

DIVERSIFY OUR NARRATIVE

Affinity Group Guides

Diversify Our Narrative: Houston Private Schools

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If you have any questions or need extra guidance, do not hesitate to reach out to us via email diversifyournarrative.hps@gmail.com

How do Affinity Groups relate to DON's mission?

Since DON is dedicated to working to fight for DEI in schools and an antiracist future, having affinity groups, or safe spaces for underrepresented students, provides spaces of safe dialogue and understanding between students of shared identities. DON Chapters can work to establish them at their schools to help deliver inclusive spaces for underrepresented students. Affinity groups can also collaborate with DON to host educational forums related to issues prevalent in their communities, which connects to DON's educational mission. It is important to keep in mind that these educational forums are the first step in creating change in the education space and we must not stop there. After hosting a forum, push to implement your story in your school's curriculum because it is essential that our schools teach our stories. Affinity groups provide a balance of community, enjoyment, and dialogue about critical social issues. Affinity groups provide this space and can work with DON to expand their community-specific messages. The most important aspect about affinity groups is that they allow us to teach and share our community-specific stories so that we speak through the "I" perspective and are able to be vulnerable and honest with our stories.

Why did we create this guide?

We first noticed the issue of a lack of safe spaces for underrepresented students with shared identities when we heard from one of our board members about her school's refusal to allow affinity groups in her school. We worked with her to try to establish an affinity group at her school, but the resistant board of trustees shut us down. We ended up helping her create a South Asian Culture Club, but this lacked the safe and inclusive space for individuals of a shared underrepresented identity that affinity groups provide. Currently, we are working to mobilize students from this highschool to fight for affinity group establishment. After our experience with our board member, we knew we had to help other students who did not have access to these spaces in their schools. So, we created this comprehensive guide with instructive steps and event ideas. Please do not hesitate to reach out about any issues you have with your schools, we will fight with you.

Affinity Group Examples: A collection of individuals who share a common identity characteristic. Click the links for more specific event ideas.

- [Latine Affinity Group](#)
- [South Asian Affinity Group](#)
- [East Asian Affinity Group](#)

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- [African American Affinity Group](#)
- [Women of Color Affinity Group](#)
- [Middle Eastern and North African Affinity Group](#)
- [Muslim Affinity Group](#)
- [Jewish Affinity Group](#)
- [Indigenous Affinity Group](#)

Other Identity-Related Group Examples: Groups such as these are important for instilling solidarity between groups and also providing spaces for students of color with intersectional identities.

- [LGBTQ+ Affinity Group](#)
- [Women Empowerment Affinity Group](#)

General Steps for the creation of an Affinity Group:

- Reach out to a teacher/faculty member that you would like as the affinity group sponsor. Usually you will need a list of ~6 students interested in joining the club, so reach out to fellow students who are interested in joining.
- Reach out to your school's administration with a proposal/fill out your school's club proposal form.
 - Here is a general email template.
 - [Administrator Affinity Group Proposal](#)
- Recruit members
 - Make a social media account.
 - Create a GroupMe and email list to keep your group connected.
 - Create a poster for your school's club fair and make sure to have QR codes for the email list, GroupMe, and social media (make sure to bring some treats as an incentive to join).
 - Also, employ word-of-mouth to recruit more members.
- Your first meeting!
 - Congrats! This is a big step and is super important in the establishment of your group.
 - You can reach out to your sponsor to hold this meeting in their room. Normally, sponsors are required to be in attendance at all meetings.
 - This meeting will be general and you can host ice-breakers and other fun games.
 - For example, members could share their countries of origin (if comfortable), favorite cultural food/s, and favorite artist of that shared identity.
 - Make sure to bring food to encourage attendance.

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Mateo & Aashna's Community Building Event Ideas for DON Organizers!

Other Events/Ideas:

- Educational forums (you might have to reach out to administration for approval, so please consider that)
 - These can be a great way to spread information on issues and topics pertaining to your community to other members of your group as well as your school.
 - Keep in mind, DON is about creating change, so this is the first step in assembling a community of individuals who will help you fight for an antiracist future.
 - Ways to further your impact in education after these forums is working to implement these resources and topics in your school's curriculum so that we can teach our stories in schools.
 - You can create slideshows, bring a guest speaker, or find a different way to relay the information.
 - Some forum topic examples include Abuse of Undocumented Immigrants in the United States, Anti-Semitism, Colorism in South Asian Communities, Introduction to Ramadan, Environmental Justice, and Indigenous Influence on Latinidad.
 - Make sure you talk about the issue but also leave room for discussion. Consider creating a script in addition to your presentation if you have one.
 - Here is an example of a successful forum we hosted:
 -  Immigrants' Rights.pdf
- Potlucks
 - One important aspect of DON's mission is teaching our stories. By sharing important aspects of our cultural identities through gathering with traditional food, we can help engage the student body and let them hear us.
 - These can be closed, as in just within the affinity group, or open, sharing your food with the school community
- Assemblies (if your school permits)
 - Similar to forums, these can involve presentations or guest speakers discussing a particular topic specific to the group
 - Another assembly idea is sharing your culture through dance or art
 - Have fun with it! You can interview students, make a video, etc. Be creative!
- Out-of-school events
 - You could organize movie nights, potlucks, game nights, and other fun out-of-school events.
 - For these events, it's important that everyone feels comfortable and not out-of-place, so please make sure to be family-friendly.
- Collaborations with other affinity groups

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- These events are a great way to further establish unity in the student body and are essential in promoting solidarity between underrepresented communities!
- You could host out-of-school game nights or potlucks at somebody's house.
 - For example, at our school, we had a collaboration of the Latine Affinity Group and East Asian Affinity Group where we brought fun board games, food from our countries, and had a great time.
- Instagram posts
 - Instagram post highlighting authors (of the shared identity) and essential literature.
 - Post highlighting artists and you could create a spotify playlist that members could add to, and then you could share it to the student body to spotlight important artists part of your community and unite the student body through music.
- Big sib-little sib
 - Pair upperclassmen with underclassmen and host bonding events where underclassmen can bond and receive guidance from their upper school mentors.
 - In spaces such as PWIs, students of underrepresented backgrounds may not feel that they have someone whom they can relate to, and by having this program you can give these students an individual they can learn from with shared experiences. This will ensure equity in schools because it will provide students from underrepresented backgrounds with the representation they deserve.
- Volunteering
 - Host a meeting inviting members to volunteer at cultural centers and other events important to your community.
 - For example, in Houston, Texas, the Latine Affinity Group has volunteered at [MECA](#), a community-based non-profit BIPOC organization, at the *Día de los Muertos Festival*. Look for community organizations such as this one in your area and contact them for a community-service based collaboration.
- Alumni Panel
 - Members can interact with school alumni of shared identities and discuss the navigation of life after high school.
 - These events are important in connecting students of underrepresented identities with alumni who have navigated career spaces and spaces of higher education and allows for mentorship and guidance.
- Back-to-school parties
 - These events are essential in welcoming freshmen to highschool and providing them with a sense of community as they navigate high school.
 - Reach out to the administration for emails to send an invitation to.
- Book displays

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- Reach out to your school's librarians to set up a book display in the library to highlight authors of a shared identity.
 - With the rise in book banning across the United States, it's important that students have access to diverse works of literature, and these displays are a great way to spotlight not only the literature of your community, but the diversity of literature.
- Affinity groups could host these displays during specific months.
 - For example, the African American Affinity Group could host theirs during Black History Month.