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Run a GSA

Congratulations! If you've landed here, that means you've already started your GSA club. Starting a GSA is a huge accomplishment, and you should feel proud. Getting your GSA started is only part of challenge! On this page you'll find out about what comes next…running your GSA!

Building Your GSA

OK, I've had my first meeting… now what?

Getting a GSA started is sometimes such a big challenge that it's hard to think about what to do after you've had your first meeting! GSAs come in various forms, from small clubs with only a few students, to large groups, or even ones that are part of a class.

The Building Your GSA [1] section has everything you need to know to organize a kick-ass GSA. Just follow the steps to BUILD your club!

> "Having a GSA at my school is extremely important because homophobia is so common among my peers that most of them don't even recognize they're hurting other students, me included. I started a GSA at my high school because I know what it's like to walk around campus and have others comment about my sexuality in mean ways, and I want to create a safe space for queer and straight youth to get along together."
>
> -- Scottie Gonzalez, 11th grade, William C. Overfelt High School, San Jose

Increasing Your Membership

Regardless of the size, one of the constant issues facing your GSA will be getting folks involved

and keeping them involved. Some GSAs provide snacks at their meetings to entice people to come. Other GSAs have an outreach table in a prominent place on campus at lunchtime.

Learn how to increase GSA membership [2] and build student power.

Check out this list of fun things to do [3] with your GSA. Hosting events and social activities is a great way to generate even more interest in your club.

> "I started my GSA in my small home town in 1999, and I can't believe it has been around now for 10 years! After my GSA started at my high school, GSAs started in the town's middle schools. Now all the middle schools and the high school have GSAs and continue to promote education and awareness! It's amazing to think that just the act of starting one small club, could change things so much…"
>
> --Geoffrey Winder, former Davis High School GSA President, GSA Network Alumni

Leading Your Club

As a GSA Leader, other students will look to you for leadership. This can be overwhelming for some students, and it is key to remember that most people in the GSA are just as nervous as you are.

Once you've had a few meetings, your GSA club will need to choose a leadership model and meeting structure [4] and agree on a decision making process [5]. Agreeing to a plan will help alleviate some of the nervousness you may have.

We recommend that you have different members take turns running GSA meetings. Here are some tips for facilitating a meeting.

> "I wasn't born a leader; I became one out of necessity. It was after being faced with homophobic and transphobic discrimination that I chose to push myself to start and lead a GSA. It wasn't at all easy to lead, especially because I was naturally very shy and timid. But I continually put myself out of my comfort zone until I was comfortable to lead and, now, easily socialize with other people."
>
> --Isobel Murrillo, 12th grade, Pete Knight High School, Palmdale

Getting Support

With the right support, GSA youth activists have the power to defeat homophobia and transphobia in school.

An Awesome Advisor [6] can be one of the biggest assets a GSA has. The Adults and Advisors [7] section outlines everything that is needed to be an effective, empowering GSA Advisor and adult ally. You can also:

- Register your GSA [8] with GSA Network so you can access all of our free resources and support.
- Subscribe to GSA Network News [9] to get email newsletters from GSA Network about upcoming events and resources.
- Contact a program coordinator [10] in your region if your GSA encounters problems. We can provide advice or come visit your school.
- Know your rights! Check out the Legal Resources [11] section.

> "GSA is important because it offers a resource of kind, caring individuals to talk to, as well as providing a space for activism."
>
> -- Sophie Lieberman, 12th grade, The Urban School, San Francisco

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GSA Network 1550 Bryant St., Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94103 | 415-552-4229 | info@gsanetwork.org
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