The GLSEN JUMP-Start Guide

Creating
Youth-Adult
Partnerships

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The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide

WELCOME!

Welcome to *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide!* GLSEN's student organizing team has created this resource to support new and established Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and similar groups that are working to make schools safer and more inclusive for all students. We've been hearing from many organizers that they need concrete ideas for building, shaping and activating their groups, and that's what this guide is all about. It takes you through the process of establishing your student club, identifying your mission and goals, assessing your school's climate, and engaging in projects and activities throughout the year. It also offers resources for further exploration.

This guide consists of eight self-contained sections; all are designed to help you *jump-start*—or bring fresh and creative energy to—your student club. Topics include:

- Building and Activating Your GSA
- Tips and Tools for Organizing an Action Campaign
- Strategies for Training Teachers
- Understanding Direct-Action Organizing
- Examining Power, Privilege and Oppression
- Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships
- Making Your Student Club Trans-Inclusive
- Evaluation, Continuation, Celebration!

Please note that we have chosen to use gender-neutral language in this resource. We recognize that replacing "he" and "she" with the gender-neutral "they" is grammatically questionable, but we hope you will overlook this in support of students who do not use "he" or "she" to identify themselves.

If you would like to receive more information about GLSEN, or to get involved in the safer schools movement, please register online at www.studentorganizing.org! We welcome your feedback on the activities in this guide—and we salute you for the important work you are doing to create safer schools for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships

The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide

PART 6

COntEnts

Creating Youth–Adult Partnerships

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What is a **Partnership?**

Bringing **youth** and **adults together** will allow more **students' voices** to be heard within the **safer-schools movement**

A **partnership** is a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by cooperation and shared responsibility, often for the purpose of achieving a specific result.

What is a youth-adult partnership?

A youth-adult partnership occurs when adults and youth work together within their communities or schools in pursuit of a common goal or cause. These relationships are built on mutual trust, learning, teaching and action. These relationships are not based on adults teaching youth, or on youth teaching adults; rather, they are relationships in which adults and youth learn from one another.

Why are youth-adult partnerships important in the safer-schools movement?

Both youth and adults have been active members of the safer-schools movement. Youth have worked primarily inside the schools, while adults have generally taken roles outside the schools. While youth frequently work and interact with adults inside school systems, it is only recently that young people have begun demanding to be part of organizations, chapters and other institutions that are striving to create safer schools. The inclusion of young people has made this movement stronger. Young people, after all, witness the harassment, experience the abuse and are aware of major problems in their schools and classrooms. Bringing youth and adults together in more aspects of the safer schools movement will allow an even larger contingency of students' voices to be heard.

Through the activities in this section of *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*, you will learn to identify the barriers that occur while working to create youth-adult partnerships; you will also learn strategies to create youth-adult partnerships. It is our hope that you will be empowered to create some of your own youth-adult partnerships.

What Is a **Partnership?** (continued)

NOTE: The activities contained in this resource can all be used both within your group and to give to other groups. You might find the handouts on youth participation and activities about adultism particularly good to give to adult organizations with which you would like to form partnerships. It can be both highly constructive and eye-opening for adults to think about the manifestations and impact of adultism. As a group, you may also want to **organize a workshop on adultism**. See the "Model Training Outline" in the Appendix for details on planning and convening an adultism workshop.

What is Adultism?

Adultism is defined as "behaviors and attitudes that are based on the assumption that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon them without their agreement." Adultism is characterized by "disrespect towards the intelligence, judgment, emotional life, leadership, or physical being of young people."

Exploring Ageism and Adultism

Ageism and adultism are both forms of **oppression** related to **age**

Ready... When looking at the impact of ageism and adultism, it is important to remember that these are entirely different concepts. The common link is that both are forms of oppression related to age. **Ageism** is prejudice or discrimination on the basis of age. Ageism can affect people of any age—children, senior citizens and everyone in between. Researchers have found that employers are four times more likely to interview a younger job applicant than an older applicant; this is a clear example of discrimination based on age. **Adultism** is prejudice or discrimination against young people because of their age. Adultism requires the oppressor to have the power that is gained only through being a certain age. A good example of adultism is when a young person does not get a job because the boss (the person with power) believes that the applicant is too young to be smart or mature enough to do the job.

