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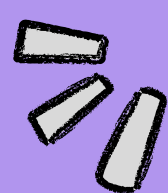
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GSA

POWER PACK



a guide

for teachers & student leaders

WELCOME!

Hi! We're so glad you're here!

We're part of GLSEN's National Student Council and we made this resource for teachers or student leaders who want to know more about LGBTQ+ spaces like GSAs (genders & sexualities alliances). We made this for **ANYONE** interested!

Tips for using this guide:

It's LONG but don't let it scare you! We've got a table of contents on the next page.

Added resources will be linked if more information is needed.

This is NOT "what you need to do." This guide is full of helpful tips that may or may not apply to your school (and that's okay). Use what you need!

Thank you for being here! We hope you learn something new!

Happy reading <3

- Gray N, HI, '25



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Everything in pink ink at the bottom of each page is a song written and/or performed by or with an LGBTQ+ artist! Some may surprise you.

GENDER & SEXUALITY DICTIONARY

get all the up-to-date terminology right!

AFAB - Assigned Female at Birth. a term some transgender people use to describe themselves (but not everyone feels comfortable with it)

agender - 1.no gender identity. 2.is it's own gender identity. is under the non-binary umbrella

allosexism - the system of exclusion and/or discrimination against asexual people and is based in the idea that everyone experiences sexual attraction

ally - a person who supports the LGBTQ+ community

AMAB - Assigned Male At Birth. a term some transgender people use

to describe themselves (but not everyone feels comfortable with it)

androgynous - a person who is masculine and feminine or in between masculine and feminine (an androgynous person)

aromantic - a romantic orientation referring to not feeling romantic attraction. "aro" for short

asexual - a broad term referring to the different degrees of sexual desire. "ace" for short

bigender - having two genders and being masculine and feminine

binding - flattening the chest by wrapping or

wearing a compression garment

biphobia - hatred or fear of those who are attracted to two or more genders (expressed as stereotyping,

bisexual - someone who is sexually, emotionally, or romantically attracted to the same and other genders. "bi" for short

cisgender - someone whose gender identity and gender role matches their sex assigned at birth.

"cis" for short meaning the same side of

cisnormativity - the assumption that gender is binary and people should align with the societal gender norms

coming out - voluntarily sharing your own sexual orientation or gender identity with other people

cross dresser - an outdated term for a person who dresses like the other sex

deadname - the name that a transgender or nonbinary person does not use anymore. typically the name assigned at birth

demisexual - sexuality in which someone only feels sexual attraction to people they have an emotional bond

enby - slang term for non-binary

FTM - Female To Male. refers to someone who was assigned female at birth and gender identity is masculine

gay - a man who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to men

gender - social construct and way of

identifying a person
(not sex assigned at
birth)

gender affirming -
actions, language,
medical care that
supports someone's
gender identity

gender dysphoria - a
person's discomfort or
distress due to their
gender identity and sex
assigned at birth not
matching

gender euphoria - joy
experienced when a
person's gender is
affirmed by any means

gender expression - how
one shows their gender
via clothes, behaviors,
and body

genderfluid - non-fixed
gender identity that may
shift overtime

gender identity - a
feeling of your own
identity that might or
might not correspond

with sex and gender
assigned at birth

genderism - the
systematic belief that
people need to conform
to their sex assigned at
birth in a gender binary
system

gender neutral -
anything that is not
gendered

gender non conforming -
descriptor for people
who do not comply with
society's expectation of
gender expression

genderqueer - a gender
that does not conform to
any binary

heteronormativity - the
assumption that everyone
is straight and that
heterosexuality is the
norm

heterosexism - the
belief that everyone
should be straight or
heterosexual

heterosexual - a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to a different gender

homophobia - hatred or fear of those who are attracted to the same gender (expressed as stereotyping, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence)

homosexual - a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. an outdated term.

