

**GLSEN<sup>®</sup>**

# **SOLIDARITY WEEK**

**2022  
Student Guide**



**Here it is! Everything you need to know about Solidarity Week. This guide will share resources, the history of Solidarity Week, and ideas to use in organizing your school's Solidarity Week in-person or virtually! Also, don't forget to register, you could receive giveaways, news and updates, emails with information and useful tips for organizing, and invitations to join conversations happening across the country!**

Originally known as Ally Week, this program was created by students from GLSEN's Jumpstart program and launched in 2005 during the week leading up to National Coming Out Day. GLSEN changed this program to Solidarity Week in 2020.

**Solidarity Week is a student-powered campaign dedicated to building collective support for LGBTQ+ students and educators. This week-long program helps people learn about and practice solidarity across different communities.**

Collective advocacy and organizing for action during Solidarity Week is a great way to start the year by discovering why and how you can support LGBTQ+ folks at your school.

## Solidarity as a Tool for Liberation

Solidarity is voluntary, collective, sustained action based on an understanding that we don't all share the same risks, and we must work across all differences to ensure that every student has the right to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education. Solidarity involves bringing together different people based on finding common objectives and solutions. Solidarity work happens when you show up to support others experiencing harm and oppression by centering their experiences, leadership, decisions, needs, requests, and ideas.

You may have already practiced solidarity in some form, whether you were taking action in your classroom, school, or broader community. In the days after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, students organized the largest single day of protest against gun violence in history. In June, protests broke out across the country demanding justice for George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by police in Minneapolis, MN. As more murders of Black people including Black transgender women, young people started organizing their own protests addressing anti-Blackness and racism in their schools. Many of you participated in GLSEN's Day of Silence, the largest LGBTQ+ student-focused and led action to raise awareness around the bullying, harassment, and erasure of LGBTQ+ students in schools.

### Solidarity Work Happens in Many Forms and on Many Different Issues

The important part of understanding solidarity work is that collective action is powerful in enacting change. In fact, solidarity can either be the biggest threat to oppression or one of the biggest allies in upholding and reinforcing it. How you show up, or don't, makes all the difference.



# Ways to Participate

As a student, you have the ability to bring Solidarity Week activities and discussions virtually and in person to your school. Having knowledge of your school's policies and procedures, you can offer suggestions on how your school as a whole can develop effective Solidarity Week activities that highlight issues impacting LGBTQ+ people and move towards changing your school in a positive way. If your school has a GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) or other LGBTQ+ affirming clubs, you can work with your club to promote the awareness week and different activities throughout the week. You can also encourage other non LGBTQ+ focused clubs or classes like ASB to work in solidarity by lifting up the needs and voices of LGBTQ+ students.

## 1) Do the internal work

As we engage in solidarity work, it is important to understand and acknowledge your own privileges. When you are aware of the privileges you bring into different spaces (it might shift depending on the folks in the room or environment you are in), you will engage with more intention around making space and taking space appropriately. Knowing your privileges also helps you offer ways you can be useful to a group taking collective action to address oppression. For example, if you have access to money or food, and know others who can help, you can offer to support resources for mutual aid at your school or in your community.

## 2) Show solidarity by centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression

Oftentimes the people we are advocating for do not actually get to advocate for themselves because they are silenced. Practice understanding what they need instead of telling them what they need. For example, it would be inappropriate for a cisgender ally to tell transgender people what they need and deciding their priorities. Making assumptions about what is best for people and making decisions for them is just another form of oppression, even with good intentions.

## 3) Work collectively

Solidarity work is not possible from an individualistic practice. It is a collective action involving more than one person. Start your meetings with space agreements so everyone understands the respectful boundaries of the group. Centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression or harm helps focus on the issues and needs that are being addressed from the people who are impacted the most. Collective work means coming together to make decisions, contribute to the conversations, and that all voices are valued. It is important to understand that financial contributions, the labor and time one gives does not give this person the most power to make decisions. People should be able to opt in to tasks and committees and should not be assigned. Resist the reproduction of an unjust hierarchy within the movement.

## 4) Identify identities/communities you are in solidarity with

Solidarity and collaboration are not a one way street and there are so many ways we can show up for each other. If we understand that each of us experiences the world as multiple, intersecting identities, we can always find opportunities to practice solidarity and invite others to be in solidarity with us.



