



How to Start (and Improve) a Youth-Led Anti-Oppression Club

and to fight for inclusion and justice in your school and community

YOUTH
CELEBRATE
DIVERSITY

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ycdiversity.org

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TIMELINE OVERVIEW

Below is a suggested timeline for your club or group to work through the school year toward a goal or action project of your choice. The timeline can be adjusted to whatever makes the most sense for your group. This is just an overview; at the end of this guide, we provide a worksheet club leaders can use to determine specific dates and agendas for meetings and milestones.

Month	Milestones
Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Draft club constitution – <i>new groups only</i> (p. 6)<input type="checkbox"/> Submit paperwork/get club approval by admin – <i>new groups only</i><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment efforts (posters, info meetings, social postings)
Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Attend student leadership training (p. 7)<input type="checkbox"/> First meeting:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Establish group norms / ground rules (p. 10)<input type="checkbox"/> Bonding games and activities (p. 9)<input type="checkbox"/> Additional meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Explore identity (p. 14)<input type="checkbox"/> Develop group sense of purpose
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Workshops and speakers to explore foundational concepts (p. 13+)<input type="checkbox"/> Identify local examples and sources of oppression or marginalization (p. 16)
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Determine top issue to be prioritized for action this school year (p. 19)
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Break for students to focus on exams, holidays, and self-care
Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identify local experts on top issue (p. 21)<input type="checkbox"/> Get student facilitator certificate (p. 7)
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Attend conference or event (p. 20-21)<input type="checkbox"/> Hear from guest speakers or local experts
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Plan action project (p. 23)
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Implement action project (p. 23)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate progress and end of year (p. 24)<input type="checkbox"/> Elect officers for following year

CREATE: STARTING A NEW CLUB OR GROUP

You've downloaded this guide because you want to start a new youth-led group or club to fight oppression. That's awesome! But how do you get started? This section is for students who don't have an existing club or group and want guidance on how to get one started. It also contains ideas that may be useful for making existing clubs more inclusive and effective.

We also offer virtual trainings on each topic that students and their advisors can attend; check out the YCD website for virtual trainings on topics that you may find useful in your work.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

HOW TO START AN ANTI-OPPRESSION CLUB

1 hour / Sign up at ycdiversity.org

How big should our club or group be?

Your group can be of any size; typically it's helpful to aim for a minimum of 8-10 group members, but even if it starts small with just two or three, that's okay! Often, new clubs and groups need a year to gain traction and build a larger membership.

On the flipside, groups larger than 30 tend to need additional organization and communication support. If your group becomes too large and you don't make adjustments, it can become impersonal and you may find members losing focus of your purpose. If you have more than 30 teens interested in joining your group, that's a good problem to have! Feel free to reach out to YCD for advice and guidance on how to organize or manage a large group.



What should our club focus on?

The more important question to ask is, what inspires you and your peers to form the club? What are your goals? What is your purpose?

As you wrestle with these ideas, it may be helpful to review the foundational concepts of the YCD program, as this can inspire how you want to frame your club and its purpose.

- **Do you want to focus on bonding and coming together around a single identity?** Examples include a Black Student Alliance, Muslim Student Alliance, etc.
- **Do you want to bridge differences focused on one major form of oppression?** Examples include a gender-sexuality alliance, or an anti-racism club.
- **Do you want to focus on fighting oppression in all its forms?** Examples include an anti-oppression club, an inclusion club, etc.

Each of these approaches are valid and can serve a good purpose in advancing inclusion and justice. With that said, YCD generally recommends the third approach — a club focused on fighting oppression in all its forms — to create a broad group that is accessible to all students across all identities.

Keep in mind what clubs and groups exist when forming your new group. Don't expect your club to replace existing groups, especially ones that focus on a single identity. Instead, try to build connections so your club can stand alongside and in alliance with those clubs when fighting oppression.



What should our club name be?

This is the fun part where the club founders get to be creative! Every group is encouraged to come up with their own name that is meaningful for them. Make sure you are thinking of a name that will work for several years to come, and promotes the values of the group clearly.

Some example names from the YCD Network:

- Diversity Leaders Club
- Inclusion Task Force
- No Place for Hate (note this name is affiliated with the Anti-Defamation League and should only be used in conjunction with their program)
- Radical Inclusion Club
- Social Justice Club
- Spectrum Club (historically used for gender/sexuality alliances, but can be used in different contexts)
- Students for Justice
- Students Promoting Inclusion and Civic Engagement (SPICE)
- Unity Club

How long should meetings be?

In general we've found 90 minutes to be the most effective meeting time for this work.

Meetings can start late because of late arrivals, so if you only budget for 60 minutes it often ends up being 50-55. For much of this work, you may feel that you're only getting to "the good stuff" around 40-45 minutes into the meeting. A planned meeting of 90 minutes provides flexibility for more time and discussion when it's needed, and you can always end a meeting early if you've covered everything you need to.

When should our meetings take place?

Each group will need to determine their schedule to maximize accessibility and attendance to the meetings. Consider surveying students who are interested to see what days of the week work best for them.

Keep in mind conflicts such as athletics/sports or other extracurricular activities; you may want to consider a later starting time for meetings, or you can alternate meeting times every week so that if someone has a conflict, they can still participate every other week. Another factor to keep in mind is transportation. How can you make meetings accessible for students who take public transportation, use the school busing system, or don't own a vehicle?

These are not easy issues to navigate. Most important is to be mindful of the conflicts students may have, and to take efforts to find the best solution.

What role should a teacher/adult play in the group?

Too often adults take over youth spaces in order to "make things more efficient" or to direct efforts in a way that suits ... the adults. YCD provides guidance and training for youth leaders to be 100% in charge, with adults playing a supportive but secondary role throughout the process.

In general, teachers/faculty advisors should attend meetings as mentors and supports for the student leaders. They can be "called in" to a conversation by the student leaders when they need help. However, they should avoid interjecting in a meeting on their own volition unless someone's safety is at risk. This may mean most of the time they are quietly observing the group.

Most of an adult/faculty advisor's work will happen outside of meetings, when they provide feedback and advice to student leaders. They also can be responsible for reserving facilities or storing materials for the group to use, and collecting any money for fundraisers, etc.

The roles and responsibilities for adults and youth leaders will always be up to the people in your group/club. Make sure you set aside time to have a conversation and get on the same page about who will be responsible for what, and what's allowed/not allowed, so there are no surprises.

TRAINING AVAILABLE

ROLES FOR ADULTS IN YOUTH-
LED CLUBS AND GROUPS

1 hour / Sign up at ycdiversity.org

How will we make decisions?

