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Creating Anti-Ableist GSAs!

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Recently I trained GSA Network staff on how we can work to create anti-ableist safe spaces to be more inclusive of disabled people in our anti-oppression work. What is ableism? **Ableism is the institutionally supported belief that there are such things as good and normal bodies and minds**, and the system that assigns privilege to some bodies and minds and not to others. Ableism works to marginalize and oppress disabled people. **Anti-ableism is working to end the individual, social, and institutional systems of power and privilege that disempower and marginalize disabled people.**

So how do we do it? ??Here are a few different ways that your GSA can work to be Anti-Ableist and be inclusive of people with disabilities:??

Be aware of accessibility. This means making sure your space and resources are made available to and respectful of the needs of disabled people. Since there are many different types of disabilities, there are many different ways in which spaces and resources need to be made accessible. For general guidelines, check out **National Youth Leadership Network?s (NYLN)** amazing article [1] on how to be an ally to disabled people.

Think about your language. Words like ?retarded,? ?crazy,? and ?lame? have been used to bully people with disabilities. If you?re running an anti-slur campaign at your school, be sure to include these words!

Learn and Teach! It?s hard to be an ally or engage in anti-ableism if you don?t know who it is for or how to do it. **LGBT History Month and Disability History Month are both October!** Now is a great time to talk about the intersections of the LGBT and Disability Rights movements because the **FAIR Education Act** is now law. This video [2] by YO! Disabled and Proud talks about the importance of disability history.??

I will also be doing trainings for the Northern California Youth Council meeting and for GSA Network?s Expression Not Suppression conference in Fresno on March 24th! If you?re in the area, stop by and be sure to look for me!??

Organizations to Check Out!?
National Youth Leadership Network http://www.nyln.org/? [3]
YO! Disabled and Proud http://www.yodisabledproud.org/ [4]

Bullying is a Waste of Time [5] - Video

Source URL: http://www.gsanetwork.org/news/blog/creating-anti-ableist-gsas/01/26/12

Links:
[1] http://www.nyln.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/disability-ally-flyer-062508.pdf
[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5ed6ra-4-k&feature=player_embedded
[3] http://www.nyln.org/?
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