

INSIGHTS

How to Use this Guide

Why is LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Important and Necessary?

Incorporating LGBTQ history and culture encourages students to think more critically about the world, helps to create safe and affirming communities for LGBTQ students and families, and has the power to transform lives. Consider downloading **GSA Network's Implementing Lessons that Matter: The Impact of LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum on Student Safety, Well-Being, and Achievement**. This document provides hard data and contextualizes curricula as part of efforts for improved school safety, decreased bullying, and higher achievement across various schools and ALL students, not just LGBTQ students. A link to this document is in the resources section of this guide.

How to Use this Guide in Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)

By watching these films in GSAs, students can delve further into the materials and contextualize them more directly within their lives and current affairs. There are even tips on how to take further actions after seeing the films. Feel free to use this guide as a resource—we know each GSA is different, so adapt the activities however you want!

How to Use this Guide in Classrooms

Because we've designed these guides to link with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), teachers can use these materials as part of their regular curriculum. Whether teaching middle school, high school, or even college-level courses, the resources in this packet can help to open students' eyes to the role of identity, struggle, bullying, and societal pressures. See pages 37-38 for information on how this curriculum fits into CCSS.

Approaching the Material

Addressing LGBT-related topics at school, whether in the course of classroom instruction or during a club meeting, can raise controversy. Before screening these films, it is important that you know your rights and responsibilities. In California, teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity is not only protected but is mandated by legislation. However, laws may vary from state to state. Please refer to our resources page for more information.

**It is highly recommended that teachers/advisors view films prior to introducing them into the classroom. Some language and subjects in these films can be challenging for students, parents and community members. Teachers/advisors should consider the age and maturity of students, as well as the screening setting, before showing the films.*

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Tips on Facilitating Conversations

- Agree upon ground rules for discussion. Rules may include an agreement to maintain confidentiality, refrain from using slurs or making personal attacks, and speaking one at a time.
- Work to establish a forum for a free and respectful exchange of ideas. Do not attempt to change anyone's point of view.
- Be aware that although you may not have an openly LGBTQ student in your class, you may have students who are questioning their identities, are gender non-conforming, or who have LGBTQ family or friends. Likewise, students may be affected by negative or hurtful comments whether or not these comments are directed specifically at them.
- Model the use of inclusive language during classroom discussions. For example, when mentioning families, use terms such as "caregiver" or "parent" to create space for all types of family structures.
- Resist the urge to put LGBTQ students, those perceived to be LGBTQ, or those with LGBTQ family or friends, in the spotlight as "experts." Allow each person in the room to speak only for themselves and on their own terms and avoid inadvertently "outing" someone to their peers.
- Establish as comfortable an environment as possible. Arrange seats in a circle. Intervene when conversations become one-sided, and pose questions to keep the conversation on track.
- Be honest about what you do and don't know. Use phrases such as, "I don't know," "That's a good question," or "Let me do some research and get back to you on that." Refer to the resources section to encourage further exploration of a topic.

For more tips on how to respond to anti-LGBTQ harassment, see Safe Schools Coalition's *An Educator's Guide To Intervening In Anti-Gay Harassment*¹ or Project 10's *How to Handle Harassment in the Hallways in 3 Minutes or Less!*²

1. www.safeschoolscoalition.org/rg-bullying_harassment_schoolbasedviolence.html
2. www.project10.org/Resources/harassment.html

What to Do if You Encounter Anti-LGBTQ or Hurtful Responses

- Stop the behavior. Interrupt the comment or harassment. Do not pull a student aside unless absolutely necessary.
- Identify the harassment and broaden the response. Make clear why this behavior is not accepted by the community: "That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people's feelings." "Our community does not appreciate hurtful behavior or language that puts people down. That word is a slur and can also be hurtful to others who overhear it." Make sure all the students in the area hear your comments. Allow this to be a teachable moment.
- Ask for change in future behavior. You may want to personalize the response: "Chris, please pause and think before you act." Or you may wish to address the whole class: "Let's all remember to treat one another with respect."
- Redirect the class to the activity at hand. Rather than shutting the conversation down completely, redirect the class's attention to the goals of the lesson: "Today we're looking at this topic in order to broaden our perspectives."
- Always address the behavior. Ignoring the name-calling and hurtful teasing allows it to continue and possibly get worse. If other students do not see action, they get the message that there is nothing wrong with it.
- Follow up privately, if necessary. Check in with the student who was called a name to make sure that the student is okay. Likewise, follow up with the student who used the hurtful language. Often times, students who bully others are in need of positive role models.

