



New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource

GSA GUIDE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS



INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE GSA GUIDE SECTION

This section is intended to provide information and support for students (but also educators and administrators) who wish to create a GSA in their school. Policy 703 – *Positive Learning and Working Environment* – was amended in December, 2013 and now includes reference to sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination:

This policy provides a framework for the department, school districts and schools to create such environments by “establishing a process for fostering positive learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

Part of creating a positive learning and working environment is the creation of GSAs, which is written into the goals of the policy:

5.5 ... Each partner in education through instruction and continued education supports the formation of school-based groups that promote diversity when interest is expressed by a student or staff member (examples include First Nations groups, multicultural groups, religious groups, and sexual minority groups).

For the complete policy: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pol/e/703A.pdf>

From Egale’s *Every Class in Every School* (2011):

GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCES (GSAs) AND OTHER LGBTQ INCLUSIVE STUDENT GROUPS

GSAs are official student clubs with LGBTQ and heterosexual student membership and typically one or two teachers who serve as faculty advisors. Students in a school with a GSA know that they have at least one or two adults they can talk to about LGBTQ matters. The



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GSA GUIDE

STRATEGIES FOR STARTING A GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE (GSA) OR OTHER LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE STUDENT GROUP

purpose of GSAs is to provide a much-needed safe space in which LGBTQ students and allies can work together on making their schools more welcoming for sexual and gender minority students. Some GSAs go by other names such as Rainbow Clubs, Human Rights Clubs, or Social Justice Clubs. This is sometimes done to signal openness to non-LGBTQ membership (though, of course, some of these are not GSAs and might not address homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia), and sometimes because “Gay-Straight Alliance” seems problematic in that “gay” does not necessarily refer to lesbians or bisexuals and trans identities are not explicitly encompassed by the expression. However, using the acronym “GSA” to represent any student group concerned with LGBTQ matters has become commonplace. Very often it is LGBTQ students themselves who initiate the GSA, although sometimes a teacher will come forward. Such groups also function as safe havens and supports for youth with LGBTQ parents. Currently, more than 100 LGBTQ-inclusive student groups across the country have registered on Egale’s safer schools and inclusive education website, *MyGSA.ca*.

Students from schools with GSAs are much more likely to agree that their school communities are supportive of LGBTQ people, are much more likely to be open with some or all of their peers about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and are more likely to see their school climate as becoming less homophobic.

For the full report see: www.MyGSA.ca/YouthSpeakUp

Currently in New Brunswick there are more than 27 active GSAs in middle and high schools.



Sometimes starting a GSA can be a challenge, but you’re not alone! Many GSAs have been successfully running for years and you can learn a great deal from the experiences of their members. **Here are 10 basic steps to help you form your school’s club:**

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ASSESS YOUR SCHOOL'S ENVIRONMENT

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Prepare yourself by thinking about possible allies. Which teachers, students, school staff members, including librarians and EST-Guidance Counsellor, and administrators do you think will be strong supporters of your group?



Check out the “School Climate Questions” and “School Climate Outlines” adapted from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network’s Jump-Start Guide (*page 14*). Where does your school fit in?



Check out 10 Faith-Based Reasons to Support LGBTQ Inclusive Education (*page 20*).



To find suggestions for potential allies, see Egale’s “Becoming an Ally” (*page 22*). This might be useful to share with students or teachers in your school who do not identify as LGBTQ.

You are not required to have a reason for starting a GSA, but it never hurts to have some rationale for why you want one. Ask yourself the following questions: Do lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/gender creative, Two Spirit, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) students want a supportive and safe space? Are there students who want to know more about the LGBTQ community? Are there students with LGBTQ parents, other family members, or friends? Are these students interested in participating in human rights advocacy?

According to Egale’s First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools...

- Almost two thirds (64%) of LGBTQ students and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents reported that they feel unsafe at school.
- More than three quarters (78%) of trans students indicated feeling unsafe in some way at school.
- 44% of trans students reported being likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe and 15% reported having skipped more than 10 days because of feeling unsafe at school.
- Over two thirds (70.4%) of all students hear homophobic expressions such as “that’s so gay” every day in school.

- In the Atlantic provinces, 63.7% of students reported being comfortable talking about LGBTQ matters with teachers, 47.4% with coaches, 66.9% with classmates and 68% with parents.
- 51% of LGBTQ students have been verbally harassed about their sexual orientation and 21% have been physically harassed or assaulted about their sexual orientation.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of trans youth have been verbally harassed about their gender expression and more than a third (37%) have been physically harassed or assaulted about their gender.
- 45% of youth with LGBTQ parents have been sexually harassed at school; over a quarter have been physically harassed or assaulted about the sexual orientation of their parents (27%) and their own perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (27%).
- Almost half (48%) of youth of colour, both LGBTQ and heterosexual, reported not knowing of any teachers or other school staff members who are supportive of LGBTQ students; only half (53%) would be very comfortable talking about LGBTQ matters even with a close friend.
- In addition, students who *witness* bullying are also impacted by violence and harassment: “Witnessing others being victimized can significantly heighten feelings of vulnerability and lower feelings of personal safety.” (<http://www.education.com/reference/article/consequences-of-bullying/>).

In December, 2013 the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development updated Policy 703 – *Positive Learning and Working Environment*. This policy provides a framework

FOR A MODEL OF A GSA PROPOSAL, SEE WHAT JOEY WRIGHT WROTE to the Greater Essex County District School Board regarding the establishment of a GSA at Walkerville Collegiate Institute in Windsor (page 33).



Policy 703 Goal 5.5: Each partner in education through instruction and continued education supports the formation of school-based groups that promote diversity when interest is expressed by a student or staff member (examples include First Nations groups, multicultural groups, religious groups, and sexual minority groups).

for the department, school districts and schools to create such environments by “establishing a process for fostering positive learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

The inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity support LGBTQ Inclusive Education.

Policy 703 outlines goals that are relevant to LGBTQ Inclusive Education (underline added):

- 5.1 Good citizenship and civility are modeled and reinforced throughout the school community. Every person is valued and treated with respect.
- 5.2 School personnel and students in the public school system have the right to work and to learn in a safe, orderly, productive, respectful and harassment-free environment.
- 5.4 Students have a sense of belonging and connection, feel they are supported by school personnel, and have a positive relationship with at least one adult in the school system.
- 5.5 ... Each partner in education through instruction and continued education supports the formation of school-based groups that promote diversity when interest is expressed by a student or staff member (examples include First Nations groups, multicultural groups, religious groups, and sexual minority groups).



To read the complete policy:
<http://www.gnb.ca/000/pol/e/703A.pdf>

5.6 All members of the school community learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from homophobia, racism and all other forms of discrimination that could lead to bullying and harassment. Appropriate procedures and strategies are in place to ensure respect for human rights, support diversity, and foster a learning environment that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for all individual.

To achieve these goals, Policy 703 requires all schools and districts to have a *Positive Learning and Working Environment Plan*. Principals prepare their schools plans which are reported on annually and approved every 3 years. Policy 703 goes on to outline inappropriate behaviours and misconduct that include (but are not limited to):

- bullying (including cyberbullying), hazing and any form of intimidation
- physical violence
- harassment
- discrimination on the basis of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity
- using disrespectful or inappropriate language or gestures

Again, sexual orientation and gender identity are included in this list, which supports LGBTQ Inclusive Education and the important work of GSAs. Also notable in this section is the use of the words “real or perceived”, since people who identify as heterosexual and cisgender can also experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia if they are perceived to be LGBTQ.

To read the complete policy: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pole/703A.pdf>

The New Brunswick Teachers Association (NBTA) also has a policy on Anti-Homophobia, Anti-Transphobia and Anti-Heterosexism (Policy 598-3). This policy states “NBTA advocates for educational systems that are safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.” This policy clearly outlines NBTA support for positive and safe school environments that are proactive in their approach to teacher awareness and including LGBTQ issues in the curriculum.

Anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism education seeks to promote equity through practicing the principles of inclusion, affirming the identity of individuals and groups, seeking the elimination of homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism in all its forms, and initiating comprehensive school programs supporting equity. All students regardless of real or perceived, sexual orientation, gender identity/gender expression, culture, socio-economic status, residence, strengths and challenges have the right to an appropriate education.

Comprehensive school programs include GSAs.

Policy 598-3 can be found in the *Information and Resources for Educators* section of this resource. You can also find it online: <http://www.nbta.ca/resources/documents/policy-598.3.pdf>

There is a history of support for LGBTQ issues in the New Brunswick school system. In 2011, School District 10 adopted policy E9 Anti-Homophobia and Anti-Heterosexism , which stated that:

In order that all members of the school community learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from homophobia, transphobia and anti-gay harassment and/or heterosexism, District 10 recognizes its obligation to adopt appropriate administrative procedures and strategies, which shall ensure respect for human rights, support diversity, address discrimination, and create a learning environment

that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for individuals regardless of real or perceived sexual orientations and/ or gender identities. This policy required school-based administrators to (among other things) “support the formation of a school-based Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) when interest is expressed by a student or staff member”.

Policy E9 set the stage for the revision of Policy 703. It was clear that a district policy was not sufficient and a provincial policy was required. Finally, the *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools* report recognized the needs of LGBTQ students in their recommendations:

6.2 Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students represent a segment of the student population that has traditionally been impacted by equity issues, including harassment, bullying, mental intimidation and on occasion, physical assault. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, districts and schools should ensure policies and practices are in place that enhance understanding and acceptance of these students and should provide these students with equitable proactive support and fair treatment in schools.

To read the full report: <https://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/comm/Inclusion.pdf>

Beyond the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policies, the New Brunswick Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on several grounds including sexual orientation. Gender identity is currently protected under the category of sex. Gender identity, gender expression and intersex will be considered when the Human Rights Act is next reviewed. The Human Rights Act applies to all aspects of education – including extra-curricular events – and overrides the Education Act. Therefore in addition to Policy 703 and the NBTA policy, LGBTQ students, staff and parents /guardians are protected under the New Brunswick Human Rights Act and schools have the responsibility to ensure a positive and safe learning environment for everyone.

To read the complete Human Rights Act: <http://laws.gnb.ca/en/ShowPdf/cs/2011-c.171.pdf>

GSAs can help to raise awareness, understanding and acceptance about people who identify as LGBTQ, as well as about homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heteronormativity and cisnormativity. They are proactive in helping to create more positive learning and working environments because increased awareness can help to reduce (and hopefully eliminate) discrimination and bullying. They also help to challenge heteronormativity and cisnormativity, and help increase intervention when bullying and discrimination occur. GSAs provide support for LGBTQ youth, youth with LGBTQ parents /guardians and LGBTQ staff.



Heteronormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships.

Cisnormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender creativity.

Cisgender (adj): Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex (e.g., a cisgender male is someone whose gender identity is man and was assigned male sex at birth).

1

Do your school and school district policies protect and affirm the rights of LGBTQ people? Do non-discrimination policies include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression? Is proactive education regarding LGBTQ policies a priority?

Is anti-LGBTQ language discouraged or encouraged? Is this language and harassment rampant in your school? Do you hear words or phrases like “fag,” “dyke,” or “that’s so gay” often? Or is anti-LGBTQ language rare and is there opposition to it?

2

Is there a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or other inclusive student group pertaining to LGBTQ matters at your school? If so, was there opposition to this club and do students feel safe attending meetings? If not, does this seem like something that would be encouraged or discouraged at your school?

3

Are LGBTQ themes and people fully integrated into your school’s curriculum and across a variety of subject areas? Do you learn about LGBTQ matters in Health and Sexual Education classes? Are LGBTQ topics and people discussed in other classes, such as English, History, and Media Studies? Is inclusive language used in all subject areas, including Math and Science, to make your school’s classrooms safer spaces and more inclusive, respectful, and welcoming learning and working environments for all members of school communities?

4

5

Are there books and materials with LGBTQ content and written by LGBTQ authors in your school’s library? Are there books and materials with LGBTQ content and written by LGBTQ authors in your school’s classrooms?

Is there school staff support for LGBTQ students at your school? Do staff members show compassion and respect? Is there health and guidance support for LGBTQ students? Is there information about available resources?

6

7

Are athletic programmes welcoming spaces for LGBTQ or gender-open students? Do athletic programmes exhibit practices of gender equity? Are anti-LGBTQ attitudes an issue?

Is there organized and vocal opposition to LGBTQ inclusion at your school? For example, have you heard things such as homosexuality being characterized as “sickness and sin”? Is there adult compassion, respect, and advocacy for LGBTQ inclusion? Do adults exhibit a commitment to social justice?

8

9

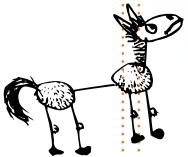
Are LGBTQ people visible or invisible at your school? Are there students or staff members with LGBTQ parents, other family members, or friends? Do they feel safe being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity or about their loved ones? Are LGBTQ students fully integrated into school life? Are LGBTQ students and other members of the school community treated equitably?

SCHOOL CLIMATE OUTLINES

Adapted from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's Jump-Start Guide

The **NON-INCLUSIVE** School

1. School and school board policies do not protect the rights of LGBTQ people.
2. Anti-LGBTQ language and harassment are rampant.
3. A GSA or other inclusive student group pertaining to LGBTQ matters is nonexistent and strongly discouraged.
4. Curricula are devoid of LGBTQ themes, people, and matters and inclusive language is not being used.
5. Books and materials with LGBTQ content or written by LGBTQ authors are nonexistent.
6. School staff support, including health and guidance, for LGBTQ students, families, and allies is nonexistent.
7. Athletic programmes are unwelcoming spaces for LGBTQ or gender-open students.
8. Organized and vocal opposition to any LGBTQ inclusion exists.
9. LGBTQ people are invisible and feel unsafe being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; members of the school community with LGBTQ family members and friends also feel unsafe.

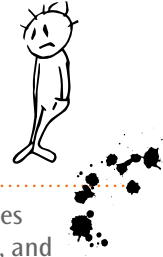


The **RESISTANT** School



1. School and school board non-discrimination policies may include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
2. Anti-LGBTQ language is common in hallways and locker rooms and on the school grounds, though not in classrooms.
3. There is resistance to the formation of a GSA or other inclusive student group pertaining to LGBTQ matters and, in the case that there is one, students feel unsafe attending.
4. Curricular inclusion of LGBTQ matters is limited to clinical references in Health or Sexual Education classes and inclusive language is rarely used.
5. Access to books and materials with LGBTQ content or written by LGBTQ authors is limited.
6. School staff show compassion, but not necessarily respect, and information and support regarding LGBTQ matters, including health and guidance, are not generally accessible.
7. Athletic programmes are moving toward gender equity, but anti-LGBTQ attitudes remain an issue.
8. Adults feel discomfort and may believe there is danger in exposure to LGBTQ matters or people.
9. A “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere exists for LGBTQ people.

