



DAY of SILENCE®

	www.dayofsilence.org
	 
	What are you going to do to end the silence?

Day of Silence®

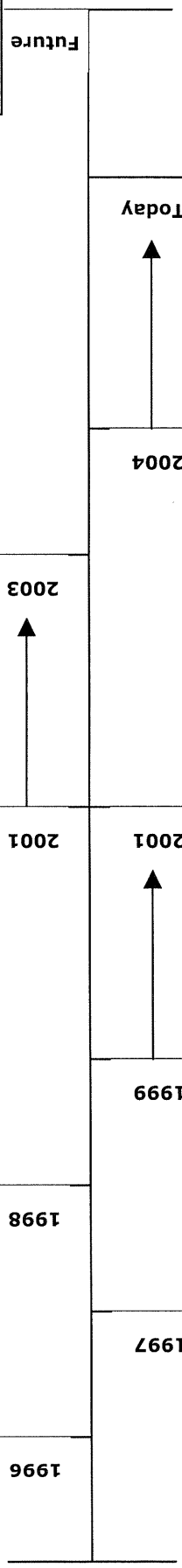
Organizing Manual

Just imagine: thousands of students, from San Francisco, California to Immo, South Carolina, united in a visible silence to create real change in local schools. Whether used to educate classmates on the damaging effects of anti-LGBT bias, or to demand passage of statewide an anti-discrimination act inclusive of all people, the Day of Silence is an awesome opportunity to create more inclusive school environments and make some noise.

Pulzetti and Gilliam realized they couldn't expand the National Day of Silence alone, so they organized a team of regional coordinators who could assist schools better by understanding and working with local networks. Expanding from a one-day vow of silence to include additional actions and educational events, the Day of Silence Project was officially inaugurated. That year, for the first time in a recognized number, students in high schools joined the organizing efforts, helping double the number of participating schools.

Students organized the first Day of Silence at the University of Virginia. With over 150 students participating, those involved felt it was a great success. The Day of Silence received extensive local press coverage and a positive response from UVA community members, motivating then-18-year-old Maria Pulzetti to take the Day of Silence national.

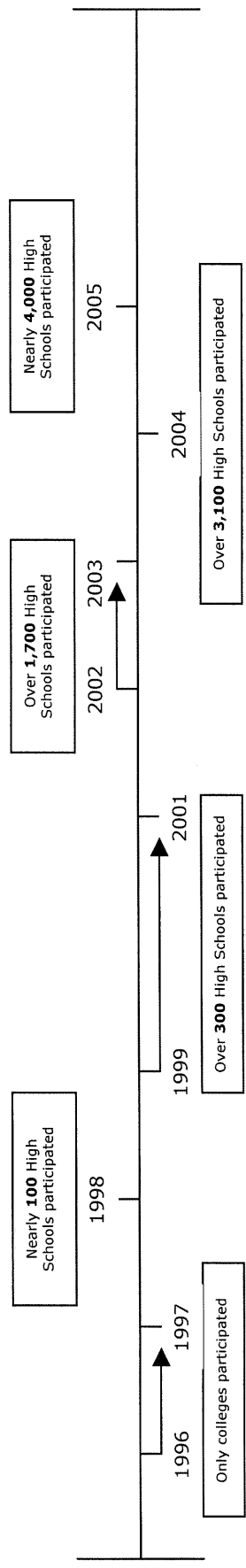
GLSEN National Student Organizer Chris Tuttle, Gilliam and Palenchar developed a proposal to provide the Day of Silence Project with new funding, staff, volunteers and an official organizational sponsor, GLSEN. To ensure its success, GLSEN developed a first-ever Day of Silence Project Advisory Board (which includes Pulzetti, Gilliam and Palenchar) to help build upon past successes, a Leadership Team of students to support high school organizers around the country, and a partnership with the United States Student Association, to ensure colleges and universities receive equal support for their organizing.



Through the success of the Day of Silence, GLSEN developed four Days of Action that students could participate in over the course of a school year. These Days of Action include Transgender Day of Remembrance, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Organizing Weekend, Ally Week and of course the Day of Silence.

Through the sponsorship of Advocates for Youth, Gilliam worked part-time over the summer of 1999 to maintain and expand the Day of Silence Project. For the first time in the project's history, a team of volunteers met for a weekend in Boston to discuss strategy and develop future plans towards assisting schools. The Day of Silence Project continued to support high schools, colleges and universities around the country with volunteers led by then-18-year-old Chloe Palenchar, the National Project Coordinator.

With a web page and much dedication, Pulzetti and then-19-year-old Jessie Gilliam developed the effort to be used in schools across the country. It was renamed the National Day of Silence, and that year nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. Some schools in Australia heard about the action and modeled a similar day for Australian schools.



HISTORY OF THE DAY OF SILENCE PROJECT

WELCOME!

*Welcome to the newly revised Day of Silence Manual! This resource is filled with information and organizing strategies that will help make your Day of Silence as successful and effective as possible. By participating in the Day of Silence, you are joining one of the largest student-led actions in the country and helping to ensure safe and inclusive schools for all students. We encourage you to use this manual in whatever way works best for you- you may choose to use ideas from a particular section or bring some of your own original strategies into your planning. The website, **www.dayofsilence.org**, is a particularly useful tool, with additional resources, ideas and up-to-date information on this year's event. Thank you for your important work and happy organizing!*

The GLSEN Student Organizing Department

For High School Organizing Contact:

The Day of Silence Project – GLSEN
90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-727-0135 (phone)
212-727-0245 (fax)
www.glsen.org

For College and University Organizing Contact:

LGBT Student Empowerment Project- USSA
815 16th Street NW
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I. Introduction

What is GLSEN?

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for ALL students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on GLSEN's educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs, research or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

What is the Day of Silence?

Founded in 1996 by students at the University of Virginia, and currently officially sponsored in K-12 schools by GLSEN, the Day of Silence is the largest student-led action to protest the bullying and harassment of LGBT people and their allies ever. Participants take a day long vow of silence and distribute or wear speaking cards with information about anti-LGBT bias and ways for students and others to "end the silence." Through Breaking the Silence events, students can speak out against harassment and demand change for their schools and communities.

What can the Day of Silence do?

The Day of Silence can be used as a tool to affect positive change – both personally and community-wide. The Day of Silence is designed to draw attention to the bullying and harassment faced by LGBT students everywhere. Silence is used as a tactic to provide a space for personal reflections about the consequences of being silent and silenced. The Day of Silence is an effort that can raise awareness on this issue, prompting people to talk and think about it. Think about what change is needed in your community and how the Day of Silence can be a building block in your efforts to create change.

For more information about how to use the Day of Silence to create change see "How to Get What You Want With An Ask!" in the Resources section at the end of this Manual

What does the Day of Silence Look Like?

No two Day of Silence events look exactly the same. Students everywhere design the day in ways that make sense for their particular school. Many students make t-shirts with slogans supporting LGBT students and their allies. Students pass out "speaking cards" that state the intention of the day and ask for understanding and consideration from their peers, faculty and administrations. Events range in size from a single student participating by themselves to a thousand students spending an entire day in silence plus hundreds more wearing or showing signs of support.

Registering Your Student Club for Day of Silence and other GLSEN Days of Action

There are two important parts of registering. First you should register yourself and/or your student club on www.glsen.org. When you register you will receive a free packet of resources from GLSEN that will help you organize future events and Days of Action. You will also be added to our Student Organizing Listserv which sends out a bi-weekly newsletter to all of the individuals registered with GLSEN. The newsletter includes information about the Days of Action, our Jump-Start National Student Leadership team, as well as events happening in local areas. When you register a student club you will be added to our ever-growing list of student clubs around the country, and your club and your school can be listed online.

