

GLSEN[®]

SOLIDARITY WEEK

**2022
Community
Conversation Guide**



One of the ways you can take action for GLSEN's 2022 Solidarity week is by hosting a conversation, bringing together people in your school, neighborhood, or city to learn about solidarity and commit to taking action together.

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

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

Solidarity as a Tool for Liberation

Solidarity is voluntary, collective, sustained action based on an understanding that we don't all share the same risks, and we must work across all differences to ensure that every student has the right to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education. Solidarity involves bringing together different people based on finding common objectives and solutions. Solidarity work happens when you show up to support others experiencing harm and oppression by centering their experiences, leadership, decisions, needs, requests, and ideas.

You may have already practiced solidarity in some form, whether you were taking action in your classroom, school, or broader community. In the days after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, students organized the largest single day of protest against gun violence in history. In June, protests broke out across the country demanding justice for George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by police in Minneapolis, MN. As more murders of Black people including Black transgender women, young people started organizing their own protests addressing anti-Blackness and racism in their schools. Many of you participated in GLSEN's Day of Silence, the largest LGBTQ+ student-focused and led action to raise awareness around the bullying, harassment, and erasure of LGBTQ+ students in schools.

Solidarity work happens in many forms and on many different issues.

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



Hosting a Solidarity Week Conversation

For community groups, GSAs, or other school-based clubs interested in hosting conversations, check out the tips below for setting up a successful community conversation for Solidarity Week 2022! For classroom conversations, check out the Elementary School Guide and the Middle/High School Guide.

Identify the why, what, where, how, who, and when for your conversation.

1) Why

What is the purpose of the conversation? What are you trying to accomplish? How does this conversation connect to other work your group is working on? Where are there opportunities to intentionally build solidarity in your school or community? Are there other identity groups who are also committed to education justice or LGBTQ+ justice, and could you co-plan an event?

Sample conversation topics:

- Panel discussion of Asian and Pacific Islander students and teachers discussing their needs from white folks and BIPOC folks, followed by small group discussions among audience members to identify concrete actions people can take to practice solidarity
- Conversation among middle school student groups to formulate requests from adults in their school to center student experiences and needs
- Intergroup dialogue between disabled and non-disabled people in a school district identify ways to fight ableism collectively
- GLSEN Chapter invites LGBTQ+ folks from across the city to have an intergenerational conversation about the needs of LGBTQ+ students and identify collective action steps
- Identity-based student groups come together to share their unique experience or needs within the school community, and then brainstorm together how they can work together to build a safer and more affirming school for every student

2) What

What are the outcomes you expect after the conversation? What will participants know/understand, do, or believe after participating in the conversation? What will be the impact within your community? Be sure your outcomes are SMART — specific, measurable, ambitious/achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Think about a specific call to action that you want to make at the end of the event — whether it's asking folks to join your group or volunteer at an upcoming rally.



3) Where/Location

Whether in-person or virtual, consider what the needs are in the space. For virtual spaces or in-person, how is language accessibility being managed? What are the broader accessibility needs to include, and how will you elicit requests? What are the specific tech tools that would make the event successful? How can the physical space be set up to make it comfortable?

4) How

Plan the content, logistics, and outreach strategy that will get to the purpose and the outcomes you outlined.

Content:

- Refer back to your purpose (why) and outcomes (what) to be sure your conversation agenda lines up with what you plan to accomplish.
- Consider using these questions to guide your conversation:
 - What identities do you hold? How does that impact your daily experience in school? What do you wish people knew about your experiences?
 - How affirming is your school for LGBTQ+ students? Is this different for each identity in the acronym LGBTQ? How can we practice solidarity across LGBTQ+ communities?
 - What does solidarity look like for you? How do you practice solidarity with others? How do you need others to practice solidarity with your communities?
 - Where are you knowledgeable about other communities, and where do you need to learn more?
 - Where do you see LGBTQ+ people in the media? Can you share a time you felt represented in the media and how this impacted you?
 - How are you using your own power and privilege to disrupt injustice?
 - What are some issues at your school that can bring people together to create change?

Facilitation:

- Check out **GLSEN's Guide for Running an Effective Meeting** for some great tips on facilitating successful conversations and **Guidelines for Respectful GSAs** for tips on creating working agreements for the space.
- Whether you're leading the conversation on your own, or co-facilitating, make sure that you do 1-2 dry runs of the agenda to get comfortable with the material and check for any final edits.
- See page # for a sample agenda

5) Who/Outreach

Who do you want to attend, and what are the specific outreach strategies that would work to reach those people? What kind of outreach materials need to be created, and who can make them? What numerical goals can we set, and by when do we want to reach them?



6) When/Date

Think about your audience and when they might be available, in addition to a time that's convenient for your team. For example, if you want students to attend, the event should happen outside of regular school hours.

7) Logistics

Consider safety and security protocols, registration/RSVP process, food, transportation, materials and supplies, and any permission slips or other paperwork that might be needed. It can be helpful to do a dry run of the event (in the virtual or physical space) to ensure you have the supplies and processes needed.

- **Cost:** Is there money available for the event? If so, what is the budget? If not, is there a need for donation or borrowed items?
- **Media:** If you plan to post photos or videos from the event, make sure you get media releases from participants.

Feel free to reach out to your local GLSEN chapter, email educators@glsen, or email students@glsen.org for more support in hosting a conversation in your community!



