



Day of Silence®
Organizing Manual

WELCOME!

*Welcome to the Day of Silence Manual! This resource is filled with information and organizing strategies that will help make your Day of Silence as successful and effective as possible. By participating in the Day of Silence, you are joining one of the largest student-led actions in the country and helping to ensure safe and inclusive schools for all students. We encourage you to use this manual in whatever way works best for you- you may choose to use ideas from a particular section or bring some of your own original strategies into your planning. The website, **www.dayofsilence.org**, is a particularly useful tool, with additional resources, ideas and up-to-date information on this year's event. Thank you for your important work and happy organizing!*

For High School Organizing Contact:

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I. Introduction

What is GLSEN?

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community. For more information on GLSEN's educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs, research or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

What is the Day of Silence?

Founded in 1996 by students at the University of Virginia, and currently officially sponsored in K-12 schools by GLSEN, the Day of Silence is the largest student-led action to protest the bullying and harassment of LGBT people and their allies. Participants take a day long vow of silence and distribute or wear speaking cards with information about anti-LGBT bias and ways for students and others to "end the silence." Through Breaking the Silence events, which are typically held at the end of the school day, students can speak out against harassment and demand change for their schools and communities.

What can the Day of Silence do?

The Day of Silence can be used as a tool to affect positive change – both personally and community-wide. The Day of Silence is designed to draw attention to the bullying and harassment faced by LGBT students everywhere. Silence is used as a tactic to provide a space for personal reflections about the consequences of being silent and silenced. The Day of Silence is an effort that can raise awareness on this issue, prompting people to talk and think about it. Think about what change is needed in your community and how the Day of silence can be a building block in your efforts to create change.

For more information about how to use the Day of Silence to create change see "How to Get What You Want With An Ask!" in the Resources section at the end of this Manual.

What does the Day of Silence look like?

No two Day of Silence events look exactly the same. Students everywhere design the day in ways that make sense for their particular school. Many students make t-shirts with slogans supporting LGBT students and their allies. Students pass out "speaking cards" that state the intention of the day and ask for understanding and consideration from their peers, faculty and administrations. Events range in size from a single student to a thousand students spending an entire day in silence plus hundreds more wearing or showing signs of support.

Registering your Student Club for Day of Silence and other GLSEN Days of Action

There are two important parts of registering. First you should register yourself and/or your student club on www.dayofsilence.org. When you register you will receive a free packet of resources from GLSEN that will help you organize future event and Days of Action. You will also be added to our Student Organizing Listserv to receive our weekly newsletter. The newsletter includes information about the Days of Action, our Jump-Start National Student Leadership team, as well as events happening in local areas. When you register a student club you will be added to our ever-growing list of student clubs around the country, and your club and your school can be listed online.

The second part of registering is specific to the Day of Silence. Every year students around the country register their participation in the Day of Silence at www.dayofsilence.org. Registering allows GLSEN to measure the success of the Day of Silence for media outlets as well as for our own future planning. In addition to being part of a larger picture, GLSEN will send you materials and resources to aid in your planning.

Find information on all of the Days of Action, including the Day of Silence, at www.dayofsilence.org or email info@dayofsilence.org.

II. The Basics of Organizing your Day of Silence Event(s)

Select Your Team

First things first, you should build a team of people who are willing to help you organize the Day of Silence at your school. You may want to organize the Day of Silence through an established school group (such as the Gay-Straight Alliance [GSA], Amnesty Club or Student Council), or you may want to build a coalition of interested individuals from different school groups. It's important, however, for you to think very carefully about the people you need and want to include, and for you to recognize that as you begin and continue to plan, your needs may change. Try to get a group of people together who have a variety of strengths and interests, such as public speaking, making fliers, organizing publicity, fundraising and contacting potential supporters. Can you organize the Day of Silence alone? Yes, but the impact will be significantly greater if you reach out to others to join you.

Use the Day of Silence Team Building Sheet to help you put your team together (page 4).

Building a Coalition

Why Build a Coalition?