YCD promotes consensus as a better, more inclusive decision-making model for groups, rather than the traditional majority rules approach.

In addition to providing virtual training on what consensus is and how to build and achieve it, we also have a one-page explanation in this Guide on page XX.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

MAKING DECISIONS THROUGH CONSENSUS

1 hour / Sign up at ycdiversity.org

How will we resolve conflict?

Conflict is inevitable whenever a group of people come together. It's easy to think you can avoid conflict, but in reality, people will always have differences of opinions that may lead to conflict in some form or another.

For these reasons, it is critical youth leaders are provided training to handle conflict, so you have a strategy for how to handle it when it comes up.

YCD promotes restorative practices / restorative justice as a model for resolving conflict. Attend a one-hour virtual training through YCD on what restorative practices are and how to use them in resolving conflict within your club.

One of the most important aspects to restorative practices is the concept that nobody is shunned or excluded from the group. When there is conflict, it must be addressed so that everyone feels safe and included in the community you have built, and conflicts are resolved rather than swept under the rug.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

MANAGING CONFLICT AND DISAGREEMENTS

1 hour / Sign up at ycdiversity.org

Do we need school approval to start a club?

No. While organizing a student club through a school is often the most convenient option, it is not required.

If you'd like to organize your club through your school, start by talking with the Director of Activities of whoever is in charge of extracurricular activities. See what the process is for a new club to get approved, and decide if you want to proceed through the school or not.

If your group tries to organize through school and meets resistance or is told you can't talk about certain subjects, look for community organizations that may be willing to host your club.

Sample Club Constitution

ARTICLE I: NAME

State the organization's official name.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

State the purpose of the organization's creation and its objectives

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

- A: State who is eligible for membership into the club.
- B: State requirements for members to be fully recognized by the club.
- C: State the rights and privileges of members.

ARTICLE IV: MEETING

- A: State how many and when meetings of the membership will be held during the year.
- B: State procedures for calling regular and/or special meetings.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

- A: State the club officers and each of their duties
- B: State process for filling officer vacancies.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS

- A: State officer positions that will be selected by the membership, length of term for each officer, and how many times a person may hold the same officer position.
- B: State the procedures for nominations and timeline for when they take place.
- C: State how nominees will present their qualifications and how and when elections are held.

ARTICLE VII: FUNDS

State procedures for the allocation of club funds (member dues, fundraising, etc). If applicable, state the justification and purpose of membership dues.

ARTICLE VIII: FACULTY ADVISOR

State procedures to determine selection of a faculty advisor and duties of each.

ORGANIZE: GETTING YOUR GROUP GOING

Once you have created your new club or group, it's time to begin meeting and working on how to make your school or community more inclusive and just. But how do you start?

Youth Leadership Training and Certificates

YCD provides the leaders of youth-led clubs and groups access to virtual training where you can develop your skills and knowledge to become an effective group leader. Each training is roughly 1 hour, and you can attend them over a period of time that works for your schedule.

Club leaders are encouraged to get the Youth Leadership Certificate from YCD, which requires you to attend these trainings:

- Introduction to Inclusion and Social Justice
- Roles for Adults in Youth-Led Clubs and Groups
- Establishing Group Norms, and Keeping to Them
- Making Decisions through Consensus
- Managing Conflict and Disagreements

Having these skills and knowledge at the beginning of your school year will super-charge your ability to facilitate meetings, manage conflict, and lead your group through a meaningful action project to make an impact.

Note the session on roles for adults in youth-led clubs and groups is meant to be attended by both student leaders and their adult/faculty advisor together, so they can get on the same page on roles and responsibilities for each person.

YCD also provides training for students to become trained facilitators to lead conversations and discussions on difficult topics. This certificate requires you to attend these trainings:

- Introduction to Inclusion and Social Justice
- Icebreakers and Group Bonding (either Virtual or In-Person version)
- Establishing Group Norms, and Keeping to Them
- The Discussion Lifecycle
- Managing Conflict and Disagreements

Find upcoming training dates and sign-up on the YCD website. While we encourage a \$5 donation per training to help us support YCD's training program, this is optional, and you may attend the trainings whether you make a donation or not. In some cases, your school club may have funds to support your training and development.



Recruitment

YCD challenges your group to work hard at recruiting a diverse membership so that the whole community is represented in your club or group. This means taking extra steps to encourage participation from students who may not appear interested at first, reflecting on barriers to participation, and taking steps to remove those barriers.

Think about the purpose of your group, and then reflect on who is not represented already. Some questions to reflect on:

- What is the racial makeup of club members, especially the group founders or officers/leaders? Does the club reflect the racial makeup of the school and community more broadly? What steps can you take to make students from all racial backgrounds want to join in? Obviously, these questions do not pertain to identity-based groups, i.e. Native Student Alliance.
- What is the gender representation in the group? What steps can you take to ensure students from all gender identities are represented and included?
- Are there students in the group/club from all classes/years in your school? Sometimes clubs can become too centralized on a group of friends who are from the same class/year. What steps can you take to build a broader coalition of students that represent all years, so that you have a pipeline of members and leaders for the future?
- Is your meeting location accessible for students with disabilities? YCD challenges groups to conduct extra outreach to disabled students to ensure they feel included and welcome in your group.



Your recruiting process at the beginning of the year generally requires at least 2-3 weeks, and sometimes longer. Consider hosting info sessions for students who may be interested but want more information. If students who are interested can't attend due to the timing or location of meetings, consider changing the schedule up to make it more accessible.

Bonding and Check-Ins

Student groups focused on building inclusion must create spaces where students feel welcome and able to be vulnerable with one another. Creating a sense of comfort for group members doesn't happen immediately, and can take several meetings before the group members let their guard down.

Group leaders may feel an urgency to do some quick bonding games and move on to more serious topics or planning action. However, YCD strongly recommends devoting significant time at the beginning of your school year – or whenever the group first forms – to bonding activities. Time invested in bonding early will pay off well later in the process.

YCD offers two separate trainings on bonding and icebreakers – one for virtual environments, the other for in-person meetings. Each training session provides a number of options and ideas.