The second part of registering is specific to the Day of Silence. Every year students around the country register their participation in the Day of Silence at www.dayofsilence.org. Registering allows GLSEN to measure the success of the Day of Silence for media outlets as well as for our own future planning. In addition to being part of a larger picture, GLSEN will send you materials and resources to aid in your planning.

Find information on all of the Days of Action, including the Day of Silence, at www.dayofsilence.org or email info@dayofsilence.org.

II. The Basics of Organizing Your Day of Silence Event(s)

Select Your Team

First things first, you should build a team of people who are willing to help you organize the Day of Silence at your school. You may want to organize the Day of Silence through an established school group (such as the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), Amnesty Club, or Student Council), or you may want to build a coalition of interested individuals from different school groups. It's important, however, for you to think very deliberately about the people you need and want to include, and for you to recognize that as you begin and continue to plan, your needs may change. Try to get a group of people together who have a variety of strengths and interests, such as public speaking, making fliers, organizing publicity, fundraising, and contacting potential supporters. Can you organize the Day of Silence alone? Yes, but the impact will be significantly greater if you reach out to others to join you.

Use the Day of Silence Team Building Sheet to help you put your team together (on page 4).

Building a Coalition

Why Build a Coalition?

Think of other school clubs, community organizations, faculty members, staff and local community leaders that might be interested in working with you. These different groups of people will be useful for the following reasons

- To provide programs and use resources more efficiently and effectively and to eliminate any duplication of services (in other words, to avoid reinventing the wheel)
- To increase communication between groups and break down stereotypes
- To revitalize the sagging energies of members of diverse groups who are trying to do too much on their own
- To plan and launch community-wide efforts
- To win victories that couldn't be won by one group alone
- To build a stronger power base
- To develop new leaders

Build it

Be strategic in how you construct your coalition. Don't assume it will come together "naturally." Who you ask, how you ask them, and who you ask first, second and third, are all important. Some groups won't join if others have been asked first. Some groups won't work together and you won't be able to get both on board. Take into account your own goals and organizing considerations.

It's important to build a diverse, representative coalition. Start with a list of every student and/or community group that is concerned with, affected by or working on diversity, equity and social justice issues. Be creative with your list; don't limit it to the most obvious choices. Once you have your comprehensive "wish list," you can begin to narrow it down according to specific concerns and circumstance. Identify the self-interest or the reason each group might have for wanting to join the coalition, and understand and respect that groups will have different reasons for joining. All needed groups should be signed on and at the table from the beginning. Diversity will only happen if the coalition works on issues that cut across many groups and acknowledges how barriers created by institutional sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism and classism affect the internal workings of the coalition.

Use the Day of Silence Planning Sheet (on page 9) to help organize your thoughts while you get started.

Reaching out to faculty, staff and administration

It can sometimes be difficult to get support from your faculty, staff and administration when planning the Day of Silence. One way you can start to build positive relationships with faculty, staff and administration is to be communicative about your plans for the Day of Silence. Providing each member of the faculty, staff and administration with a letter explaining the Day of Silence and what your activities will look like and asking them for their support is a great place to start.

If your school's administration does not support your participation in Day of Silence, there are alternative ways that you can participate, which are discussed on page 6 in this manual.

III. Silence Throughout the Day

Participating in the Day of Silence can be a powerful, moving, and sometimes challenging experience. Take care of Day of Silence participants by keeping them well informed, and providing them with opportunities to communicate their feelings about the Day. You can do this by supporting them before, during and after the Day of Silence.

Before the Day of Silence

We recommend that you hold a participants' meeting to talk about what the Day of Silence might look like and what people might expect. These meetings can consist of current organizers, and even past participants, talking about the logistics of the Day and handing out materials and guidelines. These meetings will bring together participants, creating an important support network. Many people feel more empowered and energized if they are connected to a communal effort.

During the Day of Silence

The Day of Silence has the potential to be a solitary event; at large schools, participants may be dispersed, and remaining silent for nine hours can feel very isolating. In order to help participants throughout the day, you should set up some support activities and safe spaces. One event could be a "silent lunch," which would promote visibility, publicity and participant unity. You should also establish a safe space, somewhere participants can visit if they are feeling stressed out during the day. The space should have snacks and someone to talk to, perhaps a supportive counselor or members of a local LGBT organization. For students who want to remain silent but feel the need to express themselves, offering them a space to come and write their thoughts on paper for personal reflection is a good idea. These writings should be completely personal and read only by the author and those who have been given the author's permission. Taking care of participants should be a number one priority.

After the Day of Silence

People are going to have much to say once they begin to speak again, so it is important to have additional events, such as a "Breaking the Silence" rally at the end of the day, or a more informal reflection gathering. Breaking the Silence events also provide participants with an opportunity to celebrate their achievement(s), and will provide organizers with a springboard for future organizing. Above all remember to have fun.

IV. Breaking the Silence

What does it mean to Break the Silence?

A Breaking the Silence Event is an opportunity for participants in the Day of Silence to finally speak out about their experiences of the Day. Breaking the Silence means something different everywhere you go. In many cases, Breaking the Silence is the first moment that any of the participants speak on the Day of Silence. In some places it is a celebration of the events of the day and the successes of individuals. It can also be a wonderful combination of both. It may look like a big rally, or like a small meeting but a Breaking the Silence event is always a great way to end your Day of Silence activities.

What does a Breaking the Silence event look like?

Participants from previous years have used lots of ways to break the silence:

"New Year's Eve" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day, there's a silent countdown to the designated finish time, and when the clock strikes, everyone screams, hollers, sings, rings bells, blow whistles, beats drums, shakes noisemakers, and so on.

"Daybreak" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day, there's a silent countdown to the designated finish time, and when the clock strikes, people begin slowly to make noise or speak as the feeling comes to them.

"One Voice" Model:

Participants assemble at the end of the day, and when the clock strikes, participants take turns going up to the microphones and speaking to the entire group.

One powerful approach is to have participants describe how it felt to remain silent for nine hours, and the responses they received throughout the day. Remember that participating in the Day of Silence can be a very emotional and exhausting event for people. Expect various types of conversations to ensue.

How can I organize a Breaking the Silence event?

Organizing a Breaking the Silence event goes along with the Day of Silence Planning. Some important things to remember about planning your Breaking the Silence event:

- Permission (Advisor/Administration)
- Choosing space to hold event (i.e. gym, cafeteria, sports field, auditorium)
- Reserving space for event
- Advertising (i.e. posters, flyers, announcements, emails, websites)
- Program (i.e. speakers, guests, bands, open mic etc...)
- Press Releases
- Logistics (i.e. sound system, decorations etc...)
- Staff and Responsibilities (what members of your team will need to be there to help and what will their role be while they are there)

Use the Day of Silence Planning Timeline for further suggestions (on page 8).

V. How to Handle Road Blocks

When the School Administration says "no"

In high schools, approval from the principal or other appropriate faculty is important when student organizers are working on any project. When approaching your school's administration, it helps to have the backing of a student club and your advisor(s). However, in the situation of your administration not approving or supporting the Day of Silence, you may want to consider planning a community event outside of school, in the morning or evening. You may also want to consider other types of projects inside the school that would seek to educate the administration and/or decision-maker who has not allowed the Day of Silence to take place.