For example, below is a selection of resources focused on specific communities:

<p><b>LGBTQ+2S Native American and Indigenous Experiences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color Report</b></li> <li>• <b>Beyond the Gender Binary</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ Youth Explain Why Schools Should Teach About These 17 Native Icons</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ+ History Card highlights: Ty Defoe, Candi Brings Plenty, Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>LGBTQ+ Disability Justice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Challenging Ableist Language</b></li> <li>• <b>I'm a Trans, Disabled Young Person, Not One or the Other</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ+ History Card highlights: Frida Kahlo, Chella Man</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Intersex and Trans Youth Experiences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>5 Steps to Being An Intersex Ally</b></li> <li>• <b>8 Ways You Can Be An Ally to Intersex</b></li> <li>• <b>GLSEN Changing the Game</b></li> <li>• <b>Gender Affirming Athletic Participation</b></li> <li>• <b>Trans Action Kit</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Caster Semenya, Chris Mosier, Patricio Manuel</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Black LGBTQ+ Experiences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dear My Black Bisexual Freshman Self: You Are Enough</b></li> <li>• <b>Here's What I Need a Black Queer Student</b></li> <li>• <b>I'm a Black Queer Student, and My School Needs to Recognize My Entire Self</b></li> <li>• <b>Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools</b></li> <li>• <b>Webinar: Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools</b></li> <li>• <b>Condemning Police Brutality, Calling for Greater Support for Black Lives</b></li> <li>• <b>4 Ways You Can Support Black, Queer, Trans &amp; GNC Educators Today</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Audre Lorde, #BlackLivesMatter, James Baldwin, Patricio "Pat" Manuel, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>LGBTQ+ Immigrant Youth</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Together, Our Differences Make a Strong and Beautiful Community in School</b></li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Urooj Arshad, The UndocuQueer Movement, Bamby Salcedo</b></li> </ul>

What are some other identities you could highlight during Solidarity Week? You can follow @GLSEN for new resources that will be released daily during Solidarity Week and host conversations about solidarity along with us.



## 5) Hold a discussion group

Bring together folks within LGBTQ+ communities or across multiple identities to have honest conversations about solidarity.

See below for some example questions that can guide meaningful discussions:

- What identities do you hold? How does that impact your daily experience in school? What do you wish people knew about your experiences?
- How affirming is your school for LGBTQ+ students? Is this different for each identity in the acronym LGBTQ? How can we practice solidarity across LGBTQ+ communities?
- What does solidarity look like for you? How do you practice solidarity with others? How do you need others to practice solidarity with your communities?
- Where are you knowledgeable about other communities, and where do you need to learn more?
- Where do you see LGBTQ+ people in the media? Can you share a time you felt represented in the media and how this impacted you?
- How are you using your own power and privilege to disrupt injustice?
- What are some issues at your school that can bring people together to create change?

## 6) Plan Solidarity Week activities

- Call for a meeting with other clubs or programs. Work together to identify something each group can contribute to, like an inclusive curriculum policy. Draft a letter together with the other students explaining why this is important. Then ask everyone to sign this petition or letter and deliver it to your school's administration or school district.
- Ask everyone to add their pronouns to their video platforms (Zoom, Google Hangouts, etc.) and their email signatures. Folks can link to GLSEN's [Pronoun Guide](#) or use it as a tool to explain to others the importance of sharing pronouns.
- Host a panel discussion. Invite folks in the LGBTQ+ community to join a panel and share what they are comfortable with regarding their identities. You can use the conversation questions above to ask the panel. You can also ask the audience to divide into small groups after the panel to discuss actions they can take.
- Fundraise money towards mutual aid support for students on your campus.
- Host a watch party with your GSA or community group, followed by a group discussion. Check out GLSEN's [Half of it Discussion Guide](#) or [Love, Victor Discussion Guide](#) for ideas on guiding the conversation.

## 7) Share on social media

Join thousands of students and educators across the country in sharing how you practice solidarity.

- Take a selfie or photo and add this comment to your post: Solidarity for my identity means \_\_\_\_\_ " and I practice and engage in solidarity by \_\_\_\_\_ ". How are you showing up? #SolidarityWeek @GLSEN.
  - Side note: make sure to add an image description to make sure your post is accessible. For more information about why this is important, check out this list of ["Places to Start" from the Disability and Intersectionality Summit](#).



- Use our GLSEN Solidarity Week GIFY stickers on Instagram stories. Search “GLSEN” or “Solidarity Week” in the GIFs section while creating your story to use these leading up to and during Solidarity Week.

Remember, there is not one way to organize and be in solidarity! Be mindful of your capacity and be open to different ways to show up. If there is a march happening and you are unable to attend, make signs for folks to pick up and use, or offer to help promote the event, fundraise, or create flyers. Remember that disabled folks have been organizing remotely and have built the foundation for accessible actions; make sure you are learning from them and following their leadership. And finally, solidarity work does not stop when Solidarity Week is over, it is just the beginning! This event should help launch other year-round programs and actions. And GLSEN is here to support you!

**Email us at [students@glsen.org](mailto:students@glsen.org) for questions, ideas, or just to share your photos and videos from Solidarity Week actions!**



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