

Virtual GSA Activity Ideas

This resource is to spark ideas to keep your GSA activities relevant, meaningful and in-tune with the needs and wants of your members. They are grouped into three functions: Mutual Care, Social Engagement and Organizing Action!

START

In addition to name and pronoun check-ins, it can be helpful to do a general check-in at the start. This way you can capture how members are feeling and help everyone to feel seen, heard and included.

Regardless of when and what kind of check-in you are doing, it is important to remind everyone that they can always pass their turn.

Getting Started

Group introductions including name and pronoun sharing is a great way to start, especially when there are new members to the group. Even if everyone already knows one another, this is an important practice when moving your GSA to a virtual format. Remember, the name/pronoun someone goes by at home, may be different compared to what they go by at school. If possible, encourage participants to share this information on their screen name within the video conferencing tool you are using. For more on pronouns, check out this [resource](#) or watch this [video](#).

Here are some quick and easy check-in formats that you can use to open your meetings:

- Share a rose (highlight) and thorn (low point) from your day/week/time since we last met
- My energy level right now is ____
- If I could describe myself right now as a type of weather I would be ____
- Share where you are currently at or how you are feeling with an emoji or a GIF

Mutual Care



Facilitate a Peer Support Circle

GSA meetings can be a vital opportunity for participants to access or offer community care and support. If possible, it may be helpful to have a staff advisor facilitate these types of sessions. The facilitator should feel comfortable and competent in using a range of [active listening strategies](#).

It is important to emphasize that sharing is completely optional and that anyone is free to quietly remove themselves from a conversation that may not be feeling good for them. Participants should be encouraged to practice self-care strategies and to ask for additional support if they need it.

For more on facilitating peer support groups check out this [resource](#).

Here are some sample prompts for your support circle. Ask your GSA participants to submit question prompts for the kinds of conversations they want to have!

General

- One thing I've really been struggling with lately
- What does self-care mean and look like to you? How about community care?
- Is there any forms of care, support or a resource you can safely offer to anyone in the group at this time?
- Name a person, place or thing that helps you stay grounded when you are feeling unsettled.

Pandemic

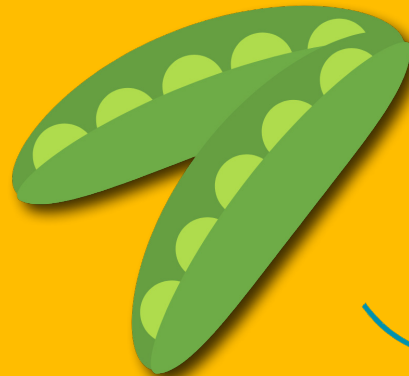
- Name a queer affirming space or resource you are sad to have lost (because of the pandemic) and one that you are happy to have found (because of the pandemic)
- One thing I miss most about life before covid, and one thing this experience has taught me.
- How do you stay connected to queer-affirming community during this time?
- One thing I miss most is

Show and Tell

Ask participants to prepare ahead of time one idea, activity, tool or resource they are excited about. Have them explain what it is, why they are excited about it, how they found it, what is it inspiring them to do? Encourage them to add it into a shared file.

Move Your Bodies Together

Use your GSA meeting to do some stretching exercises or do some gentle movement together over. Check out Egale's signature [LGBTQ!2S exercise routine!](#)



Organize a Care Pod

Your GSA can be a good place to introduce the idea of co-creating a care pod, a concept put forward by author and performer [Kai Cheng Thom](#) and inspired by [Mia Mingus](#) and the [Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective](#). A care pod is a small circle or network of mutual support, facilitated by a tool such as a group chat. It is a place where members can share support needs or plan and offer support. Kai Cheng discusses important elements of successful care pods such as fostering a culture of consent, boundaries and ensuring members feel supported. For more on care pods check out this [link](#).



Facilitate a Closing Circle

If a meeting involves some intense discussion or sharing of personal experience, doing a closing circle at the end can help the group feel supported and not alone in their feelings. These check-ins can also be a good way of assessing how the group is feeling about an activity and if you need to spend more/less time on something or create additional space for support.

Here is a list of closing activities that can help your GSA members express their feelings and needs after a meeting:

- “Share one word or one action that expresses how you’re feeling right now.”
- Use Rock, Stick, Leaf: “To close our day, we’ll go around the circle and have everyone share something that rocked for them, something that will stick with them, and something they’d like to leaf (leave) behind.”
- “Leaving this meeting, what is one thing you are going to do today to take care of yourself, or to make yourself feel good?”