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Key Terms

KEY TERMS

For students, teachers, and parents, it can be intimidating to jump into conversations about sexual orientation and gender identity without knowing the correct terminology. Use the **Key Terms** below to learn more the terms used throughout this guide, and in the films in this collection.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to males and females.

Coming Out: The process of recognizing and acknowledging non-heterosexual and/or transgender identity to oneself and then sharing it with others. This process usually occurs in stages and can be a life-long process.

Gay: Refers to any person who is attracted to members of the same gender. However, it is usually used to describe men (e.g., “gay men”).

Gender: An individual and social understanding of someone (or something) being masculine, feminine, or some combination of the two. Gender is distinct from biological sex and covers a wide range of issues that affect everyone.

Gender Binary System: A social system that requires that everyone be raised as either a boy or girl (dependent on the sex one is assigned at birth) which in turn forms the basis for education, job expectations, behavior norms, fashion choices, gender presentation, and who one should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

Gender Expression: The way a person expresses his or her gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming, regardless of biological sex (also sometimes referred to as “gender presentation”).

Gender Identity: A person’s understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of biological sex.

Gender Nonconformity: Not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.

Gender Normative/Cisgender – Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

Gender Role: Culturally accepted and expected gendered behavior associated with biological sex (i.e., acting “masculine” or “feminine”). These expectations are often stereotypical, such as “Boys like blue and girls like pink.”

Heterosexism: The belief or assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal or acceptable sexual orientation. Heterosexism is also the systematic devaluing of homosexual/bisexual/queer identities and relationships, through numerous laws, cultural norms, and social expectations.

Heterosexual: Refers to a person who is attracted to members of the opposite sex. The word “straight” is used as a synonym.

Homophobia: A term often used generally to describe a strong negative bias toward LGBTQ people, but the term “anti-LGBTQ bias” is more inclusive.

Homosexual: Refers to a person who is attracted to members of the same sex. Typically, however, the synonymous term “gay” is used. (When referring to people, the term homosexual is considered derogatory. When used to describe behavior, the term “same-sex” is preferable.)

Intersex: A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.

Queer: Originally used as an insult for being different, the word has more recently been reclaimed as positive by many LGBT people. It is currently being used by many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons to describe their pride in being different, and also serves as a broader term to define those who are not heterosexual or cisgender, but may not easily fall into a “L”, “G”, “B” or “T” category.

Sex: One’s biological assignment as male, female, or intersex.

Transgender: People whose gender identity is different from their birth or biological sex. Sometimes they may hormonally and/or surgically change their bodies to more fully match their gender identity. The term “transgender” is often used politically as an umbrella term for all gender non-conforming people.

EXPANDING OUR FAMILIES

This lesson accompanies the film *The Infamous T*

Activity #2 - What Makes a Family?

Pre-Film Exercise:

Family of Origin

For some, family is a simple concept—mother, father, and siblings all living together under one roof. But, for most people, it's not that straightforward. With both straight and LGBTQ youth, circumstances may arise that result in your biological family (family of origin) looking different than this basic model.

- What are some internal circumstances that may disrupt the stability of a family of origin? (divorce, death, etc.) What external circumstances might contribute to this disruption? (loss of employment for a parent) How could one's identity affect relationships within one's family of origin? (i.e. acceptance as a queer-identified person)

Family of Choice

Historically, LGBTQ people have often experienced a lack of acceptance with their families of origin. Much of the LGBTQ movement's history revolves around family of choice coming together to emotionally and physically support each other—such as during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. Today, a full 20% of homeless youth are LGBTQ identified, compared with 10% in the general population, statistically proving that LGBTQ folks are more likely to have to look outside of their family of origin for emotional support than other demographics.

