Be LOUD
Stay VISIBLE
Choose PRIDE

EQUALITY

PRIDE SAFETY TOOLKIT
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On June 5, 2022 anti-LGBTQ+ protesters gathered outside a family-friendly drag performance in Dallas, Texas. Organized by several groups with a history of harassing and spreading lies about the LGBTQ+ community. They shouted at patrons, photographed and videoed performers, and threatened the safety of those at the event.

And the recent arrest of 31 white nationalists in Idaho, several from Texas, who were planning to riot at a Pride event has heightened the need for safety planning at our celebrations.

The invasion of safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people by those who would do us harm is nothing new to our community. Every Pride season we must balance the joy of celebrating our diversity with the reality of providing safety and security for those who participate in our celebrations.

With the increased vitriol being leveled at LGBTQ+ Texans by politicians, organizations, and activists, this year it is even more important to prioritize making our safe spaces as safe as they can possibly be for all.

The purpose of this toolkit is to help Pride event organizers incorporate safety plans into their events that give attendees the tools they need to act appropriately in the event that they feel their safety is in jeopardy.

Emergencies and specific threats should always be directed to the appropriate authorities.
BE PRO-ACTIVE

THINGS YOU CAN DO BEFORE YOUR EVENT

- If you're a lead organizer for your Pride event, make sure your social media accounts are locked down. Anti-LGBTQ+ activists troll on social media accounts to get access to information and by setting your profiles to private and not adding people you don’t know as followers, you can help make it more difficult for them to find information or potentially doxx you.

- Set Google alerts for your pride event. This can help you find mentions of your event(s) on blogs and message boards as well as news articles or pseudo-news sites.

- Check the social media accounts or sign-up to the email list-servers for some of the most notable anti-LGBTQ+ organizations in Texas. You may want to use an email separate from your personal account or a Twitter account that is not associated with your personal account. Some of those organizations include, but are not limited to:
  - Texas Values, Twitter - @TxValuesAction
  - Protect Texas Kids, Twitter - @protect_tx_kids

ACLU LEGAL OBSERVERS

Our partners at the ACLU of Texas have a legal observer program for public demonstrations and events. These trained observers can be on hand at your event to ensure that your rights and the rights of your attendees are safeguarded from mistreatment.

To request legal observers for your event, contact Lauren Coffee at the ACLU of Texas at lcoffee@aclutx.org.

DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

Consider whether staff and volunteers should receive de-escalation training.

Here are some resources:
Crisis Prevention Institute [article]
Dartmouth Trauma Interventions Research Center [video]
DURING YOUR EVENT

BE MINDFUL OF PEOPLE YOU DO NOT KNOW TAKING PHOTOS OR VIDEOS - ESPECIALLY OF CHILDREN

- Too often anti-LGBTQ+ activists will post photos of children at Pride events without the consent of them or their parents. Some anti-LGBTQ+ organizations have also attempted to doxx attendees or organizers and directed their followers to harass or intimidate those individuals. If you see someone taking photos and you do not want to be included, remove yourself (or your loved ones) from the situation, wear a mask or ask the person to stop.

AVOID DOING “INTERVIEWS” WITH INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO BE MEDIA OR PRESS

- Oftentimes opposition activists pretend that they are journalists and will ask to get you on video answering questions. They then edit that video or play it out context as a means to amplify their anti-LGBTQ+ positions. Always be weary when someone asks to shoot a video of you.

DO NOT ENGAGE

- It is important to not engage with opposition protesters whenever possible. Often they will attend our Pride events hoping to have encounters with attendees and then recording those encounters. The best practice is to keep your distance and not engage with them.

Engaging with anti-LGBTQ+ activists does not change their mind(s) and may only put your safety in jeopardy. Keep your distance whenever possible.
COMMUNICATE WITH ATTENDEES

Let folks know about the potential risks associated with opposition protesters demonstrating at your event, or attending your event(s).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATTENDEES

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Have a general awareness of the location of pride events and designate a secondary location to meet-up with people in the event that you are separated
- Designate places like 24-hour businesses as safe spaces for individuals to go if they feel unsafe
- Encourage folks to report suspicious activity if they feel threatened or unsafe
- In the event of a situation where someone feels threatened or unsafe, people should remove themselves from the situation as quickly as possible
- Encourage people to not attend events alone, but to have a “Pride buddy” that can act as an accountability buddy and safety plan with them
- Establish a method for attendees to report suspicious behavior, like a number they can text or a single individual as a point of contact

It’s important that people are aware of security measures so they can make an informed decision of whether to attend.

- **Do disclose**: presence/absence of police *(and why)*, organizers are aware of risks and monitoring the situation, suggestion for personal safety plan *(ex: have a meet-up spot in case you get separated)*, presence of legal observers, existence of backup plan *(ex: secondary location to meet)* and notice of where attendees can find updates about the event(s)
- **Don’t disclose**: surveillance methods, names of opposition groups, secondary location(s)

If you are not partnering with local law enforcement:

- Remind attendees of historical/current issues with police presence for queer/BIPOC community members
- Assure people they retain the right to call police in case of an emergency or threat to safety
**THINGS TO CONSIDER**

**OPPOSITION PROTESTERS**

It is possible that protesters could show up in opposition to your event. The most important thing to remember is **DO NOT ENGAGE** with opposition protesters. Engaging with them simply gives them what they want. We know that sometimes it is tempting to get drawn into debates with opponents, but we strongly advise against any interaction.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Like many marginalized groups, the queer community has a complicated relationship with law enforcement. The Stonewall uprising was sparked by police violence and intimidation, and police violence against black and brown bodies is still a crisis in our country today. It is perfectly understandable if your Pride celebration has no involvement from law enforcement. However, attendees should feel comfortable dialing 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency or if they feel their safety is being jeopardized by anti-LGBTQ+ activists.

Some Pride celebrations are required to utilize local law enforcement as a result of permitting requirements by their town/city. If this is the case for your celebration, make sure officers know about the potential for threats and protestors. Some larger cities have LGBTQ+ liaison officers working within their police departments. In that instance, be proactive about engaging liaison officers and work with them to ensure there is a plan in place to deal with disruptions and guarantee the safety of your participants.

Ask law enforcement about the possibility of creating a “Free Speech” zone outside of your event where protesters will be required to demonstrate. When possible, this will help your attendees know what area(s) to avoid to stay clear of protesters.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DEMONSTRATION MARSHAL GUIDEBOOK

The Department of Justice has prepared a document that helps detail roles within a demonstration or march designed to keep attendees safe. You can access it online here.

CONSIDER USING FLAGS OR A 'RAINBOW WALL' TO BLOCK PROTESTORS

Having volunteers in a position to shield your attendees from protesters using flags or an easy to assemble rainbow wall (made out of inexpensive vinyl tablecloths) can also be effective.

REPORT INCIDENTS TO EQUALITY TEXAS

If an incident occurs at your Pride celebration, report it to info@equalitytexas.org so we can help keep track of any organized efforts to disrupt Pride celebrations. If possible, include as many details and photos/videos of protesters as possible.
THANK YOU!

www.equalitytexas.org