Think of other school clubs, community organizations, faculty members, staff and local community leaders that might be interested in working with you. These different groups of people will be useful for the following reasons:

- To provide programs and use resources more efficiently and effectively and to eliminate any duplication of services (in other words, to avoid reinventing the wheel)
- To increase communication between groups and break down stereotypes
- To revitalize the sagging energies of members of diverse groups who are trying to do too much on their own
- To plan and launch community-wide efforts
- To win victories that couldn't be won by one group alone
- To build a stronger power base
- To develop new leaders

Build it

Be strategic in how you construct your coalition. Don't assume it will come together "naturally." Who you ask, how you ask them and who you ask first, second and third are all important. Some groups won't join if others have been asked first. Some groups won't work together and you won't be able to get both on board. Take into account your own goals and organizing considerations.

It's important to build a diverse, representative coalition. Start with a list of every student and/or community group that is concerned with, affected by or working on diversity, equity and social justice issues. Be creative with your list; don't limit it to the most obvious choices. Once you have your comprehensive "wish list," you can begin to narrow it down according to specific concerns and circumstance. Identify the self-interest or the reason each group might have for wanting to join the coalition, and understand and respect that groups will have different reasons for joining. All needed groups should be signed on and at the table from the beginning. Diversity will only happen if the coalition works on issues that cut across many groups and acknowledges how barriers created by institutional sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism and classism affect the internal workings of the coalition.

Use the Day of Silence Planning Sheet (page 9) to help organize your thoughts.

Reaching out to faculty, staff and administration

It can sometimes be difficult to get support from your faculty, staff and administration when planning the Day of Silence. One way you can start to build positive relationships with faculty, staff and administration is to be communicative about your plans for the Day of Silence. Providing each member of the faculty, staff and administration with a letter explaining the Day of Silence and what your activities will look like and asking them for their support is a great place to start.

If your school's administration does not support your participation in Day of Silence, there are alternative ways that you can participate, which are discussed on page 6 in this manual.

III. Silence Throughout the Day

Participating in the Day of Silence can be a powerful, moving and sometimes challenging experience. Take care of Day of Silence participants by keeping them well informed and providing them with opportunities to communicate their feelings about the Day. You can do this by supporting them before, during and after the Day of Silence.

Before the Day of Silence

We recommend that you hold a participants' meeting to talk about what the Day of Silence might look like and what people might expect. These meetings can consist of current organizers, and even past participants, talking about the logistics of the Day and handing out materials and guidelines. These meetings will bring together participants, creating an important support network. Many people feel more empowered and energized if they are connected to a communal effort.

During the Day of Silence

The Day of Silence has the potential to be a solitary event; at large schools, participants may be dispersed, and remaining silent for nine hours can feel very isolating. In order to help participants throughout the day, you should set up some support activities and safe spaces. One event could be a "silent lunch," which would promote visibility, publicity and participant unity. You should also establish a safe space, somewhere participants can visit if they are feeling stressed out during the day. The space should have snacks and someone to talk to, perhaps a supportive counselor or members of a local LGBT organization. For students who want to remain silent but feel the need to express themselves, offering them a space to come and write their thoughts on paper for personal reflection is a good idea. These writings should be completely personal and read only by the author and those who have been given the author's permission. Taking care of participants should be a number one priority.

After the Day of Silence

People are going to have much to say once they begin to speak again, so it is important to have additional events, such as a "Breaking the Silence" rally at the end of the day, or a more informal reflection gathering. Breaking the Silence events also provide participants with an opportunity to celebrate their achievement(s) and will provide organizers with a springboard for future organizing. Above all, remember to have fun.

IV. Breaking the Silence

What does it mean to Break the Silence?

A Breaking the Silence event is an opportunity for participants in the Day of Silence to finally speak out about their experience of the Day. Breaking the Silence means something different everywhere you go. In many cases, Breaking the Silence is the first moment that any of the participants speak on the Day of Silence. In some places it is a celebration of the events of the day and individual successes. It can also be a combination of both. It may look like a big rally or like a small meeting, but a Breaking the Silence event is always a great way to end your Day of Silence activities.

What does a Breaking the Silence event look like?

Participants from previous years have used lots of ways to Break the Silence:

"New Year's Eve" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day, there's a silent countdown to the designated finish time and when the clock strikes, everyone screams, hollers, sings, rings bells, blow whistles, beats drums, shakes, noise makers and so on.

