



**A FAIR AND JUST COLORADO**

**ONE**  
COLORADO

# Agenda

- Introduction
- One Colorado Overview
- Why GSAs?
- Successful starts & building it up
- Tools & Resources
- Q & A

# What is a GSA?

Gay-Straight Alliances or Genders & Sexualities Clubs (GSAs) are:

- **student-initiated and student-run clubs**
- for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students and their allies
- a safe space for these students to meet, support each other, and educate their peers
- aimed at bringing an end homophobia and transphobia in schools

# Why have a GSA?



**FACT:** The vast majority of LGBTQ students in Colorado regularly heard anti-LGBT remarks (Fig. 1). Many also regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (13%) and negative remarks about someone's gender expression (31%).

**FACT:** Most LGBTQ students in Colorado had been victimized at school (Fig. 2). Of those, most never reported the incident to school staff (59%). Only 40% of those students who reported incidents said it resulted in effective staff intervention.

- 88% of students in Colorado reported hearing anti-LGBTQ remarks from peers and school staff on a regular basis
- Sexual orientation and gender expression remain two of the highest reported categories of identity-based harassment and assault in Colorado schools

# GSAs and School Climate:

- Feel a greater sense of connectedness to the school community
- Less likely to hear homophobic remarks such as “gay” used in a negative way
- Less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression and transgender people
- Reported a greater number of supportive school staff and more accepting peers
- Educators and school staff with GSAs are about **2 times** more likely to intervene when hearing homophobic remarks

# Defining Your GSA

GSA's take many forms and address different issues depending on the needs of the students.

- **Social**



- **Education**



- **Activism**



# Starting a GSA

Use these steps to help get your club up and running:

1. Do your homework & KYR
2. Be prepared
  - a. Identify a faculty advisor or group of advisors
  - b. Involve your administration
  - c. Identify other allies

# Starting a GSA

6. Find a meeting place
7. Advertise
8. Prepare/Plan for your first meeting
9. Hold your meeting
10. Plan for the future



# Meetings

## Why is it important to have routines and plans for facilitating your meetings?

- Encourages an interactive environment
- Give everyone an opportunity to speak
- Provides structure to meetings
- Helps others see the club as legitimate

## What topics/issues would a GSA facilitator talk about?

- Issues faced at school/community
- Current & Local Events/Issues

# Meetings

## **Responsibilities of a Meeting Leader:**

- Be neutral and move meeting along
- Build inclusive spaces
- Pay attention to the energy of group.

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Ask for feedback and input from members
- Share ownership over the meeting.
- Utilize a “parking lot” list
- Summarize the discussion & take notes

# Staying Active

- Utilize activities that meet the needs of your club
- Work together to build the capacity of your GSA
- Use topics, themes, and current LGBTQ issues to engage your club, plan events, or bring awareness to the broader community
- Participate in team building activities
- Use films and books to engage your GSA members
- Explore your resources- CO GSA Network, GLSEN, etc.

# Raising Awareness of Your GSA

- Participate in school's welcome back club fair to recruit new club members
- Educate others, bring more awareness to issues faced by LGBTQ students (class presentations, assemblies, etc.)
- October is LGBTQ History Month, use it to recognize LGBTQ figures and events that have formed our history
- During Black History Month, Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month or another observance to honor and the many contributions of Queer and Trans\* folks of color to our community/history
- Embrace and celebrate the diverse families and people in your school and community

# Raising Awareness

- Equip your group with the tools needed to combat bullying and harassment in your school (policies, practices, etc.)
- Recognize and share the laws and resources that protect students in schools and the responsibility of schools to uphold these laws

# Raising Awareness

- Learn and educate about:
  - Your GSA as well as the history, purpose and benefits of GSAs
  - Your school, community, state, and federal representatives and the issues that impact your community
  - Local, statewide, and national LGBTQ issues that you can get involved with
  - Other issues and identities, explore intersections, and work to build an inclusive environment in your school

# Action Plan



School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**GSA Positions:**

Position	Name	Email	Phone
Advisor(s):			
Leadership:			
Members:			

How many years has your GSA existed?  Our 1st yr.  1-2  3-5  5+

How often does your group meet? \_\_\_\_\_ For how long? \_\_\_\_\_ Days? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of GSA do you have or want (pick all that apply)?  Social  Educational  Activist

What are the first 3 words that come to mind when thinking about the LGBTQ community at your school? \_\_\_\_\_

Are adults supportive of LGBTQ youth at your school?  Yes  No  Somewhat

In what ways does your school include/exclude the LGBTQ community? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How can you GSA support/change the items listed above? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Depending on your answer above, what support do you believe the LGBTQ community at your school needs the most? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List your GSA's/school's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for making safe and welcoming school environment for LGBTQ students and their allies

**Strengths:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenges:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opportunities:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Review the information you listed above and the best practices provided in the [One Colorado GSA Network Resource Guides](#) to make a plan for how you will put this knowledge into action?

\_\_\_\_\_

Tasks/Goals	Time Frame/Due Date	Contacts/Resources
Ex: Improve GSAs skills/knowledge by attending spring 2018 GSA Leadership Summit	March 17, 2018	One Colorado, Keri Smith keris@one-colorado.org



# Resources & Events

## **SAFE SCHOOLS WEBINAR**

When: Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 4:00-5:15pm

Where: Online

Register: <http://ONE-CO.CO/SafeSchoolsMay2018>

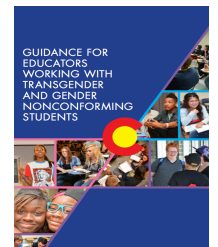
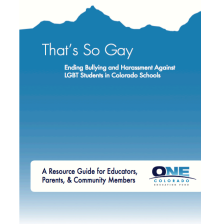
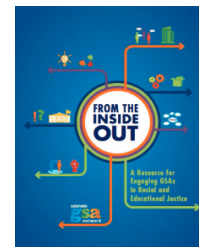
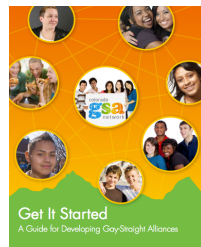
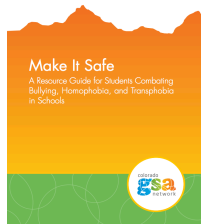
## **INSTITUTE ON LGBTQ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES:**

When: Thursday-Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>

Where: Casey Middle School, Boulder, CO

Cost: \$50\* Registration Fee (\*scholarships, sliding scale, and CLEs available)

Register: [www.cvent.com/D/MTQ6WR](http://www.cvent.com/D/MTQ6WR)





# Resources & Questions



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