

# Balancing Functions of a GSA

GSAs can fulfill a variety of functions that meet a range of different needs and wants. Some of the common functions of a GSA are to support LGBTQI2S students, build community with LGBTQI2S students and allies, and create social change. We can group these under the categories: **Social Engagement**, **Mutual Care**, and **Organizing Action**. Most GSAs do all three things, but the focus can differ between groups and change over time.

## Social Engagement

GSAs are often a place where students make new friends and create positive community in their school. GSAs can create opportunities for a group of people to do social activities together.


## Mutual Care

GSAs can be a place to provide emotional peer support among LGBTQI2S students. It can be a safer space for students to discuss experiences such as coming out, family relationships, dating, questioning aspects of identities, transitioning, navigating barriers in school and elsewhere, facing discrimination and harassment, etc.

## Organizing Action

GSAs provide a great opportunity for students to work together in order to enact change in their school community and beyond. Examples can look like:

- Petitioning to change school policies to be more inclusive
- Working with teachers and administrators to improve access to all-gender washrooms
- Creating workshops about LGBTQI2S inclusion and presenting them to teachers or classes at school
- Creating campaigns to prevent discrimination and harassment in school



Your GSA most likely has students who are looking for a variety of different functions – some students might be looking for primarily emotional support and community while others are looking for a chance to make a difference and learn more about activism. It might be helpful to have different meetings that focus on each of these areas separately so that all students have their needs met.