"Daybreak" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day, there's a silent countdown to the designated finish time and when the clock strikes, people begin slowly to make noise or speak as the feeling comes to them.

"One Voice" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day and when the clock strikes participants take turns going up to the microphones and speaking to the entire group. One powerful approach is to have participants describe how it felt to remain silent for nine hours and the responses they received throughout the day. Remember that participating in the Day of Silence can be a very emotional and exhausting event for people. Expect various types of conversations to ensue.

How can I organize a Breaking the Silence event?

Organizing a Breaking the Silence event goes along with the Day of Silence Planning. Some important things to remember about planning your Breaking the Silence event:

- Permission (Advisor/Administration)
- Choosing space to hold event (e.g., gym, cafeteria, sports field, auditorium)
- Reserving space for event
- Advertising (e.g., posters, flyers, announcements, emails, websites)
- Program (e.g., speakers, guests, bands, open mic etc...)
- Press Releases
- Logistics (e.g., sound system, decorations etc...)
- Staff and Responsibilities (what members of your team will need to be there to help and what will their role be while they are there)

Use the Day of Silence Planning Timeline for further suggestions (page 8).

V. How to Handle Road Blocks

When the School Administration says "No"

In high schools, approval from the principal or other appropriate staff is important when student organizers are working on any project. When approaching your school's administration, it helps to have the backing of a student club and its advisor(s). If your administration does not approve of or support the Day of Silence, you may want to consider planning a community event outside of school, in the morning or evening. You may also want to consider other types of projects inside the school that would seek to educate the administration and/or decision-maker who has not allowed the Day of Silence to take place.

It is important to let all faculty and staff in your school know about the Day of Silence. The best way to let faculty and staff know about the Day of Silence and your reasons for being silent is to write a letter to all faculty and staff and place it in their mailboxes. In the letter be sure to include:

- A description of the Day of Silence
- Information about the speaking cards
- Date of your Day of Silence events
- Where they can find out more information
- A "Thank You" for their support and understanding

Remember, staying silent is not the only way to participate in the day. If silence is not an option at your school, here are five alternative ways you may wish to participate in the event:

1. Ask friends or school groups to join you and gather at a table or area for a silent lunch to recognize the Day of Silence. End this period by spending some time discussing how you feel LGBT students and their allies are silenced because of harassment, discrimination and abuse, and brainstorm ways you can help end the silence.
2. Ask a supportive teacher to let you talk for five minutes at the beginning of class about the Day of Silence and why you think it's important.
3. Wear a ribbon, shirt, button, sticker or other graphic display of support for the Day of Silence. Each person you reach with the name and information about the project may be a supportive ally in organizing the project next year.
4. Write a letter to the editor of your school newspaper, explaining why events like the Day of Silence raise awareness of LGBT issues in education and how these issues are important in your school.
5. Check out the Day of Silence "Resources" online at www.dayofsilence.org and start talking to your teachers, classmates and friends about the Day of silence and why it's important. While participation may not be possible this year, starting to build a base of support will help you better next year towards creating a truly awesome Day of Silence at your school.

Day of Silence Fact Sheet and FAQ

What is the Day of Silence?

The Day of Silence is a student-led action where concerned students, from middle school to college, take some form of a vow of silence to bring attention to the name-calling, bullying and harassment—in effect, the silencing—experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

Who started the Day of Silence?

In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence with over 150 students participating. In 1997, organizers took their effort national and nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. In 2001, GLSEN became the official organizational sponsor.

Has the Day of Silence been successful?

In 2008, hundreds of thousands of students from more than 8,000 K-12 schools, colleges and universities organized Day of Silence events. These numbers make the Day of Silence one of the largest student-led actions in the United States. The event has drawn significant attention to LGBT issues in schools over the years. For example, GLSEN spokespersons have appeared on national media outlets and there has always been extensive local media coverage from coast to coast, with numerous interviews with students.

Why do we need a Day of Silence?

GLSEN's 2007 National School Climate Survey found that 9 out of 10 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and more than 30% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day of Silence helps bring us closer to making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

The Day of Silence is a call to action. Students can use this day, as well as other GLSEN Days of Action, as a means of achieving an "ask." An ask is a very specific action that calls for a change in school policies, climate and culture to achieve a larger goal of safe schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Some examples of an ask include: adding sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in your school's non-discrimination or anti-harassment policy or training teachers to respond effectively to anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling.