Think about who you go to for emotional support, or just your daily life experiences. Who do you send your favorite videos to? Who do you talk to about who you have a crush on? Who do you most want to talk to when you are feeling at your worst?

Two characters in *The Infamous T*, 18-year-old foster youth Jonathon and foster host parent Alex, speak directly about the importance of finding emotional support in those who are not your family of origin, but instead, family of choice. Pay particular attention to the statements Jonathan and Alex make about family of choice as you watch the film.



EXPANDING OUR FAMILIES

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Post-Film Exercise – Family of Origin and Family of Choice:

Here is how both Alex and Jonathon talked about family of origin and family of choice:

ALEX [5:55] “I think especially as a queer and trans-identified person a family of choice has been essential to me because at times when my family of origin was not there because they were dealing with their own fears around this stuff, my family of choice were the people who were there and to really help me in terms of my finding the strength to live in a society that doesn’t always accept you or understands you. And so to be able to be that for somebody else is also really important to me.”

JONATHON: [28:48] “All different types of families have all different types of ways they go by. Just gettin’ used to all these different types of families that I’ve had, it’s been struggles but, I mean, in the end, I do cherish all of them.”

Like Alex, many LGBTQ people are rejected by their family of origin and seek family of choice. Nearly seven in ten LGBTQ homeless youth report being rejected by their families. However, in Jonathon’s case, his family of origin does not reject him; he has the love and support of his mother and becomes homeless due to poverty.

By the end of the film, Jonathon has expanded his definition of family, and seems to have found the greatest amount of support for his goals by opening up to friends, host parents, and teachers, as well as his family of origin.

Think about the goals and hopes that each of these people has for Jonathon, as well as his goals for himself. In addition, capture some of the ways that they support him in reaching these goals. Do you think Jonathon would have the same amount of support if he only opened himself up to one of these types of “family” versus all of them?

Jonathon’s “family”	Goals	Supportive Action(s)
Carolyn (his mother)	<i>Wants Jonathon to complete his education</i>	<i>Sends him a positive text message</i>
Alex (host family parent)		
Sandy (his teacher)		
Pandora (his friend)		

EXPANDING OUR FAMILIES

This lesson accompanies the film *The Infamous T*

Activity #3 – “What’s the T?”

Discussion Prompt:

When Jonathon and his friends are asked if their dance group has a name, they come up with a name—*The Infamous T*. Some define T as a way to say “What’s going on,” as in “What’s the T?” It has also been said to mean the gossip as in “someone is spilling T.” Jonathon makes many references to his “T” in the film, in a very particular way.

Here are some excerpts from the film:

1. After coming up with the name for their group, Jonathon’s explains what his “T” is by starting off with the following: [13:09] “My T is that I get myself into shit that I really can’t get myself out of.”
2. When Pandora asks Jonathon what’s behind his T, Jonathon says [13:32] “When you become more than what you base yourself off as friend then you can’t really call yourself a friend anymore...I don’t just put down one of these as just regular friends, I put them more than that now, I’ve been actually acceptin’ ya’ll as family a long time ago. Friends to me is just like a belittling word, like associates. I’d rather just say sister, sister.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Based on these excerpts from the film, what do you think “T” means to Jonathon? Is it the same as the definition you might already know, or find online?
2. Have you ever used the term, “T”? What are some words and phrases that are popular in your social community that may not be used by people who are older or younger than you, outside of your geographic location, or outside of your race/ethnicity? Why do you think youth culture, LGBTQ culture, or other cultures create and use words and phrases like “T”?
3. As the film opens, Jonathan is watching video of people participating in a Ball. The Ball Scene stems from “houses” or “families” of economically disadvantaged Black and Latino LGBTQ folks who came together to participate in competitions as early as the early-mid 20th century. Not only did dance forms like voguing originate with this community, most mainstream drag terminology today comes from balls, including terms like “throwing shade,” and “reading.” Throughout history, the terminology of marginalized populations has found its way (eventually) into mainstream culture. Are there words from your community that are now used by the general population? When is it okay to use words that originate from communities that are not your own? When is it not okay?
4. Jonathon’s choice of language, including “The T” seems to be an incredibly important aspect of his identity, including his cultural identity. Jonathan is able to use language, among other aspects of his cultural identity, to connect with his black family and black friends in a way that perhaps he cannot with his white host home family or his white teacher, Sandy. How might cultural differences affect Jonathan’s relationship with his host family? How might these differences make it difficult for Jonathan to feel comfortable in his host home? Think about all of the people trying to help Jonathon to achieve his goals in this film. In order to acquire the resources that Jonathon needs for success (a host home, an alternate learning environment), is it noteworthy that he has to navigate in predominantly white spaces?