It is important to let all faculty and staff in your school know about the Day of Silence. The best way to let faculty and staff know about the Day of Silence and your reasons for being silent is to write a letter to all faculty and staff and place it in their mailboxes. In the letter be sure to include:

- A description of the Day of Silence
- Information about the speaking cards
- Date of your Day of Silence events
- Where they can find out more information
- A "Thank You" for their support and understanding

Remember, staying silent is not the only way to participate in the day. If silence is not an option at your school, here are five alternative ways you may wish to participate in the event:

1. Ask some friends or school groups to join you and gather at a table or area for a silent lunch to recognize the Day of Silence. End this period by spending some time discussing how you feel LGBT students and their allies are silenced because of harassment, discrimination and abuse, and brainstorm ways you can help end the silence.
2. Ask a supportive teacher to let you talk for five minutes at the beginning of class about what the Day of Silence is, and why you think it's important.
3. Wear a ribbon, shirt, button, sticker or other graphic display of support for the Day of Silence. Each person you reach with the name and information about the project may be a supportive ally in organizing the project next year.
4. Write a letter to the editor for your school newspaper, explaining why events like the Day of Silence raise awareness of LGBT issues in education and how these issues are important in your school.
5. Check out the Day of Silence "Resources" online at www.dayofsilence.org and start talking to your teachers, classmates and friends about what the Day of Silence is, and why you think it's important. While participation may not be possible this year, starting to build a base of support will help you better next year towards creating a truly awesome Day of Silence at your school.

Day of Silence Fact Sheet and FAQ

What is the Day of Silence?

The Day of Silence, a project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in collaboration with the United States Student Association (USSA), is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

Who started the Day of Silence?

In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence with over 150 students participating. In 1997, organizers took their effort national and nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. In 2001, GLSEN became the official organizational sponsor with new funding, staff and volunteers.

Has the Day of Silence been successful?

In 2004, more than 450,000 students at nearly 4,000 K-12 schools, colleges and universities organized events. This made the Day of Silence in 2004 the largest, single-day student-led grassroots action on LGBT rights in American history. GLSEN spokespersons appeared on national media outlets and there was extensive local media coverage from coast to coast. The numbers continued to grow in 2005.

Why do we need a Day of Silence?

GLSEN's 2003 National School Climate Survey found that 4 out of 5 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school, and more than 30% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day of Silence brings national attention to the need to make anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

Does the work end after the day is over?

The Day of Silence is one element of a larger effort to create safe schools for all students. Many communities, in addition to supporting the Day of Silence, host Breaking The Silence events, rallies, legislative lobby days, performances and more – both on the Day of Silence and all-year round. We are also asking our national leaders to support policies that create safe schools for all. Many communities are asking their local and state leaders to support and implement similar policies.

What is GLSEN?

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for ALL students. GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on GLSEN's educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs, research or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

Does this event put students at risk?

This event has been happening peacefully in schools since 1996. For students who are constantly faced with anti-LGBT bias and harassment, this may be the safest school day of the year.

What do you have to say to people opposing the Day of Silence?

The issue at hand is the bullying, harassment, name-calling and violence that students see and face in our schools. The Day of Silence is an activity created and led by students to educate their peers and bring an end to this harassment.

Those who do not support the Day of Silence often protest, but rarely contribute positively to finding ways to end anti-LGBT harassment. In the past, some individuals and groups have organized days in response to the Day of Silence. These events grossly mischaracterize and often simply misunderstand the basic purpose of the Day of Silence. Bringing attention to these events, which are so often based on mistruth, only adds a false credibility to their misinformation about the Day of Silence, GLSEN and the 450,000 American students taking action on.

We look forward to engaging all organizations and individuals who share The Day of Silence vision of schools free from anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment.

This Day of Silence Organizing Timeline will help you organize for the Day of Silence. This is only a suggestion and is certainly not the only way to organize a successful Day of Silence. Consider enlarging this timeline and posting it on the wall where you meet.

This timeline counts down to the Day of Silence. We will begin 6 weeks before the date itself.

Week 6 – Coalition Building

- Register your participation at www.dayofsilence.org
- Discuss your participation with the advisor of your student club, or a trusted faculty member.
- Talk to your student club and/or other student allies. Tell them about the Day of Silence and ask if they would be interested in supporting and/or partnering with you and/or your student club to organize
- Visit www.dayofsilence.org/mlk for coalition building resources
- Schedule a meeting during week 5 with the group of interested people to explain the Day of Silence further and to start planning
- Send reminder notices or make reminder phone calls to all people expected to attend the meeting.

Week 5 – Holding your Meeting

- Hold meeting and provide group with brief explanation of the Day of Silence. This may include resources found at www.dayofsilence.org.
- Brainstorm ideas for events
- Decide on what events or activities will be included in your Day of Silence (i.e. wearing t-shirts, making stickers, Breaking the Silence event, workshops)
- Delegate responsibilities to members of group (i.e. publicity, fundraising, logistics for Breaking the Silence event)
- Set goals (long-term and short-term)
- Encourage all members at meeting to register their participation at www.dayofsilence.org
- Schedule meeting for week 4

Week 4 – Get the Word Out

- Design, create and post flyers, and posters
- Send Press Release to local news reporters
- Start fundraising if necessary
- Have follow-up meeting to discuss people's progress and goals for next week
- Schedule a meeting for week 3

Week 3 – Follow-up

- Contact the Jump-Start Student Organizer(s) in your area for any suggestions and just to keep them informed of your events (visit www.glsen.org to get in touch with a Jump-Start Organizer in your area)
- Send Press Release to local news again
- Start gathering resources and supplies
- Fundraise if necessary
- Design, create and post new flyers and posters
- Hold another meeting to discuss progress and goals for next week
- Schedule a meeting for week 2

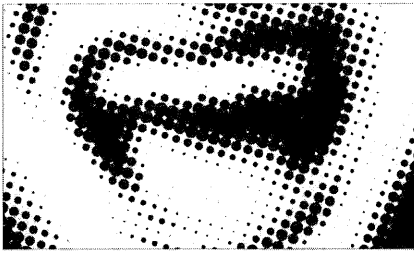
Week 2 – Almost There

- Provide faculty/staff/administration with letters explaining Day of Silence and the reason for the silent protest.
- Check website for events in your area that might be interesting to participate in
- Check in with Jump-Start Student Organizer(s) you may have contacted previously
- Send Press Release to local news again
- Design, create and post new flyers and posters
- Gather resources and supplies
- Delegate last minute responsibilities
- Hold another meeting to discuss progress and goals for next week
- Schedule a meeting for week 1

Week 1 – Here at Last!

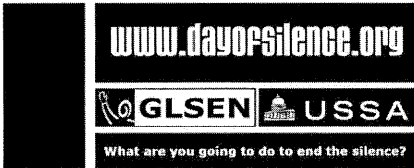
- Hold meeting to discuss last minute needs and to create a schedule of events and responsibilities for the Day of Silence
- Gather last minute resources and supplies
- Send Press Release to local news one last time
- Design, create and post new flyers and posters
- Check website
- Follow-up with any last minute contacts, or preparation
- EXPRESS YOURSELF ON THE DAY OF SILENCE**





Day of Silence Planning Sheet

DAY of SILENCE



When are your Day of Silence events taking place?

What is your message?

Who is your target audience?

How are you going to reach your target audience?

What other student clubs, community groups or organizations can you work with?

What needs to get accomplished in order to have a successful Day of Silence and whose responsibility is it?* Don't forget to check it off when it is completed.

What needs to get done?	Whose responsibility is it?
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* If you need help with this, look at the Day of Silence Timeline and refer to the roles of the team members you just filled out to determine who should be working on it. Consider enlarging this and posting on the wall where you meet.