The **PASSIVE** School



1. School and school board non-discrimination policies are inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression and students and school community members are made aware of this.
2. There are few instances of intentional harassment against LGBTQ students, students perceived as LGBTQ, or students with LGBTQ parents, other family members, or friends.
3. The GSA or other inclusive student group pertaining to LGBTQ matters is tolerated and attended by a core group of people.
4. LGBTQ themes, people, and matters are occasionally included in English, History, and Health classes and inclusive language is generally used.
5. A variety of books and materials with LGBTQ content and written by LGBTQ authors are available.
6. School staff members, including Health teachers and EST-Guidance Counsellors, have had training in LGBTQ matters and offer information and support in a respectful manner.
7. Coaches interrupt anti-LGBTQ behaviour; LGBTQ athletes are relatively safe, though not very visible.
8. The adult community is open to LGBTQ inclusion, but may not be sure how to achieve it.
9. LGBTQ people are moderately visible; they may be seen as “different,” but a relatively safe and respectful atmosphere exists.

The **INCLUSIVE** School



1. School and school board policies protect and affirm LGBTQ people; proactive education about such policies exists.
2. Anti-LGBTQ language and behaviour are rare and dealt with swiftly and decisively; anti-bias education that embraces respectful, inclusive language is common in classrooms.
3. The GSA or other inclusive student group pertaining to LGBTQ matters is visible, regularly attended, and considered as valid as any other club.
4. LGBTQ themes, people, and matters are fully integrated into curricula across all subject areas and grade levels and inclusive language is always used and openly discussed.
5. Books and materials with LGBTQ content and written by LGBTQ authors are visible and available to all students and school staff members.
6. School staff members, including Health teachers and EST-Guidance Counsellors, work with outside agencies to provide outreach, support, and education to LGBTQ people as well as members of the school community with LGBTQ parents, other family members, and friends.
7. Education around anti-LGBTQ bias is a part of athletic programming; LGBTQ athletes are treated as equals on and off the playing field.
8. The adult community has prioritized LGBTQ inclusion as part of a larger commitment to social justice.
9. LGBTQ people and those with LGBTQ friends and family members are visible and fully integrated into school life; there is a high degree of comfort and acceptance regarding LGBTQ people.

Adapted from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's Jump-Start Guide. This document, as well as other resources for GSAs, can be found at <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2226.html?state=tools&type=student>.

Adapted from a TEACH (Teens Educating And Confronting Homophobia) resource.

1. Human dignity is paramount and is inclusive of everyone without discrimination.
2. Religions are based on and have a responsibility for compassion, acceptance, peace and love. Their histories of involvement with social justice, peace movements, activism carry with it a duty to all those who are marginalized.
3. All major religions share the belief that one should treat others like one would like others to treat oneself. This “Golden Rule” is enough reason for full inclusion of members in the LGBTQ communities.
4. LGBTQ-inclusive education does not teach that someone’s religious values are wrong. In fact, LGBTQ-inclusive education is supported by doctrines, teachings, and a morality that safeguards human dignity and the respect for all human beings.
5. Most religions don’t condone violence or hate. LGBTQ-inclusive education works toward ensuring that each student has a safe environment in which to learn. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia foster, condone and willfully ignore violence and hate. The impact of disapproval and lack of acceptance based on biblical and other religious scriptures’ interpretation and theological teaching, opens up individuals who identify as LGBTQ to verbal, physical and emotional harassment, which are all forms of violence.
6. Human Rights legislation takes precedence over other pieces of legislation. Sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as provincial/territorial Human Rights Codes. Gender identity is also included as a prohibited ground in some provinces and territories. Please visit www.egale.ca for a current list.
7. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia hurt us all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Often, anyone who is perceived to be LGBTQ is subjected to harassment and victimization. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia enforce rigid gender roles and norms, deny individual expression, and perpetuate stereotypes, myths and misinformation. It is important to note that religious scriptures are never to be used as a weapon, and demand an in-depth study and understanding for accurate interpretation.
8. LGBTQ-inclusive education is NOT sex education. It is not about discussing or describing explicitly sexual activities. LGBTQ-inclusive education acknowledges and includes LGBTQ realities and issues by making room for these within the curriculum in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. It encourages awareness of and discussion about LGBTQ diversity - and by extension creates safer and affirming environments for everyone, but especially students, staff and families who identify as LGBTQ, and their allies. Support groups, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) that gather in schools serve as safe places and refuge that allow students to meet and discuss issues relevant to their lives and circumstances.
9. Religion fosters community. All human beings are valuable members of their communities regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Emphasizing how LGBTQ members are active, creative contributors adds to a positive perspective rather than an adversarial position.
10. The act of suicide is frowned upon by most religions. Studies show that LGBTQ youth report higher rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts. Silence about the existence of LGBTQ people, coupled with homophobic and transphobic harassment, create unsafe environments, which impacts mental health and other risk factors related to suicide. Those of us of faith can play a role in saving lives.

WHAT IS AN ALLY?

In the most general sense, an “Ally” is “a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population.” (Washington and Evans, *Becoming an Ally*) Allies to racial, religious and ethnic minorities have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture, and only recently has their instrumental position been extended to the area of sexual orientation. In recent years we’ve seen more and more LGBT Ally organizations strive to make the culture of a campus or workplace more aware and accepting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.

An Ally strives to...

- be a friend
- be a listener
- be open-minded
- have his or her own opinions
- be willing to talk
- commit him or herself to personal growth in spite of the discomfort it may sometimes cause
- recognize his or her personal boundaries
- recognize when to refer an individual to additional resources
- confront his or her own prejudices
- join others with a common purpose
- believe that all persons regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression should be treated with dignity and respect
- engage in the process of developing a culture free of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism and cissexism

- recognize his or her mistakes, but not use them as an excuse for inaction
- be responsible for empowering his or her role in a community, particularly as it relates to responding to homophobia, biphobia or transphobia
- recognize the legal powers and privileges that cisgender straight people have and which LGBT people are denied
- support the Ally program of his or her university or workplace

As important as it is to define what an Ally is in a positive sense, it is also helpful to understand the boundaries of an Ally’s role.

An Ally is NOT...

- someone with ready-made answers
- necessarily a counsellor, nor is he or she necessarily trained to deal with crisis situations
- expected to proceed with an interaction if levels of comfort or personal safety have been violated

(www.HRC.org)



The word “ally” has historically applied to straight allies. But, it’s not just about who you are or who you like, it’s about what you stand for. No matter how you identify, being an ally means honoring the unique experiences of LGBT individuals and championing respect in your own way. – www.AthleteAlly.org

Allies are some of the most effective and powerful voices of the LGBT movement. Not only do allies help people in the coming-out process, they also help others understand the importance of equality, fairness, acceptance and mutual respect. – www.GLAAD.org

The power of an ally can never be underestimated – giving voice to those silenced, standing up for others in the face of adversity and reaching out to raise new consciousness. – www.CampusPride.org

ALLY GROUPS:

In addition to the groups cited above, here are a few other online ally groups.

- 1) You Can Play Project - <http://youcanplayproject.org>
- 2) Athlete Ally - <http://www.athleteally.org>
- 3) Day of Silence - <http://www.dayofsilence.org>
- 4) PFLAG Canada - <http://www.pflagcanada.ca/en/index.html>
- 5) Straight for Equality - <http://www.straightforequality.org>
- 6) We Give a Damn - <http://www.wegiveadamn.org>
- 7) Straight But Not Narrow - <http://www.straightbutnotnarrow.org>
- 8) HRC Human Rights Campaign - <http://www.hrc.org>

WHY SHOULD I BECOME AN ALLY?



There are many reasons to become an ally! One of them is to help create safer spaces for all people in your school or work environment. According to Egale's First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools...

- 58% of non-LGBTQ youth find homophobic comments upsetting.
- Two-thirds of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) students feel unsafe at school.
- Over two thirds (70.4%) of all students hear homophobic expressions such as "that's so gay" every day in school.
- 51% of LGBTQ students have been verbally harassed about their sexual orientation and 21% have been physically harassed or assaulted about their sexual orientation.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of trans youth have been verbally harassed about their gender expression and more than a third (37%) have been physically harassed or assaulted about their gender.
- 45% of youth with LGBTQ parents have been sexually harassed at school; over a quarter have been physically harassed or assaulted about the sexual orientation of their parents (27%) and their own perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (27%).
- Almost half (48%) of youth of colour, both LGBTQ and heterosexual, reported not knowing of any teachers or other school staff members who are supportive of LGBTQ students; only half (53%) would be very comfortable talking about LGBTQ matters even with a close friend.

According to Egale's School Climate Survey Report "Youth Speak Up about Homophobia and Transphobia,"

Studies have suggested that there is a link between bullying and suicide, and that there is a correspondingly high rate of 'suicidality' (suicide attempts and suicidal thinking) among LGBTQ students...[and] there is some suggestion that school attachment—the feeling that one belongs in the school community—is a crucial issue in this regard because of its connection to lower suicidality rates in the general school population and among LGBTQ students.

More than half of LGBTQ students, compared to one-fifth of heterosexual students, agree that they do not feel accepted at school.

For more information, see <http://MyGSA.ca/YouthSpeakUp>.



HOW DO I BECOME AN ALLY?

➔ Examine Your Own Biases

- Ask yourself questions: Do I feel uncomfortable around people who are LGBTQ? Is there more I need to learn about heterosexism, cissexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and intersectionality? How can I get the information, help, support, advice, guidance, etc. that I need to overcome any biases I might have?



People have many identities that correspond to their race, class, physical and mental ability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. These different identities don't stand alone; together they impact a person's experiences as well as experiences of discrimination. We call this "intersectionality". See the *Introduction* section for more information.

➔ Educate Yourself!

- Read: there is no one all-encompassing LGBTQ manual that explains everything and can apply to all situations and perspectives, but there is a fair amount out there in terms of both fiction and non-fiction, depending on what you like and what interests you.



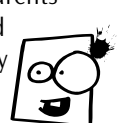
Good places to start are <http://MyGSA.ca/educators/books> and this LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource, which can be downloaded from the MyGSA website.

- Ask questions: don't be afraid to admit that you don't know or understand something, but please remember to be considerate. Also remember that one person's opinion or perspective cannot stand in for everyone else's in the LGBTQ community. (Do you think the same way as all other heterosexual people?)

➔ Pay Attention to Discrimination and Harassment and Speak Up!

If you hear someone use derogatory language about sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, engage them in conversation about discrimination and harassment. Ask why the person chose to use those words and if they understand what the words mean and that they are hurtful.

Use gender-neutral and inclusive language, such as folks, people, everybody, crushes, couples, partner, spouse, parents and guardians, chairperson/chair, firefighter, server, and actor, which do not contain assumptions about sexuality or gender.



Don't laugh at offensive "jokes" about sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression.



➔ Accept and Support Actively

Participate in your school's GSA or start one! <http://MyGSA.ca/setting-gsa>



Volunteer at an LGBTQ human rights organization! <http://MyGSA.ca/gsas-canada>

Take part in Ally Week or create one if your school doesn't have one! <http://MyGSA.ca/meeting-event-ideas>

Find out if your school, school district, and/or workplace policies explicitly mention sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression—if not, work towards changing them! <http://MyGSA.ca/setting-gsa/school-board-policies>

Display posters, signs, etc. depicting LGBTQ inclusivity



WHETHER OR NOT YOU KNOW IT—and they might not even know it yet!—there are very likely LGBTQ individuals, or people with LGBTQ parents or other family members, in your school or workplace who will appreciate your implicit support.

➔ Come Out as an Ally!

Mention your friends and family members who are LGBTQ if you have any...but only if they are already out!

Bring up LGBTQ matters, events, and news items in a positive way in class and in conversations.

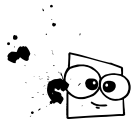
Check out the News on MyGSA.ca!



If coming out as an ally makes you at all uncomfortable, remember that LGBTQ individuals who are open about their sexual orientation/gender identity must come out whenever they meet new people. Knowing that one is in a welcoming and affirming environment or in the company of an ally really makes a difference!

Do you have more tips about becoming or being an ally? Share them on MyGSA.ca or send them to mygsa@egale.ca!

NOTABLE ALLIES



Brendon Ayanbadejo



Brian Burke

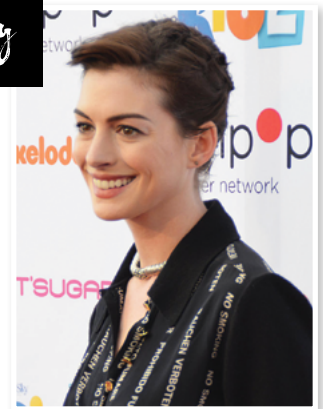
<http://youcanplayproject.org>

Photo: Damien D.



Lady Gaga

Anne Hathaway



Cyndi Lauper



Photo credit: Franco Folini

True Colors Tour
(<http://www.truecolorstour.com>)
& Give a Damn campaign
(<http://www.wegiveadamn.org>)

Macklemore

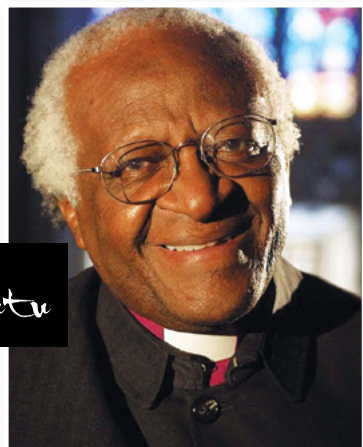


Song: Same Love



Daniel Radcliffe

(has done work for the Trevor Project <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>)



Archbishop
Desmond Tutu

Learn about these notable allies and discover what makes them allies.

SELECTIONS FROM A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE (GSA) AT WALKERVILLE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE (WCI) IN WINDSOR, ONTARIO

GSA GUIDE

Submitted by: Joey Wright
Submitted to: Greater Essex County District School Board

Mission Statement

A Gay-Straight Alliance is a youth leadership organization that is devoted to education, human rights, and the human dignity of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth, the development of positive relationships, and to raise awareness. The goal of this group is to:

1. Positively impact academic performance, school/social/and family relationships, comfort level with sexual orientation, sense of physical safety, student and teacher attitudes, perceived ability to contribute to society, and an enhanced sense of belonging to the school community;
2. Form alliances and positive relationships between gay and straight students to fight homophobia, isolation, marginalization, violence, and exclusion in the community;
3. Promote acceptance, respect, and tolerance of all individuals regardless of racial background, socio-economic status, gender, religion, or sexual orientation;
4. Raise awareness and promote education about homophobia and other forms of oppression; and
5. Offer support and resources for students in need.