Set... **People:** Entire group
Tools: Flip-chart paper, markers
Time: 20 minutes
Additional Resource: "Understanding Adultism" in Appendix (enough copies for all participants)

GO! **In a large group, review the definitions of "adultism" and "ageism" and brainstorm a list of examples of each concept.** Be sure that each participant comes up with examples that include both the older people and younger people in society. It is important to stress the difference between the terms and to discuss the idea that age is the common link. You may want to refer back to Part 5 of *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide* for connections to other oppressions.

Once participants have a solid understanding of the concepts and examples, hand out the worksheet labeled "Understanding Adultism." This can be found at the end of this section of the guide. Follow the instructions on the worksheet. This important exercise, developed by students, speaks directly to young people's experiences in our society.

What We **Never** Want To **Hear Said**

It is important
to consider how
**different
cultures**
define youth—
and to identify
**negative
messages**
that youth hear

Ready... Before your group begins the process of creating youth-adult partnerships, it is important to examine and understand the definition of "youth"—and to reflect on society's perceptions of young people. At GLSEN, a "youth" is defined as a student in a K-12 school.

As you begin this process of reflection, it is helpful to look at different cultures, traditions and situations to see how the definition of youth varies. For example, a parent may consider a 14-year-old child a youth, but an employer who is paying the 14-year-old to babysit probably views the babysitter as an adult. In the Jewish tradition, children who turn 13 celebrate the rite of coming of age as an adult. The rest of society, including the youth's parents, may consider this person a youth, but in the Jewish religion this person is considered an adult. Similarly, young women in Mexico celebrate their *Quinceañera* at age 15. A *Quinceañera* (the term refers both to the celebration and to the young woman who has turned 15) is similar in concept to a debutante's "coming-out party" in other countries. The celebration is a means of acknowledging that a young woman has reached maturity and is now an adult, ready to assume additional family and social responsibilities. Although the *Quinceañera* has turned 15 and is considered an adult in her culture, the rest of society may continue to view and treat her as a youth.

Youth hear a broad range of messages through the media, their families and at school. Some of these messages are positive and affirming, while others are highly negative and derogatory. It is important to identify negative messages that youth hear and that you know are untrue.

What We Never Want to Hear Said (continued)

Set... **People:** Entire group
Tools: Pens and flip-chart paper
Time: 15 minutes

GO! **In a large group, ask all the participants to brainstorm a definition of "youth."** Once everyone is done, come up with a working definition of the word. Next, ask participants: "What is the age range for youth?" Once you have come up with a good working definition and an agreed-upon age range, it is time to talk about youth in the context of different cultures and situations. Ask for some examples of how a youth can be considered older or younger in a different culture or situation. You might begin this part of the discussion by referring to the examples cited on the previous page.

Next, break into smaller groups of three to five members. **Ask each group to come up with four statements they never want to hear adults say about them;** for example, "All young people are lazy." Give each group a sheet of flip-chart paper to write down their responses. The groups will need about five minutes to complete this activity. Once they are done, have the groups share their sentences with the rest of the participants. Keep the flip-charts and type up the statements for use later in this Jump-Start.

Exploring Stereotypes

Think about all the **stereotypes** you have heard about **youth** and **adults**.

Ready... **Stereotypes** are positive or negative beliefs or ideas about a group of people based on generalizations or assumptions rather than experience or reason. We hear stereotypes all the time about lots of different groups—but the stereotypes we want to focus on in this activity are those that concern youth and adults.

Set... **People:** Entire group
Tools: Post-it notes, pens, markers, two sheets of flip-chart paper
Time: 10 minutes

GO! **Write the word "ADULT" at the top of a piece of flip-chart paper.** Write the word "YOUTH" at the top of a second sheet of flip-chart paper.

Distribute four to six Post-it notes to each participant. Encourage participants to think about all the stereotypes they have heard or believe to be true about youth and adults. Ask them to write one stereotype on each Post-it note that they have. Make sure that they write an equal number of stereotypes for both youth and adults—without using the words "youth" or "adults." Once all participants have finished, collect the Post-it notes and designate a reporter to read them aloud. Ask participants to shout out which flip chart each statement should be put on.

