

GLSEN JUMP-START #4

Tips and Tools for Training Teachers



Notes

We have chosen to use gender-neutral pronouns and language in this resource, in order to show respect for our readers who may not identify as "he" or "she." The drawback to this choice is questionable grammar, but we hope that you will overlook it in support of everyone's right to gender self-identification.

The GLSEN Jump-Start #4

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Register with GLSEN!

Registered Groups (GSAs and similar groups) and Individuals (student leaders, advisors, students trying to start GSAs, and so on) receive free information and resources from GLSEN's Student Organizing Department. Resources include educational books, videos and trainings; updates, information and free guides to community and school organizing around LGBT issues across the country; networking opportunities with other youth leaders and teacher advisors; and, free subscriptions to Student Organizing's e-mail listservs, which provide student leaders and teacher advisors with a discussion forum for asking questions, sharing ideas and providing feedback. Register yourself and your GSA today!

The following individuals contributed their teacher training experience to Jump-Start #4. In addition to those listed below, several other GSA leaders and advisors shared their input. GLSEN would like to thank everyone for their inspiring ideas and wish them continued success in improving their schools.

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Introduction

Welcome and Overview

Welcome to the GLSEN Jump-Start #4: Tips and Tools for Training Teachers. Many student organizers and GSAs have organized teacher trainings in their schools, and this Jump-Start includes ideas submitted by student organizers and GSA advisors from all over the country. We hope that after reading this Jump-Start, you'll see that organizing a teacher training is something that all GSAs can do. Jump-Start #4 is meant to be used as a self-contained guide to planning a teacher training in your school, but remember to take another look at Jump-Starts #1-3 for information that could help you in your planning.

From Merriam-Webster Online:

Main Entry: jump-start

Pronunciation: 'j&mp-'stärt

Function: transitive verb

Date: 1973

1 : to start (an engine or vehicle) by temporary connection to an external power source (as another vehicle's battery)

2 a : to get off to a speedy start
<advertising can jump-start a political campaign> b : to impart fresh or renewed energy to : ENERGIZE <a plan to jump-start the stagnant economy>
- jump start noun

The activities outlined in the Jump-Start always involve lots of group work - brainstorming, discussing and writing. If you need additional copies of this Jump-Start, or previous and/or future Jump-Starts, all editions are online in the GSAs/Student Resources section of the GLSEN website (www.glsen.org). We welcome feedback, suggestions and requests if you'd like to see particular topics addressed in future Jump-Starts. Just e-mail us: jumpstart@glSEN.org.

We wish you the best in your work towards creating safer, more respectful and more equitable schools for all.

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Activity 1

Planning a Teacher Training

Ready...

Training teachers in your school to respond to anti-LGBT name-calling and harassment is an essential strategy in making your school community more safe and accepting for all students. Your GSA can greatly improve the climate of your school by giving teachers the information and tools they need to make name-calling and harassment unacceptable for all members of your school community.

Planning a teacher training involves working with your school's administration. Every school and district is different. It may be easiest to start small; for example, inviting teachers to a GSA-sponsored event. In some cases, your group may be able to work with your GSA advisor(s) and the principal, or other decision-making staff, to present at a faculty meeting or in-service training. Once your GSA has gotten approval, planning your training becomes the priority. Students and faculty advisors should participate equally in the planning process.

When it comes to the logistics for the training, it's important to remember that training teachers is like any other event. You'll need to plan 1) Objectives, what you hope to accomplish; 2) Agenda, the schedule for the training; and 3) Roles and Responsibilities, the assignment of specific tasks to specific people in your GSA. We can call these the OARRs, and remember it's like paddling a canoe - you can't get very far without your "oarrs."

Set...

People: entire group (working as a whole), prepared facilitator(s) and designated note-takers/recorders

Tools: 6-8 sheets of flip chart or large construction paper, markers, tape

Time: 60-90 minutes

Hang five sheets of paper in a row where everyone can see them. Designate one or two recorders to take notes from the planning discussion. At the top of the sheet 1 write "Allies," at the top of sheet two write "Objectives Wish List," at the top of sheet three write "Final Objectives," at the top of sheet four write "Agenda," and at the top of sheet five write "Roles and Responsibilities."

Go!

Part 1: Identifying Your Allies (5 minutes)

A. Before you begin planning your Objectives, you may want to take a few minutes to brainstorm people who could be involved with the training to assist you and/or make more of an impact with the teachers. Write anyone the group thinks of on the "Allies" sheet.