VI. Working With the Media

Press Release:

You can use the media to attract attention to your message and your event. Tell print and electronic media about the Day of Silence by sending a press release and calling their offices. The press release is one of the most commonly used tools for getting press attention. GLSEN has provided you with a Sample Press Release in this manual for you to use with local media outlets.

Consistency in messaging to media outlets is very important when promoting a big event such as the Day of Silence. We encourage all students contacting the media to use the language in the Sample Press Release to promote their activities. Once you have gotten the attention of the media and they contact you then you can provide them with additional information about your activities.

Use the Day of Silence Sample Press Release as a guideline (on page 11).

Inviting the Media in:

Another way you can involve the media is to invite them to attend the event or planning meeting to cover the story. It is important that the media have a single contact person when scheduling interviews and asking questions. It is best if the student leader organizing the Day of Silence is that contact person. This ensures that the media is speaking with someone who has the most information available to them. The media contact person should have a quote or two prepared for answering common questions. Here are a few frequently asked questions that you might want to prepare to answer ahead of time:

- Why do you think we need the Day of Silence at this school?
- What are some examples of anti-LGBT bias at this school that make the Day of Silence relevant?
- How do you think that silence can end silence?
- How would you describe the general atmosphere at your school regarding LGBT people?
- How many people are participating in the Day of Silence at this school, and who are they? (i.e. What groups are they from?) How many other schools are planning the Day of Silence?

Tips:

- The most important thing about being interviewed is to make sure that you are comfortable. If you feel that you may not be comfortable with an interview, feel free to ask your faculty/staff advisor or a faculty/staff member you trust to be present at the interview.
- Don't be afraid to end the interview if you are uncomfortable in any way.
- If you are being interviewed and you do not like a certain question, feel free to redirect it.
- Make sure you talk about what you want to talk about, because you are better informed than the reporters.
- Refer to your worksheet and stick with your message.
- Ask reporters to read back your quotes at the end of the interview. Doing this can avoid misquotations, although sometimes mistakes happen anyway.
- For more information about answering questions to the media, please see page 7.

Use the Day of Silence Frequently Asked Questions to help you talk to the media (page 7).

Sample Local Press Release

Press Release For Immediate Distribution

Contact:
[NAME OF CONTACT PERSON]
[CONTACT PHONE NUMBER]
[CONTACT E-MAIL]

Students at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] Take Part in a Day Of Silence

[INSERT NAME OF CITY, STATE AND DATE]: Get ready for the campus to be a little quieter. On [INSERT DATE], students at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] will join students across the nation in a Day of Silence to protest the discrimination, harassment and abuse—in effect the silencing—faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and their allies in schools.

The Day of Silence, a project of GLSEN, will be held during school hours at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]. Over [INSERT NUMBER] participants will be silent on [INSERT DATE], wearing stickers and passing out 'speaking cards' that read:

"Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement protesting the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies in schools. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by harassment, prejudice, and discrimination. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today. What are you going to do to end the silence?"

"The Day of Silence," according to local organizer [INSERT STUDENT NAME], "is especially relevant to [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] because [INSERT STUDENT QUOTE OF RELEVANCE]." [INSERT STUDENT NAME] hopes that the event will work towards ending some of the silence and hatred students face.

GLSEN's 2003 National School Climate Survey found that more than 4 out of 5 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 29% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day of Silence is one way students and their allies are making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in American's schools.

About the Day of Silence

The Day of Silence, a project of GLSEN, is a nationwide, student-led event during which hundreds of high schools and colleges protest the oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. For more information contact Local Organizer [INSERT CONTACT NAME].

For more information and a complete collection of organizing materials, visit www.dayofsilence.org.

About GLSEN

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on creating safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on our educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

VII. After the Silence

Assessing the Effort

A Breaking the Silence event may be a good time to hand out a generic evaluation of the Day of Silence. The experience of the Day will be fresh for participants to report on and getting the forms back will be quite simple. You can have one person in charge of collecting the completed forms or offer participants a "Prize" for handing in their form. Doing this at a Breaking the Silence Event may prove useful because you won't have to search for your participants.

If you are not holding a Breaking the Silence event you should try to hold a meeting of as many participants as possible within the next week, following the Day of Silence. One good idea is to create a system for measuring your goals. You could regularly revisit each goal and assign it a number or other value that everyone understands, in order to track your progress. You could make monthly goals and then a year-end or project-end goal for each area of your work, such as outreach, meetings, budget, participation, publicity, and so on. It's useful to have a method for evaluating your meetings and events, as well. One easy tool is the Plus/Delta. Take two large pieces of paper, and write a plus sign (+) at the top of one, and a delta sign (Δ), which is a symbol that represents change, at the top of the other. On the Plus page, ask participants to write something they liked, or that they thought was successful. On the Delta page, ask participants to write something they would change. Someone in your group should volunteer to collect evaluations at all meetings and events, and to develop a summary.

Want to make assessment more fun? For a final wrap-up at the end of a project or the year, plan a party that doubles as a time to look back at your goals, assess your work, and begin new planning.

Use the sample evaluation (on page 13).

Providing GLSEN with YOUR Feedback

It is important to register your event at GLSEN so that we can offer you resources for your event and help others know what is happening in your area. It is also helpful to have your event registered as it helps GLSEN identify accurate numbers of nationwide involvement in making schools safer for all students.

In addition to registering, when your event is over, completing the easy online feedback form at www.dayofsilence.org is helpful for you as well to GLSEN. Again, this helps GLSEN keep accurate numbers for nationwide reports as well as generate new resources to help with your reported challenges. Your feedback will also allow GLSEN to modify other Days of Action to include some of your ideas from your events so that students in schools nationwide can benefit from your work.

Day of Silence Sample Evaluation

This evaluation will help make future events more successful! Please complete the evaluation as best and honestly as you can. Once you have completed the evaluation, please return it to (Student Club Leader's Name) as soon as you can. The first section asks you to check off the answer that best applies to you. The second section asks you to circle a number based on how much you agree with the statement. The last section is a short answer section. **Thanks!**

Please check the answer that best describes your involvement in the Day of Silence:

- I organized and silently participated in the Day of Silence
- I silently participated in the Day of Silence
- I supported the Day of Silence but did not remain silent

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree; 3="Agree"; 4="Strongly Agree".

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
* I am glad I was a part of the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* Other students at school were positive about my participation.	1	2	3	4
* Faculty, staff and administration supported me on the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* The Day of Silence had an impact at my school.	1	2	3	4
* Day of Silence organizers provided me with the support I needed before, during, and after the Day of Silence.	1	2	3	4
* I would like to participate in the Day of Silence again.	1	2	3	4

What did you like most about the Day of Silence? (Please be specific.)

How would you improve the Day of Silence in the future? (Please be specific.)

Additional Comments:

If you are interested in learning more please provide your email address or other contact information below:

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

IX. Glossary of Terms

Ally – sometimes referred to as “straight ally,” this term is not exclusive to heterosexual people in the GLSEN context, an ally is a person who is politically aligned and empathetic to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

Bias – Refers to an action taken or a pattern of behavior based on a prejudice against or for a group of people.

Bisexual – A term used to describe an individual who expresses attraction for men and women.

Breaking the Silence – A Breaking the Silence Event is an opportunity for participants in the Day of Silence to finally speak out about their experience being silent.

Coalition – a diverse group of individuals and organizations that work together to reach a common goal.