intersectionality - describes the multiple identities and systems of oppression collide in a person with many identities

intersex - describes a range of people whose bodies don't align into male and female. includes varied

chromosome compositions, hormones, and sex characteristics

lesbian - a woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to women

lived name - the name that a person uses that is different from their legal name

misgendering - referring to someone with the incorrect gender (does not align with how they identify) by using the wrong pronouns, gendered language, or assigning a gender to a person without knowing how they identify

neurodiversity - the variations of how human minds think

neurodivergent - having a brain that functions differently than the masses including autism, dyslexia, epilepsy &

more

neurotypical - having a brain that functions like the masses (the norm)

neutrois - gender identity that falls under genderqueer or transgender. commonly identified as neutral-gender, null-gender, genderless, or agender

non binary - 1. gender identity that encompasses the many different ways of gender expression. 2. someone who identifies outside of the gender binary. 3. umbrella term over genderfluid, genderqueer, etc

pansexual - someone who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of all sexes and genders

passing - the perception of a trans person as

either a cisgender man or woman

polygender - presenting characteristics of many genders and ignoring the binary concept of the two genders

pronouns - a word that is used instead of a noun or noun phrase to refer to a noun that has already been mentioned

queer - slur that some have reclaimed to self identify as. umbrella term to describe the gender and sexual identities that don't align with the norms of society

questioning - someone who is still figuring out their sexual orientation and/or gender identity

sapphic - woman and woman relationship in reference to the Greek poet Sappho

sexism - cultural, individual, or institutional beliefs that privilege men and devalue women

spectrum - range or sliding scale

straight - a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of a different gender

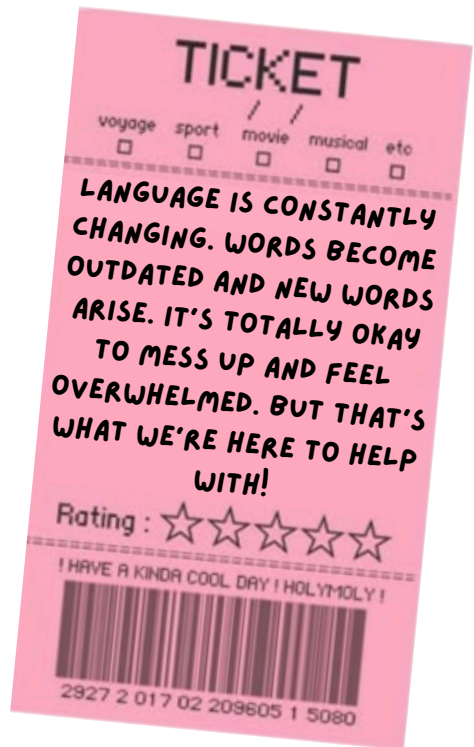
transgender - 1. umbrella term (trans for short). 2. a person whose internal feeling of their own gender is different from the gender norms that correlate to their sex assigned at birth

transition - the steps one takes to live as their gender identity. this can range from haircuts, hormones, surgery, etc.

transphobia - hatred or fear of those who are

perceived to break or blur stereotypical gender roles, expressed as stereotyping, discrimination, and/or violence

two spirit - umbrella term for gender and sexual identities within the Indigenous communities



PRIDE FLAG LIBRARY

what each flag represents and why!

LESBIAN



gender non-conformity
independence & community
unique relationship to womanhood
serenity, peace, love, sex
femininity

GAY



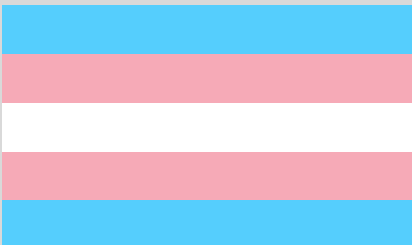
community
healing
gender non-conformity
love & diversity
fortitude

BISEXUAL



same sex attraction
both
opposite sex attraction

TRANS



traditional color for boys
traditional color for girls
gender non-conformity
traditional color for girls
traditional color for boys

PANSEXUAL

attraction to women

non-binary attraction

attraction to men



NONBINARY

gender that not in the binary

people who identify with many
or all genders

no gender



ASEXUAL

asexuality

between sexuality and asexuality

non-asexual partners

community



INTERSEX

purple circle: wholeness

yellow: not gendered



PRIDE

This is the progress pride flag which uses the iconic rainbow. Black and brown were added to represent people of color within the community. Pink, blue, and white were added to represent the transgender community.



PRONOUN CHEAT SHEET



your one-stop-shop for everything about pronouns!

mini grammar lesson #1: Everybody has pronouns! The word “everybody” is an indefinite pronoun but it’s still a pronoun. They’re everywhere and context matters!