Does the work end after the day is over?

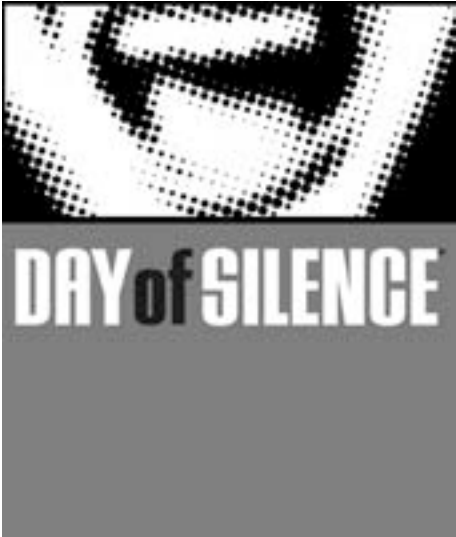
The Day of Silence is one element of a larger effort to create safe schools for all students regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Many communities, in addition to supporting the Day of Silence, host Breaking The Silence events, rallies, legislative lobby days, performances and more – both on the Day of Silence and all year round. We are also asking our national leaders to support policies that create safe schools for all. Many communities are asking their local and state leaders to support and implement similar policies. You can get connected to an ongoing national effort by registering your GSA with GLSEN.

What do you have to say about potential opponents to the Day of Silence?

The issue at hand is the bullying, harassment, name-calling and violence that students see and face in our schools. The Day of Silence is an activity created and led by students to educate their peers and bring an end to this harassment.

Those who do not support the Day of Silence often protest, but rarely contribute positively to finding ways to end anti-LGBT harassment. Some individuals and groups organize events in response to the Day of Silence. These events grossly mischaracterize or simply misunderstand the basic purpose of the Day of Silence. Bringing attention to these events only adds a false credibility to their misinformation about the Day of Silence, GLSEN and the thousands of American students taking action. If you face hostile students or organizations in your school on the Day of Silence remember to remain calm. We encourage you to not get into a debate, make gestures, and certainly not to get into a physical altercation. If you continue to be harassed, we encourage you to contact your GSA advisor or other ally school staff person.

We look forward to engaging all organizations and individuals who share The Day of Silence vision of schools free from anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment.



Day of Silence Planning Sheet

When are your Day of Silence events taking place?

What is your message?

Who is your target audience?

How are you going to reach your target audience?

What other student clubs, community groups or organizations can you work with?

What needs to get accomplished in order to have a successful Day of Silence and whose responsibility is it? * Don't forget to check it off when it is completed.

What needs to get done?	Whose responsibility is it?
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<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	
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* If you need help with this, look at the Day of Silence Timeline and refer to the roles of the team members you just filled out to determine who should be working on it. Consider enlarging this and posting on the wall where you meet.

VI. Working With the Media

Press Release:

You can use the media to attract attention to your message and your event. Tell print and electronic media about the Day of Silence by sending a press release and calling their offices. The press release is one of the most commonly used tools for getting press attention. GLSEN has provided you with a Sample Press Release in this manual for you to use with local media outlets.

Consistency in messaging to media outlets is very important when promoting such a big event as the Day of Silence. We encourage all students contacting the media to use the language in the Sample Press Release to promote their activities. Once you have gotten the attention of the media and they contact you, then you can provide them with additional information about your activities.

Use the Day of Silence Sample Press Release as a guideline (page 11).

Inviting the Media in:

Another way you can involve the media is to invite them to attend the event or planning meeting to cover the story. It is important that the media have a single contact person when scheduling interviews and asking questions. It is best if the student leader organizing the Day of Silence is that contact person. This ensures that the media is speaking with someone who has the most information available to them. The media contact person should have a quote or two prepared for answering common questions. Here are a few frequently asked questions that you might want to prepare to answer ahead of time:

- Why do you think we need the Day of Silence at this school?
- What are some examples of anti-LGBT bias at this school that make the Project relevant?
- How do you think that silence can end silence?
- How would you describe the general atmosphere at your school regarding LGBT people?
- How many people are participating in the Day of Silence at this school, and who are they? (i.e., What groups are they from?) How many other schools are planning the Day of Silence?