In general, here are some recommendations for successful bonding and icebreakers:

- Your group's first meeting should be entirely focused on bonding activities, whether one major workshop or a series of activities.
- The second and third meetings could take 1/3 of the time for icebreakers and bonding; try to reduce this time to 20 minutes for the 4th and 5th meetings, and then to 10 or 15 minutes beyond that.
- Think of the purpose of your icebreakers, and pick accordingly. Some icebreakers are great at learning group members' names, and are perfect for the first or second meeting. Other icebreakers provide opportunities for students to share some of their stories or history, and can be more personal or serious. A third category of icebreakers are focused on getting people talking and having fun, so they let their guard down. Make sure you pick bonding activities and icebreakers that match your goals for each meeting.
- Some icebreakers and bonding activities require supplies, so make sure to plan at least one week ahead so you can come prepared.
- Don't conduct the same bonding or icebreaker activity each week; try to introduce a new activity so everyone is learning something new or engaging in something new.
- Where possible, consider interjecting social justice or diversity/inclusion concepts or topics into your icebreakers. For example, if choosing an open prompt for everyone to respond to, ask "What motivates you to work for inclusion and social justice?"
- Once the group has properly bonded, you may switch from icebreakers to doing what's called a "check-in". The group is given a prompt, and everyone goes in a circle to share their answers. For example, "How are you feeling in a word or two?" Check-ins are great for groups where the members know each other well, but still give a group a meaningful introductory activity before getting into the meat of the meeting.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

ICEBREAKERS AND GROUP BONDING IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

ICEBREAKERS AND GROUP BONDING IN-PERSON

1 hour each /
Sign up at ycdiversity.org

Group Norms

Once your info sessions are over and you hold your first meeting, it's critical to establish norms or "ways of meeting" so that everyone knows what to expect, and what's not okay. These can also sometimes be referred to as ground rules.

YCD offers virtual training for student leaders on how to establish norms, but here are some general guidelines:

- Student leaders should brainstorm norms in advance that they feel are important. This way, you enter the conversation on norm-setting with some specific goals in mind.
- It's important group members get a chance to volunteer ideas for norms, so the membership has buy-in. Don't have leaders simply dictate what the norms will be.
- Start with brainstorming a larger list of ideas and write them on the board / virtual whiteboard as they are suggested, so everyone can see what's been suggested.
- After all suggestions have been mentioned, ask the group how many norms they want to have. Typically it's recommended to have anywhere from 5-10, but once you get longer lists, people won't remember them all. See if there are some that overlap or have similar meanings, or can be combined.
- Once the norms have been set, create a poster or something that can be hung at each meeting so they are always visible and can be referred to at any time. Don't let the norms-setting be a one-time experience that is quickly forgotten.
- Refer to the norms whenever someone violates them, and hold group members accountable. As part of the virtual training offered by YCD, we cover ways student leaders can hold club members accountable when they violate norms, without making them defensive or feel excluded.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

ESTABLISHING GROUP NORMS,
AND KEEPING TO THEM

1 hour / Sign up at ycdiversity.org



Consensus as an Inclusive Decision-Making Model

What consensus is

Consensus is defined as “a general agreement.” In a group of people, this means that usually everyone or most people in the group agree on a path forward.

Consensus does not mean that everyone gets their first choice. Instead, it means the group members talk through the options to find a path forward that everyone finds acceptable, even if it's not their first choice. **By focusing on what is acceptable to everyone, rather than what is their first choice, everyone wins.**

Why consensus is better than majority rules

You may be thinking, why don't we just vote and go with whatever is most popular? Why bother with all this discussion and consensus business?

The answer lies in inclusion. In any group there will be identities and perspectives that outnumber others. In some groups, there may be more students from certain backgrounds. Often, students from these identities may move forward with voting and decisions in ways that suit the majority but make others feel like their voices do not matter. This can lead to marginalization.

Consensus requires students to have discussions, hear each other's perspectives, consider all the options, and work toward an outcome that benefits the group rather than the individual. Decisions may take longer, but the process helps the group bond and understand one another more deeply, and no one is excluded.

How to tell if you have achieved consensus

Consensus does not require 100% agreement of every group member to be achieved, but it does require much more than a majority. Typically you've achieved consensus if everyone except 1-3 people are in agreement. It's always best to aim for 100% agreement.

Be very mindful of the people who are not in agreement, and what identities they come from or represent. If your group feels you've reached a decision but students from a single identity (i.e. all the LGBTQ+ students, or all the Latinx students, etc.) are not in agreement, this is a problem and needs further discussion. Invite those students to share why they don't agree and try to determine if their disagreement is connected with issues of identity, oppression, privilege, or marginalization. If yes, the group needs to reconsider the options and start over.

Steps to build consensus

Below is a structured process YCD has used in student-led meetings with regular success.

1. Start by reviewing what consensus is, and why it is important, as well as any ground rules or norms established by the group.
2. Identify the options to be considered.
3. Have the group walk through each option, considering pros and cons of each one. Do not focus on the outcome or decision, but consider each option independently.
4. Open the floor for discussion. Compare and contrast options. Invite quieter voices into the conversation to share their perspectives.
5. Once everyone in the group has contributed to the discussion, see if there are any options that can be eliminated from consideration. If there is wide agreement / consensus, narrow the options down so the group can focus.
6. Consider taking a “straw poll.” This is a vote, but it doesn't count – it's just a picture of where everyone stands at the time. This can be done secretly (“heads down”) or in the open depending on your context.
7. Invite students who may not be in the majority to share why they believe their choice is the better one.
8. Use a physical demonstration of agreement (i.e. thumbs up) to see if everyone agrees on the final choice. Congrats! You've achieved consensus!

What to do when you are stuck

Invite folks who don't agree with the consensus to share their reasons for not agreeing. If their feelings are legitimate and grounded in reasonable ideas, other members of the group will be persuaded. If they are simply focused on “winning” the decision rather than looking at it from a consensus standpoint, then you can achieve consensus despite their disagreement.

Register Your Club with YCD

We're building a nationwide student movement for inclusion and justice, and we want your group involved!

In addition to providing the YCD Guide free of charge, groups that have registered their club with YCD get these tools to help with action projects:

- Reminders and suggestions to nudge your group through the process
- Webinars and virtual trainings throughout the school year
- Feedback, suggestions, recommendations, and guidance from YCD staff
- Ideas for funding sources and opportunities
- Connections and introductions to groups in your region that may be pursuing similar projects or issues
- Sharing success stories from across the YCD network



To get all these benefits, make sure to register your club or group with YCD on our website. It's free, quick and easy, and will help your group stay in touch with thousands of others doing similar work in communities across the U.S.

EDUCATE: BUILDING YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Why is education important to fight oppression?

Creating your club or group, bonding, setting norms, and beginning to share experiences and concerns is all important work. However, if you really want to make change in your school or community, we need to shift gears and develop skills and knowledge needed to take action. This is the second and critical step in the YCD program.

What knowledge will you need to fight oppression?