Once all the notes have been posted, have group members form pairs and discuss the following questions:
⇨ **What** is the age range for an adult?
⇨ **Where** do these stereotypes come from?
⇨ **Are** these stereotypes based on truth?
⇨ **Are** all adults/youth like this?
⇨ **Can** you come up with an example in which a youth or adult does not fit these stereotypes?

Talking about Experience

Reflecting
on past work with adults can help determine the sort of **partnership** your group wants to create

Ready... Before creating new youth-adult partnerships, you need to reflect on youth-adult alliances that group members have already experienced. These experiences—involving school projects, community work or organizing efforts—may have been good, bad or mixed, but they can all be helpful in determining the sort of partnership your group wants to create and how to achieve that successfully. Remember, when launching a new project, it is always helpful to know first what is possible and then to create realistic expectations.

Set... **People:** Entire group, facilitator
Tools: "Ladder of Young People's Participation" and "Degrees of Participation" handouts in Appendix (enough copies for all participants)
Time: 15 minutes

GO! Break into pairs. Choose a method (such as counting off or self-selection) that allows people who do not know one another well or who have not yet worked together to pair up. (The facilitator should select a method based on what is most likely to work with your group. If the group is small, the activity can also be done with all participants.) Give everyone or every pair a copy of the "Ladder of Young People's Participation" and "Degrees of Participation" handouts. These can be found in the Appendix.

Pairs (or the entire group) should discuss the following topics:
⇨ **Relationships** they have had with adults in the context of organizing efforts and school-related projects
⇨ **What** this relationship looked like
⇨ **How** the relationship made each person feel
⇨ **How** this sort of relationship might be created or avoided, depending on the individual experience and results

Compare the relationships discussed to the scale diagramed on the handout. Also come up with examples for each step in the ladder of organizations that work with youth. If you split into pairs, come back together and share your examples with the rest of the group.

Why We Work with Adults

Think about the many reasons to form partnerships with adult allies

Ready... Before creating youth-adult partnerships, it is important to remember exactly why such partnerships are desirable. It is also helpful for members of your student club to recognize that adults can be allies to young people. This helps provide reasons for doing this work and incentives to continue working in the face of adultism.

Set... **People:** Entire group
Tools: Pens and flip-chart paper
Time: 15 minutes

GO! Begin by asking each participant to write down three characteristics of a partnership. Once everyone is done, have group members share their responses with the group to create a working definition of the word "partnership." After the group has agreed upon a definition, it is time to start brainstorming. In a large group, ask participants what it means to be an "ally." Next **ask participants to brainstorm at least three reasons for working with adult allies.** Continue adding reasons after everyone has offered at least one new reason. Feel free to use the ideas that are volunteered to create new reasons, but try to avoid having repeats.

Once the group has come up with a good number, ask for examples of how youth have seen these play out in their own lives or in the lives of those they know.

If participants have trouble coming up with concrete examples, discuss how many of them have actually worked well with adults in the past. Can participants identify reasons why this has or has not happened? How can past issues be addressed and anticipated before embarking on new partnerships?

Answering the Hard Questions

It's smart to anticipate questions adults might ask—and to prepare answers to those questions

Ready... Coming up with intelligent, logical answers to questions that one does not feel prepared to answer almost always makes for a difficult situation. But many questions that adults might ask of youth reaching out to them in the context of possible youth-adult partnerships can be anticipated. People generally want to get information that helps them make a more informed decision. In turn, youth need to know what their group does, what they are trying to do, and (by the time they start outreach) what role they want adults to take in the project. Still, being asked something on the spot can be uncomfortable and can leave anyone searching for the right words or feeling as though they are incapable of answering. That does not mean that the person is in fact ineffective, but they may feel that way. Practice can help, and this activity is designed to help students anticipate questions they might be asked and to gain the confidence necessary to answer.

Set... **People:** Entire group
Tools: Pens and flip-chart paper
Time: 15–20 minutes

GO! Ask participants to think of two or three questions adults might ask them as they are trying to reach out to and work with adults. Once everyone has written down their questions, break into groups of three or four and have one person write the questions on flip-chart paper.

Arrange chairs in two lines facing each other. **Have students sit in the chairs, as close to evenly divided as possible, and take turns asking and answering the questions on the flip-chart**. After all the questions have been asked and answered, have the large group come back together and discuss the following:

Answering the Hard Questions (continued)

⇨ **How** did it feel to answer questions in this manner?