Social Engagement



Attend a Live Online Event Together

There is a rich variety of queer and/or social justice-focused learning, entertainment and engagement options online. Have GSA members pool together a list of suggested events such as webinars, livestream panel talks, or any events by queer artists and cultural producers like [Glad Day TV](#) and have a vote! This is a great way to support queer and trans artists during particularly rough times. As another option, if only some of your group can attend a certain event, reserve some time in your GSA meeting for reporting back.

Invite a Guest Speaker

Take advantage of all the willing community activists and cultural workers who would be interested in coming to your GSA to speak. Look for speakers who may be able to discuss topics such as anti-oppression, LGBTQI2S history, art therapy, sex education, career or post-secondary planning, LGBTQI2S experience, decolonization, DIY projects, astrology/tarot and much more!

Please note that we recommend you take some time to raise funds to hire speakers who work directly in the community. People living at the intersections of multiple systems of oppression, including QTBIPOC people, or trans feminine people, are often the ones to provide the most valuable perspectives to critical movements, yet it is often this labour that is often undervalued and underpaid. Please, pay your guest speakers.



Virtual Open Mic

A virtual open mic can be a fun and engaging activity to do with your GSA. Does your membership have untapped talent? Do they play instruments? Want to try stand-up comedy? Want to read their poetry? Can they juggle? Do acrobatics or magic tricks? Sing? Can't sing? (Karaoke is always a good time!)

Film or Book Discussion

Hosting a film or book discussion can be a great way to prompt larger conversations about LGBTQI2S experiences.

Pool a list of titles together and vote on your choice of what to read or watch together as a group. Ask your members to bring topics, comments, and questions for discussion.

Be sure to provide an appropriate content warning for each book or film whenever possible. Ensure your group knows they can take space to breathe or work through any sensory overload or content triggers.

Check to see if your GSA members have access to a common movie or TV streaming service like Netflix or Crave. Some services have options to watch together in real time, such as [Netflix Party](#). Be sure that you are not excluding any member of GSA in your choice. Some videoconferencing tools may also have decent screen sharing options.

You can also find some excellent free LGBTQ film streaming opportunities available through [CBC](#) and [your local public library](#).

Here are some ideas and prompts for book or film discussions:

- Who is the imagined audience for the film or book?
- Whose voices are centered in the narrative? Whose voices are marginal? Whose are missing entirely?
- Are there any parts of this film/book that were uncomfortable, problematic, or that used outdated language? How does this change our perceptions of the film/book?
- Did any questions come up or were there things that sparked your curiosity to learn more?
- Were there ideas or opinions you agree or disagree with?
- How did the main characters express their gender and/or sexualities in a way that was affirming for them?
- Was sexuality or gender key to the plot?
- Did this film feature QTBIPOC (Queer and trans Black, Indigenous, or people of colour)?
- What were the moments that stirred your emotions and what emotions did they bring up?
- Did you make any connections to other events, ideas or experiences?

Get in touch with Egale to arrange access to stream [Sex, Sin and 69'](#), a documentary commemorating 50 years since the decriminalization of homosexuality. The documentary comes with learning materials and a discussion guide.