Pronouns are words that are used to replace other nouns or proper nouns.

mini grammar lesson #2:

subject	object
I	Me
You	You
She	Her
He	Him
They	Them

Some pronouns correlate with genders and those are part of “gendered language.” Other pronouns aren’t attached to a specific gender and are considered “gender neutral.”

mini grammar lesson #3: although it may feel weird to use “they” and “them” singularly, you actually do it unconsciously all the time and it’s still correct. Conscious practice helps! Try to find excerpts from books and replace all “she” and “he” with “they” and “her” and “him” with “them”

Some pronouns you might hear or see: she/her, he/him, they/them You use these for the people around you every single day! She/her is typically associated with women, he/him is typically associated with men, and they/them is gender neutral. But ALL of these pronouns are used by a range of people.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW SOMEONE'S PRONOUNS?

Ask! It’s more rude to assume somebody’s pronouns based on looks. Not everyone will use the pronouns that completely correlate with their gender expression

Use they/them! If you don’t have a chance to ask, use gender neutral language like they/them pronouns. If you mess up, fix it and move on.

Make your pronouns visible! In your email signature, social media profile, zoom name, etc. Introduce yourself with your pronouns to create a space for others to do the same.

SAFE & INCLUSIVE SPACES

how-to: create a safe space

Set up community agreements

These are sets of “rules” that everyone agrees upon. Some examples are

Don't assume identity: Just because someone is in the GSA doesn't mean you should assume how they identify.

Assume positive intent: acknowledge that not everyone gets their point across the way they mean it.

E.L.M.O. (enough, let's move on): if the conversation goes somewhere that someone is uncomfortable with, they can shout ELMO and the conversation will move on.

Always set up new agreements with every new group and try to remind everyone every once in a while.

Set boundaries

Make it known that boundaries will be respected if they're shared. Not everyone feels comfortable sharing their boundaries so try to make this anonymous.

Respect differences

Not everyone will have the same beliefs but that's okay! Try to not undermine these beliefs.

Encourage feedback and new voices

Sometimes, certain people do all the talking and decision making. Try your best to make it known that all suggestions and commentary is encouraged!



TIPS FOR A DISABILITY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

inclusion also means accessibility

Always bring water and snacks:

Drinking water is good for everyone. Snacks are also important for those who use more energy than the average person. It always helps to have free snacks available!

Turn down loud sound:

Turning down noise (talking, music, or otherwise) helps so people won't get overstimulated.

Use closed captions:

Deaf and hard-of-hearing (HoH) So turn on close captions, speak clearly while facing someone and get some paper for important notes. Look into requirements for ASL interpreters at events.

Mobility accessibility:

Make sure the space you meet in is wheelchair accessible per ADA guidelines to make sure everyone can participate.

Planning:

Concrete plans are best for everyone. Keep in mind all the previous tips!

Every disability is different and people will have different needs. Stay open to feedback and suggestions!



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GSAS



what...what is a GSA?

Genders and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs) are student run safe spaces within a school or community for queer and allied students.

GSAs can exist in many different forms like a weekly club or an online site. Typically, in-person GSAs follow three different formations: social, support, and activist. But sometimes they don't (and that's okay).

Support GSAs could be spaces for members to discuss their struggles with identity or school life.

Social GSAs could look like other clubs that

are more focused providing a community and network for the members.

Activist GSAs would focus on making change within the school or community.

Your GSA could be a mix of all three! It all depends on the needs of your community. GSAs are important in showing LGBTQ+ students that they are welcome, accepted, and wanted at their schools, but GSAs are not exclusive to only LGBTQ+ students. They should be accessible to anyone willing to learn. Keeping GSAs inclusive makes it easier to build a web of support within the school.

how to start a GSA

Every school will have different policies on student led clubs, but these steps are universal.

Find a faculty advisor: Clubs need an adult in the room. Faculty advisors can also help communicate with administration.

Plan & communicate with administration: Keep administrators in the loop. Make sure they have the name of your faculty advisor and your loose plan. Come up with days you want to meet (once a week, every other week, once a month)

Request a meeting place: Some schools require rooms to be reserved ahead of time. Find a classroom that's comfortable and safe then ask to reserve it on your meeting days.

Advertise:

Let people know that the GSA exists. You could post bulletin announcements, make posters, send out emails, have a booth at a club fair, etc.

Hold the first meeting:

Use this time to establish community agreements/ground rules and get to know all the members. Find fun icebreaker games to play

**GENDER &
SEXUALITY OF THE
MEMBERS DO NOT
MATTER. STRESS
THAT ALLIES ARE
WELCOME TOO!**

**THE GSA IS FOR
EVERYONE! FORCING
PEOPLE TO COME
OUT IS NOT OKAY.**

THINGS TO DO IN A GSA

educational activities



Some schools may ask that clubs be educational in some way. It is very helpful to have lesson plans or ideas. Below are some quick and easy topics to look into.