EXPANDING OUR FAMILIES

This lesson accompanies the film *The Infamous T*

Activity #4 – “Joy for School”

For Jonathon and Pandora, Anti-LGBTQ bullying has been a big part of falling behind in academic credits, and affects the way they view attending school on a daily basis. Here's what they said:

[18:25] Pandora: “We get that whole faggot thing a lot...we got people writin' stuff or sayin' this and sayin' that...I don't want him [Jonathon] to, you know, still be in my situation where I'm twenty-one tryin' a get my GED or high school diploma cause nobody should be in that situation.”

[20:00] Jonathon says “Everythin' you do in school somebody always goin' do something and at North High School that was just...it took away all my joy I had for school. And ever since then, it's just been downhill for me. So I'm basically at sophomore credits.”

For these characters, anti-LGBTQ bullying is a significant reason they have lost any enjoyment they had for school. Think about your level of enjoyment at school. There are, of course, school's situational circumstances, which cannot be changed (such as homework, or waking up early in the morning). But consider how people, not circumstances, affect your “joy for school.” Who and what increases your enjoyment? Who or what decreases it? Fill out the chart below, and think about what you can do on a personal, or activist level, to help create more enjoyment for school.

WHOM	MORE JOY	LESS JOY	Actionable Item?
Teachers	Using stories and films that represent diverse backgrounds	Unsafe classroom environment by not paying attention to bullying comments	Launch a “Take It Back: Anti-Slur Campaign” using GSA Network resources. ⁶
Family of Origin (Parents, Grandparents, Siblings)			
Friends			

RESOURCES

Resources for Teachers

Center for Media Literacy: Provides a wide selection of teaching tools, carefully evaluated for their quality and importance to the field.

www.medialit.org

Gender Spectrum Education & Training: Seattle-based organization that provides education, resources, and training to help create a more gender-sensitive and supportive environment for all people, including gender variant and transgender youth.

www.genderspectrum.org

GSA Advisor Handbook: A comprehensive guide to aid GSA advisors in creating strategies to empower youth leaders.

www.gsanetwork.org/advisor-handbook

Hayward Unified School District Safe and Inclusive Schools Program (HUSD): A collection of lesson plans for educators in elementary, middle and high schools working to create inclusive and affirming environments for their students.

<http://www.husd.k12.ca.us/SISBP1>

Safe Schools Coalition: An international public-private partnership in support of LGBTQ youth that is working to help schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn.

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

San Francisco Unified School District LGBTQ Support Services (SFUSD): Tools, tips and resources provided by SFUSD to support educators in approaching LGBTQ topics in educational settings.

www.healthiersf.org/lgbtq

Web English Teacher Media Literacy: An online clearinghouse of lesson plans and activity ideas to develop media literacy.

www.webenglishteacher.com/media.html

Welcoming Schools: A project of the Human Rights Campaign aimed at school administrators, educators and parents working together to create welcome and respectful environments for students at school and at home. Use the Welcoming Schools Starter Kit, a comprehensive professional training guide for educators.

www.welcomingschools.org

Official Film Websites

Genderfreak www.genderfreakmovie.com

I Don't Want to Go Back Alone www.lacunafilmes.com.br/sozinho

The Infamous T www.theinfamoust.com

Teens Like Phil www.teenslikephil.com

What Do You Know? www.welcomingschools.org/what-do-you-know-the-film

Yeah Kowalski! www.yeahkowalski.com

Additional Support from GSA Network

GSA Network staff members are also available to work with student activists and teachers who face harassment, intimidation, or other opposition to an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum or the work of GSA clubs.

