

1.4 Pick Up Your Stone! Be a S.T.A.R



Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Time: 30 minutes

Subject Area: Historical Activism

Overview:

Group members will be asked to “Pick Up Their Stone” by brainstorming and finding solutions to issues affecting their community. This activity is known as *S.T.A.R**, has 3 rounds of brainstorming at table stations. Each round students will move to or stay with the topic they are most passionate in. By the final round one student from each table will share out an action plan for that table’s community issue. Lastly, when every table shares, the GSA will reach a decision on which one they want to do pursue.

- S** - Start with your Passion
- T** - Technical, Take Apart the Problem
- A** - Action Plan(s)
- R** - Reach a Decision as GSA.

**Fun Fact: The name is an homage to Stonewall Rioters Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson’s community project Street Action Transvestites Revolutionaries (further note “transvestite” is an antiquated and inappropriate word to call someone).*

Goals:

- Explore their passions and create group
- Deconstruct problems in their community.
- Evaluate action plans and advocate for their passions in group settings.

Materials:

- Giant Sticky “Post-It” Poster Paper
 - Enough for 3 Post-It Poster Papers per Table
 - Keep in mind 5 people per table group.
- Table
 - 5 Chairs per Table

- Pro-Tip: You do not need to use tables but have distinct ‘stations’ or state only 5 per post it.
- Markers and Pens

Procedure:

Step One:

Before GSA starts, set up the room. A suggested setup would be: to have tables spread out with 5 chairs each or floor stations in each corner. Put a pile of 3 Sticky Poster Paper per table or station. Do not separate the poster papers individually. Have the 3 on top of each other. Students will pull them off from the top each round. Make sure to have at least 5 markers or pens per table or station.

Have this write out on a poster or whiteboard as a reference display:

S - Start with your Passion

T - Technical, Take Apart the Problem

A - Action Plan(s)

R - Reach a Decision as GSA.

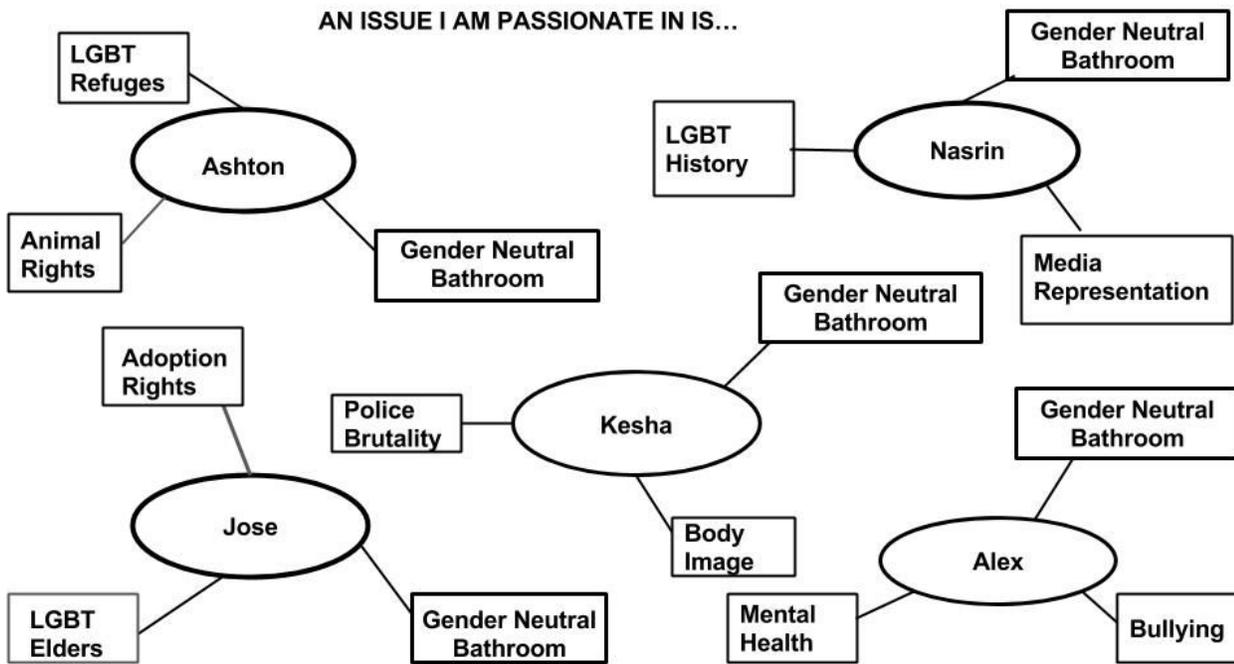
Step Two:

The ‘S’ in STAR. As students are entering tell them to quickly sit down 5 to table and that where they sit is not important. Go over GSA Guidelines, with an emphasis on allowing everyone to be heard. Then, instruct students with the following prompt:

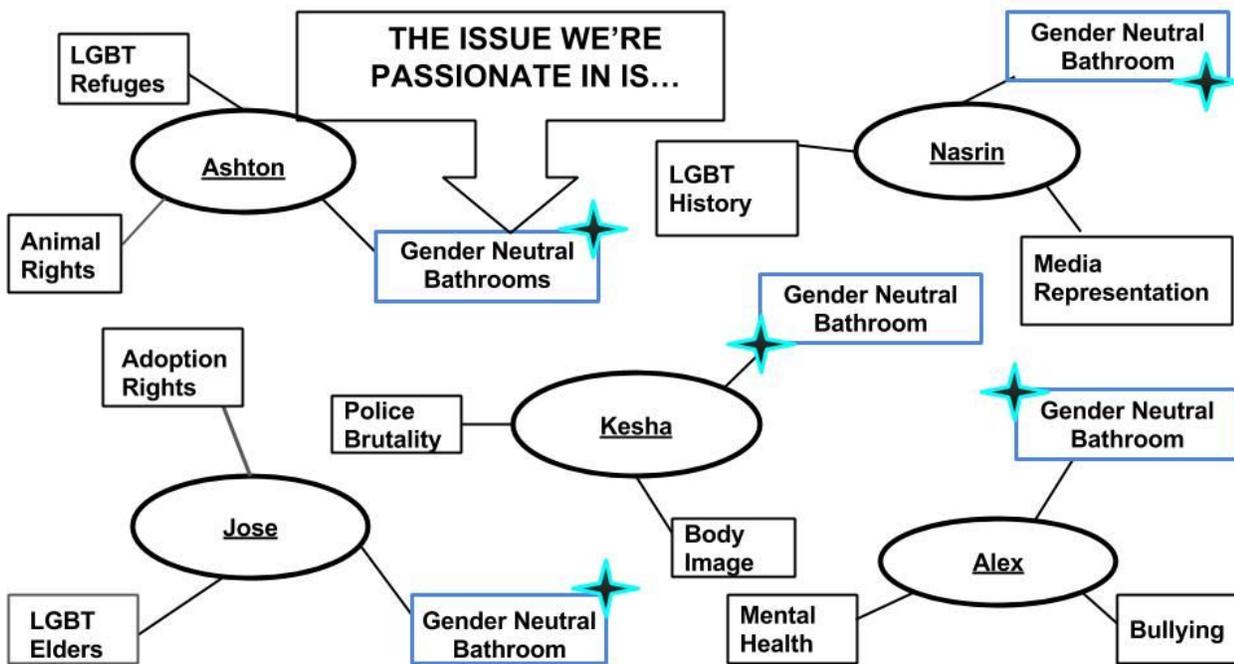
“Today’s activity is called S.T.A.R. after Marsha P. Johnson’s and Sylvia Rivera’s Street Action Transvestite Revolutionaries Project where they housed homeless LGBT youth particularly gender nonconforming youth in New York because they saw a need in their community not being met. The word transvestite is no longer an acceptable term but was used a lot in the past. You noticed that there’s a pile of sticky posters on your tables. On the top sticky note, I want you all to write down what issues in your community you are passionate about. You can do this anyway you want with your table. For example, you can list all the issues you are passionate in through bullet points or you could divide the paper into five separate quadrants for each person. You could have individual thought webs where everyone webs their passions and the center is their name. Or you could just draw issues important to you. Get creative with it, but make sure to write as much as you can for this time. Begin.”

Provide 5 mins.

Below is an example for a table topic of Gender Neutral Bathrooms brainstorm.



Then address the group by saying, *“I want you to share one by one at your tables what issues you are passionate and after everyone has shared find one topic you are all passionate in circle it.”* Provide 5 mins.



Then say, “Okay, one person from each table group will be the permanent table representative and share out what issue their table was passionate in. The table representative will not move during the activity. I understand these issues may be broad and that is okay, but the share out should only be a quick sentence description. For example, ‘Our table’s issue is Gender Neutral bathrooms in Public Schools.’ Has every tables decided a representative. (Long Pause)

Which table would like to share out first?”

Allow 2 minutes to share.