Club members of any anti-oppression club or group should work over the fall months to become familiar with the foundational concepts related to inclusion and social justice work. Without exploring these topics, conversations may remain surface-level, and the chances are the group won't make significant progress. Digging deep into these topics may seem scary or intimidating at first, but with the right norms, facilitators and guidelines, these concepts can super-charge the work of your group.

YCD recommends exploring each foundational concept individually at a separate meeting, though some could be combined if needed depending on your schedule. Addressing each individually requires roughly 7 meetings, or about two months, to walk through all the concepts. We also offer training to student leaders, to develop familiarity with these concepts so they can lead these sessions.

Each meeting should have three components:

- start with an icebreaker or check-in
- conduct a workshop or exercise to explore the concept
- have a facilitated conversation to deepen understanding and create dialogue

The YCD website contains a list of foundational concepts, definitions, as well a brief discussion of each concept to provide initial understanding. Below are some ideas of exercises or workshops your group can engage in to explore each concept, though each group should modify their approach to whatever will meet the needs and interest of the group the best. Topics are listed in a recommended order, but can be switched up at your discretion.

STUDENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION TO INCLUSION
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

2 hours / Sign up at ycdiversity.org

Identity

Consider using art as a method to encourage group members to explore and explain their identity.

You'll need some construction paper, scissors and glue for this exercise, or you can do a variation based on what materials you have available. This exercise was developed by Dr. Knette Richards, who works in association with YCD.

Start by creating or reviewing a group definition of identity. Contrast identity with personality to ensure folks understand the difference. Ensure group members think of both individual identity as well as social identity.

Once there's a common understanding, ask group members to create a representation of their identity to share with the group. Students cut shapes out and paste them to their identity picture. Each shape should represent an aspect of their identity; encourage group members to make a picture where the pieces fit together in some way or another into a larger image, similar to how their identity has multiple aspects but they all add up to a single individual. Try to limit this art-creation time to about 20-30 minutes, so you have adequate time for sharing and discussion after.

Once group members have completed their artwork, engage in a show-and-tell exercise where group members share about their identities. Ensure there is time allotted for everyone to share. Once the group has finished sharing, ask the group to reflect on some important questions:

- What aspects of our identities tend to matter the most to us, and why?
- How are our identities shaped by things we are born with, versus things that happen in our lives?
- How much of a person's identity can you grasp or understand just by looking at them, or meeting them casually?
- Why do we need to talk about identity as we start our journey to fight oppression and - for social justice?

Identity: (1) the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing or person is definitively recognized or known; and (2) the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group. (Teaching Tolerance)

Privilege

A powerful exercise you can do to explore privilege and its many forms is the “privilege beads” or “chains of privilege” workshop. This was developed by Gerakina Arlene Sgoutas and colleagues from Metropolitan State University of Denver, reproduced by Dr. Brenda J. Allen.

Complete instructions for this exercise can be downloaded at <http://www.differencematters.info/uploads/pdf/privilegebeadsBJAllen2020.pdf>

You'll need paperclips of different colors (at least 4-5 colors, ideally 8+). Create stations where each participant reads a series of statements that reflect privilege in a specific social category (i.e. disability / ability). Each station has a different color of paperclip. For every statement that is true, students pick up a paperclip. Students rotate from station to station, reading and picking up paperclips until they have finished. It is best to conduct the exercise so that participants are not talking, so they are focused on their own identity and privileges.

Once complete, engage in a group discussion:

- What did you feel and think as you went through this exercise?
- What did you notice? What surprised you?
- Now that you've done this exercise, how has it changed your thinking? What will you do differently going forward?
- Why do we study or talk about privilege? What's the point?

Privilege: (1) unearned benefits you get just by belonging to a social category; or (2) an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. (Peggy McIntosh)

Marginalization and Oppression

Marginalization and oppression can be heavy topics, but are critical for your group to understand to work for inclusion and social justice.

Consider exploring these two terms through a group discussion. We highly encourage this discussion to be led by a trained facilitator, potentially your faculty advisor or a guest speaker from the community.

Important points to cover in some form through the group discussion:

- How can we define marginalization?
- What are examples of marginalization we have experienced in our own lives? (ensure you do not pick on students to share, but invite them to volunteer stories, preserving confidentiality at all times)
- What are examples of marginalization we have experienced or seen in our school?
- Thinking of these examples, what groups are at risk of marginalization in our school or community?
- How can we define oppression? How is it different from marginalization?
- What can we do to confront and interrupt marginalization and oppression?

Marginalization: the treatment of a person, group, or concept as secondary, unimportant, inferior, or abnormal compared with those who hold more power in society. (ADL)

Oppression: the systematic subjugation of a social group by another social group with access to institutional or systemic power. Individuals belonging to the dominant group have access to privilege and benefit at the expense of individuals in the subordinate group. (Chinook Fund)

MORE INFORMATION

Explore oppression through the online exhibit Talking about Race from the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

Intersectionality

Consider exploring intersectionality through video. The person who developed and coined this concept, Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, gave a TED talk about intersectionality that uses police brutality as a topic to consider what it is and why it matters (the video is linked on the YCD website).

Dr. Crenshaw's TED talk is available at https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

Watch Dr. Crenshaw's TED talk as a group (it's a little under 20 minutes).

Have group members pair up and share their reactions with a partner, before creating a full group discussion, exploring these questions or others you come up with:

- How can we define intersectionality in our own words?
- Are there examples of intersectionality in your own life?
- What are examples other than police brutality where you notice the importance of intersectionality?
- Why does intersectionality matter as we move forward in our journey to fight oppression and make our school and community more inclusive?

Intersectionality: a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality, or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts. (Kimberlé Crenshaw)

Bystanders, Allies and Accomplices

The People's Response Team based out of Chicago have developed an excellent Bystander Intervention 101 workshop that is available for free online. The workshop is recommended to take 2-3 hours, so you may need to split it into two meetings, or you can schedule a special meeting that is longer, perhaps on a weekend.

Download the bystander workshop instructions at https://www.afsc.org/sites/default/files/documents/bystander_intervention_final.pdf

Toward the end of the workshop, check in with participants on their understanding of what it means to be a bystander, an ally, and an accomplice. YCD provides definitions of each of these terms on the YCD website under Foundational Concepts.