⇨ **Were** the answers people gave correct? Coherent? Comprehensive? How might they be improved?

⇨ **Did** people feel comfortable answering for the group? How might group members be made to feel more comfortable?

⇨ **What** was the hardest question to answer? Why?

⇨ **Discuss** any other issues participants wish to raise.

Make sure you record notes on useful parts of the discussion (such as suggestions for improvement). This way, the ideas raised can be incorporated into group materials such as talking points or phone conversation scripts. Remember, too, that it is important to have limits. If participants do not feel comfortable answering a given question for whatever reason, they should feel free to pass instead of answering it.

Knowing What You Want from Adults

Ready... When you begin to reach out to individuals and organizations for adult support, you need to be prepared to know what role you want them to take. Initiating a youth-adult partnership will do no good if the adults try to make decisions for you or take over your projects! At the same time, adults are more likely to become—and remain—involved in a project if they know they are being useful and are doing something that interests them and that works with their schedule. Therefore, it is useful to know exactly what you want adults to do and what roles or positions you can offer the people to whom you reach out. It is also important to know whether you are trying to build long-standing partnerships or if you are only looking for adult allies for a specific project and/or event.

Set... **People:** Entire group, facilitator
Tools: Pens, Post-It notes, flip-chart paper
Time: 30 minutes

GO! At the top of a piece of flip-chart paper, write "What do we want adults to do?" At the top of a second sheet of flip-chart paper, write "What do we NOT want adults to do?"

Distribute eight Post-it notes to each participant. **Ask group members to think about all the possible roles adults could take in working with your student group.** Have them write as many roles as they can think of that they would like adults to take. On the remaining Post-it notes, have participants write roles they do *not* want adults to take. Participants should not indicate on the note the category for which it is intended.

Collect all the Post-it notes and read them aloud. Ask participants to shout out which flip-chart they should be put on. Be sure to have the person who wrote the note identify themselves and verify where they intended the note to be placed. Ideally, there will be agreement within the group about the roles you want adults to take. For roles that do not have general group agreement as to whether adults should be doing them, further discussion will be needed prior to outreach. If agreement cannot be reached, it is probably best not to include those roles in outreach conversations. Once adults are involved, the issue can be re-examined and hopefully resolved satisfactorily.