Contact your **Regional Program Coordinator**¹⁰ for additional information and support.

RESOURCES

National Resources

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU): Works in the courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in the United States by the Constitution. www.aclu.org

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE): COLAGE is a national movement of children, youth, and adults with one or more LGBTQ parents. www.colage.org

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD): Dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. www.glaad.org

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN): The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. www.glsen.org

Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA): Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a national youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development and training. www.gsanetwork.org

Gender Education and Advocacy: Archived website with extensive articles and links. GEA is a national organization focused on the needs, issues and concerns of gender variant people in human society. www.gender.org

GLBTQ: An online encyclopedia of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer culture. www.gltbq.com

Implementing Lessons That Matter GSA Network's document examines the effectiveness of inclusive LGBT curriculum, and is useful for building a coalition with administrators, parents, teachers, and students.

www.gsanetwork.org/news/new-research-reveals-paths-implementing-lgbtq-inclusive-lessons/010913

Lambda Legal: Oldest national organization pursuing high-impact litigation, education, and advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ people and people with HIV. www.lambdalegal.org

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR): A non-profit, public interest law firm that litigates precedent-setting cases, advocates for equitable public policies affecting the LGBTQ community, provides free legal assistance, and conducts community education. www.nclrights.org

National Center for Transgender Equality: Dedicated to advancing the equality of transgender people through advocacy, collaboration, and empowerment. www.nctequality.org

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG): A national chapter-based organization of family members and friends of LGBTQ people. www.pflag.org

Sylvia Rivera Law Project: Founded on the understanding that gender self-determination is inextricably intertwined with racial, social and economic justice, SRLP works to improve access to respectful and affirming social, health, and legal services for transgender communities. www.srlp.org

TransActive: An internationally recognized non-profit that provides services particular to the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming youth, their families and allies. www.transactiveonline.org

Transgender Law Center: California's first statewide transgender legal organization, specializing in individualized legal information, transgender rights and advocacy materials, and transformative public-policy work. www.transgenderlawcenter.org

TRANScending Identities: San Francisco Public Library's bibliography of resources on gender variance, transgender and intersex topics. www.spl.org/librarylocations/main/glc/transcending.htm

The Trevor Project: If you or someone you know is a victim of bullying, reach out to The Trevor Project, a 24-hour national help-line for gay and questioning teens. www.thetrevorproject.org

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This Youth In Motion Curriculum Guide and Action Guide was developed by Patrick Hurley and Steven Kahl.

About Youth In Motion

Since 2008, Youth In Motion has provided free LGBTQ themed movies, with accompanying curricula and action guides, to student clubs and educators in middle and high schools. Thousands of students in hundreds of schools across California have received films over the past five years. *Insights: Queer Youth Defining Our Future* is the first national collection of films to be sent across the United States. Youth in Motion gives student activists and teachers interactive tools to educate their peers about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history and culture (and have fun doing it!). We believe that an inclusive curriculum is one step to creating truly safe and welcoming schools.

About Frameline

Founded in 1979, Frameline's mission is to change the world through the power of queer cinema. Frameline is the nation's only nonprofit organization solely dedicated to the distribution, promotion, funding and exhibition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender media arts. Inherent in all of Frameline's work is the belief that diverse representations of LGBTQ life can challenge preconceived ideas and stereotypes of our community and in the process educate audiences and build awareness of human rights.

About GSA Network

Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a national youth leadership organization that works to empower youth activists to end harassment and discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Founded in 1998, Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) is the only student-led organization that networks Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in California, and networks statewide organizations serving GSA clubs across the country

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