Day of Action – Each Day of Action is an opportunity for student organizers across the country to use their organizing skills to create, support, or participate in events that promote safer schools for all students.

Decision-maker – The person with the power to give you what you want.

Gay – A term used to describe one who identifies as a man and who is attracted to other male-identified people.

Gay-Straight Alliance – Refers to student-led clubs, particularly at the high school level, that work to promote respect for all students regardless of sexual orientation and provide a safe space for students that are LGBT, Queer, Questioning or Intersex.

GLSEN – Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

Lesbian – Refers to a woman-identified person who is attracted to other women-identified people.

LGBT – An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. There are many variations on this acronym.

Organizing – our ability to change our communities: to identify problems and develop solutions, to bring people together, to plan strategies and campaigns, to hold people in power accountable to the communities they serve.

Plus(+)/Delta(Δ) – Evaluation tool that allows participants to discuss things that went well (plus +) and things they would like to change (delta Δ).

Queer – Terms used to describe people who are not heterosexual because of its gender-neutrality and implication of social non-conformity.

Sexual Orientation – The preferred term used when referring to an individual’s physical, emotional, romantic, and/or spiritual attraction to another person.

Strategy – a larger scheme of activities that are used to achieve a goal.

Tactics – deliberate, planned actions, which should be designed to show power to your target, and to increase visibility and support.

Transgender – This term loosely refers to people who do not identify with the gender roles assigned to them by society based on the biological sex. Transgender is also used as an umbrella term for all those who do not conform to “traditional” notions of gender expression and includes people who identify as transsexual, or as a drag queen/king.

IX. Extras

Resources

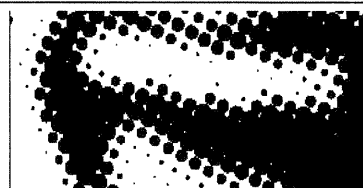
Day of Silence Team Building Sheet (pg. 4)
Frequently Asked Questions for the Media (pg. 7)
Day of Silence Planning Timeline (pg. 8)
Day of Silence Planning Sheet (pg. 9)
Sample Press Release (pg. 11)
Sample Evaluation Form (pg. 13)
2003 National School Climate Survey Key Findings
Sample Day of Silence Flyer
Speaking Cards (English and Spanish)
More Than Silence - Organizing a Breaking the Silence Event
How to Get What You Want With An Ask!
Sample Letter to Administration
Sample Letter to Local Businesses
Sample Letter to School Clubs

Websites

- www.dayofsilence.org
- www.glsen.org
- www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/curriculumchangechart.html - Midwest Academy Strategy Chart
- www.Gender.org

Key Findings

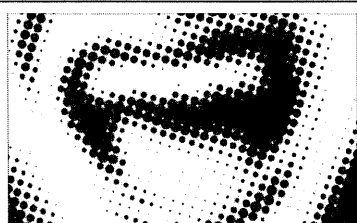
2003 National School Climate Survey



Introduction

GLSEN's National School Climate Survey is the only national survey to document the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students in America's high schools. Conducted bi-annually since 1999, the National School Climate Survey fills a crucial void in our collective understanding of the contemporary high school experience.

This data is here to provide student organizers with tools to help build their message and/or campaigns while organizing for Days of Action.



DAY of SILENCE

www.dayofsilence.org

GLSEN  USSA

What are you going to do to end the silence?

Homophobic Remarks/Verbal Harassment

- 84% of LGBT students report being verbally harassed (name calling, threats, etc.) because of their sexual orientation.
- 91.5% of LGBT students report hearing homophobic remarks, such as "faggot," "dyke" or the expression "that's so gay" frequently or often.
- 44.7% of LGBT youth of color report being verbally harassed because of both their sexual orientation and race/ethnicity.
- 82.9% of LGBT students report that faculty or staff never intervened or intervened only some of the time when present and homophobic remarks were made.

Physical Harassment/Victimization

- 39.1% of LGBT students report being physically harassed (being shoved, pushed, etc.) because of their sexual orientation.
- Within this vulnerable population, transgender students are even more at risk: 55% of transgender youth report being physically harassed because of their gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation, as compared with 41% of LGB students who report physical harassment for any one of these reasons, meaning that transgender students are more than 30% likelier to suffer physical harassment than LGB students.
- 57.9% of LGBT students reported having property stolen or deliberately damaged at school, as compared with 35% of students in a national sample of all high school students in a 1999 U.S. Department of Justice survey, meaning they were significantly more likely to be victimized by such crimes and attacks.

Sense of Safety at School

- 64.3% of LGBT students report feeling unsafe at their school because of their sexual orientation.
- 28.6% of LGBT students report missing at least one entire day of school in the past monthly because they felt unsafe. The rate was even higher (35.1%) among LGBT youth of color who felt unsafe at school for a variety of reasons (because of their sexual orientation, their race or both).

Impact on Academic Achievement and Future Educational Aspirations

Students who frequently experienced harassment because of their sexual orientation had GPA's that were more than 10% lower than those who did not: Average GPA for LGBT students who report frequent verbal harassment: 2.9; Average GPA for LGBT students who report only rare or less frequent verbal harassment: 3.3.

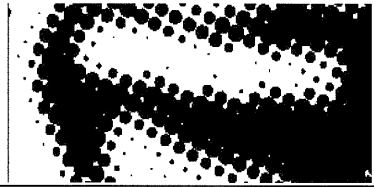
Students who experience frequent verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation are less likely than other students to plan to attend college: 13.4% of LGBT students who report verbal harassment do not intend to go to college, twice the figure of those LGBT students who report only rare or less frequent verbal harassment (6.7%).

More Key Findings on Next Page...



Key Findings

2003 National School Climate Survey



Conclusion

Clearly, more work needs to be done in our nation's schools to create safer climates for all students. Local community leaders, teachers, parents and GSA members need to work within their schools and their school districts to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to learn. These findings help us better understand what that work should entail, and we call upon all school authorities to undertake such measures so that schools may promote better educational outcomes for LGBT students.

LGBT Resources, School Policies and Support Systems

Many schools fail to provide resources or support for their LGBT students. However, when supportive faculty or LGBT-related resources are available, LGBT students do better in school and are much more likely to plan to attend college. Furthermore, there is a definitive relationship between schools and communities having policies and laws regarding violence, bias and harassment against LGBT students and student safety.

More than 4 out of 5 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school.

LGBT students unable to identify supportive teachers or staff were more than twice as likely not to plan to continue their education after secondary school: 24.1% of LGBT students with no supportive faculty or staff say they do not intend to go to college. Only 10.1% of LGBT students who did report having one or more supportive faculty or staff member say they will not go to college.

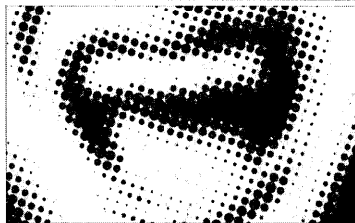
LGBT students who can identify supportive faculty or staff do better in school than those who cannot, with grade point averages more than 10% higher than their peers: Average GPA for LGBT students who cannot identify any supportive faculty or staff: 2.8. Average GPA for LGBT students who can identify one or more supportive faculty or staff member: 3.1.

LGBT students in schools with GSA's were more likely to feel safe in school than students whose schools do not have a GSA: 68.3% of LGBT students who report their schools do not have a GSA say they feel unsafe in their schools because of their sexual orientation. Students who said their school had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) were less likely to report feeling unsafe at school for the same reason (60.9%).

