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](http://www.sashclub.org)
  • Email: [info@sashclub.org](mailto:info@sashclub.org)
  • Instagram: [@sashclubs](https://www.instagram.com/sashclubs)
  • Facebook: [sashclubs](https://www.facebook.com/sashclubs)
  • Twitter: [@sashclubs](https://twitter.com/sashclubs)

• Contact an adult advisor with your questions or concerns about local issues.