B. Working with individuals and groups inside and outside of the school may be helpful. Including straight allies on the training team can be particularly effective. Some GSAs have invited families of LGBT students in the school community or from the local chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays - www.pflag.org), and/or LGBT alumni from their school who can talk about the experiences they had as students. Keep in mind that you may have local LGBT support and/or advocacy resources or groups in your community who can assist you with training teachers. Once you've ultimately decided on your "Objectives," "Agenda" and "Roles and Responsibilities," you may want to get in touch with allies such as a local trainer or other LGBT resource group to share your ideas, get feedback on your plan, and propose how they might participate in the training. You may even want to get more people on board before doing Activity 2: What Can Teachers Do?, which helps you to think about the specific sections of your training, and then include those allies in the planning process. Bringing outside individuals or groups into your school for a training or presentation will require permission from your school

administration, and there may be contracts or other documents to sign. Your advisor(s) can be of great assistance in this piece of the process.

Part 2: Establishing Your Objectives (20-30 minutes)

A. On your "Objectives Wish List" sheet, have the members of your group make a wish list of all of the outcomes they'd like to see happen from the training. Some prompts to help your group think about it include: What do you want teachers to know and/or do? How do you want teachers to respond to anti-LGBT name-calling and harassment? How would your school be different after the training? What would those who present or facilitate the training gain by doing it?

B. Your group may want to consider developing objectives which can measure the outcomes of the training, such as a having a pre- and post-training evaluation of teachers' knowledge and attitudes, checking in with teachers several weeks after the training to see if they are using their new information and skills, and/or conducting GLSEN's Local School Climate Survey (available in the "Program Tools" subsection of the "Students and GSAs" section at www.glsen.org) to assess your school's climate and how the training may have impacted it. In many schools where teacher trainings have been conducted, there's been an immediate improvement that then begins to fizzle out after a few months. While you don't need to plan a follow-up or advanced training yet, you may wish to include the idea - or other follow-up ideas - in your objectives.

C. Once the group has finished creating its wish list, take some time to prioritize the objectives and narrow the list. Let's get a little acronym-happy and say that your objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. There may be some ideas on the wish list that would be better suited to a follow-up or advanced training, because they'd need to grow out of the groundwork laid by other objectives. The group should either build consensus or agree upon the objectives for the training. Once the objectives have been decided, write them on the "Final Objectives" sheet. Now it will be easy to develop an agenda that will help your group to reach its objectives.

Part 3: Plotting Your Agenda (20-30 minutes)

A. An important part of the agenda is knowing the time allotted for the training. It helps to have at least an hour. GSAs and other groups have planned trainings of different lengths, from one-hour presentations to weekend trainings or two day-long workshops. If you have a set length of time to work with, you'll be better able to decide how to structure your agenda and which activities are most crucial. The recorder should write the time allotted for the training at the top of the "Agenda" sheet as a reminder to everyone planning the agenda. As your group discusses each proposed part of the agenda, try to come up with a general estimate of how long that part will take. Remember to include a scheduled break, depending on how long the training will be. The recorder should write decisions about the agenda on the "Agenda" sheet, but this won't necessarily be the final version. You will probably need to revisit your agenda once you've developed each individual part, in case certain topics take more or less time out of the schedule than you'd anticipated, or would work better in a different sequence than you'd originally planned.

B. It's always a good idea to begin the training with introductions and "working agreements," or ground rules. Especially if students will be sharing their own personal stories, you'll want to remind the group about respecting confidentiality, maintaining a nonjudgmental attitude and speaking only for oneself rather than making generalizations (often called "Speaking from the 'I'"). Giving the training facilitators and participants a few minutes to add their own working agreements to a master list helps everyone to feel invested in the training process, and alerts participants to each other's needs. During agenda planning, your group may also want to think about how to respond to dissent, factually inaccurate statements and offensive comments that may not have been intended as such. It's helpful to have a strategy for handling those kinds of remarks so that they can be respectfully addressed but prevented from sidetracking the training.

C. Using an activity at the beginning to survey the teachers' attitudes will help you to gauge the group and prepare it for the workshop. Activity 2 of this Jump-Start contains a section on self-assessment that includes a suggested resource and activity for the early part of the training. Concluding the training with a final Q&A period and a written evaluation will enable you to address any issues that haven't been covered, and learn what information was most and least useful for participants. This will help you in developing future trainings and under-score teachers' remaining concerns.

