



Starting and Strengthening Rainbow & Takatāpui Diversity Groups

Inside UT

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| About InsideOUT Kōaro

Our Vision

All rainbow young people in Aotearoa New Zealand have a sense of safety and belonging in their schools and communities.

Our Mission

To work with young people, whānau, schools, community groups, youth services, government agencies, and other relevant organisations to provide safer schools and communities for rainbow young people.

To foster the building and provision of resources, education, information, hui, and relevant tools which work to improve the health, wellbeing, and safety of rainbow young people.

Our Kaupapa

The statements listed below underpin all of the resources we create and inform all that we do in our work with schools.

Being trans, gender diverse, intersex, or having a diverse sexuality is a natural, positive expression of human diversity. A person's sexuality, gender, or body is not up for debate.

Gender or sex may be an important part of who a person is, but it is not the only part; our identities are also shaped by factors such as our culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, or disability.

The adults within a school community have obligations to respect students' rights to safety, privacy, and inclusion within their whānau, school, and wider community.

Respecting students' rights upholds their mana motuhake (self-determination) and mauri (energy, life force).

Being proactive about creating inclusive learning environments benefits all members of a school community.

| About Massey University

Massey University supported the redesign of this resource, taking a research-based approach to keeping the resource inclusive of rainbow and takatāpui communities in New Zealand. This new edition will cover groups based in tertiary education environments thanks to input from universities across Aotearoa.

To keep up to date and connect with Massey University's rainbow communities, visit linktr.ee/kauhi.irarau or email rainbow@massey.ac.nz.

Introduction

Nau mai, haere mai!

Starting and Strengthening Rainbow & Takatāpui Diversity Groups is a resource developed to support student leaders at all stages of their journey.

Whether you plan to kickstart the very first diversity group where you are, want tips on how to make things run more smoothly, have questions on how to be more inclusive, or just need ideas for your next event, this resource is here to help.

This new edition of our resource will cover groups based in tertiary education environments for the very first time alongside groups based in primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

Purpose of this resource

There are all sorts of rainbow and takatāpui diversity groups, from choirs through to sports teams and coffee groups. For the purpose of this resource, we will be focusing on groups connected to schools and universities, but there is a lot you can get out of it even if you aren't thinking of making an 'official' school group!

There can be a huge variation in the needs of students, schools, and groups depending on what stage of education you are at – primary, intermediate, secondary or tertiary. Some parts of this resource will talk about the need to get permission and teacher support to run groups, while others are about running a group more independently.

We've done our best to try to make a resource that is relevant to all groups and empowers all students, regardless of age. While a lot of the content in here is made with everybody in mind, some things are specifically for highschoolers or tertiary students.

We hope you find it useful, and know that you're always welcome to get in touch with InsideOUT for more support or guidance regarding starting and strengthening rainbow and takatāpui diversity groups.

Understanding Rainbow & Takatāpui Diversity Groups

What is a rainbow diversity group?

A rainbow diversity group creates inclusive spaces for young people who may not be able to access such groups outside of school. Rainbow diversity groups may also work to create change within their school and local community.



When we say 'rainbow', we're referring to all people of minority sexualities, genders, and diverse sex characteristics, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals. Rainbow is an umbrella term that takes from the history of the pride flag, which is often used to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion in wider society.



When we say 'takatāpui', we're referring to people who identify both under the wider rainbow umbrella, as well as Māori. Takatāpui is an identity that acknowledges one's sexual and gender identity alongside their whakapapa as being Māori. Takatāpui were widely embraced in Te Ao Māori prior to colonisation, but imposed Western gender and sexuality norms means this is now not always the case. Takatāpui is a te reo Māori term that has been translated in English to "intimate companion of the same sex" – however is now more widely used to embrace all rainbow Māori.

So, a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group is a group that is an inclusive space for all rainbow young people, while recognising our place in Aotearoa and affirming our takatāpui members.

Other terms you might see are GSA (gay-straight alliance) or QSA (queer-straight alliance). These terms are often used to prevent outing members. The terms we will use in this resource are 'Rainbow & Takatāpui Diversity Groups', or 'Rainbow Diversity Groups'.

Who are these groups for?

A rainbow and takatāpui diversity group is a school-based group that is open to all students. Members might join a group for lots of different reasons, such as to seek support, to meet new people, to have a safe place to hang out with friends, to learn how to support their friends or family, or because they are passionate about human rights and equity.

It's important to remember that you don't really need to know someone's sexuality, sex characteristics, or gender at the group – nobody needs to disclose or 'come out' with their identity unless they feel like it. The reason why rainbow diversity groups are often called queer-straight alliances is to point out that students don't need to belong to the rainbow community to join. This can help non-rainbow students to come along with friends to show their support, and it also means that rainbow students don't need to 'out' themselves in order to join.

One important piece of advice for anyone wishing to form a rainbow diversity group is to make sure that the group is truly inclusive for all members coming along. You may want to do a few things to ensure that all members are given a sense of belonging to the group by, for example, allowing them to create their own meaningful name, kaupapa (or purpose and description), and set of ground rules for the group.



Who is responsible for the group?

Every group works a bit differently, but generally rainbow diversity groups are student-led. One or two students might take responsibility for leading the group (such as scheduling and running meetings and other events), but it's a good idea to make decisions about how things run as a group.

Even though it's a good idea to keep a rainbow diversity group student-led, having specific staff involved can also be really helpful. Students that have staff involved to help with things like promotion, booking rooms, and general organising often have more time and freedom to work on things that they wouldn't be able to get to otherwise. Even in tertiary education where groups are run much more independently, equity staff and staff who administer student clubs can be a fantastic source of information, support and allyship. Don't underestimate how much support staff might be able to give you with your group!



We've created a 'Staff Supporting Rainbow Diversity Groups' resource – so feel free to pass this on to any relevant staff!

How does it work?

Every diversity group is unique, but most work in about three different ways:

The **Social function** – to establish, strengthen, and maintain a sense of connection and belonging between rainbow and takatāpui students, and provide a safe space where people can feel protected and confident to be themselves.

The **Support Function** – to provide students with opportunities to discuss and learn more about a wide range of struggles, and lift each other up. Topics can include coming out, bullying and discrimination, mental health, and other relevant topics.

The **Action Function** – to take action to create or advocate for a safer and more inclusive society for rainbow and takatāpui communities in your school, wider community, or in education.

Be aware that different groups work in different ways, and that this is okay! Lots of groups only focus on one of these areas to begin with and widen their scope over time. Or, there may be times where the focus of a group may shift from one function to another. Ideally, though, a group should strive to incorporate all three.



Pro Tip: for a larger group, it might be useful to have one or two group members assigned to each function of the group – that way everyone gets a chance to put on events and work towards outcomes that are important to them.

Why have a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group?

Wherever you study – that is a place where you spend a LOT of your time – how welcoming it feels, and how supported you are there, can have a big impact on your wellbeing.¹ While anti-bullying posters and rainbow stickers are a great way for a school to show support, more needs to happen to ensure students feel safe and supported at their place of education.²

Creating a sense of social wellbeing makes so many things better for students. One awesome way to approach creating this is to have a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group.

Being a part of a diversity group can strongly and positively affect the lives of its members, helping people feel connected not only to one another, but to something bigger than themselves.³

If you are a tertiary student, whether you are working towards a certificate, diploma, bachelor's degree, or any type of postgraduate qualification, there are other students just like you doing the same. In the 2022 Identify survey, nearly one-third of respondents were attending some form of tertiary or post-secondary education, including universities, polytechnics, whare wānanga, and private training organisations or trade schools. 93% of these participants knew of a group or club for rainbow students where they studied.

The Identify survey⁴ also found that rainbow students are present in every type of secondary education setting and school type. This means that it is important for every school and learning environment to be places where rainbow students can find community.



86% of secondary school students who took the Identify survey said they had a rainbow diversity group at their school, and 64% of these participants said they thought the group was helpful in making the school a better place for rainbow students.

This means that the quality of your group matters, not just whether it exists or not! We are here to help with that.

- 1 Guy-Evans, O. (2020). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>
- 2 Allen, L., Cowie, L., & Fenaughty, J. (2020) Safe but not safe: LGBTTIQA+ students' experiences of a university campus. Higher Education Research & Development, 39:6, 1075-1090, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2019.1706453
- 3 Kathleen Quinlivan's 'Butterflies starting a Tornado' is a pretty beautiful chapter about the powerful effects these groups can have on the lives of their members. Quinlivan, K. (2014) "Butterflies Starting a Tornado" The Queer 'Not Yet' of a New Zealand School Based Queer Straight Alliance As A Utopic Site of Learning. In E. Meyer and D. Carlson (Eds.), Gender and sexualities in education: A Reader. New York: Peter Lang Publishing. (pp.272-283). DOI: 10.3726/978-1-4539-1179-2
- 4 Fenaughty, J., Ker, A., Alansari, M., Besley, T., Kerekere, E., Pasley, A., Saxton, P., Subramanian, P., Thomsen, P. & Veale, J. (2022). Identify survey: Community and advocacy report. Identify Survey Team. <https://www.identifysurvey.nz/publications>

Group Profiles:

Macleans College, Tāmaki Makaurau

Rainbow Pride Group

The Macleans College Rainbow Pride Group has been part of Macleans in different forms for over a decade. It is a student-led group and many outstanding young people have contributed to the direction of the group over the years supported by various teachers.

In the past couple of years, the group has become more visible, with the first Pride Week at the school taking place in 2022. This also coincided with some advocacy for gender neutral bathrooms and more inclusive sport events. The increased visibility of the group has led to some professional development for the staff as well.

Most of the weekly sessions are relaxed occasions with the classroom being a safe place to enjoy time and make connections with like-minded people. Some weeks the leaders deliver presentations on different aspects of rainbow history or issues. We hope to make the school a more inclusive and accepting space for our rainbow community through our future projects and sharing our limitless pride.



Te Whanganui-a-Tara Newlands College

The Newlands College QSA is a fun, inclusive, community based group. We meet weekly to catch-up and connect. We are focused on providing a safe space for queer rangatahi and allies to promote an inclusive kura.

Kirikiroa, Hillcrest High School

Skittles

Skittles is our QSA based in Kirikiriroa at Hillcrest High School. We have around one hundred miharo members across all year levels who meet once a week.

On alternating weeks we have dedicated advocacy and social meetings. Over the years the advocacy aspect of our group has had various successes, including implementing gender neutral bathrooms, several successful Pride Weeks, rainbow health sessions, etc. It has also greatly improved queer communications with staff, especially because the size of our group makes us difficult to ignore. The social meetings have brought about stunning friendships, support, and solidarity.



We are so lucky to have an incredible leadership team for the QSA. Leading a group like this is tough work, but it is so rewarding - watching the group grow from 15 or so members in 2019 to around 100 has been surreal, and we feel so lucky!