U.S. LGBTQ+ History

Lavender scare

- 1950s (same time as the red scare)
- Mass firings of suspected LGBTQ+ people who worked in the federal government

Resources: [National Archive Foundation](#), [National LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce](#), [National Archives](#)

Pride Riots

Here are a few LGBTQ+ riots (before Stonewall)

- Cooper's Do-Nuts: [Cooper's](#), [USC Archives](#), [The Pride LA](#)
- Compton's Cafeteria Riot: [NPR](#), [The Rainbow Stories](#), [LA Public Library](#)
- The Patch: [USC Archives](#), [Queer Maps](#), [PBS SoCal](#)

Stonewall Riots

Resources: [Library of Congress](#), [The Harvard Gazette](#), [BBC](#)

GLSEN Lesson Plans

Pre-written lessons that are super easy for GSAs!
[Beyond the Gender Binary](#)
[Learning Empowerment and Self-Identification](#)
[LGBTQ History Timeline](#)

[Part 1: Misgendering and Respect for Pronouns +](#)
[Part 2: The Breakdown: Exploring Transphobia and Genderism](#)

GSA Lesson Plans

Lesson plans straight from the GSA Network!
GSAs and Educational Justice
Dealing with Hostility & Opposition
Pride & Protest: Safety
Tips for LGBTQ+ Youth
Transgender Day of Remembrance
Back to School Queer Survival Guide

Keep your eyes open for guides by the GSA Network for special days like GSA Day for Gender Justice and GSA Day for Racial Justice! New materials come out every year.



Zine Workshop: Keep Calm and Zine On

(this is my personal favorite)

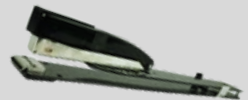
- a zine (zeen) is a small DIY print work
- started in the Harlem Renaissance
 - the first zine was called "Fire!!"
- zines can be about literally anything
 - mostly used by small communities to share art, interests, or information

How to fold a zine: tutorial by @brattyxbre

Materials to have (that would be helpful):

- scissors
- pens, markers, pencils (encourage people to bring their own as well)
- magazines to collage with
- paper (regular printer paper and construction paper)

Have fun!



Ask your GSA members what they want to talk about. Give them in a say in the topics of the meeting discussions to keep engagement up.



GSAs can also be places for people to relax and have fun.

LGBTQ+ Movie & Show Watch Party


There are MANY LGBTQ+ movies and shows to watch with your GSA. You can also use these to lead educational discussions (or just have fun). Make sure you check ratings and get these films or shows approved by a faculty advisor.

- Love, Simon (PG-13)
- The Half of It (PG-13)
- Moonlight (R)
- Boy Erased (R)
- Nimona (PG)
- Crush (PG-13)
- Heartstopper (series)
- Pariah (R)
- But I'm a Cheerleader (R)

GSA Book Club

LGBTQ+ books are everywhere. Check your local library system for ebooks (or physical copies). Extra points if you read LGBTQ+ banned books Here are some suggestions (check trigger warnings and ratings):

- We Are the Ants by Shaun David Hutcherson (YA)
- Icebreaker by A.L. Graziadei (YA)
- Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison (YA)
- Loveless by Alice Oseman (YA)
- The Sunbearer Trials by Aiden Thomas (YA)
- Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas (YA)
- I Wish You All the Best by Mason Deaver (YA)
- Always the Almost by Edward Underhill (YA)
- The Passing Playbook by Isaac Fitzsimons (YA)
- The Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School by Sonora Reyes (YA)


- 
- *Detransition, Baby* by Torrey Peters (Fiction)
 - *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin (Fiction)
 - *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (Fiction)
 - *All Boys Aren't Blue* (Memoir)
 - *No Country For Eight-Spot Butterflies* by Julian Aguon (Memoir)
 - *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong (Fiction)
 - *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* by Jeanette Winterson (Fiction)
 - *OKPsyche* by Anya Johanna DeNiro (Fiction)
 - *Young Mungo* by Douglas Stuart (Fiction)
 - *Fellow Travelers* by Thomas Mallon (Fiction)
 - *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel (Graphic novel & memoir)
 - *Transmogrify!* edited by G. Haron Davis (anthology)

Drag Day

Learn about drag history (and maybe even have fun trying out drag makeup)

Game Night

Find some games everyone loves and play together! This could be used as a chill ice breaker as well.




community outreach

It's important that the school community is aware of the good the GSA is doing (IF that is the purpose of your GSA). If you want to work on a small safe space first and make good connections with the members, doing bigger events may not be the best idea.