What is a Gay-Straight Alliance?

A GSA is a student-run group that provides a safe place for any and all students to meet and learn about all different orientations, to support each other while working together to end homophobia, and to raise awareness and promote equality for all human beings. In addition to being a group dedicated to support, it also strives to educate the surrounding areas and the community on different gender and equality issues.



Why do all schools need to establish GSAs if requested?

I believe that it is vital to establish a GSA for numerous reasons, but most importantly, for education purposes. Additional justifications for the establishment of a GSA are to empower and educate the school community, advocate for just and equal policies that protect youth from harassment and violence, and organize in coalition with other school-based clubs and groups across identity lines to address broader issues of oppression. As young people, we possess the power to lead the fight against homophobia, transform our environment into one of peace and safety, and change the lives of countless individuals. Research indicates that homophobia interferes with the health development of all young people, particularly those who are dealing with issues of sexual orientation. One of the many places gay and lesbian youth feel the effects of homophobia is within their schools.



Youth in Canada desperately require more support and resources in their educational institutions in order to make them safe, secure, and inclusive learning environments.

As the results of the First National Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools, conducted by Egale Canada, demonstrate, LGBTQ youth in Canada desperately require more support and resources in their educational institutions in order to make them safe, secure, and inclusive learning environments. There is a clear indication that this is the case: according to almost 1700 participants from every province and territory in the country, of the self-identified LGBTQ students, 60% have been verbally harassed, and over a quarter have been physically harassed, because of their sexual orientation and three-quarters feel unsafe at school. These upsetting results can no longer be ignored and the establishment of a GSA could reverse these alarming statistics.

How will this be an educational group?

Throughout the year we will be collecting resources and researching methods on how to help educate not only the students but also the teachers here at Walkerville. A lot of students are unaware of how gay-bashing affects the lives of the people around them. Terms like “faggot” and “dyke” are used daily in the halls of Walkerville. When this type of discriminatory behaviour is ignored the school consciously or unconsciously encourages this harassment. They need to be informed of ways to prevent this type of radical bullying against gay, lesbian, questioning, bisexual, transgender, or straight students.

The Story of the First GSA in New Brunswick

By Richard Blaquiere

In the fall of 2003 the World Issues and Law classes I was teaching at Woodstock High School (WHS) were following the equal-marriage debate that permeated the news from early to mid-September of that year.

During this time, I participated in a week long professional development opportunity in Ottawa, and I was one of five teachers from across the country who spent some time with Canada's first "out" federal politician, Svend Robinson.

Svend's private member bill (C-250), that added sexual orientation to race, ethnicity and religion as protected categories in the hate-propaganda section of the criminal code, was drawing attention from conservative religious groups across the country, including in Carleton County.

On a whim I invited Mr. Robinson to speak at Woodstock High on his role in the drafting of the Charter and, within that framework to discuss the evolution of LGBTQ rights in Canada. Svend accepted my invitation and on September 25, 2003 with the support of WHS administrative staff, he addressed about 300 students at our school.

Svend arrived a few minutes late and hit the stage with feet, brain and tongue engaged. It was historic.

He began by dismissing critics of same sex marriage and Bill C-250. He dissed the Vatican for its irresponsible statements that challenged the ability of gay and lesbian parents to raise children. He applauded educators who subscribed to true and full inclusion by being sensitive to the emotional needs of gay kids and who incorporated gay themes and content into their work.

Most importantly, Svend spoke to the 20-30 LGBT kids who, statistically, were in that audience. Svend told them to love themselves. He told them that their lives are deserving of respect, dignity, love and fair treatment. He told them to seek

help if they had issues. He emphasized that the inner turmoil experienced by gay kids is a function of much of society's unwillingness to accept them and has nothing to do with intrinsic worth or morality. He told them about his life as a gay teen and how he, "like many young gay men in my situation, married my high school sweetheart" but after a serious effort, he could no longer live the lie.

After the session, in the hallway, two grade nine girls talked to him about their relationship whilst in the midst of a group of their peers. They asked him what they could do to confront homophobia. Quick from his lips was, "Start a GSA." The girls, seeing me in the corner, screamed "Come here Mr. Blaquiere!" The first meeting of the original and longest running GSA in the province was held a week later.

Within two years, the first student-centred conference, supported by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, with a focus on issues facing LGBTQ students and their families was held at WHS. Titled T-CHART (Teens Confronting Homophobia, Anti-semitism and Racism Together) the conference drew students from across the province. Keynote speaker was internationally recognized "expert" on straight schools and gay kids, Bill Ryan. Over 100 students attended with about 80% being straight allies.

Concurrent sessions were held throughout the school. One was organized just for LGBTQ students. There was a plenary session at the end of which room numbers for the other sessions were read out. LGBTQ kids were invited to stay behind in the theatre. All adults but for Bill Ryan were asked to leave.

Think about that for a moment – in 2003, over 20 young sexual minority youth in the presence of a proud, articulate, successful gay man in a school in a community historically referred to as the "buckle of the bible belt."

It was an emotional and historic conference. Connections were made and even the seeds of romance were planted. But what stays most in my mind from this GSA organized conference was the sight of two young men who had met for the first time at the conference sitting in the theatre holding hands while watching a movie.

There was a time in the not too distant past where two same gender teens caught exhibiting intimate intentions or just being close were subjected to disciplinary action as well as a call to the parents and spiritual and psychological interventions. Alienation from family and friends were a common consequence as well as bullying, teasing and, far too frequently, self-destructive behaviors.

In Woodstock that night in 2003, there were no interventions, only smiles and tears of pride and joy.

We had turned a corner.

Why Every School Needs A GSA

By Aaron Cosgrove

I've said it before, and I'll say it again, every day a school goes without a GSA, is a day a student has to suffer. I know this, because at one time I was that suffering student.

Middle School had been a nightmare for me. I came out to my friends in grade 6, and it wasn't long before literally the entire school knew. Suddenly, no one wanted to be my partner at wrestling practice. No one wanted to change clothes near me in the locker room for volleyball. I constantly felt the heat of everyone's eyes when I passed through the hall.

After that,, things got really hard really fast. Many of my "friends" disappeared from my life. I went from popular to nothing in a week. Times got really dark for me and it got to the point where I needed heavy counselling. I began to regret my decision to come out. I hoped that by the time high school came, everyone would have forgotten and I could pretend like it never happened. This point in my life allows me to understand today why LGBTQ youth are 4 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

When I reached high school, a faculty member approached me about starting our school's very first GSA. At the time, it was a very taboo subject. The community was in an uproar when word got out.

At first, the group consisted of about 10 loyal students, most of them gay like me. They were all there because they were fed up with the teasing, the torment, and the lack of education and awareness in our community.

Though our group endured many challenges, we stayed strong and made some huge progress. We provided information sessions about sexual health, raised awareness, raised funds, and created a safe haven for LGBTQ students and, straight allies.

When I graduated from St. Stephen High School in June of 2012, the GSA I had helped to birth consisted of over 80 reliable students. We achieved incredible things together. Some of these things included the passing of Policy E9, an anti-homophobia policy designed for schools so no student could ever be harassed because of their sexual orientation again. Most importantly, more students than ever now felt comfortable being themselves. Regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, these students could learn to love themselves and not be afraid of harassment at school. If they ever had a bad day, all they had to do was come to our GSA meetings where we'd laugh and sometimes even cry together.

Every school needs a GSA because it creates a sense of family that we may not otherwise have. It opens up discussions on topics we may have been too scared to talk about. A GSA teaches us that we DO have equal rights. It teaches us that we DO belong here, and we DO matter. We ARE valuable members of this society, and we deserve to be respected.

Every school needs a GSA so that no student ever has to feel alone, worthless, ashamed, and unhappy ever again... that no one ever has to feel the way I did. Having a GSA means that every student can have the opportunity to live confident, proud, and happy the way I do today.

Reasons why having a GSA is important (from Woodstock High School students):

1. People feel more comfortable. There is an opportunity to talk about issues with people who have the background needed and knowledge to help fight stereotypes.
2. Just being together fights stereotypes.
3. Puts it in people's faces (the Gay issue) and they have to see it all the time because we have on-going events.
4. There's a small-town mindset here that some kids live with at home so they have acceptance here if not at home.
5. There is no judgment.
6. Safety– the presence of the GSA feels safe.
7. Good opportunity for straight people to understand what it's like.

GSA Testimonials

In my opinion, the Gay Straight Alliance is one of the most important clubs that a school can have. It's so important to have a club where the only requirements are to have an open mind and be willing to make a difference. The Gay Straight Alliance is a place where people can feel safe to talk about issues going on in the school, the community and in the world. Gay Straight Alliances are all about making a difference in how people view all sexual orientations and identities.

This club means the world to me, as I am extremely passionate about issues related to the LGBT*Q (and etcetera) community. It is so rewarding to see that other students and staff feel as strongly about this subject as I do. The Gay Straight Alliance is definitely a club that should be in every school, no matter what grade levels they include, as it is so important for people to be educated as soon as possible. The Gay Straight Alliance is a fantastic way for kids and adults alike to be educated and to make the world a better place, one step at a time.

– KH

GSA is a place for everyone who needs a safe place to be with loving, caring people around them. GSA is my home where I don't feel judged for being myself. In GSA, we will educate about LGBTQA+ issues to those who are willing to listen. We teach students and faculty to be more tolerant of all kinds of people. I couldn't think of a more important place in our school.

– HJS

My GSA is not just a group but a family. It is a safe environment where we can be comfortable and free to be our true selves. I have been in my GSA for three years and my experience has been incredible. You meet so many amazing people and it's somewhere you know that you can find constant support. My GSA is a place where I can express myself comfortably and not have to worry about any "social norms" because I know that no matter what my sexual orientation is, I will be accepted. I love my GSA and I am so glad that I was able to be a part of such an amazing group!

– A.J.

My GSA means friendships. A safe haven for anyone from any sexual orientation. Freedom to feel and express your worries, ideas and experiences without the harassment or judgment of others. It also means support. Support for those going through the change, for those coming out and for those who are between a rock and a hard place in life. But the most meaningful thing that my GSA means to me, is what it means to every other person in it, whether they are going through issues in their life or just want to support those in need of it. All in all my GSA means love.

– K.E.C.

My GSA is a safe space. It's one of the only spaces in school where I'm gendered correctly.

– M.H.



FOLLOW ALL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Establish a GSA in the same way that any other group or club in your school would be formed. Follow the guidelines set by your school, district and department. Enlisting the help of other students may be beneficial.

In December 2013, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development updated Policy 703 – *Positive Learning and Working Environment*. This policy provides a framework for the department, school districts and schools to create such environments by “establishing a process for fostering positive learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

Policy 703 outlines 6 goals, one of which speaks directly to the formation of GSAs (underline added):

5.5 ... Each partner in education through instruction and continued education supports the formation of school-based groups that promote diversity when interest is expressed by a student or staff member (examples include First Nations groups, multicultural groups, religious groups, and sexual minority groups).

As part of Policy 703, schools and districts are required to create Positive Learning Environment Plans. All plans are to promote “a learning environment that is inclusive, safe, respects human rights, supports diversity and addresses discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

The District Positive Learning and Working Environment Plan will include strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour by students as well as by parents or visitors when interacting with the school and school personnel,

consistent with the *Education Act*, the New Brunswick *Human Rights Act*, the workplace harassment policy from the Administration Manual System of the New Brunswick government, Policy 322 on Inclusive Education and this policy.

The school’s plan will reflect the school community’s vision for the safe and inclusive learning and working environment it wishes to achieve. It will include the following elements (among others):

- a school statement on respecting human rights and supporting diversity
- expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff, students, parents and volunteers;
- a School Student Code of Conduct that is not inconsistent with the *Provincial Student Code of Conduct*
- a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences to be employed when inappropriate behaviour is exhibited by anyone in the school environment;
- direction for managing behaviours that are more minor in nature but are disruptive because of their frequency.
- strategies aimed at preventing and resolving misunderstandings or disagreements between school personnel and parents or visitors to the school.

The principal of the school must prepare the school’s positive learning and working environment plan...and... must report annually to the Superintendent on the plan and related strategies implemented by the school in order to create a positive learning and working environment.

For the complete policy: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pol/e/703A.pdf>

New Brunswick’s Human Rights Act prohibited grounds for discrimination include sexual orientation. Gender identity

is currently covered under sex. This means that schools are required to create and maintain positive environments for students, staff and parents who identify as LGBTQ. This extends to extra curricular activities and includes GSAs.

To find out more, see <http://laws.gnb.ca/en/ShowPdf/cs/2011-c.171.pdf>

Some provincial Human Rights Commissions in Canada have specific policies around discrimination and harassment because of sexual orientation or gender identity. For an example see additional information at the end of this section.

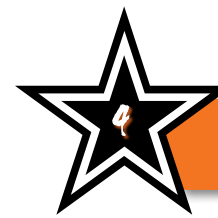


POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PLANS (PLEP) may be part of the school or district's improvement plan (SIP or DIP). Check your school and district websites for these plans. If you are unable to find them online, ask your principal for a copy.



FIND A SCHOOL STAFF ADVISOR / SPONSOR

Find a teacher or staff member to be your group's advisor. Pick someone who you feel will be supportive and a good ally for your group. Try to include both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ advisors in your group if at all possible. Although it may be beneficial to have a staff advisor, if this proves difficult, a parent or guardian could act as your advisor.



SPEAK TO YOUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Encourage your school administration to become an ally, even if it is not required that you involve them in the establishment of your group. They can help validate your GSA as an important part of the school and help with things like planning special events or bringing in speakers for school assemblies. Administrators can be important liaisons between students, teachers, parents/guardians, the outside community, and district officials. It can also be beneficial to provide administrators with information about GSAs or details about your group.

IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATION might not be supportive, review the statistics and policy information in "Assess your School's Environment" (Number 1 of this Section) beforehand.



INFORM EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEACHERS- GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, LIBRARIANS, AND OTHER RESOURCE PEOPLE

School staff may know students who would be interested in attending meetings and can help with getting more participants. Having staff involved can also be beneficial because they may have professional knowledge and valuable resources for your group and may help facilitate discussions and meetings.



FIND A MEETING PLACE

Have your meetings in a safe and comfortable location in your school. Some students may feel a little reluctant or nervous about attending a GSA meeting because they may fear being harassed or having assumptions made about their sexuality or gender identity. Remember that safety and confidentiality should always be primary concerns.



ESTABLISH A PLAN AND GUIDELINES

Select a meeting time that will be most convenient for the participants. Decide whether or not your GSA should hold meetings on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. It is always good to create group rules/norms with all members of the GSA, but it can also help to think of or draft some preliminary guidelines. For example:

See “How to Run a GSA Meeting—Meeting Formats and Ideas” (page 49).



