Published on *Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network* (http://gsanetwork.org)

GLSEN?s Day of Silence

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What is GLSEN'S Day of Silence?

GLSEN®
DAY of SILENCE®

coordinated by GLSEN, 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 GLSEN'S Day of Silence, "the event is designed to raise awareness and protest the silence faced by LGBT people, and offer tools with which to end the silence."

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 GLSEN'S Day of Silence as a way of raising awareness and fighting homophobia in their schools. This resource sheet is designed to help GSAs get started in planning for participation in GLSEN'S Day of Silence. And any point, if you experience opposition to your plans for GLSEN?s Day of Silence, you have rights! Read Lambda Legal?s Legal FAQ on the Day of Silence [3] to learn more and contact GSA Network if the opposition continues.

Text for the cards that GLSEN'S Day of Silence [4] participants pass out:
Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence (DOS), a national youth movement bringing attention to the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by anti-LGBT bullying, name-calling and harassment. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward building awareness and making a commitment to address these injustices.

Tips for Planning and Running a Successful GLSEN 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 GLSEN'S 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 GLSEN'S 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.
- Some participants may not be able to handle the length of the silence -- you should think of creative ways to handle these situations, such as: create a safe space or safe room where you can go if needed to reflect or get away from temptation to speak, or have a short, scheduled break in the day where you can all speak and then return to silence.
- Consider asking teachers to participate by developing a silent lesson plan like showing As If It Matters or another similar video and having a silent journal writing exercise afterward. If your GSA has not received a copy of As If It Matters, please email info@gsanetwork.org [5] or call 415-552-4229.

After...

- Hold a Breaking the Silence or Speak Out activity. Some GSAs get together in the quad and have a "make noise" ceremony, followed by discussion or open mic where students reflect on the day and share their experiences of harassment and discrimination. This is a great way to partner silent activities with ones that allow students tell their stories.
- Write up an evaluation documenting your club's planning process and experience with GLSEN'S Day of Silence.

This resource sheet was adapted from materials published by GLSEN'S Day of Silence. For more information, check out the website: http://www.dayofsilence.org [2].

Source URL: http://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-actions-events/day-silence

Links
[1] http://gsanetwork.org/files/resources/DayOfSilence.pdf
[2] http://www.dayofsilence.org
[3] http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/fs_2013_day-of-silence-faq.pdf

[4] http://www.dayofsilence.org/resources/
[5] mailto:info@gsanetwork.org