

# The Day Of Silence

## What is the Day of Silence?

The Day of Silence, sponsored by GLSEN ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)), is a day in which people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights take a vow of silence to recognize and protest the silence that LGBT people face each day. According to organizers for the Day of Silence Project (contact information at the bottom of this sheet), "the event is designed to raise awareness and protest the silence faced by LGBT people, and offer tools with which to end the silence." **Day of Silence is generally on the second Wednesday in April. Visit [www.dayofsilence.org](http://www.dayofsilence.org).**

The project consists of a vow of silence for the entire school day, or however long your school wishes to have it, where participants pass out cards that state their reasons for not speaking (see below). At the end of the silence, participants can host a series of follow-up events to educate their communities on how to keep the silence from continuing.

Many GSAs have organized around the Day of Silence as a way of raising awareness and fighting homophobia in their

### **Text for the cards that Day of Silence participants pass out:**

Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights in solidarity with other oppressed or marginalized people. People who are silent today believe that laws and attitudes should be inclusive of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, races, national origins, ethnicities, religions, and abilities. The day of silence is to draw attention to those who have been silenced by hatred, oppression, and prejudice. Think about the voices you are not hearing. What can you do to end the silence?

schools. This resource sheet is designed to help GSAs get started in planning for participation in the Day of Silence.

## Tips for Planning and Running a Successful Day of Silence

### **Before...**

- Your GSA should prepare in advance for how exactly you want to approach the project and what you want the day to consist of. After deciding what it is your club would like to do, you should make a to-do list so that everyone knows just what needs to be done. Be sure to include who is in charge of each item and when it needs to be finished.
- You should try and get as many people as possible aware of the event and involved in participating. You could do that by sending out e-mail announcements, advertising in the school newspaper, putting up flyers and posters, and of course, word of mouth.
- Consider including other clubs in your school that may be interested in collaborating on the project, or having the Day of Silence be a multi-issue project reflecting on the silencing of multiple groups and communities.
- Find out if staff or faculty members may be interested in participating.
- Schedule a meeting with your principal explaining your plans for the Day of Silence.
- Have a pre-silence meeting to discuss positive ways to handle harassment from non-participants.
- Build bridges to other groups that face being silenced – that way everyone feels as though they can relate.

### **During...**

- Have a resource spot or staffed table where people can find info about your GSA or other LGBTQ groups and resources.
- Organize some sort of a visible display such as having your participants all wear black or eat lunch together in silence.
- Post an announcement in the daily bulletin explaining the event and requesting that all staff and students be respectful of the participants of the project.



For more information and resources for Gay-Straight Alliances, contact GSA Network:  
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