



10 STEPS TO TAKING ACTION

1. Team up

If you want to make change happen in your school or community, you don't have to do it alone. In fact, you'll be more effective and more creative if the effort isn't "mine" but "ours." Call on your friends to ask if they want to join your group. Find an adult advisor.

2. Meet

Pick meeting times and places that work for the majority. Send e-cards or memos to those who couldn't make the meeting, describing what was discussed and asking for their input. Keep talking.

3. Zero in

What is the specific action idea that your group agreed to take on? Think about how you could make this idea workable. For example, instead of taking on a huge problem like "-racism," focus on particular ways racism is creating divisions at your school. Identify -specific actions you will take.

4. Do your homework

Learn more about the issue you want to tackle. Conduct a survey to find out how often something happens, or how students see a particular problem. Find out how others have worked to create change around an issue like yours. Check out books from the school library or do an Internet search. Brainstorm with your group to come up with original, creative ideas.

5. Create a project plan

Now it is time to do some specific planning for your project. Will you need help from adults or other people? Set goals; assign roles and responsibilities. What specific tactics will the group use to raise awareness about the problem or to effect change? Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Do you need money to implement your project? Do you need to get a permit? Who's going to do those things and when?

6. Take action

Mix It Up on the dance floor. Hit the streets. Hit the airwaves. Put pen to paper. Speak out at a school assembly. Put up an exhibit. Implement your plan, whatever it is.

7. Document your efforts

Keep good notes as you go along. A record of events will help you keep track of remaining tasks, as well as the group's accomplishments. Clip stories from school and community newspapers. Take pictures or film your "action event."

8. Assess progress

Debrief after you finish your action project. How'd it go? What worked? What didn't? What should be done differently — or the same — next time?

9. Share your experiences

Students all across the U.S. — even people in other countries — are looking for good ideas about how to create more inclusive environments. Share your ideas, your successes and even the pitfalls you encountered. Write a Mix It Up story, create an online photo-essay exhibit, publish a booklet or produce a documentary short film about your efforts.

10. Look long-range

As you celebrate the completion of your project, start planning for the future. What's next? (See #1, above.)