Tips:

- The most important thing about being interviewed is to make sure that you are comfortable. If you feel that you may not be comfortable with an interview, feel free to ask your faculty/staff advisor or a faculty/staff member you trust to be present at the interview.
- Don't be afraid to end the interview if you are uncomfortable in any way.
- If you are being interviewed and you do not like a certain question, feel free to redirect it.
- Make sure you talk about what you want to talk about, because you are better informed than the reporters.
- Refer to your worksheet and stick with your message.
- Ask reporters to read back your quotes at the end of the interview. Doing this can avoid misquotations, although sometimes mistakes happen anyway.
- For more information about answering questions to the media, please see page 7.

Use the Day of Silence Frequently Asked Questions to help you speak to the media (page 7).

Sample Local Press Release

Press Release For Immediate Distribution

Contact:

[NAME OF CONTACT PERSON]
[CONTACT PHONE NUMBER]
[CONTACT E-MAIL]

Students at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] Take Part in a Day Of Silence

[INSERT NAME OF CITY, STATE AND DATE]: Get ready for the campus to be a little quieter. On [INSERT DATE], students at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] will join students across the nation in a Day of Silence to protest the discrimination, harassment and abuse—in effect the silencing—faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and their allies in schools.

The Day of Silence, a project of GLSEN, will be held during school hours at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]. Over [INSERT NUMBER] participants will be silent on [INSERT DATE], wearing stickers and passing out 'speaking cards' that read:

"Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement protesting the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies in schools. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by harassment, prejudice, and discrimination. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today. What are you going to do to end the silence?"

"The Day of Silence," according to local organizer [INSERT STUDENT NAME], "is especially relevant to [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] because [INSERT STUDENT QUOTE OF RELEVANCE]." [INSERT STUDENT NAME] hopes that the event will work towards ending some of the silence and hatred students face.

GLSEN's 2007 National School Climate Survey found that more than 9 out of 10 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 30% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day of Silence is one way students and their allies are making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in American's schools.

About the Day of Silence

The Day of Silence, a project of GLSEN, is a nationwide, student-led event during which hundreds of high schools and colleges protest the oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. For more information contact Local Organizer [INSERT CONTACT NAME].

For more information and a complete collection of organizing materials, visit www.dayofsilence.org.

About GLSEN

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on creating safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on our educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

VII. After the Silence

Assessing the Effort

A Breaking the Silence event may be a good time to hand out a generic evaluation of the Day of Silence. The experience of the Day will be fresh for participants to report on and getting the forms back will be quite simple. You can have one person in charge of collecting the completed forms or offer participants a "Prize" for handing in their form. Doing this at a Breaking the Silence Event may prove useful in that you won't have to search for your participants.

If you are not holding a Breaking the Silence event you should try to hold a meeting of as many participants as possible within the next week, following the Day of Silence. One good idea is to create a system for measuring your goals. You could regularly revisit each goal and assign it a number or other value that everyone understands, in order to track your progress. You could make monthly goals and then a year-end or project-end goal for each area of your work, such as outreach, meetings, budget, participation, publicity, and so on. It's useful to have a method for evaluating your meetings and events, as well. One easy tool is the Plus/Delta. Take two large pieces of paper, and write a plus sign (+) at the top of one, and a delta sign (Δ), which is a symbol that represents change, at the top of the other. On the Plus page, ask participants to write something they liked, or that they thought was successful. On the Delta Page, ask participants to write something they would change. Someone in your group should volunteer to collect evaluations at all meetings and events, and to develop a summary.

Want to make assessment more fun? For a final wrap-up at the end of a project or the year, plan a party that doubles as a time to look back at your goals, assess your work, and begin new planning.

Use the sample evaluation (page 13).

Providing GLSEN with YOUR Feedback

It is important to register your event at GLSEN so that we can offer you resources for your event and help others know what is happening in your area. It is also helpful to have your event registered as it helps GLSEN identify accurate numbers of nationwide involvement in making schools safer for all students.

In addition to registering, when your event is over, completing the easy online feedback form at www.dayofsilence.org is helpful for you as well to GLSEN. Again, this helps GLSEN keep accurate numbers for nationwide reports as well as generate new resources to help with your reported challenges. Your feedback will also allow GLSEN to modify other Days of Action to include some of your ideas from your events so that students in schools nationwide can benefit from your work.