Club Fair

It's the easiest way to get the name out there. Make a fun poster, have some activities, and food



Days of Celebration and Education

These days are a perfect opportunity to educate your school community and host activities. Some of these can be used for campaigns, workshops, and more.

September

- Bisexual Awareness Week
- National Banned Book Week



October

- National Coming Out Day
- International Pronoun Day
- GLAAD's Spirit Day
- Asexual Awareness Week
- Intersex Awareness Day



November

- GSA Day for Gender Justice
- Transgender Awareness Week
- Transgender Day of Remembrance

December

- World AIDS Day
- Pansexual and Panromantic Pride Day



February

- GSA Day for Racial Justice
- Aromantic Awareness Week

March

- National Read Across America Day
- International Transgender Day of Visibility

April

- Day of (No) Silence
- National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- Lesbian Visibility Day

May

- Harvey Milk Day

June

- Stonewall Riots Anniversary



THANK YOU FOR READING!

messages from GSA members

"IT [THE GSA] SHOWED ME THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO WERE LIKE ME AND DIFFERENT TO ME BUT WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT ME ALL THE SAME"
- EDDIE R. NJ, '26

"I LOVE DOING FUN ACTIVITIES WITH MY GSA. DURING MY FIRST YEAR IN GSA, WE HAD A MOVIE NIGHT AND WE WATCHED NIMONA"

"ALLYSHIP MEANS TO BE WILLING TO STAND UP FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY EVEN WHEN THE MAJORITY OPINION IS NOT IN OUR FAVOR. WITH HOMOPHOBIA ON THE RISE IN THE US, IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR ALLIES TO SPEAK OUT AND SHOW UP, EVEN IF THEIR NEIGHBORS/FRIENDS/FAMILY/PARTNER/ETC. HAS NEGATIVE VIEWS OF QUEER INDIVIDUALS"
-KEV C. NJ, '25

"I FELT WAY LESS ALONE AND MORE CONFIDENT IN MY IDENTITY"
-GABE B. '28

"IT [THE GSA] MADE ME FEEL LIKE I HAD A PLACE TO FIT IN, LIKE I HAD PEOPLE THAT CARED ABOUT ME"
-MORGAN

"I'VE MET A LOT OF NEW PEOPLE. MAKING FRIENDS AS A QUEER KID IS HARD AND HAVING A SPOT THAT IS DEDICATED TO THAT, BUT DOESN'T FORCE IT HAS HELPED A LOT"

"I'VE GOTTEN CLOSER WITH SOME PEOPLE IN MY GSA AND HAVE BEGAN TALKING TO THEM MORE OFTEN. I'M NOT A VERY SOCIAL PERSON, NOR AM I GOOD AT FINDING SIMILAR INTERESTS OR TOPICS WITH OTHERS, SO CONNECTING THROUGH HOW WE IDENTIFY AND WHAT SIMILAR IDEAS WE HAVE IS GREAT SOCIALLY"
-NICHOLAS L. '27

"IT [THE GSA] HELPED ME FEEL BETTER ABOUT MY IDENTITY IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT CONSTANTLY TEASED ME AND OTHERS FOR JUST EXISTING"

A FINAL NOTE

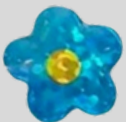
I started my school's first GSA in my junior year. I had a really hard time getting admin on board but eventually it all worked out. At my school, I experienced some teasing ("bullying" is too strong of a word) due to my identity and I knew that the other queer students probably had the same experience. There was no GSA or safe space for queer students (no student clubs at all) and I knew nobody would create a GSA for me. So I created it.

The number one issue for me was finding all of the right materials and figuring out how to run a safe space. I'd never been part of anything like a GSA so I was completely inexperienced.

I'm about to graduate and I know that none of the underclassmen are available to take over the GSA. I wanted to leave my school with all the materials I've found so that another student can pick up where I left off.

I created a website for my school and this guide for NSC for people like me who have no clue what they're doing. I hope you found something valuable in this zine.

-Gray N, HI, '25



REFERENCES

references and further reading for
definitions

UC Davis LGBTQ+ Resource Center Glossary.

Human Rights Campaign Glossary of Terms

PELAG National Glossary.