D. You may find it useful to decide on the larger thematic sections of the training now, and use Activity 2: What Can Teachers Do? to further develop those sections at your next meeting. If the topics in Activity 2 don't correspond to your own ideas for training topics, you can adapt the planning process outlined in Activity 2 to your own choices. For example, let's say that you don't want to include a section on gender-neutral language, which is one of the topics we included in Activity 2, but you do want to include a section on anti-LGBT harassment in school athletics. You can use the brainstorming tips from Activity 2 to help you flesh out your ideas, and go to www.glsen.org to find supporting resources on school athletics.

E. Remember your OARRs: after you've decided on the basic agenda, it will be important to assign roles and responsibilities for each piece of the training.

Tips for Facilitation

"Paperwork" – Use handouts and other resources for teachers to review after the training

"Visuals" – Use flip-charts, overheads, videos or other graphic features

"Many voices and faces" – One person doesn't have to do it all; divide the training into parts and delegate them to different people

"Practice, practice, practice" – Meet at least once to review the training and more if possible; you may also want to video the training for facilitators to review, so that they can improve their presentations for future trainings

Part 4: Assigning Roles and Responsibilities (10-20 minutes)

A. Begin by looking at the basic agenda developed by the group and identifying the major tasks you'll need to accomplish in order to organize your training. The points below offer some suggestions for how you can divide up responsibilities. The recorder should make a list on the "Roles and Responsibilities" sheet of each person, the tasks and responsibilities they agree to take on, and the first task they plan to do. It will be up to each individual (or group, in the case of shared tasks and responsibilities) to write down their responsibilities, take some time on their own to prioritize their tasks and create a personal timeline for accomplishing them.

B. Your group may wish to have one or two people serve as the overall training coordinators, so that they can look at the training as a whole and identify any broad changes or revisions that need to happen.

C. Depending on your group's training objectives and agenda, one or more people may be needed to oversee the logistical planning tasks, such as reserving a space for the training, reserving any audio-visual equipment or other supplies, creating invitations for teachers, creating publicity materials, photocopying handouts, buying refreshments and other logistical tasks.

D. Your group should also decide how many people you need to do outreach to LGBT community groups and other local allies who could assist you in planning and presenting your training. It's usually a good idea to have one person serve as the contact person with each outside group, if not all of them, so that people from those groups don't get confused about which person from your school to call.

E. Once the agenda has been divided into sections, whoever wishes to present that section during the actual training should be responsible for the research and preparation. The process of putting the information together will increase their familiarity with it and build their confidence about presenting it to an audience.

F. An important part of training teachers is giving them evidence of harassment in the school. Including one or more student, alumni or family speakers is a useful strategy for reaching the "heads and hearts" of teachers. As one GSA advisor put it, having students discuss their personal experiences with bias and harassment "puts a face on the issue." Prepare speakers for the training by giving them sample script outlines. Keep in mind that it's just as important to script and rehearse personal stories as it is to rehearse presentations on statistics or intervention strategies. In addition to having speakers from outside your school, it's also important to represent the diversity of your school's community—sexual orientation, gender identity and race/ethnicity are just some areas you should try to broadly represent.

Part 5: Reviewing the Plan (5 minutes)

Take a few minutes for the group to review the "Allies," "Final Objectives," "Agenda" and "Roles and Responsibilities" sheets. Make sure that everyone understands their next steps and which person(s) they should contact with any questions or concerns about fulfilling their responsibilities. Begin the next training team meeting with a check-in to see how everyone's progressing with their planning tasks.

Consider This...

- Break out: In addition to having discussions with the entire audience, identify sections where participants could divide into smaller groups for discussion, brainstorming and/or problem-solving
- Vary formats: Skits and role-plays are extremely effective training tools, but too much reliance on dramatic formats may reinforce opinions about the harassment being exaggerated
- Video the training: The tape can be used as a resource for absent teachers and new hires, as well as a self-evaluation and review tool for trainers
- Serve refreshments and take breaks: Consider the length of your training and identify places where you could fit in a break
- Make it personal: Send out personal invitations to teachers, reminder notes and an advance sign-up sheet; devise a special outreach strategy for unsupportive teachers
- Know your audience: Organize trainings in Spanish or other languages spoken by the teaching staff, to include as many teachers as possible
- Follow up: In order to sustain commitment, momentum and growth, consider planning trainings on an annual or biannual basis; repeat the same "101" training, or even develop a second, "advanced" training

Activity 2

What Can Teachers Do?