Through Skittles, the queer community is becoming an increasingly valued and represented aspect of our kura amongst both students and staff. There is still more room to bloom, and we are looking forward to using it!

Wellington, Massey University

UniQ

UniQ Pukeahu is the student run rainbow club at Massey Te Whanganui-a-Tara. We focus on bringing together LGBTTQIA+, Rainbow, Queer, Gender Diverse, MVPFAFF+, Takatāpui, and ally students to build community, support, advocacy and safe, welcoming environments. We know that a strong sense of community often results in improved mental health and emotional well-being, so we always look to encourage dialogue from our members about what they require from UniQ and Massey to feel genuinely supported on and around campus. We welcome all students to find us online at Instagram and Discord, or via our student association, Te Tira Ahu Pae.



Activity 1

Understanding Rainbow & Takatāpui Diversity Groups Quiz (answers on page 68).

- 1) About what percentage of secondary schools have a rainbow diversity group?
a) 20% b) 35% c) 65% d) 85% e) 90%
- 2) What does 'QSA' stand for?
a) Queer-Straight Alliance b) Queer Student Alliance c) Queens are So Amazing
- 3) Who runs a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group?
a) Whoever is free b) Students with the support of staff c) the rainbow community
- 4) What is the **Support** function of a group about?
a) Making sure there's enough resources available for the group
b) Peer-to-peer support and group therapy
c) To provide students with opportunities to discuss and learn more about a wide range of struggles, and lift each other up.
- 5) What is the **Action** function of a group about?
a) Advocating for positive change in the school, the wider community, or in education.
b) Ensuring that everybody in the group is working every day to improve society.
c) Keeping the group busy with lots of difference activities.
- 6) What is the **Social** function of a group about?
a) To establish, strengthen, and maintain a sense of connection and belonging between rainbow and takatāpui students
b) To provide a safe space where people can feel protected and confident to be themselves.
c) All of the above

Starting your Group

If you want to start a group and are seeking members, ask a supportive teacher, school counsellor, or other relevant staff member to share the group's details with other students who might be interested, or spread the word yourself. Once there are two or three of you, you have enough to start your group!

We have put the following ideas together on how to start groups. We'd recommend completing each task below – in any order that best suits you. Feel free to adapt or change anything so that it works best for your situation.

10 Steps to take to start your group

1. Find a staff member to support the group

This can be a school counsellor, a teacher, or any supportive staff member. It's important to have someone act as the group liaison. They can help you approach senior staff about setting up the group and support the group to be sustainable even after you've left school!

(If you can't find anybody to back the group and are experiencing resistance at a school, get in contact with InsideOUT and we can help you with this. Legally, your school is not allowed to stop you from setting up a group!)

For tertiary students, there might be somebody who organises student clubs, an equity or inclusive education staff member, or one of the teaching staff. Your local student union may also help - they have elected student representatives, as well as staff which work to support and encourage groups like these.

2. Identify and follow the guidelines

Just like any other group, there will probably be a process for setting up a group of any kind unique to your learning environment. You may need to meet with a principal, complete forms, or write up something about how your group will be run. It might be helpful to ask your supportive staff member for support during this process.

For tertiary students, while setting up an official club can be a bit more formal or daunting of a process (and isn't right for every group and situation), the access to room booking systems and sometimes funding or advertising that can be provided by your school is often worth it.

3. Schedule a planning meeting

Even if you already have a few people keen to start the group, it's usually a good idea to organise a planning meeting. This can be a great way to figure out the direction of your group and identify others who may be interested in not only attending, but supporting the group to thrive.

Tell your relevant staff member about your plan, and get support to advertise your first meeting. This could even just be online for now.

You will need to decide how publicly you want to advertise the group. For example, some groups may advertise their meeting time and place, while others might suggest you have to speak to the guidance counsellor or text a number to find out where and when it is. There are pros and cons to both of these options. The most important thing to consider is how to best make the group safe and accessible for all students interested in joining. In many schools, groups that are open work well, but ideally your meeting place should be private enough that members of your group aren't forced to be visible to everybody else.

4. Discuss the purpose of your group and how you want to achieve those goals

Once you have some interest in the group, it's a great time to decide how you'd like your group to run this year! We've identified three main focus areas for rainbow diversity groups:

Social (Do you want to meet up with others, chat, eat, hang out, play games, watch movies?)

Support (Do you want to be a group that students who are questioning or having a hard time can come to for a safe and supportive space?)

Action (Do you want to effect change? For example, hold a pride week, promote awareness around bullying in assemblies, or take part in Pink Shirt Day?)

Your group can be none, one, or a mix of all of these things and it might change over time. The most important thing is that the group is serving the members' needs and endeavours. Note that it's okay to start small and grow over time – while many groups would like to achieve well in all of the areas above, it's often easier and more effective to just focus on one or maybe two areas, especially when first starting off.

5. Plan how you will organise your group

Now you have some goals, you might be wondering how you're going to achieve everything, especially alongside your studies etc.

Have a chat together and make some decisions. Will there be a couple of leaders for the group? Will you take it in turns to facilitate, or will there be a few people who form a committee to plan the meetings? Will Kate and Aaria take the Action-based activities while Ryan and his friends run support meetings?

It's important to share the workload and provide opportunities for everyone to have a say in what you do.

□ 6. Decide on a time, place, and name for your group

Most groups meet once a week during lunch time. Think about where might be a good place that's easy for people to find, is safe and accessible, but also doesn't draw a lot of attention to group members. You may want to come up with a group name once you've formed the group. It's important to have a name that doesn't exclude anyone or prioritise certain members of rainbow communities over others.

Students in post-secondary education can find picking a time and place a bit harder to do, especially if you are spread out across one or more campuses and have different timetables that change every semester, or practicums, work placements and so on. Often this means that rotating the days, times, and locations you run events on can make things fairer and give as many people as possible the chance to attend. You might also like to have an online hangout space to help keep people in contact when they can't be together in person.

□ 7. Advertise and increase attendance

Depending on your desired group size, advertising the group to a wider school audience might help to increase attendance. Some ways of informing people about your group are: through the school counsellor, school notices, word of mouth, or at a school assembly. You may also want to put up posters, talk at classes, or invite peer mentors or student leaders to your group.

When advertising and inviting people, it might be best to use the word "questioning" alongside using words such as "lesbian", "gay", or "queer" to ensure inclusivity. It can be a good idea to make clear that the group is for people who are sure of their identities, and those who are questioning.

On this note, many groups include 'allies' within their advertising so that members who may not be 'out' yet can attend more safely. This is an important decision to make, as there are pros and cons to explicitly including 'allies' in a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group setting.

Note that some students might be a bit too nervous to attend without being explicitly invited or to go to meetings alone. Having a contact so people can reach out for more information, and individually inviting people with flyers can be a great way to address some of these barriers.

If you have put up posters around the school and they keep getting taken down or defaced, do your best to stay positive and remain committed to your group's goals! Often, just knowing that there are posters with words and information about rainbow, takatāpui, and people questioning their identities around the school makes someone feel more supported and acknowledged.

8. Create your group's value/mission statement – Your Kaupapa

A kaupapa describes your collective vision, aspiration, and agenda of your group. Kaupapa is a te reo Māori word often translated to 'purpose', and a really useful way to think about how you want your group to run. You may wish to have an overall kaupapa for the group, but also set different kaupapa for different meetings for different times of the year.

What is your purpose? What do you stand for?

To answer these questions, you may wish to write a **mission statement** so others know what and who and what your group stands for. To write your mission statement, you might want to ask yourself questions like, "What sort of future do we envision the group having? Why do we feel strongly about having it? What is its purpose? What kind of environment do we want to create in our school?, or "What changes are we hoping for?".

You can find more information about about creating your kaupapa on page 21.



Mission statements are action based, short, and explain why a group exists. For example: InsideOUT's is '...for all rainbow young people in Aotearoa New Zealand to have a sense of safety and belonging in their schools and communities'.



9. Create Ground Rules – Your Kawa

Kawa⁵ are protocol, etiquette or customs. Kawa is a te reo Māori word often used to mean 'policy', and that is what we are doing here – kawa are your ground rules. They are pretty important to have so that you all know what is expected of you. Because of this, we expand on kawa later on in this resource.

It's important to create some ground rules or a group agreement for how people will behave in the space, and create feelings of acceptance and positivity in that space. This should be a safe space that is inclusive, safe, confidential, and respectful. There should be no assumptions about people's sexuality, gender, or sex characteristics.

As well as practical ground rules like confidentiality, talk with your group about inclusivity and how you can make it a reality. Being inclusive is what diversity groups are all about. Being inclusive is something that requires being aware of all identities and experiences (culture, ethnicity, gender, class, faith, sexuality, age, and ability). Identity is **intersectional**—that is, we each have a mix of experiences and histories that interact and influence our beliefs and actions.

As people advocating for rainbow equality, sometimes people forget about these other identities because their work is so focused on sexuality, sex characteristics, and gender diversity. When we remember that identity is intersectional, we are much more likely to include the experiences of others.

You can find more information about about creating your group kawa on page 21.



Intersectionality is the idea that identities can overlap, which influences the way you experience the world differently than the identities each would on their own.

5 <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=kawa>

10. Hold Meetings!

How often do we meet?

Diversity groups often meet once a week at lunchtime, but you can meet as little or as much as you'd like.

How do we run meetings?

It's a great idea to have somebody, or a couple of people, each week who will 'facilitate' the meeting. Facilitators can rotate each week or stay the same. The main part of their role is to be a good leader of the group: welcoming people and making them feel comfortable, getting people engaged in whatever is going on, finding out what people want to do, and making this happen. Often these meetings start with a round of introductions so that everybody gets a chance to learn each other's names.

Do staff members come to group meetings?

It's up to you! You can decide on this together as a group and with your teacher.

Remember that your meetings don't always have to be about sex characteristics, gender, and sexuality. You can meet up about study skills, or body diversity, or different abilities, te Tiriti o Waitangi, online gaming as queer people, sexual health for rainbow and tākatapui people — the list is endless!



Privacy and confidentiality

When making decisions about your group, such as where or when to meet and how to invite people, you may have concerns about keeping group members safe and comfortable. Here are some suggestions to help you do so.

Find and maintain a private space to meet

Choose a place to meet that is fairly private, or that students don't usually have access to.

Classrooms that are empty during the time you meet can be good for this. Having teacher permission and support can be important and beneficial to accessing and keeping the safe space. For tertiary students, there may be dedicated, permanent spaces for rainbow students that function as a 'common room'. You may choose to meet there, or pick another location.

Look at putting up a curtain over any glass doors or windows if people can see into the room you meet in. If it is a small window or glass door you may be able to tack up posters for this.

Consider making the location of the meetings private. People who want to join must text or meet with a leader/teacher first to find out where it is and agree to keep this confidential.

Maintain confidentiality within the group

Install a 'what happens in the group, stays in the group' rule for your meetings. If you are worried there is risk of this rule being broken, you can reiterate it at the start of meetings, or throughout discussions. Make sure new members are aware of your group kaupapa and kawa.