Students who did not have (or did not know of) a policy protecting them from violence and harassment were nearly 40% more likely to skip school than those who did: 36.5% of LGBT students who said their school did not have a specific harassment policy skipped class in the last month because they felt unsafe, with that number dropping to 26.6% among LGBT students who know that there is some sort of harassment policy in place to protect them.

About GLSEN

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and their allies. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information on our educator resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.



DAY of SILENCE

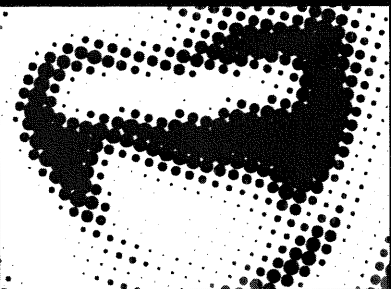
www.dayofsilence.org

GLSEN  **USSA**

What are you going to do to end the silence?

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network)
 90 Broad St. 2nd Fl. New York, NY 10004
www.glsen.org - 212-727-0135

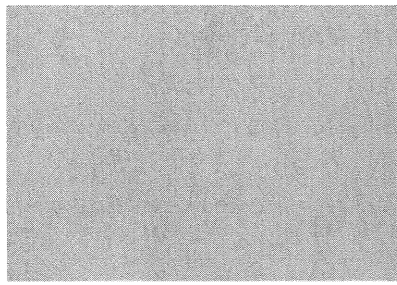




DAY of SILENCE

"Day of Silence has made people at our school more aware that there are people who care about LGBTQ issues here, and that there are problems in our community."

- Day of Silence participant in North Carolina

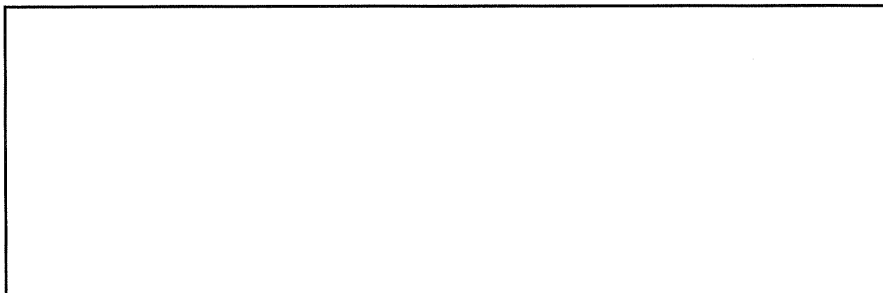


MAKING NOISE WITH THE DAY OF SILENCE!

Day of Silence is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment—in effect, the silencing—experienced by LGBT students and their allies. Last year, over 400,000 students in nearly 4,000 K-12 schools, colleges, and universities participated in the Day of Silence

PLAN IT!

Want to learn more? Want to get involved? Join us for the Day of Silence Planning Meeting to learn about the project, why it's needed and what you can do to make it a success!



DO IT!

Sign up today to participate in the Day of Silence! If you can't join us at the next planning meeting (above), then contact us today to learn more about this exciting effort to make our school a safer place for all!

CONTACT US!



VISIT THE DAY OF SILENCE NATIONAL WEBSITE AT WWW.DAYOFSILENCE.ORG!

Day of Silence

Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement protesting the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by harassment, prejudice, and discrimination. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today.

What are you going to do to end the silence?

Day of Silence
project

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Day of Silence
project

**Here's what you can do to help end the silence
and create a safer school:**

Learn more about the Day of Silence online at
www.dayofsilence.org

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Día de Silencio

Favor de entender mis razones para no hablar hoy. Estoy participando en el Día de Silencio, un movimiento nacional de jóvenes protestando el silencio enfrentado por lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y gente transgénera y los que les apoyan en las escuelas. Mi silencio que he escogido es un eco de ese silencio, que tiene como sus causas el hostigamiento, el prejuicio y la discriminación. Yo creo que acabar con el silencio es un primer paso en la lucha contra estas injusticias. Piense en las voces que no está escuchando hoy.

¿Qué va a hacer Ud. para acabar con el silencio?

Day of Silence
project

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¿Qué va a hacer Ud. para acabar con el silencio?

Day of Silence
project

Hay algunas cosas para acabar con el silencio en nuestra escuela:

escribir tu informacion aqui

Hay algunas cosas para acabar con el silencio en nuestra escuela:

escribir tu informacion aqui

**Aprender mas sobre el Día de Silencio, enviar a
espanol@glsen.org.**

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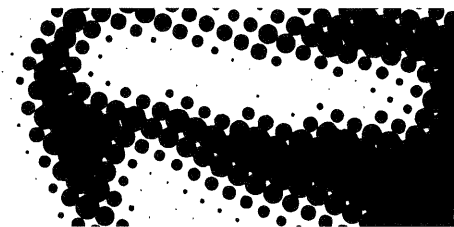
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MORE THAN SILENCE

Organizing a *Breaking the Silence* Event



“It really opened people’s minds and hearts. After the *Breaking the Silence* rally, I had to take a step back because I was so happy and overwhelmed by the well received response.”

— REINALDO CHAPARRO, SCHENECTADY, NY

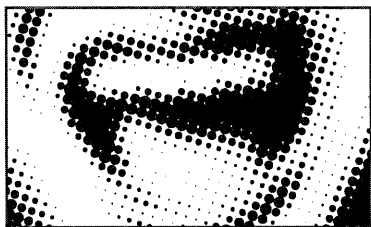
THERE IS NO ONE-WAY TO DEVELOP AND FACILITATE A GOOD *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENT. THE LOGISTICS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT ARE VERY MUCH UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON, GROUP OR COMMUNITY PLANNING IT. WITH THAT SAID, ONE COMMON OBJECTIVE OF *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENTS ARE TO BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE, AUGMENT AND SHARE THE IMPACT OF THE DAY OF SILENCE IN ALL COMMUNITIES.

MANY *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENTS INCLUDE SPACE IN THE AGENDA FOR STUDENTS WHO TO SHARE THEIR FIRST WORDS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE DAY OF SILENCE AND ARE NOW READY TO LET IT ALL OUT! PERFORMANCES, GUEST SPEAKERS OR AN OPEN MIC HAVE BEEN PART OF PAST *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENTS. OTHERS HAVE HAD RALLIES, DINNERS, DANCES OR GALAS TO BREAK THEIR SILENCE. THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO HOLD A *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENT. FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH AND WHAT WILL WORK BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY IS THE FIRST STEP IN MAKING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

HERE ARE 10 “QUICK TIPS” TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR OWN *BREAKING THE SILENCE* EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

1. FORMA COALITION: A coalition of individuals and groups allows you to outreach and work with diverse folks in your school and community. Think big! Your coalition can go beyond just the local Gay Straight Alliance or Diversity Club. Your *Breaking The Silence* event is for everyone! Consider inviting the groups who are affected by or care about anti-LGBT bias — or bias of any kind. Perhaps the local chapters of the Urban League or your school’s Black Student Union, Christian Student Group, or Latin American Club want to participate. Draft a letter explaining the Day of Silence and your *Breaking The Silence* event that can be sent to these organizations. Attend their meetings, talk about your event and identify those who express interest in participating in your coalition. The more groups involved — the better!