It's important to **agree on roles** you want—and do not want—adults to play in **helping your group**
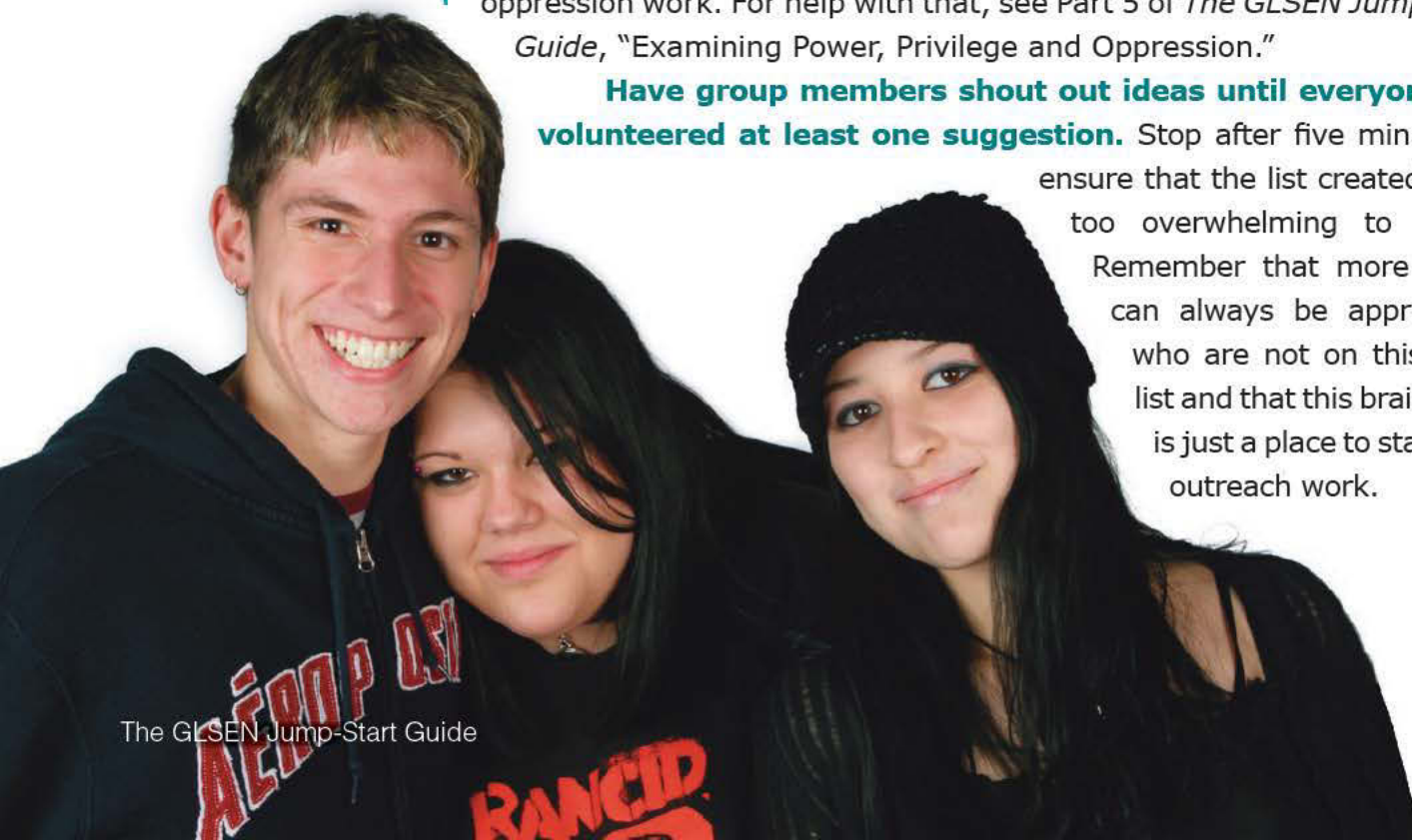
Starting or Continuing the Process

Ready... Now that you have the tools necessary to reach out to adults, you need to figure out with whom you want to partner. If you have already begun working with adults, this is a good time to create stronger relationships. Once you have identified people and organizations, you can get contact information for them and create a script that targets their interests and areas of focus.

What **organizations and activities** would benefit from young people's **ideas and involvement?**

Set...   **People:** Entire group
Tools: Pens and flip-chart paper
Time: 20 minutes

GO!   In a large group, brainstorm a list of places in your school and community where you think students should be more involved, activities and organizations that would benefit from young people's ideas, and individuals and organizations that could be most useful to your group. Remind participants to look at the local community in its entirety and to go beyond personal group contacts. If your group consists mostly of members who represent one race, class or gender, or if you notice that most of the organizations being listed have largely or entirely homogeneous membership, then be sure to look for more diverse groups with which to form alliances. Also understand that to be successful in building partnerships, your group will most likely have to do its own anti-oppression work. For help with that, see Part 5 of *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*, "Examining Power, Privilege and Oppression."

Have group members shout out ideas until everyone has volunteered at least one suggestion. Stop after five minutes to ensure that the list created is not too overwhelming to tackle. Remember that more adults can always be approached who are not on this initial list and that this brainstorm is just a place to start your outreach work.

Starting or Continuing the Process (continued)

Once you have come up with your list, have participants decide how to break it down into chunks (according to location, personal contacts, target message or whatever the participants think will be the most useful way to make outreach manageable).

Next, break the large group into small clusters so that there are a few students assigned to discuss each group of organizations listed in the brainstorm. Each small group will be responsible for creating a short target message for each organization that is included in their "chunk" of the brainstorm. They should also create a timeline and prioritize which of their organizations need to be approached first. Give each group a sheet of flip-chart paper on which to write this information. Keep these papers for later reference. Sending reminders via e-mail or posting responsibilities can be useful in ensuring that work gets done.

The large group should reconvene to assign designated members to specific organizations. Encourage all group members agree to contact a few groups. Also note that if people know they are overcommitted, they should not volunteer for more tasks than they can comfortably handle.