Ready...

As we mentioned in Activity 1, it's important that your GSA's teacher training not only provide a forum for education and discussion about the problem of anti-LGBT bias and harassment, but also contain a space for students to present solutions, and for teachers to brainstorm the ways that they can achieve these solutions. Teachers should leave the training with a concrete understanding of the problems **and** the immediate and long-term actions they can take, and students and teachers alike should feel empowered to support each other's efforts.

This activity focuses on five actions (selected from the numerous options) teachers can take to help end bias and harassment and improve the overall school climate: 1) Self-Assessment; 2) Knowledge About the Problem of Anti-

LGBT Bias; 3) Direct Harassment Intervention; 4) Gender-Neutral Language; 5) Safe Space/Zone Programs. For each action, information is provided in the following format:

1. Name and general description of the action
2. Suggested points for trainers to brainstorm and discuss how they can tailor each action specifically to their own school
3. Supporting resources (included in the mailing and/or available at www.glsen.org) that trainers can use in planning the training **and** distribute as a handout during the training itself
4. Additional tips

Set...

People: entire group, divided into five groups of at least two people (if you have fewer than ten people, you should still divide into as many pairs as you can make, and each pair will work on more than one of the five actions)

Tools: 10 sheets of flip-chart or large construction paper, markers, tape

Time: 45-65 minutes

Go!

Part 1: Small Group Brainstorm: Understanding What Teachers Can Do (20-30 minutes)

Assign at least one of the five actions to each small group, and give each group two sheets of paper per action and a marker. Each group should designate a recorder for taking notes, and then should spend 20-30 minutes discussing the action, brainstorming ideas for how teachers could implement the action in their school, and reviewing the supporting resource recommended for that action.

Action 1. Self-Assessment

Part of the process of becoming an LGBT ally is honestly reflecting on one's own attitudes towards LGBT people. Teachers will be better equipped to advocate for LGBT students and staff if they take the time to examine their own deeply-ingrained beliefs, and identify places where they can grow and progress in their thinking. Even LGBT teachers may have internalized biases about certain types of LGBT people or certain kinds of behavior.

Suggested Points for Brainstorming and Discussion

- As training facilitators, what can we do to create a safe, nonjudgmental space for participants to be as open and honest as possible?

When teachers do the self-assessment, invite a few participants to share their results on a voluntary basis. Remind everyone of the working agreements that were established at the beginning of the training.

- As training facilitators, what can we do to encourage constructive reflection?

While it's important for teachers to identify their attitudes and explore the origin of those attitudes, self-assessment has the potential to become group therapy that goes no further. For each reflection that is shared, invite the person sharing and/or the whole group to identify a step that person could take to unlearn their biases and advance their thinking about LGBT people.

*Supporting Resource: **What Do We Really Think?: A Group Exercise to Increase Heterosexual Ally Behavior** (available in the "Staff Development" section of the "Resource Center" at www.glsen.org). The **What Do We***

Really Think? resource, enclosed in the Appendix, is adapted from the work of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley. The exercise encourages heterosexual ally behavior by exploring the ways in which faulty assumptions perpetuate anti-LGBT bias. Review the resource and discuss ways that you could include it in your training.

Action 2. Knowledge About the Problem of Anti-LGBT Bias

In order to act as allies for LGBT students, teachers need to be educated about the problem of anti-LGBT bias and harassment. There are multiple strategies for doing this, and usually they work best when combined. As one GSA leader commented, "I think the combination of statistics, personal stories and role-playing...worked together to drive home the message that name-calling and harassment were happening and the teachers had the power to end it."

Suggested Points for Brainstorming and Discussion

- How can personal stories be presented so as to prompt an active response from teachers?

As we've discussed, student, alumni, family and community speakers all can make a powerful and poignant contribution to a training. The key is having only a couple of speakers, having them speak about similar (underscores the problem) **and** different (recognizes diversity) experiences, and making sure that they're comfortable speaking to the group, they've scripted their presentations and they've rehearsed them multiple times.

Two techniques for making personal stories as effective as possible are:

1. Rap - The "rap" is a method of telling a story with the five following elements: 1) introducing yourself; 2) surveying the audience; 3) telling your personal story; 4) providing historical and other group information; and 5) ending with a closing that includes an ask, a task you want the audience (individual or group) to do.
2. Message circles – "Message circles" is a method of telling your story in which you identify a problem and propose a solution.