- What tools or supplies will be needed (e.g., paper, pens, films, etc.)?
- What ground rules will help reaffirm responsible and respectful behaviours?
- Will the meeting be held in a formal or casual way (e.g., seating, speaking in turn, etc.)?

Establish your meeting space as a safe space and create a mission statement. Discuss the nature and purpose of the GSA that is suitable for your school (support, providing safe spaces, raising visibility and awareness, and/or effecting educational and social change). Brainstorm possible activities and topics of discussion for future meetings.



See the “Sample Safe Space Protocols” (page 54) and “Icebreakers” from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network’s Jump-Start Guide (page 55) as well as the “Activities” (starting on page 61) for help and suggestions!



HOW TO RUN A GSA MEETING—MEETING FORMATS AND IDEAS

GSA GUIDE

There are numerous ways to facilitate a meeting. Your GSA meetings can be formal (e.g., similar to a classroom structure) or informal (e.g., sitting in a circle). They can be very structured and planned or they can be spontaneous and open to change, and so forth. It is a good idea to get input from all GSA members regarding how meetings will be structured and what the guidelines or group rules will be. A survey/questionnaire accompanied by an open discussion during the first meeting is a good way of figuring out how your GSA meetings will operate.

Consider the following examples for some help:



If you want a formal structure...

- people raise their hands when they want to speak (one person at a time, with no interruptions);
- everyone introduces themselves (e.g., their names and 1 or 2 things about themselves);
- a student acts as a leader/facilitator who does most of the speaking and guides the conversation and questions;
- use a structured and timed schedule (e.g., meetings are 1 hour long, with 15 minutes of introductions and an outline of the agenda, another 15 minutes of discussion on a particular topic, another 15 minutes for games, and so on);
- sign in to monitor participation;
- assign different tasks to various members for the next meeting (e.g., one person will bring in a favourite LGBTQ film and another person will bring snacks); and
- take meeting minutes and document what was discussed/done.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are a written record of a meeting. Your GSA can appoint a person to record the meeting minutes. This can be one person who does the minutes for all the meetings or you can change the person from meeting to meeting. Remember that minutes are just the highlights or a summary and don't need to be lengthy.

Your meeting minutes might include the following:

- The date, time, and location of the meeting
- A list of those present
- The meeting agenda (what your GSA plans to do this meeting)
- A list of the issues your GSA wants to resolve (e.g., a heated debate that occurred at the last meeting; how to battle homophobia/transphobia/biphobia/heterosexism, cissexism in your school; and so on)
- Any events/discussions that were important to the GSA's members
- Any group decisions that were made (e.g., group rules, future activities, and so on)
- The end time of the meeting

Sample Meeting Minutes

GSA Meeting Minutes for Egale High School
(Feb. 4, 2011)
(3:00 p.m., school library)

MEETING MEMBERS:

Present: Rita Bhattacharia, John White Bear, Douglas Smith, Elizabeth Drucker, Jen Kyumoto, Marc Porter, Jasmine Chan, Geneva Peschka, and Sayid Alizadeh

OTHERS PRESENT:

Librarian: Sheila Jackson
EST-Guidance Counsellor: Mr. Touhy

MEETING AGENDA:

- Small start-up discussion (recent events, how is everyone, etc.)
- Film: *Better than Chocolate*
- Discussion: transphobia, trans-specific matters, gender-neutral washrooms

PROCEEDINGS/EVENTS:

- John and Elizabeth mentioned the idea of having a school bake sale to raise money for more LGBTQ literature for the school library—group thought it was a good idea
- Rita expressed her concern about the GSA's posters being defaced—each member will brainstorm ideas for next meeting to have a discussion about it
- Watched film
- Debriefing after movie—all group members shared that they liked the film; Jen mentioned she wants to learn more about trans people and their various experiences; Sayid recommended checking out YouTube for personal videos made by transmen and transwomen and their experiences
- Group discussed plans for next meeting: Douglas wants to talk about the possibility of a gender-neutral washroom in the school; Sheila said she could compile a list of LGBTQ books for the group members; the group decided to have a poster party at the next meeting to have more posters to put around the school
- Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Bhata Bhattacharia

➔ If you want an informal structure...

people sit in a circle or in a way that they all feel as though there is no hierarchy in the meeting;

people speak in turn (e.g., clockwise around the circle) or use a talking stick (anything that is passed around to indicate who has the floor—only someone holding the object should be speaking) or there is open dialogue (and everyone is respectful of other people's right to speak);

try some fun icebreakers as a way to get people to introduce themselves and get to know one another (for examples, see page 55);

you don't need to have a group facilitator; the meeting events and activities can be agreed upon by everyone or the majority (e.g., there can be various things planned and the order in which they occur can be decided on by the group; participants may choose to have open dialogue surrounding an issue for an entire meeting or to break up the meeting into various activities and tasks they would like to do); and

everyone can come up with one group rule/norm and see if all members agree.

Other things to consider:

- It is important to get input from group members not just during the first meeting, but also throughout all of the meetings. You could use a box for suggestions or hold weekly or monthly "how are we doing" discussions.
- It is important to appeal to all group members. This can be difficult because everyone has different interests and likes different activities. It is best not to have a narrow focus, e.g., only talking about gay and lesbian matters and concerns and not talking about trans, questioning, bisexual, or Two Spirit communities.
- Remember that it may be hard for people to open up and talk about certain subjects immediately. It may help to avoid controversial and sensitive issues/topics at first. Wait until group members get to know one another and express a sense of comfort in the group.
- It can really help to review or debrief at the end of meetings. Talking about what has been discussed can be especially important if conflicts arise, sensitive issues are touched upon, or if members have questions about certain things.

Safe Spaces Rules - Moncton

- Meetings and discussions are confidential. Names of the attendees and anything said at Safe Spaces are to remain in the confines of our space.
- Do not post personal information online about other Safe Spaces members without their permission (example: tagging someone on Facebook, saying they were at Safe Spaces, etc).
- Be open-minded and respectful.
- Respect others' opinions and listen when others speak.
- Try to use gender neutral pronouns.
- Do not use derogatory remarks.
- Members are in no way obligated to declare or define their sexual orientation or gender identity, nor are assumptions are to be made regarding members' sexual orientation or gender identity.



What do we mean by a safe space? A safe space is free of any type of discrimination for queer, trans, and questioning youth. Everyone has the right to feel safe and included. A safe space is an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

– A section from *Supporting Our Youth (SOY)*

From the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's Jump-Start Guide

Common Ground

Source: Kerry Ashworth

Students and faculty advisors stand in a circle. One person begins by saying "I've got a younger sister" or some other statement that is true for them. Everyone for whom this is also true steps into the center of the circle. Everyone who doesn't have a younger sister stays on the outside. You can always choose not to step into the circle. The game often brings up personal and important issues that students may not want to discuss in a more formal setting. This also allows everyone to recognize their differences and similarities.

Gender Stereotypes

Trace a male and a female body type on butcher paper, then have a free-for-all where everyone writes as many gender stereotypes as they can think of on the bodies where they would apply (for example, "boys are good at math" would be placed on the head of the male body). From here, you can talk about how gender stereotypes and traits relate to perceptions about gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender creative people, as well as how these stereotypes limit our possibilities, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. These exercises can also be done using stereotypes of LGBT people, helping us recognize that everyone has different traits that don't define our sexual orientation or gender.



ADVERTISE YOUR GROUP

Concentric Circles, Inner/Outer Circles

Source: Jason Fleetwood-Boldt

This exercise works well to open dialogue. It requires an even number of people, with a minimum of six or eight. It works best with 20 or more. Have people count off by twos (1, 2, 1, 2...). Tell the ones to make an inner circle and the twos to form the outer circle. The inner circle should face outward and the outer circle should face inward, so that each person has a partner in that circle. The facilitator instructs that they will ask a question and the outer circle is to talk for one minute as the inner circle listens. If it is a group whose members don't know one another, you can have people introduce themselves to their partners before they begin answering the question asked. After the minute is up, the inner circle answers the same question. Then the outer circle moves clockwise two people over, so everyone has a new partner. A new question is asked of the outer, then inner, circles. When finished, participants should discuss their conversations as a large group.

Sample Questions:

- Growing up, what were all of the names (positive, negative and neutral) that you heard related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender creative people?
- Growing up, what were some of the stereotypes you heard about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender creative people? What were some of the things you heard about these groups that you have found to be inaccurate?



Work with your GSA's advisor/facilitator and other members to discuss the best ways to advertise your group. Posters are an effective means of getting more participation as they can be displayed around the school for all students to see. They are also an important part of helping students feel safer at school as they are a visible sign of acceptance. Having a poster party can be a fun way to design and make the flyers. You can also consider using social media and/or technology if you really want to get creative! You want to continuously monitor participation and see what strategies work in terms of growing your GSA.

Remember, if posters get torn down or defaced, do not get discouraged! The posters are likely to stimulate school-wide discussion and may lead staff and students to express their personal feelings, opinions, and questions surrounding the GSA. Not all comments will be queer-positive, but breaking the silence is a vital step in addressing and challenging the many stereotypes and myths about LGBTQ individuals. Keep putting posters up if they are destroyed. It is a good idea to put them in busy areas as well as to encourage supportive staff members to place them on their doors and in staff areas. You might want to consider putting your posters behind glass in order to discourage people from destroying them.

Once your group makes posters, take a picture of them and submit it to appear at the top of Egale's national LGBTQ safer schools and inclusive education website, MyGSA.ca!



Things to consider when advertising:

- Make sure your posters set a positive tone for your group.
- Reinforce the fact that all students are welcome, including allies and all students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/gender creative, Two Spirit, queer, and questioning and who come from any ethnic, cultural, or religious background.
- Include meeting times, locations, and dates.
- Think about including a short description about what goes on at your meetings and be sure to highlight that supportive allies are welcome to attend.
- Emphasize that student confidentiality and safety are guaranteed.
- If your GSA creates a Facebook group, advertise it.
- Use LGBTQ-affirming symbols on your posters, such as the rainbow flag or pink and black inverted triangles.

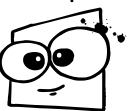


See the Symbols in the *Terms and Concepts* section of resource or on *MyGSA.ca* for more ideas!

Additional tips for finding new members:

- Personally asking people to come to your meetings can really help, especially if they don't know what your club is about and want to know more before going. Try starting a conversation with someone who you think might be interested in attending a meeting.
- Make use of your school's print publications, such as newspapers, magazines, yearbooks, and newsletters.

- Working with other school clubs to plan shared events and activities is a great way to network. Think about some other groups at school that deal with related matters. Try asking your advisor if she or he knows of any other clubs that might be interested in collaborating.
- Setting up a table or bulletin board for your group can be a great way to give out information about your club and its events. Consider tabling during school events or finding another time to reach out to the student body.
- Encourage members and visitors to invite their friends. One idea is to schedule a "Bring a Friend Day" when every member brings a friend to the meeting!
- Consider holding special events for members of the GSA. Inviting a guest speaker or watching topical movies can be great conversation starters and are often effective in engaging group members. Think about what topics or questions you might want to explore at these events and then search for speakers and films that could address these areas.



Check out the "Activities" (Number 10 in this section) for movie suggestions!



PROVIDE INCENTIVES (E.G., FOOD!)

Food can be a great icebreaker. It can give nervous attendees something to look forward to and for some it can be an excuse to attend. You can foster a sense of community by encouraging group members to bring in snacks to share with everyone or by planning events, activities, or campaigns around food.



potlucks

healthy
snacks



ACTIVITIES



HAVE AN OPEN MIC NIGHT

Do you have an untapped talent? Play an instrument? Ever wanted to try stand-up comedy? Want to read your poetry or somebody else's? Can you juggle? Do acrobatics or magic tricks? Sing? Can't sing? (Karaoke is always a good time!)

Find a stage at your school, community centre, or a local theatre organization. Ask someone to host your event and remember to prepare a sign-up sheet ahead of time. Have fun!



CREATE A MISSION STATEMENT

Does your group have a vision for itself, the school community, the world? What is it?

Your GSA's mission statement might focus on your club's goals and values as well as principles related to human rights, diversity, and social justice. It can also be beneficial to enlist the help of all the members since the statement should reflect everyone's perspectives. Mission statements tend to be 2 to 3 sentences and should say who you are, what you do, what you stand for, and why you do it.



ATTEND YOUR PROVINCIAL GSA CONFERENCE

This 2-day conference is a great way to meet other GSA members and learn what is happening at other schools throughout the province.

Examples of Mission Statements

Oromocto High School GSA

The purpose of our Gay-Straight Alliance is to create a safe, family-like environment for all LGBTQA youth and to promote equality and acceptance through the education of our students, staff, parents and community.



Woodstock High School GSA

The Gay Straight Alliance of Woodstock High School strives to create an open community based on the principles of equality and acceptance for all.

→ HAVE A MOVIE NIGHT

Watch LGBTQ movies and discuss them afterwards. E.g.,



Films, videos, and other multimedia educational and commercial resources may be very effective tools for exploring issues related to diversity of sexuality, gender identity/expression, and inclusion within a GSA or the classroom. However, it is critical that teachers or other facilitators working with learners in GSA groups or other settings carefully preview, select, and plan for the use of these resources to ensure that they are used effectively and that learners benefit from viewing and discussing the film, video or other multimedia resource.

The films that follow have been found by some teachers and LGBTQ facilitators to be potentially useful resources. However, they have not been reviewed through the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development formal resource review process, nor are they endorsed by the Department, and they do not carry a New Brunswick recommended designation. Teachers should ensure that the complexity of the material is within the guidelines defined in the grade-level standard, located in the Learning Resources section of the NBED Portal. Please note that the films on this list have been chosen for various reasons: the storyline, the opportunity to discuss stereotypes, the portrayals of LGBTQ people, historical value, and artistic value. With this in mind, not all of these movies are positive portrayals of LGBTQ identities and experiences, and some have violent content. However, problematic elements could be the subject of rich discussions, and could facilitate a historical reflection of LGBTQ realities and experiences, a critical engagement with concepts of sex and gender, and/or an awareness of what has changed with regards to LGBTQ rights and communities – if teachers are prepared to discuss these elements in order to further understanding and awareness of topics like homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, cisnormativity and heteronormativity. Teachers may also want to consider showing just excerpts of certain films for this purpose.

Shared professional judgment and planning is necessary if there are any doubts about choosing and instructing with material for an audience. Small group instruction provides a good alternative and safe environment for discussions.

Film and multimedia resources, as with all other literature or educational resource selections should be reviewed by school staff before they are used by students. In this way, learner sensitivities and the perspectives of the student population, as well as the appropriateness of the resource for the intended learning objectives are taken into account. In addition, the effectiveness of a particular resource will depend greatly on what the teacher or facilitator does in terms of preparing the audience before viewing, as well as the needs and interaction of students during and post viewing.