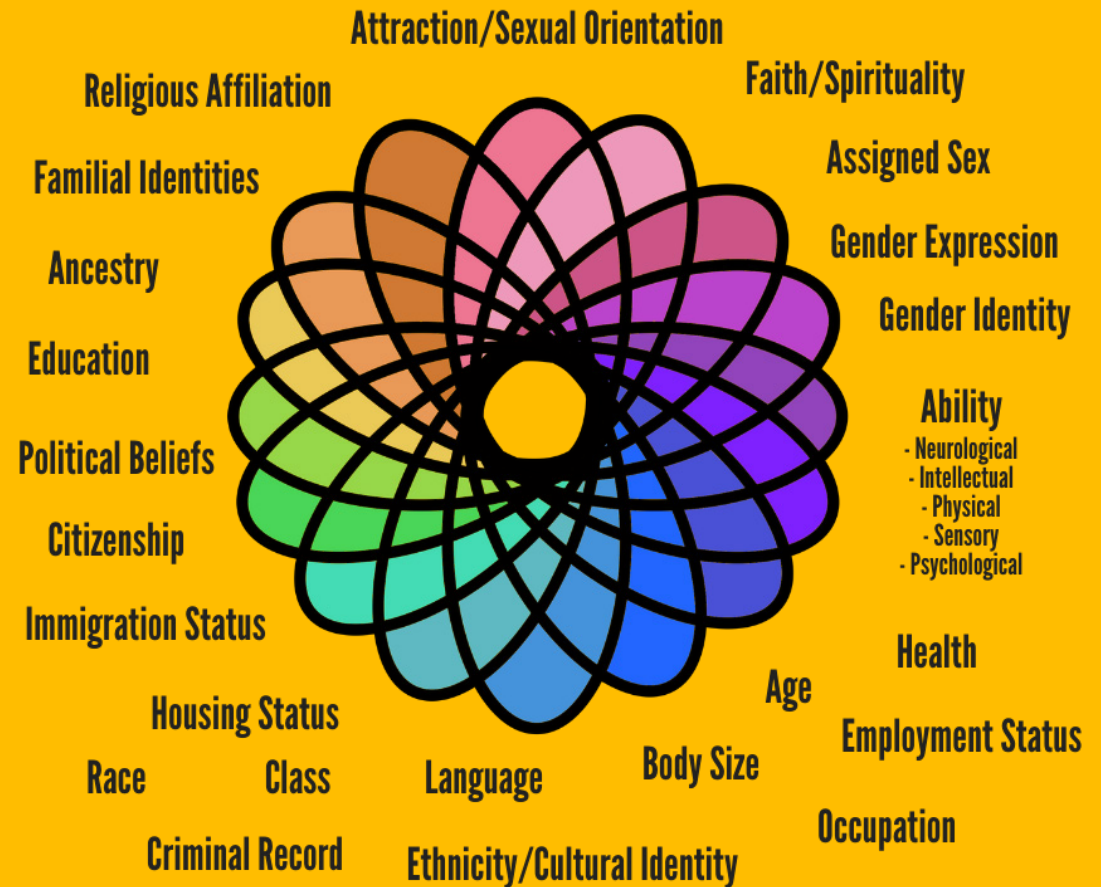
Check out and order titles featured at [Glad Day Book Shop](#), the World's Oldest LGBTQ Bookstore.

Organizing Action

Another key function of your GSA is organizing for action towards positive change in your school community and beyond. What adaptations or adjustments can be made to your GSAs previous action plans to continue the project in this new environment? Have new priorities emerged?

Set aside GSA meetings to discuss how your GSA is going to sustain and define/redefine its action-oriented goals and projects.

Here are a few ideas your GSA can pursue in learning, engaging and organizing!



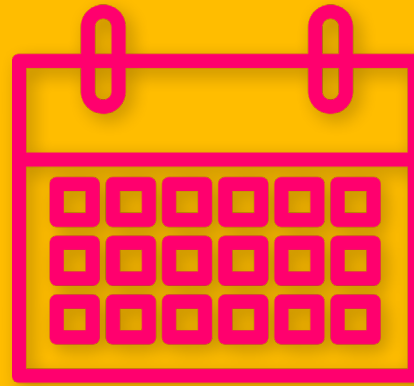
Keep it Intersectional

Together in your GSA, commit to learning about and participating in emerging and ongoing movements for intersectional justice. Some example issue-areas you may include are disability rights, labour rights, anti-racism, and access to healthcare. Discuss how these issues overlap and intersect with issues facing diverse LGBTQI2S people and what your GSA can do to raise awareness in your school community and beyond.



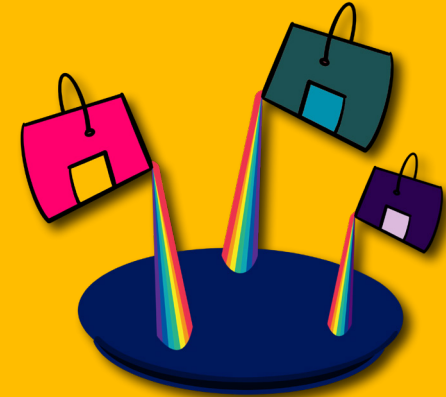
Initiate a Digital Campaign Against Anti-LGBTQI2S Cyberbullying

With more time spent in online environments than ever, and general stressors being higher, now is an especially important time to remind your school community about the importance of respectful, inclusive and violence free environments online and beyond. Check out [Egale's Anti-LGBTQI2S Cyberbullying resource](#).



Recognize a Queer Event of Significance

Your GSA can discuss how to meaningfully mark and engage with days/events of significance. Events and days like Pride, Trans Day of Remembrance, Trans Day of Visibility, and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia are some significant examples.



Connect with and Pool Resources and Efforts with other GSAs

Community is imperative especially during a pandemic, reach out to other neighboring GSAs and see what they are doing. With more GSAs going virtual (fully or in part), this is a great opportunity to connect and exchange ideas and resources with other GSAs nearby, across the country or even world!