In cases where you choose, for whatever reason, not to include live speakers with personal stories, videos can be a useful tool. Videos often include student, family and teacher anecdotes as well as research data. Check in the GLSEN Bookstore at www.glsen.org for video recommendations.

- How can teachers use statistics to connect the experiences of their students to the larger problem of anti-LGBT bias?

Statistics are a great way to reach teachers because they're concrete and provide big-picture evidence of the problem. Teachers can use them to teach about bias in their classrooms, to sway skeptical colleagues and families, and to mobilize community support for school change. Statistics on anti-LGBT harassment in the classroom, on anti-LGBT bias in school athletics, and on risk factors facing LGBT young people all can help to broaden teachers' understanding of the experiences of LGBT students.

*Supporting Resource: **GLSEN's 2001 National School Climate Survey** (both the "Key Findings" and "Complete Findings" are available in the "Statistics" subsection of the "News" section at www.glsen.org). **GLSEN's National School Climate Survey**, conducted in 1999 and 2001, is the largest national survey on the experiences of LGBT youth in schools. Released in 2001 in partnership with MTV, it examines the prevalence of school-*

"I think the combination of statistics, personal stories and role-playing...worked together to drive home the message that name-calling and harassment were happening and the teachers had the power to end it."

based harassment and victimization, the frequency with which students hear anti-LGBT language, and the factors that contribute to or detract from an overall feeling of comfort or safety.

Action 3. Direct Harassment Intervention

The most common concern GLSEN hears from teachers is frustration with anti-LGBT name-calling in their schools, mixed with confusion about how best to intervene. Many teachers are allies in spirit but not in action, who remain silent because they don't know how to respond to name-calling, especially when it's indirect (for example, the random use of the expression "That's so gay" as opposed to harassment targeting a specific student). There are multiple strategies teachers can use to respond to name-calling, and one of the best ways for them to learn those strategies is by practicing them in a role-play.

Suggested Points for Brainstorming and Discussion

- What are the specific names and slurs that we hear in our school? How, where and in what context are they used? How can we shape the training discussion of name-calling to focus on the verbal harassment in our own school?

Give students the opportunity to share their experiences with name-calling, and likewise give teachers the opportunity to share their stories about name-calling incidents in their classrooms. Throughout the training, keep a list on the board or flip-chart so that you can incorporate the specific types of name-calling discussed into your role-play, if you decide to include a role-play (it's highly recommended!) in your training. Similarly, keep a list of the places in your school where name-calling incidents happen most, and discuss how teachers could help to create an ally presence there.

- Does our school have anti-harassment and nondiscrimination policies that are inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression? If so, how can we encourage teachers to be more proactive in implementing the policies? If not, how can we encourage teachers to mobilize in support of creating such policies, or revising existing ones?

As one GSA student organizer advises, "Emphasize educators' legal, ethical and professional responsibilities to promote a safe learning environment for all students." Ask teachers directly if they know about the school anti-harassment and nondiscrimination policies, and if they've participated in any trainings or discussions about how to implement them. Give them an opportunity to brainstorm how they can collaborate to better educate themselves and the school community about school policy. In cases where there is no school policy or the existing policy is not inclusive of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, give teachers an opportunity to brainstorm how they could advocate at the school and district levels to get such policies passed.

- Does the problem of name-calling and harassment in our school extend beyond the LGBT community? What other groups are targeted by harassment? Is there an opportunity to apply the intervention strategies we discuss in our training in a broader way?

While the focus of your training is LGBT students, it's important to remember that LGBT people have complex identities. They may experience multiple oppressions and be targeted by sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment, or other forms of bias. Teachers need to be aware of the multiple issues facing their students and how different forms of oppression interact. In addition,

there are tremendous coalition-building opportunities among different groups in schools, and addressing a common issue such as student harassment can help to empower all students and improve the school climate for everyone.

- What kind of proactive measures can teachers take to set a tone that discourages antagonistic behavior among students?

Harassment intervention is often reactive, happening after the name-calling and harassment has occurred. Discuss ways that teachers can establish classroom procedures and relationships with their students that set a positive tone.

"Emphasize educators' legal, ethical and professional responsibilities to promote a safe learning environment for all students."