Bystander: Someone who sees bias or bullying and does not say or do anything. (ADL)

Ally: will mostly engage in activism by standing with an individual or group in a marginalized community. (Colleen Clemens / Teaching Tolerance)

Accomplice: will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group—and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group. (Colleen Clemens / Teaching Tolerance)

Social Justice

After prior exercises exploring identity, diversity, inclusion, privilege, marginalization, oppression, intersectionality, bystanders, and more, it's time for your group to focus on the future. What does justice look like? How can we go about creating it? This exercise can help your group create a strong, shared sense of purpose for the remainder of the year.

If you are able, get several large sheets of butcher paper or post-it paper that can be hung around the room where you are meeting. At the top of each page, write a provocative question to get your club members thinking about these issues. Below are some questions you can include, or you can brainstorm your own depending on your context:

- What source of oppression or marginalization brought us to this group/club?
- How do we want our school/community to be different for students that come after us?
- What group(s) are marginalized in our school/community and need our attention and support most urgently?
- What does justice look like for the marginalized people in our community? What role can we play in achieving this?

Give each student a marker to write on the poster paper, or sticky notes they can attach. Divide the group into four (or however many posters you have) and have them spend about five minutes at each station. Encourage students to spend at least the first minute at each station thinking to themselves, before they start to share with others.

After rotating each group to each station, bring everyone back to a full group circle to review the answers. See if there are prominent topics or themes that emerge where group members agree focus should be placed.

Try to leverage this exercise to have your group commit to focusing on a single form or source of oppression/marginalization for the remainder of the year. When doing so, make sure to hear perspectives from students who may come from an identity that is the target of that oppression, as well as students who do not.

Use consensus to ensure all group members are committed to this focus. Anticipate there will be an effort to broaden the focus for the group, rather than keeping members' efforts targeted on one form of oppression. Try to resist this, as groups that try to "tackle the world" often end up doing a lot of talking and not a lot of action. For your group to be successful, you will want a clear mandate / sense of group purpose coming out of this conversation.

Social justice: full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. A vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members of a space, community, or institution, or society are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (Maurianne Adams and Lee Anne Bell)

YCD Conference Experiences

Students in the YCD network work collaboratively to plan and create conferences on the social issues affecting teens today. These unique experiences provide an opportunity for youth to meet others who share their passion for inclusion and justice, brainstorm ideas, and learn from community experts on the topics that matter most to them.

We believe the conference format can be transformational and inspirational to the work you plan to do, and give your group members access to a wide range of knowledge, experts, and connections in a short amount of time. Visit the YCD website for more information on any of the conferences listed below.



Cherry Creek Diversity Conference

This Denver-based event brings together over 1,100 teens and teachers from across Colorado each year. The conference features 40+ workshops, and also includes the Rocky Mountain Diversity Fair in the morning before the conference starts.

Colorado Summit for Inclusive Teen Athletics and Activities

Uniquely focused on inclusion in the world of teen sports and extracurricular activities, this program is launched in partnership with CHSAA (the Colorado High School Activities Association).

Mountain West Diversity Conference

Created by teens and teachers in Gypsum, this conference is for Colorado's Western Slope students who may not be able to attend the statewide event in Denver each year, and welcomes 200-300 teens annually.

New Mexico Diversity Conference for Youth

Held in Albuquerque, this conference is in its third year and draws students and teachers from across New Mexico. Last year's conference brought together 400+ teens and teachers, and we anticipate an audience over 500 in 2021.

NoCoWyo Diversity Conference

Hosted by CSU in Fort Collins, Colorado, this regional conference is for students from northern Colorado and Wyoming. The event draws 250-300 teens and teachers each year.

We acknowledge the conference format may not be accessible to all students, especially outside Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. If you are interested in working with YCD to start a youth-led conference in your state or region, reach out to find more information on how to start that process.

Other Conference Opportunities for Youth

We're serious about empowering young people wherever they are to make the change they seek. This includes promoting education and skill-building opportunities with other organizations across the country.

On the YCD website we've highlighted additional youth-led and youth-focused opportunities. If you have a suggestion for an addition to this list, please contact us.

Education outside of Conferences

While we believe strongly in the power of in-person gatherings, there are other sources you can look to for the education and skill-building necessary to take action. Below are some ideas to explore.

Invite a local guest speaker to a meeting

Sometimes the issue your club or group members want to focus on requires a local lens and knowledge. If this is the case, consider learning both from a local expert doing the work as well as seeking out national experts who may be leading work in other communities with similar challenges or issues.

Conduct an interview with an expert

If you can't invite someone to your meeting — consider taking the meeting to them. Reach out to an expert in the field to see if they would agree to a virtual meeting/interview, where your group members can ask questions and get advice.

Come prepared to the meeting with some facts, statistics, or other information to show you're serious about the issue, and brainstorm questions to ask in advance.

Conduct research

In some cases the issue you are confronting or addressing may not have a lot of statistics or research behind it already. Don't let this faze you — consider doing your own research project to create the statistics or data you need to demonstrate the problem to non-believers, or to brainstorm community solutions.

Connect with an organization that focuses on your issue or topic

YCD provides a robust list of non-profit and community groups that fight oppression in specific areas. Look under the section *Who and What We Fight For* for suggestions of organizations that have youth-focused options and can provide workshops, speakers, or programs for your club and group to connect with.



TAKE ACTION: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PROJECT

What is an action project and why is it important?

An *action project* is an ambitious capstone project created by students in a club aimed at addressing a specific social issue. This is the culmination of a year-long process the group has gone through.

Every school and community faces unique challenges to full inclusion and justice, so every group is encouraged to brainstorm an action project that is most relevant for them and their community.

It's important to distinguish an action project from other efforts. Bringing in a guest speaker for a one-time talk, doing community service for a few hours, or watching a movie and having a discussion, while all important, do not rise to the level of action we are encouraging at this stage. An action project should be ambitious in advancing inclusion and social justice in a meaningful way. Consider root causes of the injustice your group is looking to address, and then craft an action project that strikes at the heart of those root causes. This is the time for big, bold ideas to make change.



Your group will have bonded through icebreakers and discussions, and everyone will have learned new terminology, thought in new ways, or built new skills for social change. All of these building blocks are important for a young person's individual development. But how will we achieve justice and inclusion without making structural and institutional change?

An action project is where the rubber meets the road. This is the step in the process where hopes, ideas, brainstorming, thinking, and wishing need to be shifted into doing. If your group does not take on an action project, how will your school or community be any different for the students who come after you? How will they be any closer to inclusion and justice?

Identify Your Issue

If you've been following the YCD Program throughout the school year, the fall semester led your group through a series of workshops and discussions to highlight an issue your group wants to address. This is a critical step, and shouldn't be rushed.

If your group has identified more than one issue, see if there is an overlap or intersection between the issues that your project could focus on. In general, we recommend a single, major project for the group to pursue so that it will be effective and have the whole group's attention and effort.