A Jihad for Love	14A (not recommended for children)
Albert Knobbs	PG
Apples and Oranges	
Beautiful Thing	14A (language may offend)
Big Eden	
Billy Elliot	14A (coarse language)
Boys Don't Cry	R
Breakfast with Scot	PG (language may offend)
But I'm a Cheerleader	14A (language may offend)
C.R.A.Z.Y.	14A (substance abuse)
Chasing Amy	
Cure for Love	
D.E.B.S.	PG
Deb-we-win Ge-kend-am-aan, Our Place in the Circle	ONF
From Criminality to Equality	Canadian Documentary
Georgie Girl	Documentary
Get Real	14A (mature theme)
Girl Inside	Canadian Documentary
Gray Matters	PG (mature theme)
Hedwig and the Angry Inch	14A (coarse language/mature theme)
I Can't Think Straight	
If These Walls Could Talk 2	14A (mature theme)
Il était une fois dans l'est (Once Upon a Time in the East)	
Imagine Me and You	PG (mature theme)
In Other Words	
The Incredibly True Adventure of 2 Girls in Love	
It's Elementary	Documentary

J'ai tué ma mère (I Killed My Mother)	14A (mature theme)
Johnny Greyeyes	
Just Call Me Kade	
Kissing Jessica Stein	14A (mature theme)
Les amours imaginaires (Heartbeats)	14A (language may offend/mature theme)
Lilies	R
Living with Pride: The Ruth Ellis Story	Documentary
M Butterfly	
Ma vie en rose (My Life in Pink)	14A
Mambo Italiano	14A (language may offend)
Milk	14A (violence/sexual content/coarse language)
Naissance des pieuvres (Water Lilies)	14A (nudity/sexual content)
Nina's Heavenly Delights	14A
One of Them	
Pariah	
Paris is Burning	
Philadelphia	
Quand l'amour est gai (When Love is Gay)	
Saving Face	14A
School's Out	
Secrets de polichinelle (Open Secrets)	
Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story	14A
Shaking the Tree	14A
Show Me Love	14A
Single Man	14A
Sticks and Stones	

Taking Charge	
Talk to Me	14A (language may offend/mature theme)
That's a Family!	Documentary
The Brandon Teena Story	Documentary
The Business of Fancydancing	
The Hanging Garden	
The Normal Heart	
Tomboy	PG (mature theme)
TransAmerica	14A
TransGeneration Documentary	14A
Trevor	18A (sexual content/coarse language)
Two Spirits	
We Were Here	

Maritime Film Classification is responsible for the classification of films and videos in the Maritime provinces. For more information about how films are classified, or to view film ratings, please visit <http://novascotia.ca/snsmr/access/alcohol-gaming/theatres-amusements.asp>

Some movies have not been rated. Regardless, it is recommended that your teacher-advisors preview any films before they are viewed, so that they are familiar with the content.

Do you want to recommend other great LGBTQ movies to youth and educators throughout Canada? Send them to [mygsa@egale.ca!](mailto:mygsa@egale.ca)



FIND/CHANGE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT POLICIES

Does your school have a policy on LGBTQ matters? Your school district? Are they inclusive and do they explicitly address sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression? If not, or if they are not satisfactory, as a group and using the information, policies, and legislative information provided in this resource and on MyGSA.ca, work towards changing them!



In December 2013, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development updated Policy 703 – *Positive Learning and Working Environment*. This policy provides a framework for the department, school districts and schools to create such environments by “establishing a process for fostering positive learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

Policy 703 outlines 6 goals, one of which speaks directly to the formation of GSAs (underline added):

5.5 ... Each partner in education through instruction and continued education supports the formation of school-based groups that promote diversity when interest is expressed by a student or staff member (examples include First Nations groups, multicultural groups, religious groups, and sexual minority groups).

As part of Policy 703, schools and districts are required to create Positive Learning Environment Plans. All plans are to promote “a learning environment that is inclusive, safe, respects human rights, supports diversity and addresses discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity.”

The District Positive Learning and Working Environment Plan will include strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour by students as well as by parents or visitors when interacting with the school and school personnel, consistent with the *Education Act*, the New Brunswick *Human Rights Act*, the workplace harassment policy from the Administration Manual System of the New Brunswick government, Policy 322 on Inclusive Education and this policy.

The school’s plan will reflect the school community’s vision for the safe and inclusive learning and working environment it wishes to achieve. It will include the following elements (among others):

- a school statement on respecting human rights and supporting diversity
- expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff, students, parents and volunteers;
- a School Student Code of Conduct that is not inconsistent with the *Provincial Student Code of Conduct*
- a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences to be employed when inappropriate behaviour is exhibited by anyone in the school environment;

- direction for managing behaviours that are more minor in nature but are disruptive because of their frequency.
- strategies aimed at preventing and resolving misunderstandings or disagreements between school personnel and parents or visitors to the school.

The principal of the school must prepare the school’s positive learning and working environment plan...and... must report annually to the Superintendent on the plan and related strategies implemented by the school in order to create a positive learning and working environment.

For the complete policy: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pole/703A.pdf>

Positive Learning Environment Plans may stand alone or may be part of school and district improvement plans. Check your school and school district websites for these plans.



IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FIND YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S

Positive Learning and Working Environment Plan on its website, ask your principal for a copy of it.



An LGBTQ specific policy (E9) was created in New Brunswick in the former School District 10 in 2011. It is included in this section on *page 71*.

USING THE RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE PROVIDED HERE,

review and evaluate your school's policy. If your school does not address LGBTQ matters, approach your GSA's school staff advisor/facilitator, another staff member at your school, your principal, or a parent /guardian to ask for support in changing it.

**A Brief History of Policy E-9**

In 2011, the former School District 10 struck a diverse committee (of teachers, guidance counsellors, administrators, educational assistants, bus drivers, students, and parents/guardians) to create New Brunswick's first anti-homophobia and anti-sexism policy. The group worked collaboratively to outline the parameters necessary to create and maintain safe, affirming and inclusive learning environments for LGBTQ students, staff families and allies. Drawing on research and anti-homophobia documents from other Canadian jurisdictions, the policy was prepared. It was unanimously adopted by the District Education Committee (DEC).

In 2012 the school districts amalgamated. At this time it became clear that a provincial policy was required. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development revised Policy 703 to include gender identity and sexual orientation. Although this is not a discrete anti-homophobia document, it seeks to ensure that "all members of the school community learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from homophobia".

School District 10 Policy E-9

Policy Type: District "End Results"
E-9 Anti-homophobia and Anti-heterosexism

POLICY: School District 10 is an inclusive anti-homophobia and anti-heterosexism organization.

In order that all members of the school community learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from homophobia, transphobia, anti-gay harassment and/or heterosexism, District 10 recognizes its obligation to adopt appropriate administrative procedures and strategies, which shall ensure respect for human rights, support diversity, address discrimination, and create a learning environment that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for individuals

regardless of real or perceived sexual orientations and/or gender identities.

District 10 recognizes that LGBTQ students, staff and same-gender-parented families have the right to:

- self-identification and freedom of expression;
- be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
- inclusion, representation and affirmation;
- freedom from harassment, discrimination and violence; and,
- avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) when they are victims of harassment, discrimination or violence.

The superintendent or designate shall take necessary and timely action in developing a district action plan, and ensure the development of school-based action plans, that promote a consistent, district-wide, systemic response to homophobia, through staff and professional development which strives to identify and change educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism, as well as the homophobic attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices.

PROCEDURE

1. All employees of School District 10:
 - have a responsibility to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism in the working and learning environment;
 - shall address assumptions that being a sexual minority or gender variant* individual is unnatural, and reinforce that everyone in the school environment deserves to be respected; and,

- shall confront the stereotypes and misinformation behind insults and abuse by challenging staff, students, and parents who behave in a prejudicial manner towards LGBTQ individuals.

2. District 10 shall:

- provide and promote opportunities for employees to increase their awareness of the scope and impact of the discrimination of LGBTQ individuals;
- provide and promote opportunities for employees to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity and addressing homophobia and heterosexism in our schools;
- work to increase parental awareness of the needs of LGBTQ staff, students, and their family members;
- aid school-based administrators and guidance counsellors by providing the necessary support and/or education to ensure that individuals who behave in a prejudicial manner towards LGBTQ individuals receive age-appropriate education-based interventions by peaceful and positive role models;
- develop an action plan leading to the implementation of this policy and create a list of concrete actions needed to improve the school environment for LGBTQ staff, students, and their families; and,
- subsequently require all principals to facilitate the development of a school-based action plan that aligns with that of District 10.

** Please note that in this resource we have chosen to use gender creative instead of gender variant.*

3. School-based administrators (principal or designate) shall:
 - create an inclusive and welcoming environment for sexual minority youth, parents and staff
 - create an action plan to implement this policy;
 - ensure that the District 10 Anti-Homophobia and Anti-Heterosexism Policy is effectively shared with all students, parents and staff;
 - include the District 10 Anti-Homophobia and Anti-Heterosexism Policy statement (as well as a link to the full document) in the preface of their school agenda and in their school-based Positive Learning & Working Environment Plan (P.L.E.P);
 - support the formation of a school-based Gay-Straight Alliance (G.S.A.) when interest is expressed by a student or staff member; and,
 - aid all staff by providing the necessary support and/or education to ensure that individuals who behave in a prejudicial manner towards LGBTQ individuals receive age-appropriate education-based interventions.

MONITORING:

Method:

Frequency:

APPENDIX I – DEFINITIONS

ALLY: A person, regardless of his or her sexual orientation, who supports the human, civil, and sexual rights of sexual minorities.

BISEXUAL: An individual who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to both males and females.

GAY: A person who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. The word gay can refer to both males and females, but is commonly used to identify males only.

GENDER IDENTITY: An individual’s sense of being male or female, which may or may not be the same as one’s biological sex.

GENDER VARIANT: A term to refer to individuals whose expressions of gender do not conform to the stereotypical gender norms of masculinity and femininity. (Please note that in this resource we have chosen to use gender creative instead of gender variant.)

HETEROSEXISM: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and/or the belief that sexual minorities are abnormal. Heterosexism is a barrier to inclusion and prevents the affirmation of LGBTQ individuals.

HETEROSEXUAL: A person who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to someone of the opposite sex.

HOMOPHOBIA: The fear, and/or hatred, and/or repulsion of homosexuality in oneself or in others, often exhibited by self-hatred, prejudice discrimination, bullying or acts of violence.

INCLUSION: (Inclusive Education): “...defined broadly, supports the equality mandates of the *Charter of Rights* and New Brunswick’s human rights code” (McKay Report).

“Inclusive education is about educating all students in a way that allows them to reach their full potential as valuable human beings while contributing to and enhancing their communities. It includes but is not just about students with disabilities, but rather all students— boys, girls, Aboriginals, Francophones, Anglophones, new Canadians, high achievers, the disenfranchised, students with mental or physical limits, religious or cultural groups, people of differing sexual orientation and those considered at risk.”

“Inclusive schools are safer schools. Students are made to feel as though they belong rather than feeling alienated. Inclusion is the best antidote to violence in schools.”

“Inclusive education is the model that best achieves the goals of equality for all, as articulated in the Charter of Rights, the human rights code and international commitments” (Inclusion! What is Inclusion Anyway? Questions and Answers About the MacKay Report on Inclusion).

INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA: A diminished sense of personal self-worth or esteem felt by an individual as a result of the experienced or presumed homophobia of others.

LESBIAN: A female who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex.

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Two-Spirited, Questioning/Queer. (In this resource we use the term Two Spirit.)

SEXUAL MINORITY: Persons expressing some same-sex sexual orientation; sexual attractions to same-sex individuals; histories of sexual activity with someone of the same sex; identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual (Harvard Injury Control Research Center).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: The emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the same sex, the other sex or either sex.

TRANSGENDER: A person whose gender identity, outward appearance, expression and/or anatomy does not fit into stereotypical expectations of male or female. Some describe it as being born into the wrong body.

TRANSPHOBIA: The fear and/or hatred, and/or repulsion of transgender individuals and is exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence.

TRANSSEXUAL: A person who experiences intense personal and emotional discomfort with their assigned birth gender.

TWO SPIRIT: Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirit rather than as bisexual, gay, lesbian or transgender. Historically, in many Aboriginal cultures, two-spirit persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirit persons were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.

The Toronto District School Board's Gender-Based Violence Policy

Policy P071

Adopted: April 14, 2010

Here is an example of a school district policy that has included LGBTQ issues within the context of gender-based violence. The result is that issues like homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and harassment related to real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation are included in an already important discussion. This makes it more likely that school staff will be able to detect these forms of bullying, discrimination and harassment, understand their gravity, and to know how to intervene.

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish the Board's commitment to eliminating gender-based violence in its school

2.0 DEFINITIONS

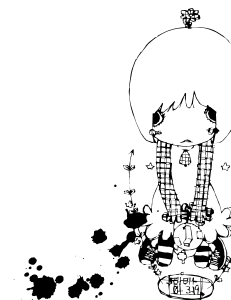
Gender-based violence is any aggressive action that threatens safety, causes physical, social or emotional harm and denigrates a person because of his or her gender identity, perceived gender, sexual identity, biological sex or sexual behaviour.



It is important that policies also include references to *perceived* gender, sexual identity, biological sex or sexual behavior. Straight and cisgender students (and adults) may also be experiencing homophobia, biphobia or transphobia because of society's stereotypes of masculine and feminine behaviour and appearance.

Gender-based violence includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Sexual assault (perpetrator aged 12 years and over)
- Inappropriate, problematic and intrusive sexual behaviour (perpetrator under age 12 years)
- Sexual exploitation (perpetrator an adult employee/victim a student)
- Sexual misconduct
- Sexual harassment
- Sexist discrimination
- Domestic violence
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Forced prostitution
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Harmful gender-based social practices, e.g. female genital mutilation



Gender-based violence operates on a societal imbalance of power and control based on social constructions of sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, perceived gender and sexual behaviour. This imbalance may manifest in multiple forms as aggressive and discriminatory behaviours and expressions of hatred. (See the next page for information on gender-based violence.)

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Superintendent, School Services, East

4.0 POLICY

4.1. Reporting Incidents of Gender-based Violence

- (a) All employees of the Board shall report any concerns about or incidents of gender-based violence in the school community to the school principal.
- (b) All allegations of sexual assault perpetrated by persons 12 years of age and older and/or sexual misconduct by children under 12 years of age shall be reported to the appropriate Board employee.
- (c) Any act or concern of gender-based violence that takes place off school property, including use of electronic media, and has a negative impact on a school's environment shall be reported and responded to.



This policy reaches beyond what might happen in the halls or on school property, which is crucial especially with the advent of cyberbullying.

