

Resources:

[Gender Affirming and Inclusive
Athletics Participation](#) | [GLSEN](#)

[LGBTQ Students and School Sports
Participation](#) | [GLSEN](#)

[Get the Facts about Transgender &
Non-Binary Athletes](#)

[GSA Resources](#) | [GLSEN](#)

[National Student Council](#) | [GLSEN](#)
[Bans on Best Practice Medical Care
for Transgender Youth](#)

[Trans Inclusive School Policies
Resource](#)

[GLSEN - NSC](#)

[ACLU - Mapping Anti-Trans
Legislation](#)

[Improving School Climate for
Transgender and Nonbinary Youth](#) |
[GLSEN](#)

[Supporting Safe and Healthy
Schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, and Queer Students:](#)

[10 Steps to Start Your GSA](#)

[GLSEN](#) | [GSA Resources](#)

[GLSEN](#) | [Policy and Advocacy
Resources](#)

[Movement Advancement Project](#) |
[LGBTQ Equality By State](#)

[PFLAG](#) | [More Emergency Support
Hotlines](#)

Tips for GSA Leaders on How to Use This Resource



Lead a discussion with your GSA: Why is personal storytelling so important in activist spaces?



Lead an LGBTQ+ book club using one of the books NSC highlighted in this zine.



Collaborate on your own “Queer Joy” playlist and discuss with your club. Why are these songs important to you?



Collect stories from GSA members and create a zine like this one.



Several NSC members wrote about their experiences in poetry form. Find a queer poetry book and discuss the intersection of arts and activism.



One piece in this zine is in an illustrated comic. Work on an art piece with your GSA that displays your group values and identity.

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

We hope these essays and stories from GLSEN's 2024-2025 cohort of the National Student Council inspire and empower our readers to get involved with advocacy in their communities and learn more about what the path to youth activism looks like.

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