Consider having members sign a confidentiality agreement when they join the group. If they break the confidentiality agreement, make sure they understand that the consequences could include being asked to leave the group or needing to apologise to the person they may have caused hurt to. It may be best to deal with this on a situational basis rather than having a blanket rule.

Respect that not every member will be open about their identity

Some people may want to come to the group in secret, and might even pretend they don't know you when you are outside of the group. This is for their safety and comfort, and isn't about you. It is always best to find out each individual's comfort level, as some may be out to friends and not family, or not out to anyone else at school.

Establish a method of allowing members to know who within the group is open about their identity. In your group rules/values, ensure that everyone having their needs and privacy respected by other members is addressed.

Don't force anyone to put a label on their identity to be a part of the group.

Kaupapa and Kawa

Your kaupapa is the set of values or principles that sets the foundation for how your group will be run. Your kawa are the policies or guidelines of your group - the 'ground rules'.

It's a good idea to develop your kaupapa and kawa at the beginning of your group, as these will help to guide you as your group grows.

You could ask group members to brainstorm values they'd like to see the group adopt. This could be done as a group brainstorm, or everyone could have a chance to write down their ideas during a session and these could be later shared and agreed on. You could also focus on different elements of the group, such as the environment, the structure, and participation:

What do we want for the environment of this group?	e.g. to feel safe, visible, private...
What do we want for the structure of this group?	e.g. shared leadership, no leadership, diversity...
What do we want for participation in this group?	e.g. everyone gets a chance to talk, group discussions aren't shared outside the group, equal opportunities...

The answers to these questions might end up being expressed in a couple of different ways.

Because a kaupapa is like a mission statement, it will sum up what your group is and what it is for. This may change over time or be different at different parts of the year. Anything in your answers that is 'who are we and what do we want this group to be' is likely going to become a part of your kaupapa.

On the other hand, your kawa are your rules, your code of conduct, the ways you agree you will act when meeting with one another. So any of the answers that are about how you behave and what you expect of one another are likely to fit in your kawa.

Some groups might find it helpful to write their kawa up and display it visually at every session. Others may want to write it up as a contract for group members to sign. Some groups may want to simply tell new members what the guidelines and expectations are. It's your group - decide what will work best for you!

You may wish to write your kaupapa and kawa together as a guiding document.

Activity

You might like to do the following planning pages together to come up with ways to express your core values and how you plan to operate (or, your kaupapa and kawa). Picking something as a core value or focus doesn't mean you do not care about the other areas. It is about what you are specifically focussing on together. You may wish to have a discussion as a group as to what you collectively value the very most, or feel you need the most in your lives.

Activity 2

Core values (blank)

Context and intentions

Where does our group operate and meet?

What are the characteristics or qualities of our group members?

What do we hope to achieve with our group?

Core values

What is the core value of our group?

Why is this what we value?

Explain it like you would to a new student member

Explain it like you would to a staff member

Core values (example)

Context and intentions

Where does our group operate?

We meet mostly online, because we are spread over a large area, and across Faculties.

Who are our group members?

Every group member is a formal or informal leader representing a group in their own Faculty.

What do we hope to achieve with our group?

We hope to reduce 'doubled up' work across the University, to learn from one another, and to support each other as leaders with the practical- 'what works and what doesn't'

Core values

What is the core value of our group?

The core kawa of our group is Mahi tahi. We value listening to one another, collaborating, and sharing what we know.

Why is this what we value?

We have come from a variety of backgrounds and Faculties, but are mainly students who take rainbow leadership roles. Because of this, our group is more of a 'working group' where we share ideas, what works, what the challenges are in our area, and how we might learn from one another.

Explain it like you would to a new student member

This group is about learning what we can from others doing the same sort of work but in different areas. Everybody here is a leader. Sometimes they may do things differently from you- that could be a good thing to learn about!

Explain it like you would to a staff member

Every member of our group is already in a leadership role, formal or informal, within Rainbow groups for their own Faculties. Because of this, our focus is very much on 'how do we get the most out of work we are doing as individuals to make things better for the whole university'

Activity 3

Guiding document (blank)

Introduction

(Group Name) is designed as a space for _____, _____ and _____. We are a public/private group that is open to anyone who _____.

In this group, we aim to _____.

Purpose

The purpose of (Group Name) is to _____.

Private Information

To keep our group safe, some information in this group will be kept private. Private information includes:

-
-
-

Public Information

To keep our group sustained and visible, some information about this group will be shared publicly within the school. Public information includes:

-
-
-

Meetings

_____ (Group Name) will meet every _____ in _____. Meetings will be advertised by _____.

Responsibilities

Every group member has the responsibility of _____.

Some group members will have extra roles, such as _____, _____ and _____. These roles will be chosen by _____.

New Members

New members will always be welcome to join the group. They can join by _____.

Extra Information

The final few things you need to know about (Group Name) are _____.

Guiding document (example)

Introduction

(Trans on campus) is designed as a space for Transgender staff and students at the University. We are a public/private group that is open to anyone who identifies as transgender at our university.

In this group, we aim to socialise with one another, hang out, share information, do what we can to support each other and make our university a better place for trans people- ourselves, each other, and anybody who comes after us.

Purpose

The purpose of (Trans on campus) is to bring trans students and staff together.

Private Information

To keep our group safe, some information in this group will be kept private. Private information includes:

- The names and identities of members

- The link to our Discord server

Public Information

To keep our group sustained and visible, some information about this group will be shared publicly within the school. Public information includes:

- The email that is used to contact the group

- The main staff member who organises the group

Meetings

Trans on Campus will meet at several points during the semester on campus at Queerspace. Meetings will be advertised on the Discord server

Responsibilities

Every group member has the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality.

Some group members will have extra roles, such as organising meetings and moderating the server. These roles will be chosen by mutual agreement.

New Members

New members will always be welcome to join the group. They can join by emailing the group email, or being added to the discord by a trusted member.

Extra Information

The final few things you need to know about (Trans on campus) is while we do meet in person, our Discord server is always active to socialise and share information.



As an example, on the next page is the guiding document for InsideOUT Kōaro's Shift Hui event. The whole document is referred to as the hui's kaupapa because it is centred in values, however you can see how each values statement acts as a sort of rule as well, which lets this act as the kawa also.

Shift Hui

How We Roll

Our Kaupapa/Values

Because we are all smart, independent, capable young people we have created a guideline for *how we roll*, which is a reminder of our kaupapa and values for the hui - so that we can all practice ways of being with ourselves and each other which make us feel awesome.

- That we are **kind** to each other
- We remember difference is our strength not our downfall, and **agreeing to disagree** is all good
- That we are gentle with ourselves and **listen to our instincts** around what feels good and what doesn't
- To remember we all have a **body** which is amazing, we are respectful and in awe of each other's uniqueness, and we appreciate how our bodies function differently. We don't need to default to popular hierarchies of what's hot or 'natural' and what's not.
- That we use **language which is inclusive** and makes us feel fantastic. This means finding creative ways to communicate that are smarter than phrases or ways of acting which perpetuate the things that make us feel bad - like racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia, and classism. We will make mistakes, but the key is to keep trying to use language that makes us feel included.
- That we respect **we are in Aotearoa** and so we practice basic tikanga to keep us safe over the weekend. Things like we keep our butts off places that we are using for food or for our heads, that we wait to do karakia before tucking into our kai, that we are generous hosts and respectful guests.
- That if we are overwhelmed with love and attraction, we find a way to express this **without making other people uncomfortable**. That we listen carefully to what others want and don't want, and that we remember to connect with all the amazing people at the hui, not spend the whole three days staring into one person's eyes, however magical they may be.
- Together we will create a sanctuary. A space where no one will make assumptions about –
 - our identity and how we identify
 - our capability
 - our likes and dislike
 - what we love
 - our beliefs
 - our cultural contexts
 - our families

- This is our chance to practice **assuming nothing**. Join in and build great friendships.
- We need to be understanding about confidentiality. “What happens at Shift, stays at Shift”. When someone shares something personal with you, alone or in a workshop, they are sharing it with you, not your mates or anyone else. The only exception is if they have said something which makes you worried for their safety or the safety of someone else - in which case you can mention it to one of the tuakana or other adults at the hui.
- And **trust**, remember there are many reasons we are not able to be open with our friends or family about how we feel or who we like. This space is safe to be open, but remember not to assume that how a person is here is how they will be back home.
- **Everyone** has the right to **pass**. Be aware of ‘cold toast’ – stop talking about this, and ‘warm toast’ – orange light, slow down as I’m not sure I want to talk about this. ‘Hot toast’ – go baby go!
- That we **take care of each other** - make sure people are feeling okay, check in with them but understand that people aren’t always able to talk about it right now.
- That we **recognise** our own and each other’s **boundaries**, because they are different and that’s okay!
- That we **recognise** that staying within the marae is a sign of **safety** and **respect**, and that we will only leave the marae during designated times and with designated people.
- We understand that Shift Hui is a totally **smoke, drug and alcohol free** space.

Creating an Inclusive Culture

Rainbow communities are made up of people with a diverse range of identities, languages, cultures, and religious and spiritual perspectives. Forming a group where everyone feels included, and within which students feel they can be their true selves, is a challenging undertaking.

While it might seem overwhelming at first, it's worth remembering that no group does this perfectly. However, given that inclusion is central to the purpose of the group, it's important to discuss this topic with everyone in the group and create some goals you would like to work towards together.

A good starting point may be to look at your school's values and how they could be made real in the way the group operates. You could also consider how to promote inclusiveness and diversity within the group's leadership team. When diversity is modelled within the group's leadership, a wider variety of young people are likely to feel confident and comfortable participating.

Below are some ideas around fostering different types of inclusion for people belonging to different identity groups.



Cultural inclusivity

Depending on the cultural make-up of each school, different considerations will need to be made to ensure the rainbow diversity group provides a safe space for everybody.

Common considerations include the concepts of 'coming out' and claiming identities. For rainbow people of some cultures, there is an expectation that someone's identity will be known but never directly spoken about. People might also feel more connected to non-English terms for their identities. For these reasons, it is important that people are never put on the spot to state their identity. As well as this, 'coming out' is not part of everybody's journey.

In collectivist cultures, the happiness of the whānau or group can be considered more important than that of the individual. Rainbow young people need to find a way of navigating this so that they feel they are respecting their whānau or culture while also being kind to themselves. Simple statements such as "just be yourself" can minimise this very real tension. If someone in your group is struggling with this, it is advisable to link them up with a safe person who is also from a group-based culture to talk things through. This might be a member of staff.

Below are some practical steps your group can take to help group members of various cultures feel welcome and that they belong. These are just ideas – brainstorming with the group might yield better ones to suit your context.