4.2. Notification and Investigation

- (a) In situations where a student has been physically or emotionally harmed, the appropriate supervisory and School Services staff shall be notified.
- (b) Employee Services shall be notified of any incidents of gender-based violence involving Board staff. Where staff have a complaint against students or other staff, the Human Rights office shall be notified.
- (c) Principals shall be the first point of contact for investigating incidents.



4.3. Compliance and Accountability

As with all Board policies, all staff are expected to be compliant with this policy and its related procedures. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

4.4. Prevention Strategy: Staff Development

- (a) Gender-based violence policy and procedure training shall be mandatory for all staff.
- (b) All school-based staff shall receive annual training on responding to incidents of gender-based violence.
- (c) Professional learning opportunities for administrators, superintendents, teachers and support staff shall focus on the causes of gender-based violence, prevention strategies and Board policies and procedures for responding to gender-based violence.



Training—and ongoing training—

are key to creating an environment that is safe. Not all violence is obvious, and sometimes homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments can be missed because they often play into the stereotypes society has about gender that we are constantly bombarded with in the media.

4.5. Prevention Strategy: Professional Supports

- (a) An interdisciplinary team shall be established to deliver both policy implementation training and programs that focus on the development of student, staff and parental involvement related to raising awareness, developing school-based action plans and coordinating system-wide student-led activities.



This gets the whole school community involved and makes this policy a living, breathing document.

- (b) Superintendents and principals shall work with the appropriate staff to access professional support staff on a priority basis for incidents of gender-based violence involving students.
- (c) Resources shall be realigned to establish programs at both the high school and junior-intermediate levels for students who have engaged in repeated acts of gender-based violence in order to support the re-integration and re-engagement of these young people into society and prevent future incidents.

4.6. Student Engagement

- (a) Students will have the opportunity to participate in gender-based peer education programs that examine the roots of gender-based violence and its impact on females and males, healthy relationships and equality among marginalized groups.
- (b) Issues related to gender-based violence such as healthy relationships, sexuality, gender stereotyping and homophobia shall be integrated and reinforced in subjects across the curriculum. *Integrating these issues into the curriculum signal their importance as well as ensuring that all students learn about them.*
- (c) Primary prevention programs for students in elementary and secondary schools shall be designed to be comprehensive, coordinated, sequential, developmental, and that create both an awareness of, and a framework for dealing with, gender-based harassment and violence. *Starting in elementary school is appropriate because we are exposed to stereotypes that perpetuate violence and discrimination in the media from an early age.*

4.7. Coordination

- (a) Establish a position where the sole responsibility is the co-ordination and oversight of all initiatives relating to gender-based violence.
- (b) Establish an advisory body consisting of representatives from legal services, human rights, professional support services, caring and safe schools, guidance, health and physical education, equity, health and safety, employee services, the Anti-Bullying Committee, superintendents of education, principals, and students who shall meet regularly to advise the Gender-Based Violence Policy (GBVP) Coordinator on policy implementation and prevention strategy. The advisory body will consult with external partners as required.
- (c) Establish a policy implementation team, both East and West, consisting of one Superintendent of Education and Principal and the North - South Chiefs of Social Work to advise the GBVP Coordinator and help facilitate policy and procedure training in each quadrant.

4.8. Communication

- (a) Policies and resources relating to sexual assault and gender-based violence shall be posted in schools and shall form part of the orientation process for all staff and students at the commencement of each year and be included in all student agendas.
- (b) Relevant information shall be prepared for each of the employee groups, parents and community partners on gender-based violence and harassment.

4.9. Evaluation

Research tools shall be developed that ensure prevention programs are regularly evaluated to determine their effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement. An annual report will be made to the appropriate standing committee.

5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.

6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information About Gender-based Violence in Schools

7.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Board Documents (available on the Board's Policies and Procedures website)

Policies

P044, Code of Conduct

P064, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

P051, Safe Schools

P071, Gender-based Violence



Operational Procedures

PR585, School Code of Conduct

PR522, Suspension Appeals and Expulsion Hearings

PR586, Programs for Students on Long-term Suspensions and Expulsions

PR697, Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour

PR698, Police-School Board Protocol

PR540, Safe Schools Student Transfer

Other Documents

Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER E.2

O. Reg. 472/07, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils

O. Reg. 612/00, School Councils



Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memoranda

PPM 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

Policy P071
Appendix A

Information about Gender-based Violence in Schools

Gender-based violence in schools has far-reaching consequences to students, their peers, their families and the community at large. According to the Province's Safe Schools Action Team, it needs to be seen in the context of bullying. One-third of students experience bullying and one-third report having bullied someone else. Bullying has a negative impact on school safety, school climate and student learning. It can be severe, persistent and pervasive to such a degree that it limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an education program and creates an educational environment that is hostile and threatening.

The consequences for victims can include depression, loss of appetite, nightmares, disturbed sleep, low self-esteem and feelings of being sad, afraid, scared, or embarrassed. In terms of student learning, victims reported a loss of interest in school activities, increased absenteeism, decreased quality of school work, poor grades, increases in skipping, dropping classes, tardiness and truancy. While female students are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, research has shown that males more often than females receive and make homophobic comments.

Students are not the only victims of gender-based violence in schools. Significant numbers of teachers and other staff complain that they have been sexually harassed by students and other staff members.

Gender-based violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, is occurring at alarming rates and is largely going unreported¹. Measures relating to the protection of youth against sexual assaults, including those aimed at timely reporting of sexual assaults and anti-bullying programs have not succeeded in eliminating gender-based violence. These programs need to be combined with preventative education including gender-based peer education programs that examine the roots of gender-based violence and its impact on females and males, healthy relationships, and equality among marginalized groups, as well as the creation of "safe space" programs that use peer facilitators to lead open discussions amongst vulnerable groups.



¹ Findings of the School Safety Advisory Panel (2008) and the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Action Team (2009).

The Vancouver School Board's LGBTQ Policy

This is another example of a policy that very clearly outlines the desire to create safe spaces for LGBTQ students and staff. Policies are important for recognizing and acknowledging that there is an issue, for raising awareness and getting administrators and staff talking about it – as well as for working for change. The clearer the policy is at including LGBTQ issues – and explaining their impact and importance – the better, since clarity leaves little room for personal interpretation.

Intent

Vancouver Board of Education of School District No. 39 (Vancouver), Vancouver, B.C. is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students and employees including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. These students and employees, as all students and employees, have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B.C. Human Rights Acts* and the *Collective Agreements* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences. Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes, harassment or discrimination, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters.

The Board will provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, bisexual and



By including LGBTQ explicitly in this policy, there is no question who is included. One way homophobia, biphobia and transphobia manifest is by exclusion and lack of recognition of the lived experiences of (and different barriers that exist for) LGBTQ individuals. “Queer” is missing from this list.



Pro-active strategies and guidelines are just as important as those that are reactive – perhaps even more so if they are effective.

questioning students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. *It is wonderful that this policy is so explicit! “Welcomed and included in all aspects of school life” is broad enough and clear enough at the same time to address homophobia, biphobia and transphobia*

wherever it appears. The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness of and responsiveness to their deleterious effects. *Greater awareness is a crucial component of creating safer spaces for LGBTQ individuals.* This policy is also drafted to ensure that homophobic complaints are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures. The policy will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. By valuing diversity and respecting differences, students and staff act in accordance with the Vancouver district’s social responsibility initiative.

Leadership

The Vancouver School Board shall ensure that all staff will be able to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, as well as work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and demonstrate accountability for their removal so that all students are treated with fairness and respect. *Being able to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours as such is key. Homophobic comments like "That's so gay" have become common and accepted parts of youth language and are often not seen for the damaging effect they have on LGBTQ individuals and how they are perceived. Systemic barriers are even harder to notice when they are not impacting you personally. But by clearly outlining both of these as areas of focus, the Vancouver School Board acknowledges that discrimination happens through individuals as well as through policies and systems.*

All administrators, teachers, counsellors, and staff and student leaders will communicate the board's position to their employees, staff and students. In the course of their leadership roles, they will commit to listen to lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning youth and their designated support groups and take concrete actions to make schools more welcoming and safer places for these students. *This is amazing - because who better to tell you what is happening and how they are affected than the people who are experiencing it?* The Board shall consult with the LGBTTQ Advisory Committee to ensure that policy directions, priorities and implementation of programs and services are consistent with this LGBTTQ policy.



An Advisory Committee specifically for LGBTQ issues is a good idea to help bring (and keep) attention to the need for safety and awareness.



Students who come from LGBTQ families are not included in this list, and should be (see last two comments above).



Even heterosexual individuals can be victims to homophobic (or biphobic or transphobic) harassment if they do not conform to society's expectations of masculinity or femininity, and are perceived as LGBTQ.

Counselling and Student Support

The Vancouver School Board is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment which actively provides counselling and support to students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. All counsellors provided by the board shall be educated in the knowledge and skills required to deal with LGBTTQ issues with students. *Counsellors who are educated on LGBTQ issues are very important because their role is to support and guide people who are struggling. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in this environment can be particularly damaging since it flies in the face of what we expect. Furthermore, for some students seeing a counsellor may be their last resort, so timely and appropriate intervention may be even more crucial.* Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, anti-homophobia, hate literature, discrimination and harassment, and will alert their school community to these policies. Counsellors will be sensitive to lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students as well as students from LGBTTQ-headed families.

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are experienced by children of LGBTQ parents because of their family structure. These students may fall under the radar because they themselves are straight or cisgender, but the attack on one's family can be just as impactful.

Elementary and Secondary Schools are encouraged to appoint a staff person to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. School administrators should inform students and other staff about the location and availability of this contact person. Schools are encouraged in their goal planning to advocate for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and those who are questioning their gender identity. Where students request and where staff are willing to volunteer their time, Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) will be encouraged at Secondary Schools in the District.

Anti-Harassment

Homophobic harassment is demeaning treatment to all students, students' parents or guardians, and employees regardless of their sexual orientation. Harassment based on gender identities is also demeaning to all students and employees. These forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated. Schools will be encouraged to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student codes of conduct. Please refer to the "General Anti-Harassment VSB Policy." *Naming these behaviours and including them explicitly in the code of conduct is important in order to raise awareness and visibility as well as to increase the likelihood that action will be taken. This will leave less room for interpretation.*

Curriculum Learning Resources

Anti-Homophobia Education strives to identify and change educational practices, policies, and procedures that promote homophobia, as well as the homophobic attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Anti-homophobia education provides knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to examine such discrimination critically in order to understand its origin and to recognize and challenge it.



Seeing yourself and your life reflected positively in the curriculum is important to self esteem and engagement. Omissions speak just as loudly as negative messages about the value society places on a particular experience or reality.

Beyond individual behaviour, the curriculum is full of messages about what and who has value. By educating staff about systemic homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism and cissexism (and how they manifest) staff can critically examine the curriculum they use including their own language. Awareness can be raised by using offending examples as teaching tools to show how homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heteronormativity and cisnormativity manifest themselves.

The Board is committed to enabling all lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students to see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum. Resources should be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that accurately reflect the range of Canada's LGBTTQ communities. Keeping in mind the multicultural aspect of the district, as many of the above resources as possible should be available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ESL students.

Staff Development, In Service, and Professional Development

The Vancouver School Board is committed to ongoing staff development in anti-homophobia education and sexual orientation equity for trustees and Board staff, and will assist them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to identify and eliminate homophobic practices. The Board will provide in-service training for teaching and support staff in anti-homophobia methodologies to enable them to deliver an inclusive curriculum. The Board will also provide in-service training for employees to deal effectively and confidently with issues of homophobia, heterosexism and gender identity and support initiatives that foster dialogue to create understanding and respect for diversity.



LGBTQ individuals exist in every culture, all over the world. Curriculum materials should reflect the diversity within LGBTQ communities, regardless of the diversity of the students in the district, as part of preparing students to be global citizens.

There are still many countries around the world where sexual orientations other than heterosexual are illegal and some where same-sex relationships are punishable by death. In most jurisdictions around the world transgender people face some form of discrimination, often including state-supported violence, intimidation, and a lack of access to medical care.

Training and professional development should extend beyond school staff so that all members of the school community receive these important messages (regardless of how they identify).

Positive messages are important for creating a safe environment because they set the tone in the school and send a message to the school community of who is valued and important. This is proactive.

Reactive support is just as crucial as proactive support. Immediate recognition and intervention are necessary to ensure schools are safe for all members of the school community.

As communities and legislation change, ongoing dialogue is important to keep informed about the needs and realities of LGBTQ individuals and how best to create and sustain safe spaces.

Having LGBTQ parents and parents of LGBTQ students on parent advisory councils helps to create inclusive schools because the needs and realities of LGBTQ parents and LGBTQ students can be represented and considered in decision making .

School-Community Involvement

The Vancouver School Board is committed to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and other communities who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity to increase cooperation and collaboration among home, school and the community.

The Board will work to create partnerships that ensure effective participation in the education process by representative and inclusive organizations and LGBTTQ communities that are committed to the mission of the VSB. (To enable students to reach their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, cooperation, and social responsibility.)

The Board will encourage parent advisory councils to reflect the diversity of the District. The Vancouver School Board will acknowledge through its communication to students, staff, and the community that some children live in LGBTT-headed families and need to be positively recognized and included as such. Any information to students and parents on anti-homophobia, anti-discrimination and sexual orientation equity needs to be translated into the languages spoken in the home. Parent Advisory Councils and students will be encouraged to engage in dialogue with openly identified LGBTTQ youth and their organizations.

Employment Equity

The Board of School Trustees (the “Board”) believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B.C. Human Rights Act* and the *VSB/VTF Collective Agreement* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences.

The Board will ensure that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of staff will be protected. Employees who are out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transitioning to another gender will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.



START A WRITING GROUP

Think about compiling the narratives as a group to share with others.

Tell your own stories!



ARRANGE SPEAKERS

Contact some of the local organizations listed in the *New Brunswick Policies and LGBTQ Resources* section of this resource or on *MyGSA.ca* and ask to have someone come in to talk about matters related to LGBTQ communities.



DO A CAMPAIGN

As a group, come up with a name for your campaign and create posters, videos, pamphlets, stickers, etc. to share your message.

What matters to you? What do you want to change?



Promote your campaign and connect with LGBTQ youth and allies throughout the country by uploading information about it on *MyGSA.ca*!



Want some ideas and tools to explore sexual and gender stereotypes? Check out the following:

- Heterosexual Questionnaire
- Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack II– Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Adapted from the work of Dr. Martin Rochlin (1972)

LGBTQ persons are often confronted with questions and assumptions about their lives that are stereotypical, incorrect and disrespectful. This questionnaire can help non-LGBTQ people understand what it feels like to be faced with these assumptions. It can be used to raise awareness of heterosexual privilege and bias.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Could it be that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how can you be sure you wouldn't prefer that?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Why do heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?
8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?
10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual men. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual male leaders.
11. With all the societal support for marriage, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?