Day of Silence Sample Evaluation

This evaluation will help make future events more successful! Please complete the evaluation as best and honestly as you can. Once you have completed the evaluation, please return it to (Student Club Leader’s Name) as soon as you can. The first section asks you to check off the answer that best applies to you. The second section asks you to circle a number based on how much you agree with the statement. The last section is a short answer section. **Thanks!**

Please check the answer that best describes your involvement in the Day of Silence:

- I organized and silently participated in the Day of Silence
- I silently participated in the Day of Silence
- I supported the Day of Silence but did not remain silent

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling 1=“Strongly Disagree”; 2=“Disagree”; 3=“Agree”; 4=“Strongly Agree”.

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
* I am glad I was a part of the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* Other students at school were positive about my participation.	1	2	3	4
* Faculty, staff and administration supported me on the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* The Day of Silence had an impact at my school.	1	2	3	4
* Day of Silence organizers provided me with the support I needed before, during, and after the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* I would like to participate in the Day of Silence again.	1	2	3	4

What did you like most about the Day of Silence? (Please be specific.)

How would you improve the Day of Silence in the future? (Please be specific.)

Additional Comments:

If you are interested in learning more please provide your email address or other contact information below:

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

IX. Glossary of Terms

Ally – sometimes referred to as “straight ally,” this term is not exclusive to heterosexual people in the GLSEN context, an ally is a person who is politically aligned and empathetic to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

Bias – Refers to an action taken or a pattern of behavior based on a prejudice against or for a group of people.

Bisexual – People who are attracted sexually and emotionally to some other males and females.

Breaking the Silence - A Breaking the Silence Event is an opportunity for participants in the Day of Silence to finally speak out about their experience being silent.

Coalition – a diverse group of individuals and organizations that work together to reach a common goal.

Day of Action - Each Day of Action is an opportunity for student organizers across the country to use their organizing skills to create, support, or participate in events that promote safer schools for all students.

Decision-maker - The person with the power to give you what you want.

Gay – A term used to describe males that are attracted sexually and emotionally to some other males. It can also be an umbrella term for anyone who is attracted to the same gender.

Gay-Straight Alliance – Refers to student-led clubs, particularly at the high school level, that work to promote respect for all students regardless of sexual orientation and provide a safe space for students that are LGBT, Queer, Questioning or Intersex.

GLSEN – Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

Lesbian – Females who are attracted to sexually and emotionally to some other females.

LGBT – An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. There are many variations on this acronym.

Organizing - our ability to change our communities: to identify problems and develop solutions, to bring people together, to plan strategies and campaigns, to hold people in power accountable to the communities they serve.

Plus(+)/Delta(Δ) – Evaluation tool that allows participants to discuss things that went well (plus +) and things they would like to change (delta Δ).

Queer - An umbrella term used by many whose sexual orientation or gender identity/expression is not considered “standard”. Typically known as a pejorative term, this has been reclaimed by some people in LGBT communities.

Sexual Orientation – The preferred term used when referring to an individual’s physical, emotional, romantic, and/or spiritual attraction to another person.

Strategy – a larger scheme of activities that are used to achieve a goal.

Tactics - deliberate, planned actions, that should be designed to show power to your target, and to increase visibility and support.

Transgender – Umbrella term to describe people whose gender expression and/or whose gender identity is different from assigned to them upon birth.

Websites

- www.dayofsilence.org
- www.glsen.org
- www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/curriculumchangechart.html - Midwest Academy Strategy Chart
- www.Gender.org

Key Findings

2007 National School Climate Survey



Introduction

GLSEN's National School Climate Survey is the only national survey to document the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students in America's high schools. Conducted bi-annually since 1999, the National School climate Survey fills a crucial void in our collective understanding of the contemporary high school experience.

This data is here to provide student organizers with tools to help build their message and/or campaigns while organizing for Days of Action.

Homophobic Remarks

- 73.6% of LGBT students report hearing homophobic remarks, such as "faggot," "dyke", and 90.2% heard the expression "that's so gay" frequently or often at school.
- 82.4% of LGBT students report that faculty or staff never intervened or intervened only some of the time when present and homophobic remarks were made.