2. SET GOALS: This may sound like the easiest part, but it isn’t. Setting goals can be a tedious process, but it can be one that excites and motivates you! After building your coalition, it is the first step in planning your event. Set a goal for the number of people you like to realistically attend your event, how much money you plan to spend, how many performers or speakers you hope to have. The more detailed your goals are, the more likely you will stay focused during the planning process. Some communities have found it easier to start early. In Albany, NY, students begin planning in the fall, which allows time for a schedule of trainings for schools and time for a larger coalition to help plan and participate in their *Breaking The Silence* event. GLSEN Chicago wanted to integrate the *Breaking The Silence* event with a campaign for teacher training for all district teachers, so they hoped for more of a community event with large numbers to rally outside the school district offices to demand teacher trainings. Their goals allowed them to plan for a later rally, which allowed students from numerous schools and adult allies to participate.



DAY of SILENCE

www.dayofsilence.org

 **GLSEN**

3. SET A DATE: You want your event to be on or near the same day as the national Day of Silence.

Confirming the day and time of an event can sometimes be a process. When searching for a date, pay attention to other activities or events that are happening during that time. Finding a date that works for everyone in the coalition is tricky. At Northport High School in Long Island, NY, students planned an event at the end of the school day while organizers in Connecticut planned an early evening activity at the state capitol, which allowed community members and others to attend.

4. GET SPACE: Now that you've set your goals and date, you need to find a space that can host your event comfortably. You'll also want to consider other goals or objectives. Will there be performances? Speakers? Will the event require a stage, microphone or podium? Do you want your event at school or in the community? With your coalition partners, brainstorm a list of five locations and delegate to different people to contact the possible spaces. Again, don't be afraid to think big! If you want the event at the Capitol, the Elks Club or the school cafeteria — just ask! You might not be able to get your first choice, so ranking your preferences is a smart idea.

5. GET SPEAKERS/PERFORMERS: First, what kind of people do you want to participate? Remember to consider your target audiences (i.e. whom you want to "speak to") both at the event and through the media who may cover the event. Possible participants include school board members, city council representatives, the mayor, the governor, poets, students, faculty, artists, singers and dancers. The mix can never be too varied if you set up the program in a way that keeps the interest of those who will attend the event. If you want the mayor or governor to attend — invite them! It won't hurt, and you'd be surprised at how receptive some people can be. Also, make sure you follow-up with all people you invite. After your first invitation, try to follow-up with a phone call to confirm that they received information about the event. Also, encourage performers and speakers to outreach to others about the event. One last tip: If you don't have a lot of scheduled speakers or performers, providing an open mic can be a great way to fill space and allow people to Break The Silence.

HINT: Whether or not the governor, mayor or local officials can attend your event, ask them for a proclamation or resolution. Planners of events in Hartford, Madison, Seattle and Kalamazoo were able to present and read proclamations and resolutions from elected officials at their *Breaking The Silence* events. For more information on proclamations and resolutions, contact the Day of Silence leadership team or visit www.dayofsilence.org.

6. SPREAD THE WORD: This is when your coalition comes in really handy! The more people at your event, the better! Outreach happens in many ways. Word of mouth is the most personal and can provide the best responses. Talking to people (at lunch, before class, in the hall or on the street) and telling them about your event is really productive and creates a personal experience with the person you just spoke with. Flyers and e-mails are always great too! Make more than just one type of flyer. Catchy and fun are always appealing, but be sure to include the essentials like the date, time, location, and event highlights (i.e. open mic, performers, poets, speaker, etc). Students in Missoula created buttons for the Day of Silence and their *Breaking The Silence* event. In Beaverton, outside Portland, students created some very successful stickers.

7. BE SAFE: Safety is always important! Even if you don't need a chaperone, it might be a good idea to ask a school staff or other trusted adult to participate. Also, many schools and communities require permits or other forms of permission to have events even in public spaces. With that, better safe than sorry. If people try to disrupt your event or you are having any other challenges, don't be afraid to inform the school staff or a trusted adult.

8. MAKE A CHECK LIST: Being organized is good. The days before your event can feel somewhat hectic. Write down and track what you need to do.

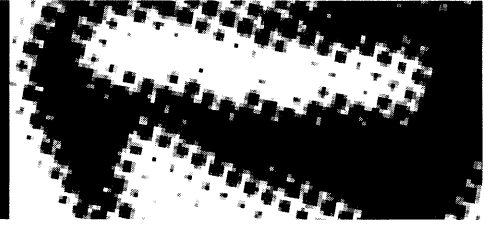
9. HAVE FUN: When you're part of the team that is planning a *Breaking The Silence* event, having fun can sometimes be forgotten. Through it all, this is intended to be a great experience that includes a lot of celebration and fun

10. GOOD LUCK: Actually, you don't need luck — after following the 10 steps to organizing your *Breaking The Silence* event, you're ready!

> K-12 Students Contact GLSEN @ (212) 727 0135 OR info@dayofsilence.org

> College & University Students Contact USSA @ (202) 347-8772 OR lgbt@usstudents.org

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT— *WITH AN ASK!*



“The Day of Silence is a perfect tool for creating change. We wanted a queer-friendly prom, and after showing that many students and staff care—we got a queer friendly prom. We said we wouldn’t be silenced, and we won’t.”

THE DAY OF SILENCE CAN BE A GREAT TOOL TO CATAPULT CHANGE AT YOUR SCHOOL! DO YOU WANT A MORE LGBT INCLUSIVE LIBRARY, TEACHER TRAINING, LGBT INCLUSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES OR SOMETHING ELSE? IF YOU WANT SOMETHING TO CHANGE — YOU CAN USE THE DAY OF SILENCE TO HELP WITH YOUR “ASK!”

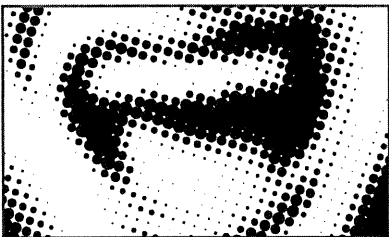
SO, YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING WHAT AN “ASK” IS. SIMPLY PUT, IT’S AN ORGANIZING TOOL, BUT LET’S BACK UP FOR A MINUTE. ORGANIZING IS WORKING WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE, LIKE STUDENTS IN YOUR STUDENT CLUB, TOWARDS AN “ISSUE.” AN “ISSUE” IS A PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, TEACHER TRAINING IS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HARASSMENT AND NAME-CALLING. WITH ANY “ISSUE,” THERE’S ALWAYS ONE PERSON WHO CAN GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT, AND THIS PERSON IS CALLED THE “TARGET” OR “DECISION-MAKER.” WHEN YOU ASK THE “DECISION-MAKER,” LIKE THE PRINCIPAL, TO AGREE TO YOUR “ISSUE,” OR APPROVE THE TEACHER TRAINING, THEN YOU HAVE MADE AN “ASK!”

SO, AN “ASK” IS A VERY SPECIFIC QUESTION THAT USES YOUR ALLIES TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE “DECISION-MAKER.” PARTICIPATING IN THE DAY OF SILENCE IS GREAT, BUT WHY STOP THERE? YOU CAN GET A LOT OUT OF THE DAY OF SILENCE AND REALLY CHANGE THE CLIMATE OF YOUR SCHOOL, SO PLAN AN “ASK!”

HERE ARE A FEW STEPS TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO MAKE YOUR ASK A LITTLE BIT EASIER:

1. IDENTIFY YOUR ISSUE! What does your group want to “ask” for with the Day of Silence? With that, your group will want to determine what the problems are and pick one as well as one solution to that problem – this is your group’s “issue.” Strategically, you’ll want to remember the mission of your group and the purpose of the Day of Silence. Don’t be afraid to think too big, but remember you can make change happen in steps. Students in Florida and New York used the Day of Silence to “ask” elected officials to pass the statewide legislation pending in the state legislature. Their “asks” were on the back of the Day of Silence speaking cards as postcards for Day of Silence participants and other students to sign and send to elected officials to show student support for passing laws to protect all students from discrimination and harassment.

