

Activism Basics

How to Advocate, Influence, Communicate, Organize



Content Warning



*****SASH Club Power Topics may include sensitive content that may be difficult to present and may possibly be triggering to some participants.*****

You may want to seek the support of an ally during this presentation, especially if you're a survivor of sexual violence.

What's Ahead



- What is activism?
- Identifying the problem
- Organizing for action
- Influencing others
- Getting started
- What can I do if I am sexually assaulted?
- What can I do if I experience or witness sexual harassment?

What is Activism?



- Activism is the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
 - SASH Club activism relies upon interpersonal relationships.
 - Changing cultural conversations about sexual harassment and assault is activism.
- Activism is about bettering the community.
- Activism requires listening to what the diverse stakeholders in your specific community want and need.
- Activism is the process of building power to make change.

Step 1: Identifying the Problem

Ask yourself the following questions



- What is the purpose of our work?
- Who is the audience we are trying to motivate?
- How do we reach our audience, keep them engaged, and move them to action?

Research



- Every community is different and you want to determine the approach that best suits yours.
- Strategic questions – **What** does the change look like:
 - What needs to change?
 - Who are we influencing?
 - What does change look like?
 - What is our timeline?
- Tactical questions – **How** will the change happen:
 - What are the levers to effect change?
 - What is the sequence of events that will bring about the best results?
 - Who holds the power?
 - Who can help?

Construct a mission statement



- Keep everyone on the same page through the use of a mission statement.
- Construct the mission statement keeping five elements in mind:
 - Value – What is the value of your activism to the community?
 - Inspiration – Why should people care about your cause?
 - Plausibility – Make it sound reasonable.
 - Specificity – Tie it back to the big picture issue.
 - Audience – Consider with whom the message will resonate.

Construct a mission statement

- The SASH Club national project mission statement:
 - “SASH Club brings together and empowers youth to end sexual harassment and assault.”
- What kind of mission statement would you envision for your local chapter?
 - Think about the five elements of a mission statement on the previous slide.
 - Be mindful of inclusivity.

Step 2: Organizing for Action

Listen



- Sexual harassment and assault are issues that affect everyone regardless of gender, race, or identity.
- To ensure your activism is inclusive, identify the perspectives not represented by the group in the room and consider them:
 - For example, how do issues of sexual harassment and assault affect people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and other under-represented groups?
- Hold space for ideas that you do not agree with and use compromise to find a middle ground.

Set Goals



- Use the **SMART Goals** technique to organize your club's goals.
- SMART Goals:
 - **S**pecific- What do you want to accomplish?
 - **M**easurable- How will you know the goal is accomplished?
 - **A**ttainable- How realistic is the goal?
 - **R**elevant- Does this match the community's wants/needs?
 - **T**ime-based- Can you achieve it in the time you have?
- Answer these questions when framing each goal.

Delegate Tasks



- Delegating tasks will help ensure no one feels overwhelmed and everyone is working on something they are passionate about.
- Create groups that will help you achieve your SMART goals most efficiently.
- Some examples of task delegation could be:
 - Running social media
 - Organizing a presentation for the school or community
 - Organizing an activity to educate the school or community
 - Writing articles for the school paper or local media

Step 3: Influencing Others

Constructive Dialogue



- For sensitive topics, a casual approach to the conversation helps others to feel comfortable and engaged.
- Keeping your activism focused on open conversation encourages others to ask questions.
 - Lecturing doesn't help engage people in activism.
 - Young people are more likely to engage if they feel like they're part of an open conversation.
 - The most important thing you can do is **start the conversation.**
 - The more you engage in dialogue, the more skilled you will become in persuading others.

Confidence



- Relay information, present your mission, and convey your goals with confidence:
 - You've done the research and preparation.
 - You know your material so trust your ability to engage credibly.
- When trying to make change on something that people are resistant to talk about, you *will* receive pushback:
 - In these moments, always remember what motivates you.
 - Use facts and the research about your own community to back you up in the face of resistance.
 - Know when to walk away from an unproductive conversation. Changing culture is a gradual process and you will have many opportunities to make progress.

Get Started!



- As a member of SASH Club, know what your organization stands for so you can speak intelligently about it.
- Start a conversation today about sexual harassment and assault:
 - It is never too early to start the dialogue and exchange ideas.
 - And while you're at it, invite others to support SASH Club with their participation, guidance, or experience.

Talk About It



- Which elements of the club's mission statement are most important to you?
- What ideas do you have to reach our audience?
- Why is deep research so important?
- Does starting a conversation feel like something you would do? Why or why not?
- What forms of activism do you feel would be impactful in your school or organization?

Do More



- Role play with other members of your SASH Club to gain confidence in responding to questions and meeting resistance.
- Delegate research topics and share your findings.
- Make a list of people in power and brainstorm who in the club would be best to speak with each of them.
- Share one thing you learned today and something you will commit to doing to move forward.

Sources & Acknowledgments



Thank you to the members of the Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS) Youth Leadership Division for contributing their expertise as youth activists.

To Do Immediately if Sexually Assaulted



- Get away from the attacker to a safe place as fast as you can.
- Then call 911 or the police.
- Call a friend or family member you trust.
- You can call a crisis center or hotline to talk with a counselor.
- One 24/7 option, for all genders, is the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673).
- RAINN will connect you with a rape crisis center in your area.
- Visit the Survivor Support page at www.sashclub.org/survivor-support/ for more helpline options and details.

To Do Immediately if Sexually Assaulted

- Preserve the evidence, even if you are unsure you will report.
- **Do not:**
 - Wash, comb your hair, or clean any part of your body
 - Brush your teeth
 - Change clothes, if possible, so the hospital nurse can collect evidence
 - Touch or change anything at the scene of the assault
- Seek medical attention *ASAP* at your nearest hospital ER:
 - You need to be examined, treated for any injuries, checked for possible sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy, and can receive preventative medicine.
 - The nurse or doctor will collect evidence the attacker may have left behind.
- Ask hospital staff to connect you with a local rape crisis center.



If You are Sexually Harassed

- It isn't your fault...and you can get help to make it stop.
- Reach out ASAP to a friend, school counselor or trusted adult for immediate safety & support to bring the issue to your Dean of Students, Principal, or Title IX Coordinator.
- Confidential National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673
www.rainn.org

Feedback & Suggestions

- SASH Club welcomes your feedback and suggestions on the content of this presentation. Contact us via:
 - www.sashclub.org
 - Email: info@sashclub.org
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 - Twitter: [@sashclubs](https://twitter.com/sashclubs)
- Contact an adult advisor with your questions or concerns about local issues.