*Supporting Resource: **Zero Indifference: A How-To Guide to Ending Name-Calling in Schools** (available in the "School/Classroom Practice" subsection of the "School Safety" section of the "Resource Center" at www.glsen.org). **Zero Indifference: A How-To Guide to Ending Name-Calling in Schools** was produced by GLSEN last fall. The resource spells out the legal and ethical case for stopping name-calling in schools and provides a practical guide for intervention and education. Review the resource and discuss ways that you could include it in your training. It's an extensive guide, so you may wish to highlight only certain parts of it in the training, and distribute the whole resource to teachers for their own reference. The sections in **Zero Indifference** that provide examples of responses teachers can use when they hear name-calling could help you to develop your role-play.*

Action 4. Gender-Neutral Language

Using gender-neutral language is one of the simplest, most proactive ways that teachers can "come out" as allies to LGBT students. Being conscious of language and choosing words carefully is already a crucial part of teaching, and it's perfectly reasonable to ask teachers to consider how the gendered language they use, both in casual conversation and in their lessons, sends specific messages about equity and power to all of their students. If you choose to address this subject in your teacher training, it's another area where role-playing can be very effective.

Suggested Points for Brainstorming and Discussion

- What are some concrete ways that teachers could make their language more gender-neutral?

One example that often produces an "Aha!" reaction in teacher trainings goes like this: Let's say it's Monday morning and a teacher asks students what they did over the weekend. One female student responds by saying that she went on a date. The teacher, wanting to show interest in the student's life, asks, "What's his name?" or "Where did you and your boyfriend go?" or "Do I know him?" By asking instead "What was your date's name?" or "Do I know the person you're dating?" the teacher could refrain from making an assumption about the student's sexual orientation.

- How can teachers change their language to respect gender-variant students, gender-questioning students, or students whom they suspect of being transgender?

Using gender-neutral language is especially important in affirming gender-variant students or students who may be going through a process of gender questioning or transition. Transgender students may or may not feel comfortable correcting teachers who use incorrect pronouns to describe them, and it's important for teachers to remain aware and sensitive to all of their students' self-expressions. Of course, teachers should think about the privacy needs of students

as well as their own desire to show support. It's generally better to approach students privately to discuss their gender identities and sexual orientations, and learn from them directly how they'd like to be addressed and supported.

*Supporting Resource: **The Language of Gender** (available in the "Staff Development" section of the "Resource Center" at www.glsen.org). **The Language of Gender** provides educators with a set of definitions to help expand their understanding of gender, enabling them to speak effectively and respectfully about gender with peers, parents and students. Teachers usually respond very favorably to learning about vocabulary because it gives them something really tangible to use. Including a section on gender identity and sexual orientation vocabulary also provides a useful opportunity for clarifying the distinctions between different types of gender variance (i.e. transgender, transsexual, FTM, MTF, and other terms). Review the resource and discuss ways that you could include it in your training.*

Action 5. Safe Space/Zone Programs

The purpose of a Safe Space or Safe Zone Program is to create safe, supportive spaces within schools that are beneficial and easily identifiable to LGBT students and staff. Safe Space/Zone Programs provide LGBT people and allies with useful information and effective strategies to increase their understanding of LGBT issues and end anti-LGBT bias in their school.

Some of the more common features of Safe Space/Zone Programs include:

- Distribution of materials (stickers, brochures) for students and staff to display in locations around the school as a way of declaring them to be safe spaces for LGBT people
- Designation of trained Safe Space/Zone allies who understand LGBT issues and are willing to personally provide support and advocacy to LGBT students and staff in cases of bias and harassment; allies also should be equipped to provide referral services to community resources for students with coming-out, health, family, relationship, violence or other issues that would be handled best by a professional counselor
- Development of additional strategies for making Safe Space/Zone Programs highly visible in schools

Suggested Points for Brainstorming and Discussion

- What makes a space safe?

Students doing teacher trainings often include an activity that involves teachers reflecting on their own experiences in school. Teachers are asked to think about how they felt at school, which people they considered allies, what "ally" behavior looked like for them, whether there were any safe spaces for them to go, what specific attributes of those spaces made them feel safe, what about other spaces made them feel unsafe, and other such questions. It's a very useful exercise for putting teachers into the mindset of students and helps to create empathy for their students' experiences. It also helps to drive home the idea that all students need to feel safe and supported in school, and that LGBT students are not asking for "special" rights or treatment.

- What are some strategies teachers can use for helping to create a Safe Space/Zone Program that's organized and visible?