- Watch InsideOUT's More than Four videos on Rainbow Pasifika and Queer Asian people's experiences.⁷
- Learn and use rainbow terms from different languages.
- Watch the documentary *Leitis in Waiting*⁸ on ETV, looking at gender fluidity in Tonga or other short documentaries on gender diversity within Pacific culture at The Coconet.tv.⁹
- The Manalagi Repository¹⁰ is an open-access archive that centres Pacific LGBTQIA+ MVPFAFF communities in Aotearoa and the Pacific diaspora.
- Celebrate a variety of cultural festivals and events (such as Chinese New Year or Diwali) or different language weeks (such as Te Wiki o te Reo Māori).
- Watch or read about and discuss media about rainbow people from various cultures.
- Invite adults from various cultures to be guest speakers. Who are the people to whom your group is already connected who would be willing to share?
- Village Collective's Rainbow Fale¹¹ supports Pacific young people, including rainbow diversity groups in local schools. It is based in South Auckland. If you are in Auckland, you could reach out to the Collective but even if not, there are links on the website to resources you may find helpful.

7 <http://insideout.org.nz/more-than-four/>

8 www.leitisinwaiting.com/

9 www.thecoconet.tv/

10 www.manalagi.org/manalagi-repository

11 www.villagecollective.org.nz/rainbow-fale

Accessibility for ākongā Māori and takatāpui students

Ākongā Māori might not feel welcome in a group started by non-Māori students unless specifically invited. This can be especially true where ākongā Māori do not feel culturally included in the school environment.

Here are some things rainbow groups can do to be more inclusive of ākongā Māori:

- Make sure the group follows basic tikanga (for example, not sitting on tables, putting hats on the table, or stepping over each other).
- Open and close your gatherings with karakia and ensure your group understand why.
- Practise whakawātea: after a heavy topic, members could deliberately do something to shift the feeling in the room. This could be having a kai or drink of water, saying a blessing (in any language), or going outside and getting five minutes of sunshine.
- Watch InsideOUT's takatāpui More Than Four video.¹²
- Ask the te reo Māori teacher or other relevant staff member for advice on including ākongā Māori or opportunities to engage them.
- Collaborate with Māori cultural groups on joint projects, such as a non-uniform day celebrating diversity and raising funds, or a bake sale to raise money for the kapa haka group.
- Discuss how colonisation impacts the ways Māori may express their identities and navigate rainbow spaces. Actively encourage members to examine and decolonise their own thought processes.
- Attend Māori cultural or learning events together. This could involve an event at a marae or wānanga, local kapa haka competitions, or iwi-led Treaty commemorations.
- Acknowledge the gifts and knowledge of Māori in the group, whilst not always expecting them to answer any and all 'Māori' questions.
- Hold a te reo pronunciation workshop. Approach a Māori language teacher in your school or engage with online videos. Check out the te reo Māori resources listed on Te Kete Ipurangi.
- Invite a takatāpui speaker from InsideOUT or your local community to come and talk about takatāpui identities and experiences. Honour their time and knowledge with a koha (a gift of some kind).
- Access resources on takatāpui from *Takatāpui: A Resource Hub*.¹³ For example, there are booklets you can order and videos you can watch as a group.
- Include the word takatāpui when listing identities on posters or other promotional material for the group.

¹² <http://insideout.org.nz/more-than-four/>

¹³ <https://takatapui.nz/>

Accessibility for disabled and neurodivergent students

There is quite a bit of overlap between disabled, neurodivergent, and rainbow communities. By learning about and accommodating for neurodiversity and disability, your group will be well set up to welcome even more of our awesome community members.



The 2018 Counting Ourselves report showed that around a quarter of their 1178 transgender and nonbinary participants had a disability.

The 2022 Counting Ourselves survey asked even more questions about disability, so hopefully when the results come out we can make even more connections!

Disability

Disability is much more than the classic symbol that 'person in a wheelchair' would have you believe. Disabled people are all through society, with some disabilities like minor vision impairment being so common that we often forget they are a disability - think of how many people you know who wear glasses!

Disabilities might look obvious, or be entirely invisible. They might be something that somebody is born with, develops later in life, or acquires. It is important to keep an open mind, ask before making assumptions about what somebody with a disability can or cannot do, then listen to what they say - we are often the best judges of our own capabilities.



Watch the series 'What's the Disabili-Tea' produced by Attitude Live and hosted on Radio New Zealand to hear the stories of queer disabled rangatahi in Aotearoa as they explore accessibility in queer spaces, and what Pride means to them.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/whats-the-disibili-tea>

Neurodiverse: A group of people (e.g. a student cohort) is **neurodiverse** if one or more members of the group differ substantially from other members in terms of their neurocognitive functioning- multiple **neurotypes** (including **neurotypical**) may be represented.

Neurotype: An expression of neurocognitive function, of which **neurotypical** is the dominant group. Other neurotypes include autism and ADHD.

Neurotypical: A person who is of the dominant **neurotype**. Assumed 'default' human experience, falls within dominant societal standards of 'normal'. Opposite of **Neurodivergent**.

Neurodivergent: An individual with a **neurotype** that diverges from the assumed norm. Their neurocognitive function is different from a **neurotypical** individual, as well as individuals of other **neurotypes**, and there is also often variation of experience within the same neurotype.

Definitions taken from or adapted from:

Doctor Nick Walker, California Institute of Integral Studies

<https://neurocosmopolitanism.com/neurodiversity-some-basic-terms-definitions>

You can make your group more inclusive for disabled members by:

- Welcoming members to privately disclose whether they have any particular needs.
- Recognising and respecting boundaries - assistive technology and mobility aids can be like an extension of somebody's body. Permission is important before you touch. Yes, even wheelchairs. Always ask if somebody needs or would like a push, and respect their answer.
- Choosing a room that is accessible by ramp and/or lifts.
- Making sure your room layout has enough space for a wheelchair or somebody with other mobility aids like crutches to navigate.
- Thinking about whether there are accessible bathrooms nearby (or any at all).
- Checking whether any films you plan to watch together have a strobe warning (for epilepsy and migraine) and communicate this to your group to make certain everybody will be safe to watch it (or pick a different film).
- Providing enough seating, and accommodating for requests to sit in particular spots.
- Allowing everybody to take breaks as needed.
- Being flexible about time limits on activities - allow people to take the time they need.
- Thinking of and providing alternatives to hand-writing things out or hands-on crafts. Some people are better able to participate if they can use a computer, or might be happy to buddy up with somebody and give them instructions on what to make (e.g. if you are making name badges and they have impaired motor skills.)

Neurodiversity

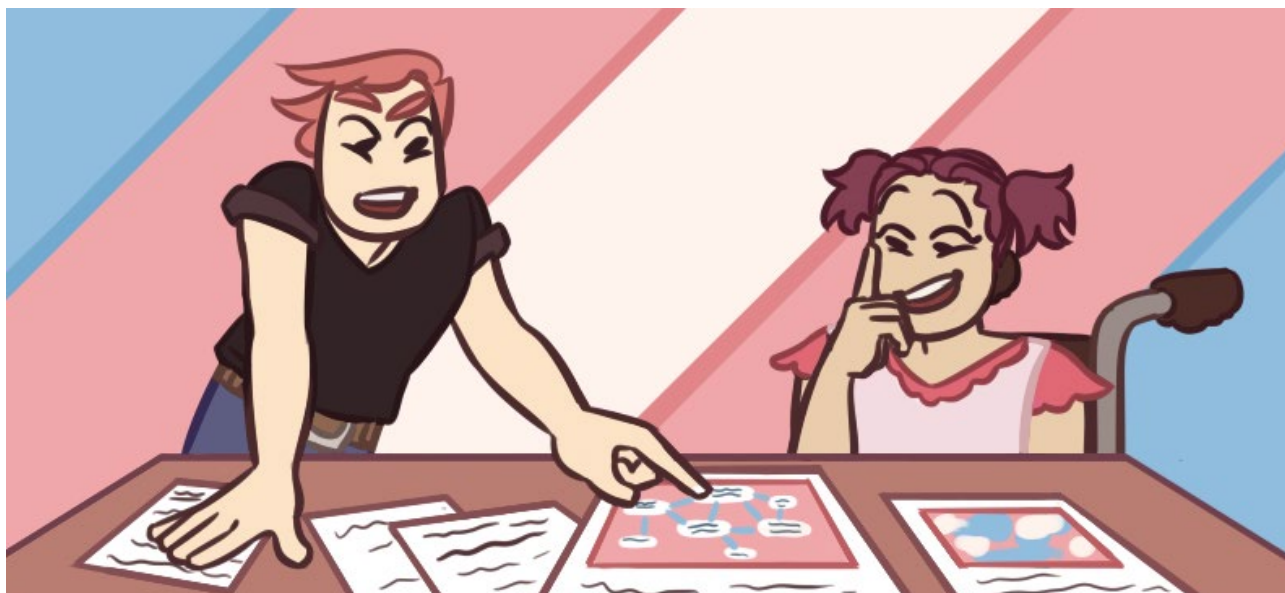
Human brains and minds differ from one another in terms of neurocognitive function, with a huge amount of variety and diversity. **Neurodiversity** is used to acknowledge that a variety of **neurotypes** exist - **neurotypical** people are a part of this diversity of forms and expressions of human minds! **Neurodivergent** people are anybody who is not neurotypical.

Our society and education system are set up with the assumption that everybody participating in them is neurotypical. We can make a big difference by not making that assumption and setting up our groups and spaces to be more inclusive and welcoming.

Some common ways that neurodivergent people may differ from neurotypical people can be differences in concentration, attention span, ability to regulate focus, short term memory, verbal processing, energy levels, and sensitivity to sensory stimuli.

You can make your group more inclusive for neurodivergent members by:

- Putting key information about your group all in one place for easy reference.
- Asking the group if there are any ways the meetings could be made more inclusive - create a culture where this is okay to do.
- Setting up ways to remind members when and where meetings are.
- Making records of your meetings available afterwards (for those with memory or focus issues).
- Thinking about the places you meet - are they very bright, loud, crowded? What are ways the space could be more accommodating? Are there places that people could sit (by a window or at a certain part of the room) that they feel more comfortable?
- Trying to have a 'quiet space' available - we can get excited when we meet up and this can lead to people feeling overloaded.
- Normalising it being okay for people to take a break outside or somewhere quiet if they need it.
- Having some concentration tools / fidget items available, or not making a big deal out of it if somebody is using theirs.
- Running a variety of activities and events each year so that everybody has something they can participate in.



Strengthening your Group

Ideas for Meetings

Mihimihi. Do a round to introduce everyone at the start of each meeting — you might ask for peoples' names, pronouns (as optional), how they are today, why they are there, or something random each week like their favourite colour or celebrity crush.

Provide kai! Everyone loves food so see if there's a way you can provide food at each of your meetings — the school might have a budget for this, or it could be a shared lunch where everyone brings something, or you could do some fundraising as a group in order to raise money to buy food for your meetings. Just remember to be mindful of your school's allergy policies and the dietary requirements of everyone in the group to ensure everyone is safe and included.

