HOW TO HOST A VIRTUAL GSA MEETING

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Getting Started

- **Pick a platform:** Select a digital platform based on the type of GSA meeting you want to host. Club leaders, including advisors, should research platform features and prices before making a decision.

  – *Video call:* Zoom, Google Hangouts, Google Meet, Skype

  – *Group chat:* Slack, Discord, Q Chat Space

  – *Movie party:* Netflix Party, Metastream, Kast, Squad, TwoSeven

  – *Game party:* Houseparty

- **Choose a meeting date and time.** Encourage members to RSVP.

- **Promote your meeting:** Club leaders should work with their advisors to determine the safest way to contact members. Be discreet and mindful of people's privacy.

  – When calling youth, it may not be safe to mention "GSA club" or another LGBTQ+ reference. Alternatively, say that you are from a student leadership program from [insert school name].

  – Do not share meeting or registration details publicly. Send that information directly to GSA members via email, text/phone, or direct messaging online.

Setting Your Agenda

Once you know what type of meeting you want to have, make a schedule of activities and topics to cover. *See sample agenda on the last page.*

1. **Introductions and check-in:** Share names, pronouns, and responses to an icebreaker question.

2. **Housekeeping:** Explain how the digital platform works and review community agreements for meetings.

3. **Optional wellness activity:** Share a tip or resource to stay grounded and healthy.

4. **Political education or group discussion:** Introduce a topic of the day. Lead a workshop or pose a discussion question related to that topic. *See sample workshops on our Virtual GSAs in Action page.*

5. **Closing:** Finish the meeting with club announcements, including the next meeting date and time, ways to stay connected while physical distancing, and additional resources.

Running a Good Meeting

Similar to in-person meetings, facilitators should keep the group on schedule and encourage member participation.

- **Get to know the platform:** Prior to meeting day, take some time to familiarize yourself with your chosen virtual space. Read the platform's instructions and/or find a video tutorial.
- **Day-of setup:** Spend 15-30 minutes before your meeting to make sure the digital space is ready for members. If there are special features (*chatboxes, polls, breakout rooms*), practice using them.
- **Make space:** Ask members if there is an item they want to add to the agenda.
- **Stick to the ground rules:** Make sure that members follow your GSA's community agreements.
- **Keep the energy up:** Be aware of the energy level and make adjustments to the agenda as needed.
- **Center community care:** Members may be overloaded with stress, fear, dysphoria and anxiety during this time. Be prepared for them to bring their feelings to the virtual space.
  - Before the meeting, check in with yourself and make sure you are in the mindset to hold these types of spaces. Recognize your boundaries and what you are able to help with.
  - If someone feels comfortable sharing, listen respectfully. If they need additional support, feel free to contact GSA Network for resources. Please refrain from giving members advice. You would not want to put a friend in jeopardy.
  - Reframe "social distancing" as "physical distancing" or another clever term that feels less isolating.

Additional GSA Resources

How to Have an Awesome GSA

GSA Tree Checklist

How to Facilitate a Meeting

Rapid Response Resources

- **Hotlines**
  - Trevor Lifeline: 866-488-7386 / Trevor Text: Text START to 678678
  - Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860
  - National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: 212-714-1141 (English and Spanish)
  - GLBT National Hotline: 888-843-4564 / GLBT National Youth Talkline: 800-246-7743
  - DeHQ: LGBTQ Helpline for South Asians: 908-367-3374
- **Chatrooms**
  - Q Chat Space

Sample Agenda

1. Check-In (5-10 minutes)

– Share your name, pronouns, and your quarantine nickname (your mood + the last thing you ate).

2. Optional Ice Breaker (10 minutes): Animal Showdown

– Make sure players have their videos on and set to a view mode to see everyone. Choose a starting ringleader from the group. Name 4 animals (ex. bunny, dragon, bear, snake) and match them with different hand signals. On the count of 3, players reveal their animal sign. If players choose the same animal sign as the ringleader, they are eliminated. The ringleader role can rotate from person to person.

3. Housekeeping (10 minutes)

– Briefly explain the main features of the digital platform (ex. how to turn the microphone or video on and off, breakout rooms, etc.)

– Review your club's ground rules and community agreements (ex. What's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here.)

4. Optional Wellness Activity (5-10 minutes)

– Play a funny YouTube video or a song that you have on repeat.

– Lead a quick group stretch.

5. Political education or group discussion (20 minutes): Climate Justice

– Introduction: Show a video of a youth-led climate strike.

– Discussion questions: What have you seen or heard about young people fighting for the environment? What do you think climate activism can learn from trans and queer communities?

– Resource: What the queer community brings to the fight for climate justice

– Resource: Climate Justice & Queer & Trans Liberation (podcast)

– Resource: Why Indigenous Youth Were 2019's Climate Warriors

6. Closing (5-10 minutes)

– In the chat box, share a word for how you're feeling right now or a takeaway from the conversations you had.

– The next meeting will be next Wednesday at 4pm.

– What recommendations do you have for future discussion topics or activities? What did you like or dislike about this digital platform?