Sense of Safety at School

- 60.8% of LGBT students report feeling unsafe at their school because of their sexual orientation and 38.4% feel unsafe because of their gender expression.
- 32.8% of LGBT students report missing at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe.

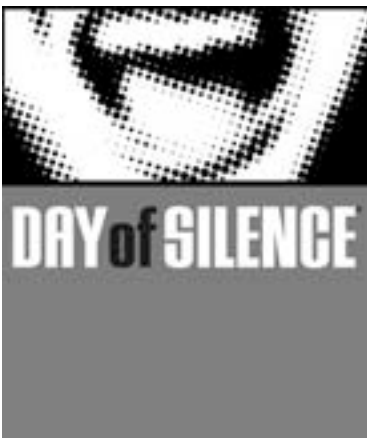
Harassment/Victimization

- 86.2% of LGBT students report being verbally harassed (called names, threatened, etc.) because of their sexual orientation, and 66.5% because of their gender expression.
- 44.1% of LGBT students report being physically harassed (being shoved, pushed, etc.) because of their sexual orientation.
- Within this vulnerable population, transgender students are even more at risk: 85.1% of transgender youth report being physically harassed because of their gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- 48.2% of LGBT youth of color report being verbally harassed because of both their sexual orientation and race/ethnicity.

Impact on Academic Achievement and Future Educational Aspirations

Students who frequently experienced harassment because of their sexual orientation had GPA's that were half a grade lower than those who did not: Average GPA for LGBT students who report frequent physical harassment: 2.4; Average GPA for LGBT students who report less frequent physical harassment: 2.8.

Students who experience frequent physical harassment because of their gender expression are less likely than other students to plan to attend college: 41.5% of LGBT students who report high frequencies of physical harassment do not intend to go to college, compared to 30.1% of students who report less frequent harassment.

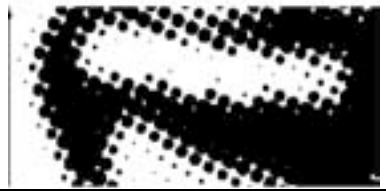


More Key Findings on Next Page...



Key Findings

2007 National School Climate Survey



Conclusion

Clearly, more work needs to be done in our nation's schools to create safer climates for all students. Local community leaders, teachers, parents and GSA members need to work within their schools and their school districts to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to learn. These findings help us better understand what that work should entail, and we call upon all school authorities to undertake such measures so that schools may promote better educational outcomes for LGBT students.

LGBT Resources, School Policies and Support Systems

Many schools fail to provide resources or support for their LGBT students. However, when supportive faculty or LGBT-related resources are available, LGBT students do better in school and are much more likely to plan to attend college. Furthermore, there is a definitive relationship between schools and communities having policies and laws regarding violence, bias and harassment against LGBT students and student safety.

The grade point average of students who had many supportive teachers or other staff was about half a grade higher than those who did not have this kind of support (2.9 versus 2.5).

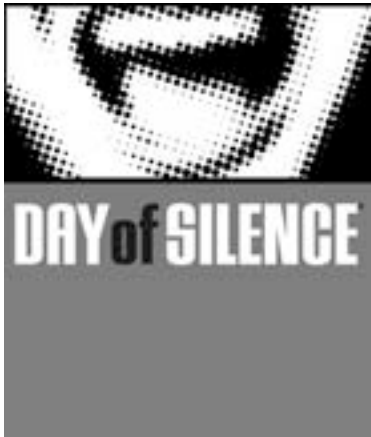
A greater number of educators supportive of LGBT students was also associated with higher educational aspirations — 15.1% of students with many supportive educators reported not planning on attending college versus 26.5% with no supportive educators.

LGBT students in schools with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) were more likely to feel safe in school than students whose schools do not have a GSA: 54.7% of LGBT students who report their schools do have a GSA, compared to 64.3% of students with no GSA.

Students from schools that have a comprehensive policy protecting them from violence and harassment are more likely to report incidents to school personnel: 18.7% of students with comprehensive policies told school staff about harassment, compared to 13.7% students with a generic policy and 11% with no policy.

About GLSEN

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and their allies. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on our educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.



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