



Advocacy &
Services for
LGBT Elders

We refuse to be invisible

Stonewall OutLoud and Senior Living Communities

Stonewall OutLoud is an exciting opportunity to interview LGBT older adults and make sure their stories are recorded for posterity. There are some important things to consider before hosting an event in a long-term care, assisted living, or other senior living community.

Many LGBT older adults are in the closet and afraid to openly identify as members of the LGBT community. The benefit of these events is that they engage residents and staff in important conversations about LGBT history, but people having more conversations about LGBT topics might make someone who is in the closet feel heightened anxiety or stress. This is why we recommend the following:

1. Make it clear that everyone can participate, and just because someone participates in the event that does not mean that they identify as LGBT. Encourage people to sign up as interviewers. Residents do not need to talk about their own identity, they can talk about their memories of the LGBT movement, or LGBT friends or family members. Making the event for everyone will help remove the worry that participation is the same thing as coming out, or that participating will make other community members think the participant is LGBT.
2. Let people know they do not need to use their real name. Someone may want to record a memory, but be afraid of being recognized. Let them choose a different name, or change identifying details in their story. Make sure the interviewers maintain privacy and do not repeat the story or identify the story teller. Each interview should be conducted in a quiet and private space.
3. There might be residents who you think are LGBT, but do not ask anyone directly or individually if they want to be involved, and nobody should feel like they are being singled out. Instead, make sure that everyone knows about the event and has the opportunity to join in, and get the word out in group settings and through posters or other mass communications.

We hope that these events capture interesting stories and get your staff and residents talking about LGBT inclusion. For more information on training opportunities and other resources to make your senior living community LGBT-inclusive, please visit the SAGECare program at www.sageusa.care