Try to have a plan for each meeting Beforehand and share group facilitation responsibilities with other members, so it doesn't always fall on the same person. Some meeting ideas might include playing games, discussions on relevant topics or discussing something that's come up in the media related to sexuality, sex characteristics and gender diversity, having a guest speaker, doing some crafts, reading an article/story together and discussing it, making a film, doing a quiz, learning about parts of the rainbow community you don't know about, and more.





Come up with some goals or dreams for the group. Get inspired! What do people coming along want out of it, what changes do they want to see in the school? Work together to make these happen – e.g. getting involved in Schools' Pride Week and bringing awareness to the wider school community, working on a policy to make your school inclusive for trans students, getting sexuality, sex characteristics, and gender diversity included in the school health curriculum.

Activities for your Group



























At the start of each year or term, you might want to hold a brainstorm session with your group and see what ideas everyone has or what things people are keen to do at what time. It's also a good chance to reflect on your previous events and how people feel they went.


To help get you going, here are a few tried and tested ideas for your group:










We've given some of these icons to help you work out what type of 'cost' they each have, whether that be in  money,  time, or  organising effort. Some activities may also be more  emotional labour than others.












SOCIAL






Discussion Groups  	<p>Picking a topic, e.g. fatphobia (discrimination against body size) or transphobia. Discussing topics in a group provides a way to learn about many different perspectives on an issue, and can help foster the development of new, positive ways of approaching those topics in the future. You could get a guest speaker to come the week before or after your discussion to give you more information on the topic.</p>
Watch a Movie 	<p>There is a large selection of rainbow films available online, or at your local library!</p>
Games session    (if buying game)	<p>You could play board games, go and play a game of soccer, or create a game for yourselves.</p>
Create a performance   	<p>You could all make a performance e.g. dance show together, and perhaps use that in a talent quest, or have it up your sleeve for other meetings.</p>
Form a reading group 	<p>Each member of the group could be reading the same book/article/short story and discussing it.</p>
Have a potluck  	<p>You can have a potluck lunch where you each bring a plate of food to share.</p>
Show and tell 	<p>You can create a meeting in which people share their community histories. You can each do your own research and bring it together to present on a different aspect of queer, trans, and tākatapui history, i.e. important activist heroes, historic days, law reforms, what things used to be like, or what the issues we still face are.</p>
Host a picnic  	<p>Have one of your meetings outside on the field or a nice outdoor area and get everyone to bring tasty treats for a picnic!</p>
Make Valentine's Day Cards  	<p>Make Valentine's Day cards in your group!</p>
Gift swap  	<p>At the end of the year put everyone's name in a hat and have each person draw a name. They have to get or make a gift for the other group member (set a price limit such as \$5) to hand out at the last meeting. Try and organise some extra gifts in case anyone forgets or pulls out.</p>
Knit or crochet   	<p>Learn to knit or crochet, make squares to put together into a blanket to decorate the space.</p>
Rainbow pride crafts   	<p>Make rainbow pride crafts (for example, stickers, badges, tote bags, tie-dyeing old clothes)</p>
Just hang out 	<p>There doesn't need to be a plan every meeting! Sometimes it's nice to just eat lunch and chill out together in a shared space.</p>

SUPPORT	
Coming out session  	Those who want to can talk about how that's going for them, and others can listen and support. No one should ever be pressured to disclose their identity if they are not comfortable or feel it is unsafe to do so. Remember that everyone will be at different places in their journey and some people may be straight/cis or still questioning.
Have a name party   	Have a name party to celebrate someone in your group deciding on their new name.
Learn together   	As a group you can get together to learn more about different topics relating to rainbow and takatāpui communities. For example, watching a documentary or short video, reading resources, or having a facilitated discussion with pre-written questions.
Group outings   	You could visit another rainbow diversity group, your local rainbow community group, or go to a rainbow related event during the weekend or after school as a group.
Community wardrobe or clothing swap  	Set up a community wardrobe at your school or do a clothing swap to let people explore and play with their presentation. Make sure everything is clean and in decent condition, and that there are private places to change.
Practice pronouns and names   	Help each other practise using pronouns, either for people you know who have requested it, or neutral pronouns in general. Some members might like to 'try on' a pronoun or a name for the meeting to see how it feels.
Help people with their name change paperwork   	Some of your members might be trying to get their name changed legally, or working out how to get a legal or preferred name changed at your institution. It can be a huge mental load to work out where to go and what is needed – help them research this.
Listening session  	Sometimes you just need to let it out. Set time aside to have a kōrero

ACTION	
Hold a stall   	If your school has a day for clubs/cultural groups to have stalls, sign your group up to have a stall so you can raise more awareness about it!
Guest speakers    	Find someone from your local rainbow community group, or someone from your local Family Planning, to visit your group meeting to talk about safer sex that is inclusive for queer, trans, intersex, tākatapui, questioning people. You could find a guest speaker to come in and talk about drawing comics, racism — the topics are endless! You could also ask InsideOUT to send a speaker on a topic that is of interest to the group, or ask a teacher or school counsellor for help with arranging a speaker.

ACTION

Assembly presentation 	Tell the school about what your group does! Some groups might do this through a speech, skit, or short film.
Day of remembrance 	Recognise a day to remember those who've died from HIV, transphobia, or another cause that might mean something to your group.
Rainbow ribbon day 	Buy a bunch of ribbons and sell a small amount for a koha (donation). This gives staff and students in the school a way to show that they support the stopping of bullying around sexuality and gender.
Create a display 	Create a display in your library (e.g. for Queer History Month or for the Out on the Shelves campaign) or a display case in a hallway to help raise more awareness and increase visibility about rainbow issues in your school.
Raise awareness 	Participate in days/weeks/months of action such as International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Interphobia on May 17th, Pink Shirt Day, Schools Pride Week, Youth Week, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Day of Silence, Bisexual Awareness Week, Asexual Awareness Week, and more.
Organise a pride week 	Celebrate Schools Pride Week in your school and organise different activities/events for each day!
Fundraise 	Come up with ideas for fundraising as a group so you can have some money for food at meetings, travel costs to attend a rainbow youth hui around the country, donate to InsideOUT or your local community group. Fundraising could take the form of a bake sale, milkshakes/hot chocolates at school, rainbow ribbons, a variety show, or face-painting.
Make a film 	Make a film in your group to promote it or raise awareness about bullying against rainbow students or other issues facing the community.
Debate 	Hold a debate on an issue that's relevant for rainbow students. This could be your group vs the school debating team, or even a team of staff. This could be a good event for Pride Week! Note that it's better to have debate topics that don't encourage questioning the rights or validity of rainbow and takatāpui people. We suggest more neutral topics like: should school uniforms be compulsory?
Design 	Design a group logo or make a group t-shirt - T-shirts could be sold to older rainbow people who used to go to your school as a fundraiser. They will be excited to see there is a rainbow diversity group at their old school.
Make a directory 	Make a directory of safe places and recommendations for younger rainbow people (for example, recommended doctors, counselling services, hairdressers, and clothes shops).

ACTION	
Engage in politics 	<p>This can include: researching parties' policies about issues affecting the rainbow community, attending consultations, writing to the local council if there are services that do not suit rainbow people, and writing submissions to parliamentary select committees that are considering issues relevant to rainbow young people.</p>
Learn about Te Tiriti 	<p>Workshop what Te Tiriti o Waitangi means for how the group is run and what it should be promoting.</p>
School policy review 	<p>Participate in school self-review and contribute to the development of inclusive policies and procedures.¹³</p> <p>Does your school let you change your name or gender marker on school records? What are the options for uniforms and dress codes, and are they gender neutral?</p> <p>What are the options to have your pronouns used?</p> <p>Do you know whether any of the teachers or staff members are a part of rainbow communities? Are they supported?</p>
School curriculum review 	<p>Participate in school self-review and contribute to the development of a more responsive local curriculum.</p> <p>Do you get taught positive or helpful things about rainbow people, histories or issues?</p> <p>What is the quality of relationships and sexuality education for rainbow students specifically?</p>
School facilities review 	<p>Are there messages around your school that support rainbow students, like posters or pride flags?</p> <p>Are there gender-neutral bathrooms? What about changing rooms for sports or swimming? Are transgender students supported to use the bathrooms or changing rooms they feel the most comfortable with?</p>

¹³ While the presence of a Rainbow Diversity group alone can have a positive impact on these, active participation from your members will do a lot more.

Russell B. Toomey, Caitlin Ryan, Rafael M. Diaz & Stephen T. Russell (2011) High School Gay–Straight Alliances (GSAs) and Young Adult Well-Being: An Examination of GSA Presence, Participation, and Perceived Effectiveness, *Applied Developmental Science*, 15:4, 175-185, DOI: 10.1080/10888691.2011.607378

InsideOUT's resource *Creating Rainbow-Inclusive School Policies and Procedures* might also be a helpful resource. You can find this resource here: <https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Creating-rainbow-inclusive-school-policies-and-procedures.pdf>

Believe in your ideas

Remember that new ideas pass through three stages:

- 1) It can't be done
- 2) It probably can be done, but it's not worth doing
- 3) I knew it was a good idea all along

In addition to regular group meetings, you might find it helpful or exciting to run other events and activities that promote rainbow diversity groups, such as Pride Week, Pink Shirt Day, Out on the Shelves, Day of Silence, discussions, fundraisers, games, outings, crafts, and more.



Here's a bit more info on some of the things InsideOUT does that you can get involved with:

Schools Pride Week

Schools Pride Week is the first ever nationwide Pride Week campaign based in schools, with a range of activities that schools, QSAs or rainbow diversity groups, students and staff can get involved with. The campaign is a celebratory week of events and activities that support rainbow young people to have a sense of belonging in their schools and communities. Learn more at pride.school.nz

Out on the Shelves

Out on the Shelves is an online resource that lists books with rainbow themes and characters, with the aim of supporting rainbow young people to find stories that represent their identities in positive and affirming ways.

Out on the Shelves is also an opportunity to create more visibility in our school and community libraries! The Out on the Shelves campaign is a chance for libraries to promote and build their rainbow collections, celebrate these stories and help connect rainbow young people with their stories and with each other.

Find out more at outontheshelves.insideout.org.nz

Aro ki te Hā

Aro ki te Hā is a youth programme designed to support rainbow rangatahi to have safe, respectful, nurturing relationships with themselves and others.

Learn more about how to take part in upcoming programmes at: insideout.org.nz/respectful-relationships-programme/

Shift Hui

A national youth hui for rainbow, takatāpui and intersex young people and their friends! Learn more at insideout.org.nz

Check out our website at www.insideout.org.nz or contact us for further information or support at hello@insideout.org.nz

The Little Extras to Make Your Group a Success

There will be ups and downs with the group when it is flourishing and when it is quiet. This is natural, and does not mean your group isn't doing well.