Model Training Outline
What to Include in a Workshop on Adultism

A workshop on adultism can be a particularly useful activity for adult organizations with which you may want to partner. Students in your group can lead this type of workshop for adults and youth together, and can invite participants from one organization or many. Such workshops can follow the loose outline given below, but you should feel free to customize it for the group you are training. You can also add some of the activities presented in this Jump-Start.

Ideally, there should be two facilitators to balance out the work, help in avoiding a lecture-style workshop, and assist any small-group work that happens. Be sure you know before leading the workshop who is facilitating which sections and that you have everything you need. Workshops are generally 60 to 90 minutes long, and the time dedicated to each activity needs to be planned accordingly. Workshops that run longer on one topic tend to lose people's interest or get fewer participants since people only have so much time. As far as materials needed, flip-chart paper and markers are guaranteed to be helpful at just about any workshop, so always bring them or request that they be provided!

Welcome and Introductions

If possible, arrange the participants in a circle for the workshop. Then begin introductions. This can take 5 to 10 minutes depending upon how many participants there are. Facilitators should introduce themselves first, giving their name, preferred gender pronoun, and briefly explaining what they want to get out of this workshop. Generally, it is also good to give a 30-second explanation of preferred gender pronouns at this time; they can be masculine (*he/him/his*), feminine (*she/her*), or gender-neutral (*zie/hir*), and are simply the pronouns people would like to have used in reference to themselves. It is important to ask people to identify which gender pronouns they prefer because sometimes we can't tell just by looking at a person. At this point all other participants should go around and list the same for themselves. (For more information about pronouns, check out Activity 7.1, "Learning the Language," and Activity 7.6, "The Pronoun Game," in *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*.

Model Training Outline
What to Include in a Workshop on Adultism (continued)

Agreements

This section should take 5 minutes. If the facilitators provide basic agreements (or ground rules) such as those that follow, participants can take a few minutes to add any they also think are important. Post these so that they are visible during the workshop, and remind people of them if you see people not following them:

⇨ **"One mic, one voice."** Only one person should speak at a time.

⇨ **"Step up, step back."** Participants should be aware of how much they are speaking. If they feel they are speaking a lot, they should let others speak, and if they find themselves not talking, they should try to contribute some comments, ideas or suggestions.

⇨ **"Use 'I' statements."** Everyone should speak from his/her/hir own experience and avoid making generalizations.

⇨ **"No assumptions—except for best intentions."** People should not assume other people's experiences or anything else. The only assumptions people should make are that when other participants speak, they are speaking with the best intention and do not mean to offend anyone.

⇨ **"Correct gently, but do correct."** If participants say something that is incorrect or offensive, politely call them on that. Letting comments slip by only makes the space less safe and increases the difficulty of building successful partnerships.

⇨ **"Oops" and "Ouch."** If a participant makes a comment and then realizes it is offensive and that it shouldn't have been said, the participant should say "Oops." If a participant is offended by something someone has said, that participant should say "Ouch" to let other people know that what was said hurt or offended him/her/hir.

⇨ **Respect!**

Model Training Outline
What to Include in a Workshop on Adultism (continued)

Start with an Energizer!

Energizers are really important because they allow people to become more comfortable with each other and get people ready for the topic. Depending on which energizer is used, this should take 3 to 10 minutes. One simple, brief energizer that also informs the facilitators about their audience is "Stand Up, Sit Down." This involves asking participants to stand up if they answer whatever question is asked positively. Then they sit down, and the next question is asked. Start with something simple, like "Stand up if you…enjoyed lunch/would still like to be asleep/enjoy today's weather." Then ask questions that give the facilitators useful information, such as "Stand up if…you are under 25 years old," "…have experienced adultism," or "…want to create a successful youth-adult partnership." It is best to end with something positive that is intended to make everyone stand up. To find other great icebreakers to use, check out Part 1 of *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*.

Activities

These next activities should take about 25 to 30 minutes all together. The two activities that GLSEN would recommend for this section are Activities 6.1 ("Exploring Ageism and Adultism") and 6.3 ("Exploring Stereotypes") from this part of *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*.