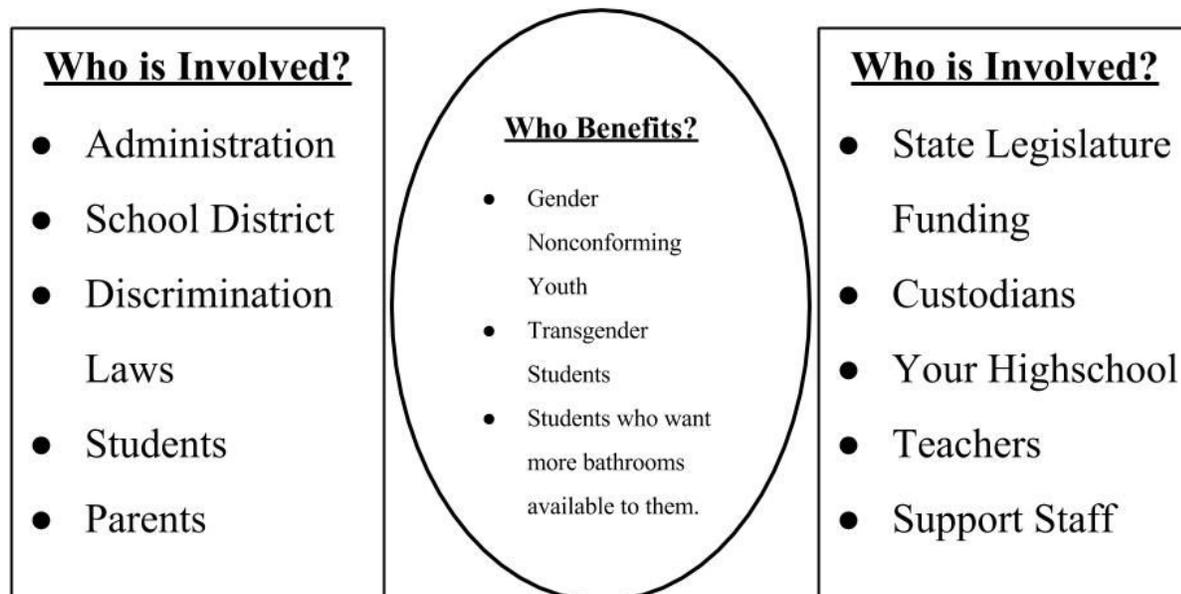
After each table shares, the students are to move to the table with the topic they are the most passionate or interested in. Give them 2 minutes to move. Only 5 people per table. The representatives of the tables are to stay.

Step Three:

The “T” in STAR. After students are seated at their new tables. Instruct them to take off the first poster paper a stick it to the wall nearest to them or to edge of their table. On this clean poster sheet, instruct them to get more technical with the topic/issue. Tell them to “Break down the issue by listing off who is involved in creating the issue, who benefits from solving this issue, and/or who would be involved in solving the issue.”

Pro-Tip: If you notice cliquy behavior remind students to not just follow their friend group but to be honest with themselves, not be a follower and to branch out.

Below is an example for a table that picked Gender Neutral Bathrooms.



As you can see there's a lot of people and organizations involved in fixing the issue. And that's okay, the more people involved the more angles students can take to solve the issue in "A" step in STAR.

Similar to the previous step a student representative will again share out their table's topic and after all the representatives share out, the rest of the students will move or stay with the topic they are more passionate in.

Step Four:

The "A" in STAR. In this Step, students will create an action plan based around their community issue.

As students settle into their seats, Instruct students to take off the top sheet from the poster pile.

The facilitator will then say,

"Okay now that you are all in your seats, the table representatives are going to summarize the last round by describing all those involved in solving their table issue. After they are done summarizing, as a table group you will brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. Come up with as many solutions as you can from all angles. Begin."

Provide 5 mins for general brainstorming.

Instruct the students to then come up with a 2 minute pitch about what their issue is, who is involved and how as GSA they could help to fix it. This 2 minute pitch will be their proposed "Action Plan." Allow the students time to write up their action plans and then have them share it out to the group. Have a debate on which table group's action plan should be picked and done by the GSA. It needs to be the most realistic, liked and doable plan.

For example, an Action Plan pitch for Gender Neutral Bathrooms is the following:

"Our Table Group's issue was about the lack of gender neutral bathrooms in public schools. Specifically in our school. This issue affects gender nonconforming students who may not fit the gender binary enough to go to one bathroom or the other without fear of discrimination and bullying. It is also beneficial for transgender students attending our school during their transition as well as further dismantle unnecessary gender segregation. The people and organizations involved in the problem and solution are the following: the administration, our school district, school faculty and students attending public schools as well as their parents. One way to combat this issue is for the GSA to start a #I'llGoWithYou campaign lead by allies to raise awareness to discrimination students face in bathrooms. Our second solution is a school wide petition requesting a gender neutral bathroom from administration. In order to do this we would need over 50% of students attending our school to sign on in agreement. Easy first steps to a larger problem, but doable and needed."

Step Five:

Draw a STAR



Draw a star and inside put the topic and action plan that as a GSA they will take on.

Work on steps to achieve that plan next GSA Meeting.