Plan Your Project

Once your issue has been identified, it's time to craft your project. The planning process typically requires at least 3-4 weeks before you can implement.

Questions to consider:

- Who is your audience for the project? Are you trying to convince decisionmakers, such as school leaders or city councilmembers, to make a change? Or is your audience the student body, and who within that? How will you reach your intended audience?
- What tactics and strategies will you use your project? Are you aiming to persuade folk that a change is needed? Are you trying to get publicity? Do you want to use art to make a statement?
- What is your timeline for the project? What are the key milestones? Create a project schedule that is realistic to accomplish your goals.
- Will your project require funds or money to be implemented? Do you need supplies, transportation, or food?
- How will you measure success? Every successful project has some type of evaluation, so you know if your efforts made a difference.

Implement Your Project

Time to bring your project to life! Ensure each club member has a defined role, and that communications among group members are clear. Many times implementing your project will go faster than the planning process. Ensure the group is coordinated and working inclusively throughout this time.



Evaluate Your Project

You will have created an evaluation plan as part of your planning process. Make sure while implementing your project that you take the time to conduct evaluations with your audience, so you can demonstrate the impact of your work.

Celebrate!

Ensure your group or club's final meeting of the year is a celebration of everything you've accomplished. Think back on where you started, the process you went through, the highs and lows, and what you've accomplished. Even if the issue you chose to address is not fully resolved, take pride in your effort and how your school or community is a changed place because of your work.

As a final step to the year, tell YCD more about your project and how it went with this form. This feedback guides our efforts in the future, and gives other groups points of inspiration for projects they may want to pursue.



Sources for Funding of Action Projects

Your group may have brainstormed an incredible action project to implement, but maybe you need some funds in order to make it a reality. Here are some suggestions of places you can apply for funding to get the funds you need.

Community Foundations

Every state has community foundations; in many states, there may be multiple community foundations for different parts or regions of the state. These groups exist to grant money to good causes. Some community foundations may have a “rapid response” grant opportunity for teachers or students to apply and get funding on a short basis. Other community foundations require application for a grant by a deadline that may not match your project calendar well. Contact your local community foundation to see what options are available.

Issue-Specific Foundations

Depending on the focus of your project, there may be foundations that share the same focus and want to fund small projects on your issue/topic. Conduct research on the internet to see if there are groups willing to fund your efforts.

School District Foundations

Larger school districts often have foundations to support initiatives of these schools and their teachers/students. Check with your administration to see if your district has a foundation and what funding support they provide for student-led projects and initiatives. This will vary widely depending on your local situation.

Help from Your Principal or School Leader

In some cases, the principal of a school may have a small budget they can use for special projects. If you have a compelling project and have tried to raise funds from other groups but are still short, check with your principal to see if they may be willing to provide the money you need to proceed. This may require a special presentation. Make sure to highlight how your project will help the whole school and not just your club members, and commit to presenting the results of your project to the principal and/or the administration after your project is complete.

Group Fundraising

Your group members can choose to conduct a fundraising initiative to get the money you need for your project. There are several common ways that clubs and sports groups do this fundraising every year, so consider how you will stand out from the other fundraising efforts going on in your community.

In-Kind Donations

If your project requires supplies, maybe try getting the supplies donated directly rather than raising money to buy them. Approach local stores that sell these supplies to see what the owners are willing to donate for your project. You'll need to have a compelling story to persuade them, and it may require approaching several different stores or vendors to get everything you'll need.

Club Dues

Some extracurricular clubs collect “member dues” to help fund projects. For example, every member may contribute \$10 - \$20. This approach can work for some groups, but be very mindful of putting pressure on students from low-income families who may not be in a position to contribute member dues. We generally suggest finding other sources of funding unless your club members form a consensus this is the best approach. If you move forward with this, have your faculty advisor or sponsor collect the dues privately, so that students can opt out of paying member dues without revealing this to everyone.

45 Action Project Ideas and Examples

Here is a list of project ideas across a wide variety of topics and issues. Whatever project your group plans to pursue, it's most important that your group makes it relevant to your local school and community's needs, and that you center those impacted by the issue throughout your planning and implementation.

Conflict Resolution

1. Enact an anti-bullying campaign. There are many resources and options online; one to check out is the HEAR for High Schools program, which was created by experts at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The program is delivered by trained members of the National Guard at no cost for schools, with a special focus on cyberbullying. A second option to investigate is Kind Campaign, which focuses on girl-on-girl bullying. If these programs aren't a good fit, do some research to find a program that matches your school's need, or contact us for more guidance or advice. Make sure to pick a program that matches and addresses your community's need and is culturally competent for your student body.
2. Engage in a group project to learn about microaggressions in more detail, document examples in your community, and share the knowledge with others to push for change. Check the YCD website for a useful tool on the different themes that come up with microaggressions, examples, and underlying messages. Move beyond identifying the problem by coming up with specific tips and strategies (through brainstorm and research) for students as well as teachers on how to handle or interrupt microaggressions when they occur, and then present your findings.
3. Does your school have a restorative justice program? If not, talk to deans, counselors and others about the approach and research that shows its effectiveness in reducing conflict in schools. Search for an experienced RJ practitioner (we can provide referrals) to guide your school through the process of implementing a new restorative justice program. Understand this process will require buy-in from all parties, and often requires several years to fully implement.

Disability Justice and Youth

4. Are disabled students segregated in a different part of your school so they are out of sight for most students? Does your school provide opportunities for disabled youth to interact and build connections with their peers? Conduct a project with disabled students and administration to reimagine how disabled students can be more fully included in your school's campus, classroom and curriculum. Ensure any effort centers the voices and ideas of disabled students.
5. Are "special education" classes receiving the same funding, supplies, books, and support as typical courses in your school? Often these programs are underfunded, and the materials used to teach these courses assume limits from the students enrolled. Read on the YCD website about how one school district in California revamped their approach to special education. After doing some local investigation, work with disabled students, teachers and administration to support mainstreaming of special education students.

6. Are disabled students welcome and included in clubs and extracurricular activities at your school? If they are welcome but not participating, are there barriers preventing their attendance, such as the bus schedule or accessibility of the meeting space? Look for barriers that may prevent disabled youth from joining in these important activities and conversations, and then work to remove those barriers, centering the disabled voices throughout the process.
7. One disability that is significantly misunderstood and misrepresented today is autism. Consider inviting an autistic person to join your club or class to share more about their experiences, and to learn about the neurodiversity movement. Be cautious about which organizations you approach for help; there are many autism-focused orgs that are not led by autistic people, and are actively doing harm to the autistic community. Ensure you are hearing a perspective that centers the autistic person. The hashtag #actuallyautistic on social media and elsewhere can help in this effort.