12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?
14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear s/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of her/his own leanings?
15. Heterosexuals are notorious for assigning themselves and one another rigid, stereotyped sex roles. Why must you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16. With the sexually segregated living conditions of military life, isn't heterosexuality incompatible with military service?
17. How can you enjoy an emotionally fulfilling experience with a person of the other sex when there are such vast differences between you? How can a man know what pleases a woman sexually or vice-versa?
18. Shouldn't you ask your extremist co-horts, to keep quiet? Wouldn't that improve your image?
19. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?
20. Why do you attribute heterosexuality to so many famous lesbian and gay people? Is it to justify your own heterosexuality?
21. How can you hope to actualize your innate homosexual potential if you limit yourself to exclusive, compulsive heterosexuality?
22. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really want to. After all, you never deliberately chose to be a heterosexual, did you? Have you considered aversion therapy or Heterosexuals Anonymous?



Now that you have completed the questionnaire, reflect on the experience and share your thoughts with others in your group.

DAILY EFFECTS OF STRAIGHT PRIVILEGE

This list is based on Peggy McIntosh's article on white privilege (Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack) and was written by a number of straight-identified students at Earlham College who got together to look at some examples of straight privilege. These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which straight people have. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer-identified folk have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on most of these conditions in their lives.

On a daily basis as a straight person...

- I can be pretty sure that my roommates, dorm-mates, and classmates will be comfortable with my sexual orientation.
- If I pick up a magazine, watch TV, or play music, I can be certain my sexual orientation will be represented.
- When I talk about my heterosexuality (such as in a joke or talking about my relationships), I will not be accused of pushing my sexual orientation onto others.
- I do not have to fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical, or psychological consequences.
- I did not grow up with games that attack my sexual orientation (e.g., fag tag or smear the queer).
- I am not accused of being abused, warped, or psychologically confused because of my sexual orientation.
- I can go home from most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped, or feared because of my sexual orientation.
- I am never asked to speak for everyone who is heterosexual.
- I can be sure that my classes will require curricular materials that testify to the existence of people with my sexual orientation.

- People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.
- People don't ask why I made my choice to be public about my sexual orientation.
- I do not have to fear revealing my sexual orientation to friends or family. It's assumed.
- My sexual orientation was never associated with a closet.
- People of my gender do not try to convince me to change my sexual orientation.
- I don't have to defend my heterosexuality.
- I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual.
- I can count on finding a therapist or doctor willing and able to talk about my sexuality.
- I am guaranteed to find sex education literature for couples with my sexual orientation.
- Because of my sexual orientation, I do not need to worry that people will harass me.
- I have no need to qualify my straight identity.
- My masculinity/femininity is not challenged because of my sexual orientation.
- I am not identified by my sexual orientation.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my sexual orientation will not work against me.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has sexual orientation overtones.
- Whether I rent or download a movie or go to a theater, I can be sure I will not have trouble finding my sexual orientation represented.
- I am guaranteed to find people of my sexual orientation represented in the curriculum, faculty, and administration.

- I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.
- I can choose to not think politically about my sexual orientation.
- I do not have to worry about telling my roommate about my sexuality. It is assumed I am a heterosexual.
- I can remain oblivious of the language and culture of LGBTQ folk without feeling in my culture any penalty for such obliviousness.
- I can go for months without being called straight.
- I'm not grouped because of my sexual orientation.
- My individual behavior does not reflect on people who identify as heterosexual.
- In everyday conversation, the language my friends and I use generally assumes my sexual orientation: for example, sex inappropriately referring to only heterosexual sex or family meaning only heterosexual adults who have children.
- People do not assume I am experienced in sex (or that I even have it!) merely because of my sexual orientation.
- I can kiss a person of the opposite gender on the street or in the cafeteria without being watched and stared at.
- Nobody calls me straight with maliciousness.
- People can use terms that describe my sexual orientation and mean positive things (e.g., "straight as an arrow," "standing up straight," or "straightened out") instead of demeaning terms (e.g., "ewww, that's gay" or being "queer").
- I am not asked to think about why I am straight.
- I can be open about my sexual orientation without worrying about my job.

Adapted from http://www.cs.earlham.edu/~hyrax/personal/files/student_res/straightprivilege.htm.

DAILY EFFECTS OF CISGENDER PRIVILEGE

These statements are also based on Peggy McIntosh's article on white privilege and are taken from a number of cisgender privilege questionnaires (see below for references). These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which cisgender people have. Trans-identified, genderqueer and gender creative people have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on most of these conditions in their lives.

- I can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest
- I can use public facilities such as gym locker rooms and store changing rooms without stares, fear, or anxiety.
- My validity as a man/woman/human is not based on how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" as non-transgender.
- I have the ability to walk through the world and generally blend-in, not being constantly stared or gawked at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of my gender expression.
- Strangers call me by the name I provide, and don't ask what my "real name" [birth name] is and then assume that they have a right to call me by that name.
- I can reasonably assume that my ability to acquire a job will not be denied on the basis of my gender identity/expression.
- I can flirt, date and form a relationship and not fear that my biological status may be cause for rejection or attack, nor will it cause my partner to question their sexual orientation.
- If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment.
- I am not required to undergo an extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.

- I can easily find role models and mentors to emulate who share my identity.
- Hollywood accurately depicts people of my gender in films and television, and does not solely make my identity the focus of a dramatic storyline, or the punchline for a joke.
- I am able to assume that everyone I encounter will understand my identity, and not think I'm confused, misled, or hell-bound when I reveal it to them.
- I can purchase clothes that match my gender identity without being refused service/mockered by staff or questioned.
- I can purchase shoes that fit my gender expression without having to order them in special sizes or ask someone to custom-make them.
- No stranger checking my identification or drivers license will ever insult or glare at me because my name or sex does not match the sex they believed me to be based on my gender expression.
- I can reasonably assume that I will not be denied services at a hospital, bank, or other institution because the staff does not believe the gender marker on my ID card matches my gender identity.
- I am able to tick a box on a form for gender without someone disagreeing, and telling me not to lie.
- I can go to places with friends on a whim knowing there will be bathrooms there I can use.
- I don't have to remind my extended family over and over to use proper gender pronouns (e.g., after transitioning).
- I don't have to deal with old photographs that did not reflect who I truly am.
- I never considered hiding my body parts by binding or tucking.
- It is unlikely that I would consider changing my voice.

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/11/list-of-cisgender-privileges/>
<http://queersunited.blogspot.ca/2008/08/cisgender-privilege-checklist.html>



Literature can be an effective resource for exploring issues related to diversity of sexuality, gender identity/expression, and inclusion within a GSA or the classroom. However, it is critical that teachers or other facilitators working with learners in carefully preview, select, and plan for the use of these resources to ensure that learners benefit from reading and discussing the resource.

The following books may be useful resources. However, they have not been reviewed through the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development formal resource review process, nor are they endorsed by the Department, and they do not carry a New Brunswick recommended designation. Teachers should ensure that the complexity of the text is within the guidelines defined in the grade-level standard, located in the Learning Resources section of the NBED Portal. Also, teachers will find two additional resources helpful: p. 54-55 of the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Foundations Document <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/cd/Documents/Foundation%20Document%20for%20Atlantic%20Canada%20English%20Language%20Arts.pdf> and the teacher created module about building classroom libraries, found in the Professional Growth section of the NBED Portal. (Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Foundations Document: Understanding Text Complexity and Building Classroom Collections Grades 6 – 12: <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/pd/Reading/Pages/default.aspx>).

Shared professional judgment and planning is necessary if there are any doubts about choosing and instructing with a text for an audience. Small group instruction provides a good alternative and safe environment for discussions.

All literature or other educational resource selections should be reviewed by school staff before they are used by students. In this way, learner sensitivities and the perspectives of the student population, as well as the appropriateness of the resource for the intended learning objectives are taken into account. In addition, the effectiveness of a particular resource will depend greatly on what the teacher or facilitator does in terms of preparing the audience before reading, as well as the needs and interaction of students during and post reading.

HAVE A BOOK CLUB

Check out this list of Egale recommended books! Ask your friends to read the same book and bring topics, comments, and questions for discussion to your GSA meeting.

What are your favourite books with LGBTQ themes or written by LGBTQ writers?

5 RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL READERS

Drama (2012) by Raina Telgemeier. Graphic novel through drama—a play – and drama between characters explores middle school feelings with boyfriends and girlfriends, and boyfriends and boyfriends.

The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World (2009), by E. L. Konigsburg. Two boys find themselves caught up in a story that links a sketch, a young boy's life, an old man's reminiscence, and a painful secret dating back to the outrages of Nazi Germany. Includes revelations about the victimization of artists and gays during the Holocaust.

Playground: A Mostly True Story of a Former Bully (2011) by Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson. A realistic look at bullying from the perspective of an urban young teen boy in middle school. Looks at the boys feelings as both a target and perpetrator of bullying. Also deals with divorce and gay parenting. Some explicit language.

The Revealers (2011) by Doug Wilhelm. At Parkland Middle School, three bullied seventh graders start an unofficial e-mail forum in which they publicize their experiences. Unexpectedly, lots of other kids come forward to confess their similar troubles, and it becomes clear that the problem at their school is bigger than anyone knew. In one email, a student tells his troubles of being called gay.

Riding Freedom (1999) by Pam Muñoz Ryan and Brian Selznick. A fictionalized account of the true story of Charley (Charlotte) Parkhurst who ran away from an orphanage, posed as a boy, moved to California, drove stagecoaches and continued to pass as a man her whole

Individually or as a group, write up a review to post on MyGSA.ca and find out what other youth throughout Canada think!

Tell us about your favourite LGBTQ books at mygsa@egale.ca!

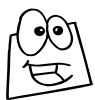


13 RECOMMENDED LGBTQ BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Absolutely, Positively Not (2005) by David LaRochelle. In a touching, sometimes hilarious coming-out story, Steven DeNarski, 16, tries to deny he is gay. . . . The wry, first-person narrative is wonderful as it goes from personal angst to outright farce (Steven takes a pet golden retriever to the school dance). The characters are drawn with surprising depth, and Steven finds quiet support, as well as betrayal, in unexpected places. Many readers, gay and straight, will recognize Steven's need to talk to someone.

Between Mom and Jo (2006) by Julie Anne Peters has been named an Honor Book for the first ever James Cook Teen Book Award given by the Ohio Library Council. The award recognizes books that promote and celebrate cultural, ethnic, and social diversity; demonstrate excellence in writing; and have a wide appeal to a teen audience. It has also been chosen as Rainbow Reads by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association.

"Jo promised Nick they'd always be together. So did Mom. When you're a stupid little kid you believe what your parents tell you. You want to believe that your life will be good and nothing will change and everything—everyone—goes on forever. It's not until later you find out people are liars, forever is a myth, and a kid with two moms should never be put in the position of having to choose between them."



SHARE THIS LIST with your school staff advisor/
facilitator, teachers, your librarian, your Education
Support Teacher - Guidance Counsellor, and your principal.



From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun (1995) by Jacqueline Woodson: Thirteen-year-old Melanin Sun has always had a close relationship with his mother, a single parent. He is surprised when she tells him that she has fallen in love with a white woman. Worried that this relationship means that she doesn't love him, an African-American male, Melanin shuts his mother out of his life. After a confrontation, he agrees to spend the day with his mother and her partner, Kristen. It is through meeting Kristen that Melanin learns how important family is, and rejoices in the fact that his mother will always have a place for him in her life.

Funny Boy is Shyam Selvadurai's first novel; it won the Lambda Literary Award for Best Gay Men's Novel as well as the Smithbooks/Books in Canada First Novel Award in 1994. In this remarkable debut novel, a boy's bittersweet passage to maturity and sexual awakening is set against escalating political tensions in Sri Lanka during the seven years leading up to the 1983 riots. Arjie Chelvaratnam is a Tamil boy growing up in an extended family in Colombo. It is through his eyes that the story unfolds and we meet a delightful, sometimes eccentric, cast of characters. Arjie's journey from the luminous simplicity of childhood days into the more intricately shaded world of adults—with its secrets, its injustices, and its capacity for violence—is a memorable one, as time and time again the true longings of the human heart are held against the way things are.

Hear Me Out: In 2004, Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia (T.E.A.C.H.) published a book of stories written by peer facilitators about their coming out experiences. These stories are based upon the stories the peer facilitators use to engage participants during T.E.A.C.H. workshops. Critically acclaimed, the book received attention across Canada upon its publication.

Koolaid's (1998) by Rabih Alameddine: An extraordinary literary debut, this book is about the AIDS epidemic, the civil war in Beirut, death, sex, and the meaning of life. Daring in form as well as content, *Koolaid's* turns the traditional novel inside out and hangs it on the clothesline to air.

The Little Black Book for Girlz: A Book on Healthy Sexuality (2006) and *The Little Black Book for Guys: Guys Talk about Sex* (2008) by youth for youth: St. Stephen's Community House, a community-based social service agency in Toronto, engaged a diverse group of teens looking for the real deal about sexuality. To find answers, they collected stories, poetry, and artwork from other youth. They also interviewed health experts to get the facts about issues young people face. The result? An honest and powerful mix of real-life examples and life-saving info.

Luna (2004) by Julie Anne Peters has been chosen by the American Library Association for their 2009 Great Stories CLUB. The Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Under-served teens, and Books) is a reading and discussion program designed to reach under-served and at-risk youth through books that are relevant to their lives.

"From as early as she can remember, Regan O'Neill has known that her brother Liam was different. That he was, in fact, a girl. Transgender. Having a transgender brother has never been a problem for Regan—until now. Liam (or Luna, as she prefers to be called by her chosen name) is about to transition. What does it mean, transitioning? Dressing like a girl? In public? Does Liam expect Regan to embrace this decision, to welcome his sex change? She's always kept her brother's secret, always been his confidante, but now Regan's acceptance and love will be put to the test."

Rainbow Boys (2003) by Alex Sanchez. Jason Carrillo is a jock with a steady girlfriend, but he can't stop dreaming about sex... with other guys. Kyle Meeks doesn't *look* gay, but he is. And he hopes he never has to tell anyone — especially his parents. Nelson Glassman is “out” to the entire world, but he can't tell the boy he loves that he wants to be more than just friends. Three teenage boys, coming of age and out of the closet. In a revealing debut novel that percolates with passion and wit, Alex Sanchez follows these very different high-school seniors as their struggles with sexuality and intolerance draw them into a triangle of love, betrayal, and ultimately, friendship.