This section is about the little extras to help keep your group running smoothly and productively. Like any activism-based organisation, it's important to make sure that your goals and endeavours continue to be addressed even as old members leave and new members join the group. Here are some suggestions of how to ensure that your group's mission and work is sustained in the future:

Connect with younger year levels

If your group is solely composed of older students, it may be difficult to pass the group facilitation responsibilities to new, younger members if they have never attended a group. You're not a student forever, so if your group is made up of only people in your year level, then when you leave there is no more group. To prevent this from happening, try to make sure there are people that come to the group from a range of year levels. To do this you might need to advertise in a junior assembly, or make sure the group and the current members are welcoming of people from other year groups.

Rotate roles

If you have the same person leading/facilitating the group each time, then no-one else will know what to do when they can't make it, or once they leave school. It's a good idea to try and take it in turns, or have multiple facilitators so the responsibility isn't all on one person and to give other members an exciting experience to learn and practice important group facilitation skills.

Mentor potential future facilitators

The people in the group who have some specific skills in certain areas can teach those skills to other members of the group who may be interested in assuming a facilitator role in the future. For example, a younger student co-facilitating with an older student before the older student leaves, or both talking in an assembly together. Previous leaders who have graduated could be invited back for a visit to share what they have learnt about leadership, or to mentor current leaders. You might also want to prepare some handover documents when you pass the group on to someone else, with any advice, previous files, or ideas — you could even create a group handbook or website that captures what the group has learnt about what works well.

Pace

Starting a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group is exciting and often we want to do everything all at once, so it's important to maintain a logistical perspective on group activities. If you believe that you have enough support, and have received school endorsement, then pursue your ideas. If not, take some time to reflect on the process and create more realistic timelines.

In some cases you might have to go slower. Sometimes activities will start off slow because other students might take a while to get interested. You may come across varying levels of resistance within the school, either to promote it, or even just to have it. If this is the case, remember that no change is instant and that sometimes slower change is more sustainable change. So, if it takes off slowly, or you have to take small steps at a time, remember, everything you're doing is making a difference. Keep it up!

Setting achievable goals

Wanting to make every rainbow person in the world feel safe and loved is a valid hope, but probably not achievable in your time at high school. However, creating visibility in your school which might lessen homophobic, biphobic, interphobic and transphobic bullying for that year, or even combating isolation for one or two students who are questioning their identity, is an amazing achievement and something you can try to accomplish while at school.

Achieving this goal may still be a big challenge since every school has a different level of rainbow acceptance. If your school does not want a diversity group, giving them information about the importance of groups for them to think about is a major step in the right direction. If you still face resistance from your school, remember you can always get in touch with InsideOUT as we can help ensure your school lets you set up a rainbow diversity group.

Bridging your work to the greater community¹⁴

This can include forming relationships with other diversity groups from other schools, diversity groups from around Aotearoa, local and national queer organisations, groups and communities in your area, and of course, with InsideOUT. This means you can find out what others are doing and even attend others' events (alternative balls, leadership days, diversity group days, youth forums that want youth to speak about sexuality and gender etc.), get great ideas you want to replicate in your school, or help others out with their projects so that projects become bigger and better.

You can find out about important days coming up to commemorate in your school (such as Pink Shirt Day or International Day Against Homo/Bi/Trans/Interphobia) and new resources that you can request for your group (new research about sexuality and gender in schools, new anti-bullying packs, leadership guides, or games packs).

Funding and fundraising

You might have noticed that while some of the suggestions of what to do with your group are easily done for free, others will take some resources, whether that means a small budget for printing or snacks, or more for big events that take a lot of purchases to set up. Fundraising can therefore be a useful way to widen the opportunities that your group can pursue.



14 A really effective thing your group can do for the wellbeing of your members is to connect them to your wider community where they can attend events, access resources, and interact with community organisations. Alex St. John, Robb Travers, Lauren Munro, Renato Liboro, Margaret Schneider & Carrie L. Greig (2014) The Success of Gay-Straight Alliances in Waterloo Region, Ontario: A Confluence of Political and Social Factors, *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 11:2, 150-170, DOI: [10.1080/19361653.2014.878564](https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2014.878564)

Things that you might be able to achieve through fundraising include:

- Holding different events (such as an end of year ball)
- Buying kai for group meetings
- Buying reusable items for your group (e.g. pride flags or decorations)
- Practical things like locker space to store your group's belongings

Lots of groups fundraise by:



Selling
rainbow
pins



Bake sales



Asking for
donations

Others might access funding through:



Teachers



Student
associations



Community
funds

It is good to check out your options and see what you might have access to.

This doesn't have to all be on you as a leader either – you can do a lot of the planning and actions together with the members of your group, and all feel involved and a part of something.



As a group you could:

- Auction off something cool
- Run an art exhibition
- Arrange a bingo evening
- Go on a sponsored bike ride or run
- Make and sell badges
- Put together a calendar
- Set up a craft fair
- Arrange a film night
- Plan and run a quiz

Activity 4

Why not have a go at planning a new activity? Choose one from the list above (or make up your own) and have a go at seeing what is needed to bring your idea to life.

Name of activity

Area of Focus (circle one)

Social

Support

Action

Purpose of activity

Target audience (e.g. students at lunchtime, diversity group members, parents)

Organiser names and contacts

Outline of activity process and actions:

We have a few suggestions of tasks to complete below. Feel free to write who is responsible for each item, and tick them off as you go! You may wish to add more depending on the level of your event or activity. It's important to share responsibility for larger events and to always have a back-up plan in case something goes wrong.

Checklist

- Get permission to hold the event
- Schedule date and time
- Book the venue or space
- Design an advertisement
- Post about the event around your school, on social media etc.
- Prepare food, refreshments, cutlery etc.
- Prepare decorations (e.g. pride flags, lighting)
- Tidy up and prepare venue
- Facilitate the event and welcome attendees
- Get feedback from attendees on how it went, and how you can improve
- Tidy up after event

Facilitation and Leadership

Being a good facilitator

A facilitator is someone who holds the main responsibility of overseeing the group, either by themselves, or with their co-facilitators. Basically, they are the ones that make things happen!

Facilitators open the group, make sure all new and existing members feel welcome and safe, and are the official group representatives. They uphold the group's vision, mission, values, and objectives, and act as role models for other group members.

Being a facilitator is heaps of fun, and can be very rewarding, but it's also important to set boundaries and practise self-care.

Here are some helpful ways to make sure your role as facilitator remains manageable.

Having a role

Try assigning roles for different people in your group (e.g. Leader/Facilitator of events or meetings, Secretary/Note-Taker, Treasurer/Fundraising Coordinator). These roles can also rotate and be shared between members.

You may also want to assign roles on the functions of diversity groups – e.g. somebody who takes ownership of action, another support, and another on the social aspect.

Sharing the load

Try providing opportunities for everyone to help out, including facilitating a meeting. Learning from experience is an invaluable opportunity, so allowing other group members to try managing new responsibilities and tasks within the group is incredibly important to the wellbeing of your group. When group members are able to contribute to the group, you are helping them to develop a sense of group pride and ownership.

Running Your Meetings

Have a rough plan before your meeting to go over what is going to happen, even if it's just that you're going to start with an introduction round and socialise afterwards. Planning will be most useful when you intend to have a presentation, discussion, or activity during a meeting.

Additionally, meetings themselves can also be a space where you can plan for events, big and small. These types of planning meetings might include asking the group questions to brainstorm, assigning tasks for the next meeting, and following up on tasks to make sure everything's running smoothly.

Try to keep the conversation at the group PG. Steer the group away from topics such as clubbing, drinking, drug-taking, and sexual experiences, as this may make members feel uncomfortable or feel left out.

Members may ask you about rainbow topics or other issues, and it is important to keep an open mind and listen without judging. Let them know that they can contact InsideOUT, or OUTLINE on 0800 088 5463 to talk.

Starting meetings

You may wish to open your hui with a karakia, or start by introducing yourself and the other facilitators and going through what you have planned for the meeting. Now is also a good time to let other members know about any upcoming events and let them know about the bathroom and fire exits. Prepare some icebreakers to get people feeling comfortable and ready to talk.



Asking for pronouns? Cool or nah?

We know not everybody is comfortable sharing their pronouns. So if somebody doesn't mention theirs, just move on and don't bring it up or single them out.

During Meetings

During meetings, it might be necessary to assign a speaking order to allow everyone a fair chance to share their opinions. To assign a speaking order, you can go in a circle, or ask people to put up their hand when they want to speak and take note of the order.

Make sure everybody gives speakers the respect they deserve by allowing them to finish their statements and promote active listening among group members. Another good idea might be to come up with a cute hand signal you can use when people agree with what the speaker has said (sparkle fingers is a common one)! These are a few ideas that have been used by other groups – your group can also make up your own roles/gestures/protocols that will work the best for the group.

If the group is quite busy, drift around, talk with different people at the group, and encourage people to mix and include new members in their conversations. It is okay if new members just sit in a group listening so long as they do not feel left out.

If new members are staying off to the side, it can be a good idea to simply talk to them one-on-one with light conversation, asking things like where they heard about the group. When they seem more comfortable, you can get them talking to other members. Avoid intense or probing questions as this may put people off.

Ending meetings

It's a nice idea to close your meetings with quick reminders of any upcoming events or opportunities for your members. You may also wish to close with getting your members to share their reflections on how the meeting went. If you started your meeting with a karakia, have one ready to say to close the space. It's always nice to share relevant karakia with members so people can take it upon themselves to deliver a karakia if they feel like they want to.

Finally, take a moment to jot down your own thoughts, ideas, and reflections on the meeting, and take your attendance numbers. These will be vital with your future planning!

Activity 5

Details	
Opening	<i>An appropriate opening (e.g. a karakia tīmatanga or welcome)</i>
Introductions	
Advocacy	
Support	
Social	
Any other business	
Closing	<i>An appropriate closing (e.g. a karakia whakamutanga)</i>



Tip: Providing kai

If you are providing kai for your meeting, you may want to do a karakia kai as a group.