Most Safe Space/Zone Programs include the display of a sticker, sign and/or poster (often designed and produced by students) that communicate through a symbol or slogan that a space is officially "safe." Teachers participating in the program can put stickers and signs on their doors to show all students in the school, and on their walls, desks and other visible places inside their classrooms to show their own students. In addition, participating teachers can create a space in their room where they keep materials such as copies of school and district anti-harassment and nondiscrimination policies, GSA resources, pamphlets on coming-out, health and other personal issues, referral information for local social service providers and youth support groups, and LGBT-inclusive books and videos.

Supporting Resource: GLSEN's Safe Space Project

Due to popular demand, GLSEN is expanding its Safe Space Project by redesigning and printing new stickers for the 2002-2003 school year, along with an accompanying guide that will provide information about how to use the stickers, how to increase ally behavior and how to implement a Safe Space Program in your school. Keep an eye on GLSEN's website for this upcoming resource.

*Supporting Resource: **Ten Things Educators Can Do...** (available in the "School/Classroom Practice" subsection of the "School Safety" section of the "Resource Center" at www.glsen.org). This recently-updated GLSEN resource provides a great overview of the actions educators can take to improve their schools, including the five actions emphasized in this activity.*

Part 2: Report-Back: Sharing Your Ideas (20-30 minutes)

Each of the five groups should hang its brainstorm sheets on the wall where everyone can see them and choose a reporter for its group. Each reporter should take a few minutes to share the ideas generated during their group's brainstorming session, pose any questions their group has about their section to the rest of the group, and answer any questions from the rest of the group. The whole group should make a final decision about which actions will be presented in the training, and who will be responsible for doing further research, developing each part of the script and presenting each action. At your next training team meeting check-in, take some time to discuss the work that you've done in developing the content of the training, and brainstorm ideas for transitioning from one section to the next.

Consider This...

- Emphasize needs: Teachers should leave the training understanding, as one GSA leader commented, "that students need teachers' help and that they have an opportunity to support their students and improve the school climate as a whole."
- Provide options: Give teachers multiple solutions and intervention options, while encouraging consistency across the faculty/staff
- Show evidence: One GSA used "confiscated hateful flyers and notes" to prove to teachers that anti-LGBT harassment was a legitimate problem in its school

Model Training Outline

(from the student organizers in the Franklin High School GSA, Portland, Oregon)

1. Welcome

2. An activity "in which the teachers called out people who they'd depended on for support when they were students." (Like the one mentioned above in the Safe Space/Zone Programs section-JS)

"We then went through the list of people and systematically crossed off almost every one, explaining why an LGBT young person couldn't necessarily depend on those people."

3. Personal narratives from students

4. Gallery walk

"The teachers went around the room to anti-LGBT scenarios we'd written on paper. In their groups they had to come up with responses to each scenario: what would they say, whether or not they'd report it and to whom, and what they could do to prevent it from happening in the future. At the end of this activity, they all shared their answers and discussed the best ideas and how they could use them."

5. Statistics

"We showed some statistics about drop-out rates, suicide, alcohol and drug use, including students' reports of being unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation (or perceived orientation)."

6. Role-plays!

"This was one of the most effective tools we used. The three students played students in different scenarios (saying "fag" in the hallways, threatening each other, saying "That's sooo gay" during a class, and others). The teachers would then have to react on-the-spot and figure out what to do. A lot of the teachers got up and didn't know what to do, so other teachers would jump in with suggestions or get up and respond them selves. This gave them all a chance to empower themselves by tackling the situation with students they may not have known. It was by far the best part of the training."

7. Closing

Total time: 2.5 hours.

Conclusion

We hope that this fourth installment of the Jump-Start has provoked reflection, conversation, inspiration and action in your group. Collaboration can be as exhausting as it is exciting, and it's important always to remember what unites the members of your group, even as you remain conscious of your distinct perspectives. Your commitment to working as a group to improve your school community is phenomenal, and as you know, victories are much sweeter when shared, so do your best to support one another in fulfilling your goals! Remember that GLSEN's Student Organizing Department is here to help you, too.

Remember to keep an eye on the "Students and GSAs/Student Resources" section of our website (www.glsen.org) for additional ideas, activity plans and resources.

As we mentioned in the introduction, feedback and suggestions for future Jump-Start resources are always welcome, and we encourage you to email us at jumpstart@glsen.org.

See you soon...and good luck!