She Walks for Days Inside a Thousand Eyes: A Two Spirit Story (2008) by Sharron Proulx-Turner. Sharron Proulx-Turner combines poetry and history to delve into the little-known lives of Two Spirit women. Regarded with both wonder and fear when first encountered by the West, First Nations women living with masculine and feminine principles in the same body had important roles to play in society, as healers and visionaries, before they were suppressed during the colonial invasion. She walks for days inside a thousand eye (a Two Spirit story) creatively juxtaposes first-person narratives and traditional stories with the voices of contemporary Two Spirit women, voices taken from nature, and the teachings of Water, Air, Fire and Mother Earth.

So Hard to Say (2004) by Alex Sanchez. Frederick is the shy new boy and Xio is the bubbly chica who lends him a pen on the first day of class. They become fast friends-but when Xio decides she wants to be more than friends, Frederick isn't so sure. He loves hanging out with Xio and her crew, but he doesn't like her that way. Instead, he finds himself thinking more and more about Victor, the captain of the soccer team. Does that mean Frederick's gay?

Stealing Nasreen (2007) by Farzana Doctor: Nasreen Bastawala is an Indo-Canadian lesbian and burnt-out psychologist who meets and becomes enmeshed in the lives of Shaffiq and Salma Paperwala, new immigrants from Mumbai. Both Shaffiq and Salma develop confusing attractions to Nasreen. For Shaffiq this causes him to bring home and hide things he “finds” in her office. Salma's crush on Nasreen harkens back memories and regrets about a lesbian affair that ended badly years ago.

Zami: A New Spelling of My Name (1982) by Audre Lorde: This biomythography traces Audre Lorde's life from her childhood in Harlem through her discovery and acceptance of her self as a black, lesbian woman in the late 1950s. Masterfully crafted by the profound and artistic Lorde, *Zami* reads like musical poetry. Through her life experiences, Lorde carefully forges a path to locate her position in the world. Ultimately, naming and accepting difference are the tools necessary for Lorde's ability to stay alive and stay human.

Contact local organizations from the *New Brunswick Policies and LGBTQ Resources* section of this resource or MyGSA.ca for assistance.



➔ PARTICIPATE IN PRIDE EVENTS

Does your community have a Pride Event?

If so, take part in marching and/or performing. Do a dance routine or make a float!

If not, why not? (See “Do a Campaign” on page 97.)

➔ DO WORKSHOPS

Using your collective knowledge and the information provided in this resource, put together your own anti-heterosexism, anti-cissexism, anti-homophobia, anti-biphobia, anti-transphobia, and intersectionality workshops.

➔ FUNDRAISER

Do something for your community to raise funds for your group. Need ideas? Start a topic on the *MyGSA.ca* discussion forums and brainstorm with other students from across the country!

➔ HAVE AN EVENT

Have an event to celebrate or commemorate:

Ally Week (October)

International Day Against Homophobia (May 17)

LGBTQ History Month (October)

Pink Shirt Day (February)

National Coming Out Day (October)

Day of Silence (April) Pride / Pride Month (June)

Harvey Milk Day (May)

Transgender Day of Remembrance (November)



PLAY GAMES

Try the “Icebreakers” (page 55) or “A Sociometry of Oppressions” (page 114). There are also activities included in the *Information and Resources for Educators* section of this resource. Look there for even more ideas!

GOOD LUCK & HAVE FUN! If you encounter any obstacles along the way, talk to your school staff advisors, teachers, ~~EST~~-Guidance Counsellor, and school administration. If you find that you still need help, remember that you have resources and support: contact Egale at mygsa@egale.ca or 1.888.204.7777 (toll-free).



Used with the permission of Susan Diane RN, BA, MA

Grades: 10-12

Time: 30 to 60 minutes

Objectives:

- to introduce the concepts of privilege and oppression and that all individuals are affected by them;
- to develop a better understanding of the complexity of individuals within our society;
- to increase awareness and understanding of the meanings of power and control;
- to gain a better understanding of how and why our culture maintains the status quo; and
- to develop empathy for others.

Context:

The basic premise for this experiential educational exercise came from Logan et al. (1996) who were educating social work students about heterosexual privilege. Although this educational tool still includes sexual orientation/identity, it has been expanded to include gender, race/ethnicity, age, class, occupation, ability, and religion. It is expanded here to give a sense of the interconnections and complexity of identity within the multiple structures of oppression in a hierarchical, capitalist, patriarchal society. Although the activity is complex, students can gain a sense of these issues through role play and assuming other identities.

Preparation:

- Photocopy and cut identity cards.
- If necessary, photocopy the Sociometry of Oppressions Question Sheets to read out to the group.
- A fairly large open space is needed which often necessitates moving furniture or using a gym or hall instead of a classroom.
- A class of about 15-20 participants seems ideal, but it can be used with smaller or larger numbers.
- About half an hour is needed to complete the exercise, although this will vary depending on the amount of time it takes for debriefing each participant.

Lesson:

Explain that participants will be given an identity card and asked to move forward one step (or its equivalent if there are wheelchair participants) when answering affirmatively to a series of questions. It is helpful to explain that everyone will be taking the same amount of risk in playing the game. If it seems the students may be reluctant, try using a “fish bowl” technique, where some students do the activity and others watch. (All the students report on what they learned from the activity. It does not work as well, but is one way to adapt this for shy students.)

Hand out cards to each participant. Instruct them not to show their cards to other participants. You may need to help some participants individually if they have questions about their identity card. If you have a small number of participants, try to pick identities so that you have a mix of sexual orientations, genders, ethnic origins, religious denominations, and abilities.

Have participants line up against a wall. Start with all participants facing towards the wall. Ask those who can be open about their sexual orientation to turn around and face forward—you may choose to broaden this by asking all those who can be open about their own sexual orientation and gender identity as well as the sexual orientations and gender identities of their loved ones to turn around and face forward.

Read out the questions regarding social and economic privileges which are worded so that those who can participate in the activity (e.g., take out a loan) can take a step forward. Those who would not be able to do that in our society must remain where they are. After reading out all the questions, and allowing participants to move forward to various degrees, have participants stay in their resulting positions of privilege when the questions are finished.

Ask each one in turn to read out their identity and discuss what the experience was like for her or him. You are actually debriefing each participant, but others will usually join in the discussion as this process continues. Be sure to have each and every student discuss what the experience was like for her or him in order to ensure they can all make sense of what they experienced. As in any experiential activity, be prepared for the possibility of someone's personal experiences being triggered so that further debriefing may be needed. Participants are asked to take on a pseudo-identity (a type of role-playing) here, which usually does not trigger major personal revelations.

After each student has shared what it was like, discuss how privilege works and how those with it can be successful, while those without it find themselves falling behind in our society. Talk about intersectionality and “double and triple oppressions.” This is when a person has a number of interconnecting factors holding them back (e.g., racism, homophobia, and transphobia). Discuss the reason this happens in our society. Why are groups oppressed? What is the purpose of oppressing a group of people? Whose needs does it serve? Is it acceptable? Legal? Fair? Ethical? What can we do to change this? How can we do it? Who is responsible for what is happening in our society? What did we learn from this discussion?

Related Activities:

- Have the students write a journal about any of the questions above that they are interested in.
- Share with the students some historical examples of oppression, such as Apartheid, the Holocaust, Black slavery in the USA, the Stonewall Riots, and the continuing oppression of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/gender creative, Two Spirit, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) community. Have them research a group of people (or a specific person) and the oppression they have suffered and present their findings to the class.

Share your thoughts about this exercise on the [MyGSA.ca](https://www.mygsa.ca) discussion forums!



Pseudo-Identities:



19 year-old gay male who has a girlfriend and secretly has sex with guys. His girlfriend thinks they should get married.	16 year-old white female who had sex for the first time last year. She has just found out she is HIV+.	17 year-old First Nations female. She is talented at basketball and wants to play, but she's usually late for practice because she has to look after her siblings.
17 year-old white heterosexual female whose father is rich. She skis in Whistler and stays in their cottage during the summer.	16 year-old Cambodian female who is an EAL student. Her family ignores her and she is behind at school by 2 years. She is always by herself and looks lonely.	Indo-Canadian female who is dating a white male. Her family is against the relationship. She is thinking of getting pregnant.
White male Goth student who is in a relationship with a black female. His family lives in poverty.	Grade 8 white male student, skateboarder. He has a close group of friends, both male and female.	Grade 8 student with learning difficulties, thinking of dropping out of school. Parents don't really expect him to graduate.
Grade 12 student who is an out lesbian. Her friends are trying to find a sponsor teacher to start a GSA in their high school.	17 year-old white depressed female who uses a wheelchair and is questioning her sexuality. She has attempted suicide four times.	15 year-old white female student who is in a violent relationship with an older man. She is scared to tell anyone.
16 year-old straight male hippy who smokes pot openly and was home-schooled.	Grade 12 trans M2F (male-to-female) student. Wants to wear dresses and make-up to school and use the female washroom.	Grade 10 female student who cares about the environment and educates others about food choices.

15 year-old white male who skips school most days and hangs out at the mall. He is starting to do drugs.	17 year-old white lesbian stay-at-home-mom of two small children living on welfare. She is studying by distance education.	19 year-old, vegetarian female rock musician in a relationship with another woman. She identifies as bisexual.
17 year-old female with a one year-old baby, living with her parents. She is trying to finish her last year of high school.	17 year-old Caucasian female who is living on the street. She is addicted to crack.	19 year-old lesbian female, who is a practising Wiccan.
19 year-old white heterosexual female who is in a relationship with an older Jamaican-Canadian man.	16 year-old white male who lives with his mom. She is addicted to heroin. He was recently beaten up by her boyfriend.	16 year-old gay male who is in the closet. He dates girls and plays sports. He recently met a guy he likes.
16 year-old lesbian high school student who uses sign language to communicate.	16 year-old First Nations female student going out with a white male. She practices traditional native spirituality.	16 year-old female who works at the bakery to help her family that has recently immigrated. Her mom speaks very little English.
17 year-old student who identifies as queer and is a practicing Muslim.	Grade 9 student going to a Catholic school and who believes strongly in her religion. Her best friend since kindergarten just came out to her as gay.	Attractive and popular athlete with 2 dads. Nobody knows.

Sociometry of Oppressions Questions:

These questions are asked once individuals have their pseudo-identity cards (which they are instructed not to show to others) and are lined up, facing a wall.

1. If you are comfortable being open about your sexual orientation and gender identity with those close to you (i.e., “out” in most situations), please turn around and face the centre of the room. Optional: If you are not free to be open about the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of each of your friends and family members, please turn around again and face the wall.

2. Can you expect to speak openly and easily about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity at school or at work without fear of harassment or negative consequences?

3. Do you feel safe walking alone on the streets after dark?

4. Do you expect to be treated fairly by the police?

5. Do you expect that you and your body will be treated with respect and dignity at school or work, without fear of harassment?

6. Can you go to the corner store on foot quickly and easily?

7. Can you walk by a group of teenagers without fear of insults or harassment?

8. Do you expect your children to attend school without discrimination or harassment?

9. Can you legally marry?

10. Do you expect to be financially well off and be able to travel during your retirement?

11. You are being considered for a promotion. Are you secure your personal life or identity will not hinder you?

12. You are in a new social situation and you are asked if you are married. Are you comfortable answering truthfully?

13. Are you comfortable bringing your partner to the school dance?

14. Do you expect to be able to get a large loan from the bank easily?

15. Would it be easy for you to introduce your partner to your family?

16. Do you think that your chances are good when you are interviewed by a social worker to adopt a child?

17. Are you comfortable holding hands with your partner in public?

18. If you became HIV-positive, would some people say you were an innocent victim rather than you deserved it?

19. Can you expect to be a religious leader in your community?

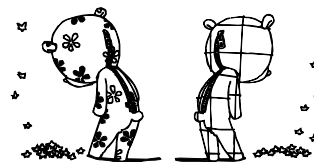
20. Can you discuss your religious practices and holidays openly at work or school without fear of harassment?

21. Can you communicate easily with others you have just met?

22. If your partner died, would you be automatically recognized as the next-of-kin?

Sociometry of Oppressions for Teenagers: revised list of questions for lesson plan

1. Going to school every day is something I look forward to.
2. I am confident that I will do well in most of my school subjects.
3. I look forward to seeing my friends at school.
4. I have plans for post-secondary education.
5. I plan to go to the school dance with my favourite friends.
6. I usually meet my friends for lunch.
7. I usually buy my lunch in the cafeteria.
8. I get along well with the teachers at the school.
9. I feel comfortable walking down the hallway at school.
10. I feel comfortable in the change room before and after Phys. Ed.
11. I am well regarded by other students.
12. I am considered to be a leader at school.
13. My parents listen to my plans and support them most of the time.
14. My parents are happy to have my friends visit me in our home.
15. My parents approve of the person (or people) I date.
16. I am able to be open with my friends about my sexuality.
17. I am able to be open with my parents about my sexuality.
18. I feel comfortable visiting my friends at their home and meeting their parents.
19. I am able to speak up in class and know I will be heard.
20. The teachers at my school are good role models for me.



21. I feel comfortable letting others know my religious beliefs.
22. I am able to speak freely with others about what is important to me in life.

Debriefing Questions (for feedback from individual participants)

[Feedback may be verbal—especially for a, b, c, d, and e—or students may write/discuss/reflect.]

- a. What holds people back?
- b. What gives people privilege?
- c. Are there inherent assumptions in our school system?
- d. Are there assumptions in our school system? (about roles, aspirations, abilities, interests of students)
- e. Are there assumptions in homes?
- f. How can we support other people to be themselves and to achieve their potential?
- g. What insights have you gained through this exercise?
- h. What would you like to tell others about identity?
- i. How important is a person's identity in achieving goals or having a happy life?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Alberta Teachers' Association

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity webpage:
Ten Steps to Creating a GSA in your School

American Civil Liberties Union Foundation (ACLU) (US)

Tips on Starting a GSA



The Canadian Teachers' Federation

Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook: A Comprehensive Resource for Canadian K-12 Teachers, Administrators, and School Counsellors



Egale Canada Human Rights Trust

MyGSA.ca
www.egale.ca

Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE BC)

Creating & Supporting a Gay-Straight Alliance (2nd edition)

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) (US)

The Jump-Start Guide Part 1: Building and Activating your GSA or Similar Student Club

GSA Network (US)

How to Start a Gay-Straight Alliance

The Nova Scotia Youth Project

Gay/Straight Alliance Manual

Ontario Human Rights Commission

policy around discrimination and harassment because of sexual orientation or gender identity: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>

Rainbow Youth Niagara, Niagara Pride Support Services

Safer Schools for Gender and Sexually Diverse Youth: A Guide to Starting a Safer Space Program

Stonewall (UK)

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT) and Allies Guide: Creating Change at Your School

**New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive
Education Resource is part of
Egale's Safer and Accepting
Schools.**