Example runsheet (filled, typical meeting)

<h2 style="color: #55a868; margin: 0;">Introductions, blood donation campaign, self care and movies</h2>	
Opening	<p>Whakataka te hau ki te uru Whakataka te hau ki te tonga Kia mākinakina ki uta Kia mātaratara ki tai E hī ake ana te atākura He tio, he huka, he hauhū Tihei mauri ora!</p> <p><i>Get ready for the westerly and be prepared for the southerly. It will be icy cold inland, and icy cold on the shore. May the dawn rise red-tipped on ice, on snow, on frost.</i></p>
Introductions	<p>Introduce new members to the group.</p> <p>Everybody to go around in a circle to say a bit about themselves and make them feel welcome.</p>
Advocacy	<p>Receive people’s letters for blood donation access campaign</p> <p><i>(Facilitator note: send reminder to members to bring these beforehand)</i></p>
Support	<p>Give out top tips from counselling team on self-care</p> <p>Hand out printed sheets and talk through them briefly</p>
Social	<p>Start watching ‘But I’m a cheerleader’.</p> <p>Keep an eye on the time so we can pause and close out properly.</p> <p><i>(Facilitator note: need staff member to sign in so we can use the projector)</i></p>
Any other business	<p>Just chilling out- unless somebody brings up something at the start.</p>
Closing	<p>Kia whakairia te tapu Kia wātea ai te ara Kia turuki whakataha ai Kia turuki whakataha ai Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e!</p> <p><i>Restrictions are moved aside So the pathways is clear To return to everyday activities</i></p> <p>https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/mo-te-puni-kokiri/karakia/he-karakia</p>

Example runsheet (filled, formal AGM)

<h3>Annual General Meeting</h3>	
Opening	<p>Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tātou Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te aroha, toi te Reo Māori kia tūturu, ka whakamaua kia tīna! Tīna! Hui e, Tāiki e!</p> <p><i>Let the strength and life force of our ancestors Be with each and every one of us Freeing our path from obstruction So that our words, spiritual power, love, and language are upheld; Permanently fixed, established and understood! Forward together!</i></p> <p>https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/mo-te-puni-kokiri/karakia/he-karakia</p>
Welcome and apologies	Formal apologies from people who can't make it. Check you have enough members there to do the votes.
Reports	Financial report, president and secretary's reports.
Nominations and voting	Positions of President, Treasurer and Secretary. Formal nominations in already, take nominations from the membership, ask candidates to speak then put it to a vote. Congratulate the new committee.
Rules changes	Membership to vote on changing group name from X to Y.
Plan for the next year	Short presentation on what we want to do in the next 12 months.
Closing	<p>Kia whakairia te tapu Kia wātea ai te ara Kia turuki whakataha ai Kia turuki whakataha ai Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e!</p> <p>Restrictions are moved aside So the pathways is clear To return to everyday activities</p> <p>https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/mo-te-puni-kokiri/karakia/he-karakia</p>

Addressing Challenges

Group dynamics

Every group will operate with a different group dynamic. Some people find it naturally easier to get on with others, and other people may find it more difficult to engage in a group situation.

Working to make sure every member who attends is included in the group in some way is key to running a successful peer group. This includes broadening topics of conversation so that everyone is interested and can have input, and running activities that all can participate in (in regard to cost, physical accessibility, and the level of knowledge required), as this will help make sure the group is inclusive and relevant.

A common behaviour to keep an eye on can be the formation of 'cliques'. These tend to happen naturally as people who have been in the group for longer start to get to get closer, and focus more on hanging out with each other than participating in the group and meeting new people. Creating discussions or activities that actively break up these cliques can help to make new members feel more welcome, rather than experiencing that feeling of 'everyone else knows each other already'.

Supporting those different to yourself

As an amazing facilitator for your group, you'll have a multitude of unique identities that will influence your role of being a facilitator. You may choose to label these identities or not. These identities might be related to your sexuality, gender, beliefs, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, a disability, etc.

Like you, your members will hold many intersecting identities. Their experience may vary from your own. Recognising this, and that you may have trouble relating to or understanding something someone says or does, is important to maintain a safe space for your group, and to make the individual members of your group feel supported.

Try to remember a time that you have felt left out or hurt because your sexuality or gender has been ignored, assumed, or insulted (even accidentally) by those around you. This is a common experience for other people with marginalised identities and experiences. Remaining open to hearing from people that feel they have been left out somehow, and putting in the effort to make the changes necessary, are characteristics and practices of great facilitators.

Language is one way we can practise and role model a celebration of diversity. Using inclusive language makes people feel validated. Using the right language, avoiding stereotypes, assumptions, and names that perpetuate negative ideas about marginalised identities such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia, and classism. We will make mistakes, so it's important to recognize the power of our words, admit our mistakes, and stay dedicated to using language that makes everyone feel included.

Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of any group of people that comes together. Conflict can arise for many reasons:

- Miscommunication between group members
- A group member disrespecting another member of the group
- Confusing the dislike of an idea with dislike of the person who expresses it

As a facilitator, your role is to de-escalate the conflict, and to maintain a safe space for all group members. Remain calm, acknowledge all sides of the conflict and the feelings of those involved.

Maintain the safe space of the group by making sure members maintain respect for each other, in accordance with the group kaupapa, kawa, and values. Ask everyone how they would like the conflict to be resolved.

If the conflict can't be resolved within the group space, you can bring the conflict to your group's supportive staff member or get in touch with InsideOUT for support.

Being an assertive facilitator

Often, people like to 'test the boundaries' of what they can do within a group by resisting your directions as a facilitator of the group. This is another type of conflict, and you may need to be more assertive in your facilitation of the group than you normally would feel comfortable with.

Speaking in a calm way, setting clear expectations of behaviour, and justifying these with the group's values can help to assert the expectations you have of group members, without having to resort to "Do as I say because I'm the facilitator".



Dealing with a crisis

As a facilitator for your group, you are never alone when dealing with a crisis. Crises can come in all shapes and sizes. For example:

- A young person is kicked out of home by their parents
- Someone has a medical emergency during a group meeting
- A young person tells you they are going to attempt suicide or harm themselves

Whatever type of crisis you experience, staying calm is an excellent first step to a good outcome. Take a few deep breaths before asking yourself, “What is the first step I need to take in order to resolve this?”

Make the person in crisis feel safe and welcome. Let them know you are here for them, and will listen to and help them as best you can.

Ask for help, as many times as you need to, until someone provides it.

If it is an emergency, or you feel that yourself or someone else is in danger, dial 111 straight away. If you’re worried that someone may attempt suicide, you can contact your local Mental Health Crisis Team by ringing Healthline on 0800 611 116.

No matter what the situation, if you are unsure whether you are experiencing a crisis, if there is something that you are not comfortable with, or if you’re not sure how to handle something, get in touch with your group’s supportive staff member, InsideOUT, or another person that you trust.



Disclosures

Disclosure is when someone tells you personal or confidential information, such as telling you that they are queer or trans, or that they have experienced a harmful behaviour, such as self-harm, sexual abuse, eating disorders, body dysphoria, family or relationship violence or physical abuse, or suicidal thoughts or intent. This may be the first time they have told anyone, and it was likely a very difficult thing for them to do.

Just like dealing with a crisis, the first step is to stay calm. Acknowledge any thoughts, emotions, or judgements you may have about what the person has just told you, then set these aside in your mind to focus on supporting the person effectively and appropriately.

Listen to the person, accept what they are saying as the truth about how they feel, and thank them for telling you and trusting you with this information. Reassure the person that you are here to support them, and that you will help them find any other support they might want or need.

Always treat what the person is telling you as confidential, and only share it with people who may need to know (e.g. your supportive staff member). The disclosure should remain confidential unless there is the potential of harm to the student or to someone else.

A great tool for showing you are listening to someone is to summarise what they have said, and say this back to them. This is called reflecting, and helps to confirm that you have correctly understood what they are saying to you.

After the disclosure, make sure to follow up with the person, and to put them in touch with any people or services that may be able to help support them. At the very least, tell other facilitators about the disclosure (if appropriate), or put the person in touch with a staff member who can help them.

Your school or educational facility may have additional support or guidance regarding disclosures, so it's worth asking a staff member for a copy of any relevant guidelines if available.

Self care

Self care is about looking after yourself, and making sure that you are okay before trying to look after others. Remember, the best way you can care for the needs of others is by taking care of your needs first.

Facilitating a group of young people can be hard work — dealing with group dynamics, thinking of something to do each session, having people disclose to you, and dealing with other crises can take a toll both physically and mentally.

Checking in with your fellow group facilitators or supportive staff member on a regular basis, such as just before or immediately after each session, can help share the load, and is another great way of making sure you are looking after yourself.

Setting personal boundaries

Sometimes group members can be a little too enthusiastic to get to know you. It is completely okay to keep your personal details (such as your phone number or email address) private and refrain from adding group members as friends on social media if you do not feel comfortable doing so. Instead, you could suggest they talk to the school guidance counsellor or ask them to join the group's social media page.

Another way of establishing boundaries is knowing the activities or topics of conversation which could trigger an intense emotional response, such as anger or sadness, for you and group members. Avoid these topics of conversation, or excuse yourself from the group when these topics do arise. This is an important tool in maintaining your calm **demeanour** as the facilitator of the group. If you're not sure on how to deal with particular topics when they come up, you can contact InsideOUT, or talk to the staff member supporting your group.

Every now and then you may experience a particularly challenging group, or have someone disclose something that is particularly distressing to you. Acknowledging these emotions and taking positive action to diffuse them is important. The ways which work best are different for everyone, but may be as simple as taking some time out for yourself, catching up with a group of friends at a cafe, or checking in with a staff member at InsideOUT.



Demeanour = behaviour or attitude. Basically, your vibe.

A few common challenges

While running a group, things might come up that you find difficult to deal with. We've addressed some common challenges below, but please contact us if you need further support.

What can you do if teachers aren't respecting you and/or taking you seriously?

- Having the support of another teacher or staff member can be helpful, as teachers will often respect their peers over their students.
- Bring the issue to senior staff if it is serious enough.
- Try reasoning with them, providing useful information, and explaining the problem.
- Ask InsideOUT for support – InsideOUT staff can help advocate for you, or help facilitate a conversation between you and the teachers.

What can you do if you have too many other commitments and are struggling to juggle them all?

- Delegate tasks, such as coming up with topics of discussion or providing food for the weekly meeting, to another member of the group.
- Organise your different commitments with a timetable or a diary.
- Having a co-leader or a deputy can also be helpful to take some of the workload. This way you can share ideas and tasks between the two of you.
- Let the group and your staff liaison know that you've got a lot on and ask them to help you out.

How can you get students from other year levels to join the group?

- Advertising your group in both junior and senior assemblies can be a good way to get members, especially if you offer food to those who come to meetings.
- Holding workshops about sexuality, sex characteristics, and gender diversity with younger year health classes can be a good way to introduce your group to younger students, as well as educating them.
- Speak in form classes across year levels about your group or events you are running.
- If you already have members from different year levels in your group, make this known to a wider audience. For example, having a junior and senior student speaking in assembly about your group shows that it's there for all students.



How can you deal with cliques within your group?

- It can be a good idea to have an introductory round either every week, or whenever a new member comes to the group, even if it is just names and pronouns.
- Have group discussions involving the entire group.
- Split the group into smaller groups for activities, telling them to join with people they don't know well yet.
- Discuss with your group the kind of environment you want to create. Prompt them to think of times when they have felt excluded — how did that feel? All work together to make sure the group is an inclusive and welcoming place for all members.
- Make an extra effort when a new member joins your group to welcome them, talk to them, and let them know you'd like to see them back next time.

What can you do if members of the group are fighting?