Action Planning

This is generally best done with 10 to 15 minutes in small groups, and 10 minutes for sharing with the large group. It should involve brainstorming activities, strategies or whatever would be most useful for your situation and the type of partnerships you are trying to build. If this is the first real interaction with the individual and/or group, it's useful to have participants brainstorm ways that they can make their events, organization, or themselves more inclusive of and welcoming to youth and less adultist. Whatever you decide to do, be sure that you have a clear explanation of what you want people to think about. Facilitators should walk around to the small groups and answer any questions while offering additional suggestions to spur discussion.

Model Training Outline
What to Include in a Workshop on Adultism (continued)

Resources and Giving Direction

The list of things you never want to hear said (from Activity 6.2 in this section of the guide) should be passed out so that everyone has a copy. As a group, you should go over these statements. This should not turn into adults giving excuses or explanations for why they may have made some of these comments at various times, nor should it turn into any youth present becoming angry at the adults in the room. If explanations are requested, they should be given. Otherwise, the information should be pretty much accepted, and the handouts kept for future reference. This may be a good time for students to add to the list or for adults to create a list of things they never want to hear said again by youth. Any other resources can also be given out and discussed at this time.

Closing

This should take 5 to 10 minutes. A contact list should be collected for people who would like to receive more information or stay involved. Facilitators should thank participants for coming and give their contact information. If a follow-up meeting has not already been set to continue work to create a youth-adult partnership with this group, it should be done now. The contact list should be used to send out reminders about future meetings and updates about the work. Once contact information has been collected and/or distributed, it is time to do a quick evaluation of the workshop. A popular evaluation method is the "plus/delta" system. "Plus" stands for the good things about the day, and "delta" stands for things that should have been changed. Create a chart with a plus on one side and delta on the other. (A delta looks like a little triangle.) Allow each person to add a plus and a delta and write their response on the chart. Once everyone has had a chance to offer a comment, ask if there are any additional pluses or deltas. If not, conclude the workshop by thanking everyone for attending and laying the foundation for a healthy youth/adult partnership!

Understanding Adultism

Consider these examples of adultism, created by young people involved in governance structures. In pairs, read the following examples and then, in each case, answer the following questions: What do the examples have in common? What motivates adults to act this way? After discussing the examples, reconvene as a group and share your thoughts. To conclude the exercise, each group member should write their own definition for the word "adultism" in the space at the bottom of this worksheet.

EXAMPLE 1: Writing "Tasha, age 17," rather than "Tasha Martin." While it's great to demonstrate that young people are involved, you should be very careful not to be condescending. Adults would never write "Jim, age 54" in a professional setting.

EXAMPLE 2: Considering only age, not experience. Young people's experiences are extremely valuable, even if they are not traditional professional experiences.

EXAMPLE 3: Asking young people, "Do you understand?" in a condescending way. It's great to be thoughtful when someone looks lost, whether they are an adult or a young person, but be careful not to put young people on the spot.

EXAMPLE 4: Assuming young people won't be able to understand a topic or concept rather than taking the time to explain it to them.

EXAMPLE 5: Making condescending comments like, "You're still a little wet behind the ears!"

"When you grow up, you'll understand" or "It's just a phase; you'll grow out of it."

EXAMPLE 6: Asking young people to handle only small or menial tasks. As with adults, simple tasks need to be balanced with important and challenging projects in order for work to be exciting and fulfilling.

EXAMPLE 7: Being surprised when young people say something intelligent, when they are dressed appropriately, or when they are well organized. Comments such as, "You're so smart! I can't believe you're only 15!"

EXAMPLE 8: Assuming that young people only know about issues concerning youth.

EXAMPLE 9: Ignoring young people when you are busy with "more important things."

EXAMPLE 10: Using jargon that is unfamiliar to young people. Remember to phrase things so that everyone can understand.

Your definition of adultism:

....

....

....

....

....

Youth / Adult Partnerships
Self-Assessment Tool

This is not a test! Rate yourself on a scale from 1-5, "one" being a beginner in this area. In the first column, put where you see yourself now. In the second column, put where you would like to be.