2. PREPARE! GET THE FACTS! Who needs to know about and support your “ask?” What research do you need to do? If you want a better library, what books do you want and whom should you talk to in order to get that? If you want a teacher training, what things and topics do you want included? It is good to contact schools that already have what you want for your school. Find out ways that other people have gone about making this change and use that information too. Also, you might want to consider showing how the problem of harassment affects students. You can use statistics from GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey or implement the local school climate survey to determine the extent of name-calling in your school.




DAY of SILENCE

www.dayofsilence.org

 **GLSEN**

- 3. WHAT'LL YOU SAY?** Once you have your “issue” and facts, it will be important for your group to agree to “messages” or “talking points.” Simply put, these are the standard phrases that everyone will use and which are easy enough for each Day of Silence participant to be able to remember. It will be important to have your “talking points” include your “issue” and facts as well as the most compelling reasons why your “ask” should be approved. Catchy phrases are also good, like “Day of Silence: Support the GSA! Teacher training, and stop name-calling TODAY!”
- 4. FIND YOUR ALLIES!** What adults or students would make a good contribution to your “ask?” If you want a teacher training, why not attempt to become allies with the Future Teachers club? Finding your allies can be easier than it sounds – brainstorm as many student clubs or individuals to join as participants or as part of a coalition or planning group for Day of Silence. Not everyone is going to be interested in joining you, but don’t be afraid to “ask” people. Also, don’t rule anyone out! The GSA at Homestead HS in Wisconsin asked the Bible Club to join their Day of Silence coalition and support their “ask” for changes to the school’s policy because the club’s members has also experienced harassment in school. The first step in getting allies is asking them if they are interested in being a visible ally and participating in Day of Silence with you. Also, don’t discount the allies who are already visible. Make sure you include them in your strategy.
- 5. LET FOLKS KNOW!** Make sure that Day of Silence participants are aware that participating in the Day of Silence is also asking for a specific request. Students at Hellgate HS in Missoula, MT made pins, posters and t-shirts. You can also have a petition at the Day of Silence sign up or just include the request on your posters, speaking cards or t-shirts – this allows the “ask” to get out there. Also, check out ideas for “postcard asks” on the Day of Silence website. Let people know what you want!
- 6. SET IT UP!** After Day of Silence, it’s time to “ask!” Set up your meeting and bring your research, your student support and you and your planning committee or coalition! If you had petitions, letters of support, the number of students who supported or participated in Day of Silence or any other information that relates and can help – then prepare and bring it all to your meeting. Remember to plan this meeting well and designate facilitators as well as an agenda and “talking points!” It will help the meeting go better!
- 7. WORK IT OUT!** Remember “asking” does not guarantee a “yes,” but try your hardest. That said, you should follow up, and always send a thank you or acknowledgement to everyone who helped and the “decision-maker” (even if the problem was not solved). Remember, don’t give up! If it does not work out this year – there is always next year. You’re starting something! Good Luck!



> K-12 Students Contact **GLSEN** @ (212) 727 0135 OR info@dayofsilence.org

> College & University Students Contact **USSA** @ (202) 347-8772 OR lgbt@usstudents.org

Day of Silence *project*

Sample Letter to Administration

Dear [INSERT NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR],

I am writing to request a meeting with you to discuss your support of students' participation in the Day of Silence.

The Day of Silence is a national student-led action to raise awareness of the discrimination, harassment and abuse—in effect, the silencing—that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their allies face daily. On the Day of Silence, students at high schools and colleges across the country take a vow of silence and distribute “speaking cards” explaining their participation.

The Day of Silence at our school is particularly relevant because [INSERT BRIEF EXPLANATION WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES]. We hope that you and the rest of the administration will join the following groups in supporting the event: [INSERT NAMES OF CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS]. The Day of Silence is an opportunity for students to take the initiative to teach one another about difference, respect and safety for all students. Students gain leadership skills, provide a valuable service to the school community and empower themselves by realizing their ability to make a difference in their school.

There are numerous ways in which Day of Silence participants can meet their academic responsibilities without speaking. With the support of teachers, students could lead or take part in a “silent lesson” or complete a written assignment.

I look forward to speaking with you soon, and will call you within the week to confirm your receipt of my meeting request. Should you wish to contact me sooner, I may be reached at [INSERT SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CONTACT INFORMATION].

[You may also want to request that the school host a follow-up activity or event.]

Thank you,

[INSERT YOUR NAME]
[INSERT SPONSORING CLUB/ORGANIZATION]
[INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]

Day of Silence *project*

Sample Letter to Local Businesses

[INSERT ADDRESSEE NAME]
[INSERT ADDRESS]

[INSERT CURRENT DATE]

Dear Member of the [INSERT CITY/TOWN NAME] Business Community:

The [INSERT SPONSORING CLUB/ORGANIZATION], a school-based group that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality, is seeking donations to fund the Day of Silence. We would appreciate an in-kind or monetary donation from your business.

The Day of Silence Project (www.dayofsilence.org) is a national effort organized by students in schools across the country. On the Day of Silence, participants take a vow of silence to protest the discrimination, harassment and abuse faced by many LGBT people and their allies. Instead of speaking, participants hand out "speaking cards" explaining their reasons for remaining silent. We are organizing the project at [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] in order to [INSERT BRIEF AND CLEAR EXPLANATION OF YOUR GROUP'S GOALS]. In addition, at the end of the day, we will hold [INSERT BREAKING-THE-SILENCE ACTIVITY/EVENT].

We believe your business could help to ensure our success by donating [INSERT PRODUCT OR SERVICE, SUCH AS PHOTOCOPIES, T-SHIRTS, ETC., OR MONEY], although any contribution would be welcome. With your donation, we can feature the name of your business in our Day of Silence publicity materials.

We truly appreciate your valuable support of the [INSERT SPONSORING CLUB/ORGANIZATION]'s work.

Sincerely,

[INSERT YOUR NAME AND TITLE IN YOUR GROUP]
[INSERT SPONSORING CLUB/ORGANIZATION]
[INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]

Day of Silence *project*

Sample Letter to School Clubs

Dear [LEADER OF CLUB/ORGANIZATION]:

I am writing to request [NAME OF CLUB/ORGANIZATION]'s support of students participating in the Day of Silence.

The Day of Silence Project is a national student-led action to protest the discrimination, harassment and abuse—in effect, the silencing—faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their allies. On the Day of Silence, rather than speaking, participants hand out “speaking cards” explaining their reasons for remaining silent throughout the day. At the end of the Day, participants will gather for [INSERT BREAKING-THE-SILENCE ACTIVITY/EVENT].

The Day of Silence is particularly relevant at our school because [INSERT BRIEF EXPLANATION WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES]. We would be thrilled if your group would join us in taking a stand on issues of social justice and equality for all people.

There are two kinds of involvement that we’d like to request from your group. First, we hope that your group will co-sponsor the Day of Silence with us. This means that you would express your support publicly and consider making a donation of time and/or money towards organizing the Day. Secondly, we hope that your group’s members will participate in the Day of Silence. We would like to visit your meeting and distribute sample “speaking cards” and other participant materials at your earliest convenience.

Please visit the Day of Silence Project’s website, www.dayofsilence.org, and contact [INSERT CONTACT NAME] at [INSERT SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CONTACT INFORMATION] for more information or to arrange a meeting time.

Thank you,

[INSERT YOUR NAME]
[INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]