- The ultimate purpose of your group is to provide a space that is safe and supportive for all members. While this may seem redundant, it is something that people can lose sight of, and individuals may need reminding. There are many ways in which you can establish and maintain this.
- Talk to your guidance counsellor or staff liaison — you may need to organise a mediation between those who are fighting.



How can you talk about your group in assemblies and deal with any judgement?

- People respond to witty and clever presentations. Use “yes” language — that is, refrain from telling people they are not behaving correctly or aren't being supportive.
- Humour and light-heartedness often come across better than anger and seriousness to students.
- Make or play a video to engage your audience and draw the attention away from yourself.
- Make it clear that anyone can be part of the group to avoid people assuming it is only there for rainbow people. Sometimes having popular or respected student allies in the school who everyone knows (maybe they are the student leaders or peer mentors) standing up and supporting the group with you can make it harder for people to respond negatively.

How can you deal with concerns that the group is a space for sexual relationships?

- It works best to address the issue before it arises. Whenever discussing or advertising your group, maintain that the group is for support and making change, working to create a safe environment for the rainbow students within the school.
- Consider communicating clearly that the group is attended by many students who are busy with activities like crafts, watching a movie, organising a fundraiser, or having a political discussion.
- Reiterate that the group is for anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, sex, or gender.

What can you do if people think the group is pressuring people to ‘become rainbow’?

- Make it clear to anyone who suggests this that rainbow diversity groups do not encourage people to ‘become rainbow!’ They simply encourage everybody within them to feel safe and supported in who they are.
- It can be helpful to remind others that people in rainbow communities cannot be ‘made’ straight and cisgender simply by being exposed to straight and cisgender people, messages, or stories. Likewise, straight and cisgender people cannot be ‘made’ gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, or gender diverse just by being around people who are.



What can you do if your co-leader is not reliable?

- Ultimately the selection of a co-leader should be prefaced with a discussion about the responsibilities of the role and the potential candidate should be asked if they can commit to this.
- In the event a co-leader is not reliable or fulfilling their responsibilities, you should meet with them to find out the reason for their lack of commitment. Approach them in a way that gives them the benefit of the doubt. Personal factors or a lack of clarity about what they are supposed to be doing could be affecting their performance.
- If they can no longer commit to the role then do not force them to continue. If this is the case, it would be best to advertise for a new co-leader, who once assured of their responsibilities can commit to the role.

What can you do if straight, cisgender supporters are taking over your group and behaving negatively or not listening to the rainbow students?

- With the beginning of the group and introduction of new members, it should be established that the group is in fact intended to be a safe space to predominantly support rainbow individuals in the group.
- It could be wise to establish the role of friends and those who don't identify as part of the rainbow community, and what they need to do to be supportive. A good constructive activity for your group could be to advertise what it means to be supportive, as part of a school-wide campaign.
- Behaviour that contradicts the role of a supporter should be taken seriously, as it undermines the core function of the group. So, if negative behaviour does arise, firstly try to speak to them and explain how their behaviour is negative. If they continue to act accordingly once spoken to, it may be wise to ask them to leave the group, or get your staff liaison involved.
- Have an outside group in your community come in and do a session with the group on what it means to be supportive, or addressing other social issues (e.g. why it's not okay to say "that's so gay", even if you don't mean for it to be offensive).



What can you do if a teacher or guidance counsellor is being too controlling or spreading the wrong message about your group?

- Try to communicate that rainbow diversity groups are generally meant to be led by students.
- Try and tell your teacher if they are doing something wrong and explain why, e.g. transphobic behaviour. Remind them of the purpose of the group, or let them know that you think it would improve the group if they had more of a background role. Get another staff member involved to help you speak to them if needed.



Support for your Group

InsideOUT supports young people and schools all over Aotearoa in starting, strengthening, and sustaining rainbow diversity groups in their school to:

1. Create spaces where students can socialise in a safe environment
2. Provide support for students who might be facing issues such as bullying
3. Spread awareness about homophobia, biphobia, interphobia, transphobia, or other issues related to gender, sex characteristics and sexuality within the school.

Support for leaders

Our regional Schools Coordinators can work with you to set up or strengthen your group. This could involve visiting your rainbow diversity group, connecting you with rainbow diversity groups at nearby schools, working with school staff to help them understand the importance of you having a diversity group, running workshops for students, supporting you to advertise events or fundraisers you are running, and more!

We also run Shift Hui, a national gathering for rainbow and takatāpui youth to learn, develop and build support networks over an awesome weekend together. Shift Hui typically happens every April.

Find out more at insideout.org.nz/events

Support for staff

Staff Supporting Rainbow Diversity Groups (available from <https://insideout.org.nz/resources/>) is a companion resource to this one, for teachers, guidance counsellors and other school staff. It is intended to help staff to support your group.

Our regional Schools Coordinators can provide professional development and workshops for school staff. They can support staff to make changes in schools or to address any challenges staff may be facing. Encourage your staff liaison to connect with the InsideOUT Schools Coordinator in your region to discuss how they can help.

Resources and community support

InsideOUT.org.nz – free resources, posters, campaign info, schools support, volunteer opportunities, training and consultancy
<http://www.insideout.org.nz>

Takatapui.nz – a resource hub for takatāpui and whānau.
<https://takatapui.nz/>

Genderminorities.com – resources for trans and gender diverse people, friends and whānau in Aotearoa
<http://www.genderminorities.com>

Intersex Aotearoa – an intersex-led non-profit organisation that provides affirmation, advocacy and referral for intersex people and their whānau.
<https://www.intersexaotearoa.org/>

RainbowYOUTH – an organisation providing support for queer, trans and intersex youth in Aotearoa. Their website has lots of helpful resources.
<https://ry.org.nz/>

Legal Rights at School – a resource for students to advocate for their legal rights at school.
<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Legal-Rights-at-School.pdf>

Resources for teachers

Starting and Strengthening Rainbow Diversity Groups – a resource for staff supporting rainbow diversity groups
<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Staff-Supporting-Rainbow-Diversity-Groups.pdf>

Creating Rainbow-Inclusive School Policies and Procedures – a resource for school boards, teachers, guidance counsellors, and school communities.
<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Creating-rainbow-inclusive-school-policies-and-procedures.pdf>

Making Schools Safer – a resource providing information and guidance for schools to create safer and more inclusive environments for their trans, gender diverse and intersex students.

Join this Chariot – a resource for Christian schools supporting rainbow students' wellbeing
<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Join-this-Chariot-2023.pdf>

What we wish our teachers knew (InterACT Youth)
<https://www.genderinclusivebiology.com/newsletter/what-we-wish-our-teachers-knew-brochure-from-interact-advocates>

PPTA Rainbow Taskforce – the post-primary teachers' association taskforce for safer schools in Aotearoa

<https://www.ppta.org.nz/communities/lgbtiq/>

Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidelines – suggestions from the Ministry of Education

<https://hpe.tki.org.nz/guidelines-and-policies/relationships-and-sexuality-education/>

Teaching and Learning Resources

Rainbow Tamariki – listen to the voices of rainbow tamariki and whānau at primary and intermediate schools in Aotearoa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LT5llhHKGrU&ab_channel=InsideOUT

More Than Four – a video resource on rainbow identities in Aotearoa.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4lyxUW1_5XNS-3tgA3dw3LpYNUzxTmvk

Inside Out – a sexuality and gender teaching resource

<https://insideout.ry.org.nz>

Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau – a resource where takatāpui, whānau, and communities share stories and information about identity, wellbeing, and suicide prevention

<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/takatapui-part-of-the-whanau>

Rainbow Young Peoples' Experiences in Sport – a video resource of transgender rangatahi and their whānau sharing their experiences with sport and active recreation.

<https://sportnz.org.nz/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/transgender-and-rainbow-inclusion/rainbow-awareness-and-inclusion-animated-video/>

Health Resources

Be There – a resource for whānau supporting rainbow loved ones.

<https://www.be-there.nz/>

OutLine Aotearoa (0800 688 5463) – confidential, all-ages, free support line, rainbow specialist counselling and peer support . Phone line is open from 6-9pm, and a chat service and face-to-face sessions are also available.

<http://www.outline.org.nz/>

Professional Association of Transgender Health Aotearoa (PATHA) – a network for people

working in transgender health. PATHA has developed Aotearoa-specific guidelines and resources for supporting trans, non-binary and gender diverse people. There is also an email discussion list for members.

<https://patha.nz/>

rainbowmentalhealth.nz – a resource for mental health professionals that provides accessible explanations of terms and outlines mental health challenges for rainbow communities. Posters are also available to download for free.

Anti-bullying

Ending Rainbow-Focused Bullying and Discrimination – a workbook for schools creating inclusive and caring learning environments for all students

<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Ending-Rainbow-Focused-Bullying-and-Discrimination.pdf>

Bullying Free NZ – a online guide on preventing bullying in Aotearoa

<https://www.bullyingfree.nz/>

Pink Shirt Day – a national anti-bullying campaign

<https://pinkshirtday.org.nz/>

Surveys and Reports

Youth19 Brief: Transgender and Gender Diverse Students – a report on findings on transgender and gender diverse students from an anonymous survey on high school students in Aotearoa

<https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications/transgender-and-diverse-students-brief>

Youth19 Brief: Same and Multiple-Sex Attracted Students – a report on findings on same and both-sex attracted students from an anonymous survey on high school students in Aotearoa

<https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications/same-and-multiple-sex-attracted-students-brief>

Youth19 Negotiating Multiple Identities Report – a report on findings on intersecting identities from an anonymous survey on high school students in Aotearoa

<https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications/negotiating-multiple-identities-report>

Counting Ourselves – an anonymous health survey designed by and for trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa

<https://countingourselves.nz/>

Identify Survey community and advocacy report – a survey of the experiences of rainbow young people aged between 14 and 26 in Aotearoa

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60187146e9f9034475dea113/t/6390e802bd4e535d10b72a17/1670440980159/community_advocacy_report.pdf

Statistics New Zealand: LGBT+ population of Aotearoa June 2021 – statistics on the LGBT+ population in Aotearoa

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/lgbt-plus-population-of-aotearoa-year-ended-june-2021/>

Answers to quiz on page 13

About what percentage of secondary schools have a rainbow diversity group?

d) 85%

What does 'QSA' stand for?

Queer-Straight Alliance

Who runs a rainbow and takatāpui diversity group?

b) Students with the support of staff

What is the **Support** function of a group about?

c) to provide students with opportunities to discuss and learn more about a wide range of struggles, and lift each other up.

What is the **Action** function of a group about?

a) Advocating for positive change in the school, the wider community, or in education.

What is the **Social** function of a group about?

c) All of the above

Terminology

The meanings for some of the terms used in this resource, as well as other identities that rainbow people may use to describe themselves, are on the InsideOUT website. A term may mean something slightly different for everyone who identifies with it.

The list will update and change to keep the definitions current, so we encourage you to print your own.

<https://insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/InsideOUT-rainbow-terminology-2023.pdf>



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