

# Tools for Librarians



How can you make your library safe and inclusive for LGBT youth? The following resources (free to download) will help you be a visible ally, use literature to teach respect, celebrate your diverse community and provide access to the LGBT-related information that youth need.

## SAFE SPACE KIT

Designed to help educators create safe spaces for LGBT youth in secondary schools (grades 6-12). The Safe Space Kit includes book recommendations, tips for responding to “that’s so gay” and other anti-LGBT language, a guide to supporting youth who come out to you and more. Download a free copy or purchase a hard copy for your collection.



## NO NAME-CALLING WEEK

An annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds, inspired by James Howe’s “The Misfits”. Download lesson plans for all grades, tips to prevent bullying, resource and book lists and more.

## GLSEN COMPANION TO NEA’S READ ACROSS AMERICA

Use Read Across America to highlight books on respect, diversity and fairness in your library. Filled with ideas and discussion guides on a number of GLSEN-recommended books, the downloadable GLSEN Companion can help you ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

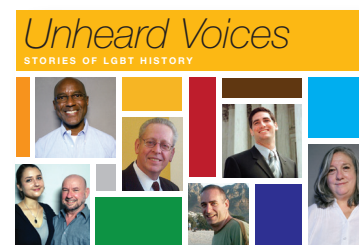
## READY, SET, RESPECT! GLSEN’S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOOLKIT

Developed in partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, this resource focusses on creating respectful schools and examining name-calling, gender roles and family diversity. It includes tip sheets, book and resource lists and lesson plans. Download a free copy or purchase a hard copy for your collection.



## UNHEARD VOICES: STORIES OF LGBT HISTORY

Celebrate LGBT History Month (October) and connect to important moments in history all year long with Unheard Voices. This multimedia curriculum, created by GLSEN, ADL and StoryCorps, includes downloadable oral



history testimonies, discussion guides, biographical and historical resources, thematic lessons and activities.

## 2011 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

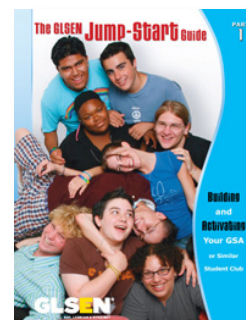
GLSEN’s latest survey finds that 8 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the previous year. The survey also highlights interventions that help improve school climate and student well-being: GSAs, inclusive curriculum (including library materials), supportive staff and comprehensive anti-bullying policies. Download a free copy or purchase a hard copy for your collection.

## CHAPTERS

Connect with a local GLSEN Chapter near you. Partner, learn, support and collaborate: the possibilities are endless.

## JUMP START GUIDE

Support Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) by letting them meet in your library. Better yet, become a sponsor of the club! For guidance, download GLSEN’s Jump Start Guide for GSAs, everything you and your students need to create and sustain a strong GSA.



# Library as Safe Space – Librarian as Ally

By Jenny Betz, GLSEN Education Manager

Whether you are school-based or at a community library, you've probably observed young people who find safety and solace among the stacks. They sit and read during lunch and do their homework after school. They may come to the library to escape the taunting of peers or disapproval of their parents. They may come to the library to be safe. But that's just the start of it. With your help, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth can use your library to enrich their lives as they search the web, read and explore your collection to learn about themselves and the world around them.

Our nation's schools continue to be hostile environments for LGBT youth in middle and high school. According to GLSEN's 2011 National School Climate Survey (NSCS), 82% experience harassment based on their sexual orientation and 64% based on their gender expression each year. One third of LGBT students missed at least a day of school in the last month because they felt unsafe. The name-calling, bullying, harassment and assault that LGBT students experience also lead to lowered academic achievement and educational aspirations, and poorer psychological well-being.

GLSEN research shows that in order to provide safe and inclusive environments for LGBT students, schools should work to provide: Gay Straight Alliances and similar student clubs, LGBT-inclusive curriculum (including library materials), supportive educators (including librarians), and comprehensive bullying/harassment policies.

GLSEN has always seen librarians as partners in ensuring safe, inclusive and respectful spaces for all youth. In fact, while overall the percentage of students with access to LGBT-related information in school has not changed dramatically over the past 10 years, there is one exception. The percentage of students with access to inclusive library resources continues to grow each year. Still, less than half of LGBT high school and 20% of LGBT middle school students report having access to LGBT-related library materials at school.

You have a unique opportunity to be an ally to LGBT students. You can ensure that your library carries materials with positive representations of LGBT history, themes and events. And, you can be there for students when they most need adult support. For that, LGBT youth need to know they can talk to you. Unfortunately, less than 30% of LGBT student reported feeling comfortable talking to librarians about LGBT issues and only 10% actually have.

I suspect that most of you will answer "yes" to most of these questions. We know that librarians have often been strong advocates and allies to LGBT youth. And, for those areas in which you see room for growth at your library, connect with a local GLSEN chapter near you, visit [GLSEN.org](http://GLSEN.org), and find us on twitter and facebook.

## What type of environment are you creating in your library?

- Do your library rules include respect for all visitors and are those rules posted where everyone can see them?
- Do you intervene when you see name-calling or bullying in-person or online?
- Does your collection include books, periodicals and media with LGBT-related themes for all age levels?
- Do you display books and hang posters with diverse faces and families?
- Do you ensure access to LGBT-related content on the internet (you'd be surprised how many schools and libraries can't access [GLSEN.org](http://GLSEN.org) or other LGBT organizations and resources)?
- Do you celebrate LGBT-related events, such as LGBT History Month (October), Ally Week (October), No Name-Calling Week (January), Day of Silence (April), and LGBT Pride Month (June)?
- Do you incorporate LGBT-related materials into other events, such as Banned Books Week (September), Holocaust Remembrance Day (January), Black History Month (February), Read Across America (March), Women's History Month (March)?
- Are your library accommodations (restroom, etc.) safe and accessible for all patrons, including transgender youth?
- Do you provide space for Gay Straight Alliances or local LGBT youth organizations to meet?

GLSEN has provided groundbreaking research, resources and programs for over 20 years, envisioning a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community. ALA, the GLBTRT and individual school and local librarians continue to be our partners in working towards this vision.

In a country where most LGBT students report facing harassment, fewer than half say their school has a GSA, less than 10% report that their school has comprehensive and enumerated bullying/harassment policies, and where only 17% have been taught positive representations about LGBT people, history or events in their classes, your help is crucial.

Make your library safe and inclusive. Be an ally to LGBT youth.

**GLSEN loves LIBRARIANS!**