A FAIR AND JUST COLORADO
Agenda

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

GSAs 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
- Gives 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

Adapted from GSA Network & “Keep in Mind for Facilitation” by Margo Adair & Bill Aal
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

List your GSA/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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks/Goals</th>
<th>Time Frame/Due Date</th>
<th>Contacts/Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: Improve GSAs skills/knowledge by attending spring 2018 GSA Leadership Summit</td>
<td>March 17, 2018</td>
<td>One Colorado, Keri Smith <a href="mailto:keris@one-colorado.org">keris@one-colorado.org</a></td>
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</tbody>
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Depending on your answer above, what support do you believe the LGBTQ community at your school needs the most?

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**School:** __________________________  **District:** __________________________

**Club Name:** __________________________

**GSA Positions:**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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**Advisor(s):** __________________________

**Leadership:** __________________________

**Members:** __________________________

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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? __________________________

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[One Colorado GSA Network Resource Guides](#)
SAFE SCHOOLS WEBINAR
When: Wednesday, May 16th 4:00-5:15pm
Where: Online
Register: [http://ONE-CO.CO/SafeSchoolsMay2018](http://ONE-CO.CO/SafeSchoolsMay2018)

INSTITUTE ON LGBTQ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES:
When: Thursday-Friday, June 28th-29th
Where: Casey Middle School, Boulder, CO
Cost: $50* Registration Fee (*scholarships, sliding scale, and CLEs available)
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