Economic Justice

8. How does food insecurity show up in your community? Use the US Department of Agriculture's food desert locator to investigate what communities lack access to healthy food. Investigate the racial, socioeconomic and other statistics for the neighborhoods identified as food deserts. Contact your city council members or state representatives to ask what they are doing on food insecurity and food deserts, and pressure them for action.
9. Start a local, student-driven campaign to erase school lunch debt, so that all students can eat. Learn more about this movement from the #SchoolLunchForAll campaign. And, while you're at it, do a nutritional analysis of the food being provided in school, and work with administration to see what improvements can be made, so that school lunch is both free and healthy for students.
10. If your community is in an existing food desert, get in touch with any local farmers markets to see if they are donating leftover produce to local hunger relief agencies. If you don't have an existing food bank in your community and there is need — start one! The YCD website has tips on how to start a food pantry.
11. If you live in a larger city, how has gentrification shaped your community to date? Are there communities facing displacement right now? Launch a group project to conduct interviews of people who are facing gentrification to learn more about the history of these neighborhoods. With permission, film these interviews to make a short documentary that can be shared with city council members or community leaders to put a human face and stories to the problem. Put on a film screening at your school. Press government officials for tangible actions on fighting gentrification and displacement.
12. Prepare inexpensive care packages that can be distributed to homeless individuals when you encounter them. Conduct a fundraiser at your school to finance the initiative; most care packages can be created for under \$20 per person. Anyone under 18 years old should have a parent, teacher or experienced homeless advocate accompany them to distribute care packages, or you can drop off the packages to an existing homelessness

agency to distribute on your behalf. Watch a video on the YCD website to learn from a couple in Tacoma, Washington that regularly hand out homeless care packages.

13. Research what the minimum wage is for your city and state, and see how that compares to the average cost to live in your community. The Living Wage Calculator from MIT can help in this process. Reach out to local organizations working to increase the minimum wage to see how you can get involved. It may be easier and more effective to work on making changes within your city rather than waiting for action at a state or national level depending on your location.

Gender Justice and Equity

14. Invite a local non-profit organization that supports sexual assault victims to conduct a workshop on sexual harassment. Promote attendance so that all students feel invited and compelled to attend. Come up with a group plan on how to combat sexual harassment in your school and community.
15. Conduct research on the attendance, funding and support for female versus male sports and athletics in your school. Does your school celebrate and support female athletes equitably? Are there policy, funding or other changes your administration should make to bring equity between male and female sports teams?
16. Does your school support healthy masculinity? Conduct a roundtable or panel discussion among male students from different backgrounds on the pressures they feel connected to masculinity, and have an open dialogue around how to create a healthy masculinity culture in your school and community.
17. Learn more about the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). Seek out a local indigenous speaker or organization to share information, or if none are available in your local community, check out the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women and their resources. After learning, share and spread the knowledge, and support Native people's work to end the epidemic.
18. Are women and girls represented equitably in your school's Student Council, popular clubs and extracurricular activities, and other leadership roles? If not, conduct a project to look at the history behind female leadership in the school, and come up with a plan to promote and encourage female student leadership.

Immigrant and Refugee Youth

19. ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has detention facilities in all 50 U.S. states. 'Facilities' is a nice word for these places, which really are more like jails. Immigrants are held there and not able to leave, often for long periods of time (averages are 3-9 months), and lack basic access to things like books, schooling, and visitation from family members or advocates from the community. Consider holding a vigil to raise awareness; organize a book drive; or start a detention visitation group to support immigrants detained locally. (These ideas were provided in part by the AFSC).
20. Have you ever been the new kid at school? It can be a daunting experience for anyone. Imagine now that not only are you the new kid, but you are also a refugee and living in a new country, and maybe even learning or speaking a language that is not the one you

Speak at home. Like all of us, refugee youth need friends and allies when they join a new community. Talk with your school administration about how your club can partner with them to form a welcoming and inclusive group of people so that when a new refugee student arrives on your campus, they have an immediate circle of support.

21. Ensure that welcoming new immigrant or refugee students to your school or community isn't just about showing them around and being an ally in their new environment — your club or student group should strive to learn more about the people and culture of those joining your community. This is best done by hearing from students directly about their experiences, and not creating stereotypes based on books, movies, or other sources. Once a new student has had time to find their bearings, invite them to share more about where they come from and their journey to your school and community. This could be at a club meeting, or a special event. Let them lead in designing any event or space, and limit the audience to whatever they are comfortable with. If they are not interested in sharing, honor these feelings and wishes and do not push them. The most important thing is to ensure they know you are interested in hearing their story if and when they are ready to share.
22. Achieving immigration justice requires action from the U.S. Congress to create a path toward citizenship for undocumented people. Research the political positions of your area's representative and your state's two senators. Consider starting a letter-writing campaign or other steps to push elected officials to take action on immigration. Make your voice as a future voter heard by those in power.

Inclusive Sports and Activities

23. What kind of language is used by your team during practice, games, or on the field? Is there a culture of support, belonging, and inclusion? Or, are there insults, degrading remarks and language that offends? Think about the culture you want around you. Seek out others who share your values, and talk with your coach and team leaders about how to shift to a healthy culture that supports and nurtures everyone.
24. Are students from religious minorities able to easily participate in sports? Muslims' holy day is Friday; and Saturday is holy for Jewish students. If your practices or games are regularly scheduled the same day each week and conflict with religious calendars, chances are these students cannot participate. Yes, it is likely impossible to find a time that works for everyone, but consider changing the schedule up or alternating days every week. Take a critical look at the scheduling to make these programs accessible to everyone. Survey students (including students who may not be in the program because of scheduling conflicts) to drive your decision-making.
25. Are there dress code limitations that conflict with religious beliefs? Hijabs (head coverings) in particular are important to some Muslim girls and women. Does your school allow for hijabs to be worn during athletic competition? Read a story on the YCD website about one girl's experience wearing a hijab during athletic competition, and how it turned into a campaign to end discrimination in sport. Ensure your school's and state's dress code isn't discriminating against teens based on their religious beliefs.
26. Does your school give equitable support to male and female sports teams? Are the games for girls basketball filled with fans just as much as the boys? Is funding shared

between the teams equitably? Is there a “pecking order” around reserving the gym or other spaces? If your school isn’t making sports and athletics equitable for all genders, create a project to document the inequity, raise it with administration, and fight for change.

