

Discussion Guide for Teachers  
Interview with Madeline Stevens  
Interviewer: Brittany Wilkins  
Date of interview: February 25, 2011

This is an up-close and personal interview with Madeline Stevens, who helped to start a Gay-Straight Alliance at Potsdam High School in Potsdam, New York. The interviewer started by talking with Stevens about her personal background and how she became interested and involved with the Gay-Straight Alliance. Then we progressed to a discussion of what the organization has done so far, her goals for the future, and the changes she would like to see at the state and national levels of government in the near or distant future.

**Discussion questions:**

- What do you think about the idea of having a Gay-Straight Alliance club in high school? Why?
- Do you think only LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) students should join a Gay-Straight Alliance? Why or why not?
- If you were the president of a Gay-Straight Alliance, what events would you sponsor to try to get more members?
- In 2011, at Flour Bluff High School in Corpus Christi, Texas, Nikki Peet asked for a safe space for students to meet and discuss anti-gay bullying, but her request was initially denied by the superintendent. Why do you think this happened? (You might want to surf the web to find out more about this case.)
- Why do you think that gay teenagers are more likely to commit suicide than teenagers who are not gay?
- Do you think that gay people will always be discriminated against?
- There is a campaign on Youtube for gay teens called “It Gets Better,” and on Facebook, there are several groups you can “like” to find out more about LGBT issues. To what extent do you think social networking sites help to end discrimination?
- Do you think that it gets better for LGBT students after they graduate from high school?
- Some teenagers find it hard to tell their friends that they are gay or questioning their sexuality. How would you react if someone with whom you are very close told you that he or she was gay?
- Some cities have schools specifically for gay students. Do you think that this will help gay students? Do you think this will make it harder for gay students to fit in with those who are not gay?
- Some religious groups allow Gay-Straight Alliances to hold meetings in their buildings, while others do not. Why do you think this is?
- Sometimes students who are not gay are discriminated against for standing up for people who are gay. Why do you think this is?
- What are some stereotypes or assumptions you’ve heard about gay people?
- When did you first talk to someone who was gay?