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# Middle School GSA Social Support Agenda

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**This sample agenda was created for a GSA that has more of a social support focus.**

- 1. Introductions and icebreaker question (5 minutes)** – It’s important to start out every GSA meeting with introductions, even if the same students are coming to every meeting. Students’ preferred names and pronouns might change, and it’s good to allow space for students to re-introduce themselves.

*“My name is Jordyn, I’m in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and my pronouns are she and her.”*

*“My name is Mr. Johnson, I am one of the advisors, and I use he and him.”*

*“I’m Kai, I’m an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, and for today’s meeting I’d like to use they/them/theirs.”*

**Reminder:** Asking students to share their preferred pronouns is not the same as asking students to share their sexual orientation or gender identity. For more information on pronoun usage, check out the “Pronouns Matter” resource on the GSAFE website.

You may also want to add a quick icebreaker question to the introductions.

*“If you could describe your mood today with a color, what color would you be?”*

*“If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?”*

*“If you had to eat only one food for the rest of your life, what would you eat?”*

- 2. Group Agreements (5-10 minutes)** – All clubs should have group agreements. This is especially important for a social support GSA, as they help establish expectations for how the members will be interacting with one another in the space.

Work with the students to create group agreements and revisit them often. If students feel ownership over the group agreements, it is easier to hold them accountable to them.

**Reminder:** When it comes to confidentiality, you should let students know what your responsibility is as a mandatory reporter.

## **WE AGREE TO:**

*Respect confidentiality*

*Listen when others are talking*

*Be respectful of one another*

*Be open to new ideas*

*Help one another learn*

*Make space for everyone*

*Have fun!*

- 3. Roses and Thorns (30 minutes)** – “Roses and Thorns” is an activity that asks participants to spend some time talking about what is going well for them and what is not going so well for them. They can choose to talk about the best part of their week so far and the worst part of their week so far, or they can speak more broadly about how things are going for them. The most important part is that each participant share at least one rose and at least one thorn. Some students may need some help or encouragement thinking of a rose if they are having a hard or challenging day.

**Suggested set up for activity:** If possible, arrange the room so that everyone is sitting in one big circle. Explain what “Roses and Thorns” is, and then say that you are going to go around the circle and give each participant a chance to share.

You may find it helpful to use a “talking piece” or some other prop as a visual reminder of whose turn it is. Ask all the participants to practice their best listening skills, giving their full attention to the person who is sharing. Explain that the goal of the activity is not to come up with solutions or make suggestions, but rather simply to share and listen. As the advisor, you may want to give some validating statements after each participant shares, but your main role will be to help keep the conversation moving. Examples of validating statements are:

*“That sounds really tough. I’m sorry that happened to you.”*

*“I am so happy to hear that.”*

*“That stinks that you’re having a hard day. We are glad you’re here.”*

If you have a really big group, you may need to set a time limit on how long each person talks. Once the talking piece has made its way all the way around the circle, you can open up the conversation for more sharing if there is time.

- 4. Appreciations (10-15 minutes)** – At the end of a sharing session, it is important to take time to talk about what people appreciated about the meeting. Using however much time is left, send the talking piece around the one more time and ask each participant to share one thing they appreciated. If they are going to appreciate a particular person, remind them that the appreciations should stay focused on what a person said or did, not on more superficial things like appearance or clothing.

*“I really appreciated getting to talk about the fight I had with my mom.”*

*“I appreciated that there were tasty snacks.”*

*“I appreciated Olivia’s bravery in talking about coming out to their friend.”*