27. Does your state athletic association have a trans-inclusive policy that supports trans students participating in the sport of their gender identity? As of July 2020, 18 US states and the District of Columbia have inclusive policies; all others either do not have policies, have policies that need improvement, or have discriminatory policies. Get the latest info about your state’s policies from transathlete.com. If your state needs change, learn more about Colorado’s creation of the first-in-the-nation policy, and conduct an advocacy campaign to make your state’s athletics trans-inclusive.
28. How accessible are sports and athletics in your school and community for students from lower income families? Can they afford fees, equipment, travel, or more? Does your school put financial barriers in place to their participation? Look into the specifics in your school, and then conduct a group project to make change. Advocate for school-imposed fees to be cancelled or on a sliding scale; create a scholarship fund; and reach out to sports equipment companies and retailers for in-kind donations.

Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation

29. Is there a religious minority in your school or community that is not well understood? Consider a group outing to a local house of worship (mosque, temple, shrine, etc.) to learn more about the faith and create personal connections. Do not show up uninvited; contact the house of worship in advance to see if they welcome visitors and have specific times set aside for school or community groups to visit and learn. Not all groups will want to invite visitors into their house of worship, which is okay. If they invite your group to visit, plan ahead by reading the appropriate section of the book *How to be a Perfect Stranger: A Guide to Etiquette in Other People’s Religious Ceremonies*. Have a group discussion in advance of visiting about how to be respectful, and plan another post-visit conversation to process what the group learned, and what actions your group can take to stand up for religious minorities facing bigotry.
30. Check if there is an interfaith organization or affiliation that is operating in your region (the Interfaith Alliance is a good place to start; here is a map of affiliates across the U.S.). Invite the leaders to share what initiatives they are currently working on, and seek their guidance on how your group can support or get involved. This may take the form of advocacy (writing letters/emails to government officials, etc.), publicity of the initiative on social media, or gaining buy-in from additional congregations in your community.
31. For communities that have experienced a specific hate crime or incident of religious bigotry, show up at protests, rallies or demonstrations in support of those being persecuted. Write articles in the local newspaper or go on the radio station to bring attention to and denounce the incident, and to show you and your community will not tolerate such behavior. Start or contribute to a fundraiser if there was property damage or medical costs due to injury. Reach out to the affected faith or group to ask how you can support them through this time, and honor and center their preferences and voices at all times.

LGBTQ+ Youth

32. Does your school have a GSA? If not, consider whether starting a GSA may be a good first step to making LGBTQ+ youth more visible and accepted in your community. The YCD website has 10 tips for starting a GSA from Teaching Tolerance. Keep in mind how starting a new club may impact other groups, for example a diversity or social justice club. LGBTQ+ youth deserve a unique space to meet and be themselves, but at the same time should not be isolated from other social justice groups in the school or community.
33. If your school has a GSA, is it fully inclusive and intersectional? In some communities students of color may not feel represented or welcome within LGBTQ+ spaces without specific outreach and efforts. If that seems to be the case, consider discreetly interviewing LGBTQ+ students of color about their experiences, and find ways to bridge the barriers to participation and inclusion.
34. Are LGBTQ+ people represented in your curriculum? More states and school districts are passing regulations to ensure inclusion of LGBTQ+ history in school curriculum, but this is often due to student activism. If your teachers aren't actively mentioning LGBTQ+ people and history in classrooms, consider a project to engage them to update the curriculum, or work on a project to change the law in your state.
35. Bullying within school is one of the biggest challenges for LGBTQ+ youth. Consider launching a project to identify spaces where students are regularly harassed, and then come up with an action plan to call out and address the harassment. Try to build a coalition of student groups, teachers, and administrators working collaboratively on the problem.
36. Does your school have gender-neutral bathrooms available for trans and non-binary students? If not, engage administration to come up with a plan.

Mental Wellness and Healthy Relationships

37. Does your school or youth organization have a mental wellness and/or relaxation club, or times set aside for mental health? Consider getting a group together to do yoga, meditation, and other activities on a weekly or regular basis to calm your mind, help you de-stress, and regain your focus.
38. How has social media helped or harmed your mental wellness and self-image? Plan a group conversation on this topic to hear multiple perspectives. Ensure whomever is leading the discussion has been trained to facilitate. After participants have shared their general feelings and experiences, try to shift toward action items or solutions you can take so that social media nurtures and enriches your life.
39. One of the best strategies for getting young people to share the challenges they are facing, and to get the relevant help they need, is peer counselors. This is a group of teens who are trained to be available for any student to share what's going on, be an active listener, and to connect them with resources for help. If your school has an existing peer counseling program, consider signing up to be trained. If your school does not have a peer counseling program, check out these questions and suggestions to start one.

40. Host a screening of One Love's Escalation workshop, which features a film about dating violence and abuse relationships, followed by discussion. Consider expanding the audience beyond your club to anyone who may be interested. Oftentimes, students in unhealthy relationships may seek out educational experiences like these when given the opportunity, but ensure it's presented in a way so there is no stigma attached for attending.

Racial Justice and Anti-Racism

41. Does your school have police officers or SROs on-site? What is their connection to the local police? What are the standards for referring students to the criminal justice system? Student activists across the US are working to remove police from schools, and to sever the connection between schools and the criminal justice system.
42. Are students of color represented in advanced classes such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP) programs? Are they represented in honors courses? Students and teachers are pushing back on "tracking" within the educational system which so often exclude students of color from accessing higher level courses. Read an article from Teaching Tolerance (linked on the YCD website) about how one school stopped tracking.
43. Does your school district carry "lunch debt" charges for students? There is a growing body of student activism to make school lunch free for all, so that all students can eat regardless of ability to pay. Check out schoollunchforall.org for more information and resources.
44. Look into how your school and school district are funded, and how it compares to other nearby districts. Are there disparities along racial lines? Engage school and district leaders to press for change. Read an article from NPR (linked on the YCD website) on why white-majority districts have so much more money.
45. Start a book club, reading one of the suggestions on the YCD website, or host a movie night with your family, club or class. Make sure to budget time for a facilitated conversation to digest the book or movie with a properly trained facilitator. Check for an upcoming YCD webinar or training on facilitating difficult conversations.

PLANNING WORKSHEET

Use this page to create a draft meeting plan for your group. Make sure to skip school holidays, and take a break around semester finals. You don't have to have exactly 20 meetings; create schedule that works best for your group.

#	Meeting Date	Agenda / Key Focus
		Recruiting / info sessions
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		End of year celebration