Where I am now:	Where I would like to be:	
_____	_____	Familiar with resources about youth participation and youth and adult partnerships (e.g. technical assistance, books, etc.)
_____	_____	Affirm and support people's feelings and ideas.
_____	_____	Treat all group members with respect.
_____	_____	Appreciate and incorporate the strength of similarities and differences among people (gender, spiritual, class, etc.).
_____	_____	Resist the urge to take over.
_____	_____	Careful about interrupting people of all ages.
_____	_____	Provide opportunities to have youth reflect and learn.
_____	_____	Believe in the potential and empowerment of all youth.
_____	_____	Trust youth to be powerful.
_____	_____	Ability to identify positive possibilities in difficult situations.
_____	_____	Listen carefully to people of all ages.
_____	_____	Get involved and provide support when a person puts down or devalues another or her / himself.
_____	_____	Seek to learn from people.
_____	_____	Expect youth to make their own decisions.
_____	_____	Say something where young people's rights and due respect are being denied or violated.
_____	_____	Celebrate people's successes.
_____	_____	Advocate for improvement of youth / adult partnerships in teams, organizations, and communities.

Ladder of Young People's Participation*

Maximum Youth Participation

Minimum Youth Participation

9. Youth Initiated and Directed

8. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults

7. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed
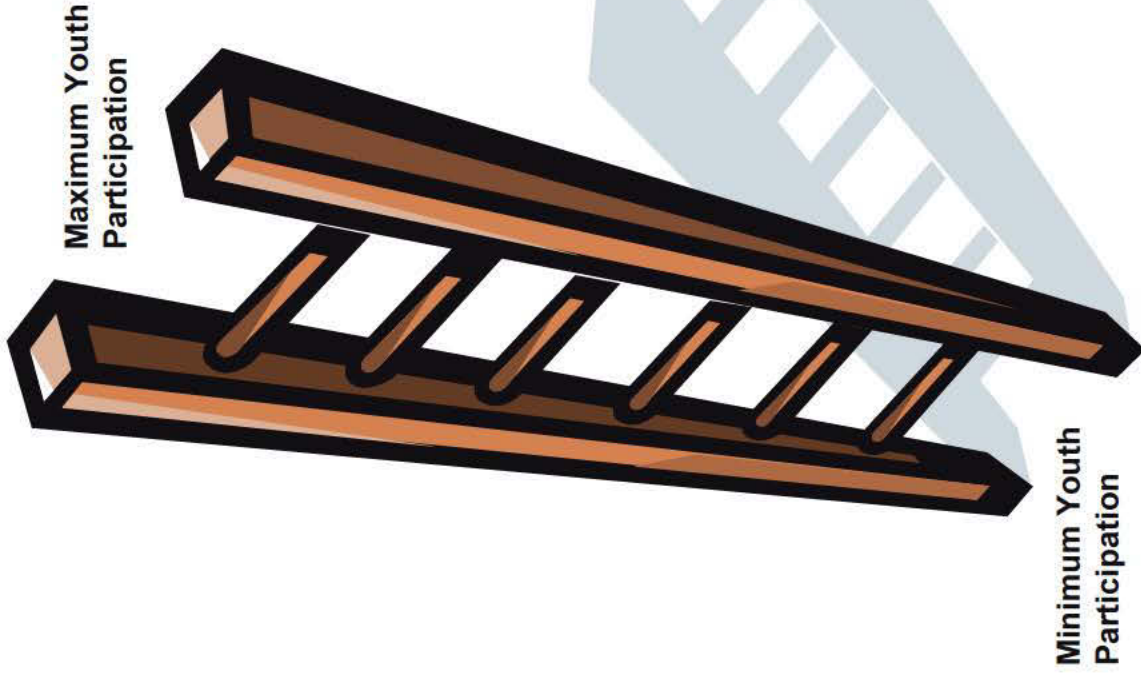
6. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth

5. Consulted and Informed

4. Assigned and Informed

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

Degrees of Participation

9. Youth Initiated and Directed → Designed and run by youth and decisions made by youth.

8. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults → Designed and run by youth who share decisions with adults.

7. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed → Designed and run by youth and adults in full partnership.

6. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth → Designed and run by adults who share decisions with youth.

5. Consulted and Informed → Designed and run by adults who consult with youth. Youth make recommendations that are considered by adults.

4. Assigned but Informed → Youth do not initiate, but understand and have some sense of ownership.

3. Tokenism → Symbolic representation by few. May not have genuine voice. May be asked to speak for the group they represent.

2. Decoration → Adults use youth to promote or support a cause without informing youth. Youth are not involved in design or decisions.

1. Manipulation → Youth involvement used by adults to communicate adults' messages.