

I'M COMING OUT: TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR COMING OUT IN LATER LIFE

National Resource Center
on LGBT Aging
National Headquarters
c/o Services & Advocacy
for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
305 Seventh Avenue
6th Floor
New York, NY 10001

212-741-2247 phone
212-366-1947 fax

info@lgbtagingcenter.org
lgbtagingcenter.org

Youth and young adults are often the focus when speaking of coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT). The truth is people come out at all ages and stages in life. It's not uncommon for people to self-identify as LGBT long before they come out to family and friends. Regardless of age, the coming out process is personal and can be filled with mixed moments of relief, celebration, anxiety, and stress as people step into what they may know as living their authentic lives.

If you are an older adult ready to come out, know that you are not alone. Keep the following tips in mind as you explore coming out as LGBT in later life. A list of resources is provided at the end of this document for continued support and learning as you come out to family, friends, and others in your life.

Coming Out Tips

- **Coming out is personal** – Only you can decide when and if to come out. It is okay to start slowly and share that you are LGBT with those closest to you. Ask them to respect your privacy and not share with others until you are ready.
- **Educate Yourself** – There are several website resources, support groups, books, and movies that can help you answer sexual orientation and gender identity questions. Search the internet using the term “Coming Out in Later Life.”
- **Connect with Community** – Finding community through social groups can be very empowering as you come out. There are often meet-up groups, social clubs, Facebook groups, and other opportunities for connecting with the community. Search the internet for LGBT Older Adults to find local groups and resources.
- **Consider Counseling** – It is often encouraged to establish a therapeutic relationship with a counselor to support coming out. An LGBT affirming counselor can help you explore your coming process and work with you as you begin coming out to family and friends.
- **Spiritual/Religious Support** – Reconciling faith beliefs may be challenging when coming out. Today there are several LGBT welcoming and affirming spiritual and faith traditions that you can seek out for support.

Remember – while many family, friends, and acquaintances may have questions, it is not your responsibility to educate them on all things LGBT. It may be helpful to refer your family and friends to organizations such as SAGE or PFLAG for additional resources and support in their learning process.

Resources You Can Use

Bisexual Resource Center (biresource.org/) - works to connect the bi+ community and help members thrive with resources, support, and celebration.

Center Link (lgbtcenter.org) - links the LGBT Community across the country.

FORGE Transgender Aging Network - (forge-forward.org/resources/aging/) providing support and resources of older transgender people and their significant others.

GLMA (glma.org/) - a searchable database of health and mental health providers who are LGBT affirming.

SAGE (sageusa.org) - the largest and oldest nonprofit dedicated to providing advocacy and services to older LGBT people. Programs through SAGE that may of interest include:

- SAGE Affiliate Network with programs across the country.
- SAGEConnect is a safe and easy way to connect with a volunteer for friendly conversations and connection to the community.
- SAGE NYC Centers provides opportunities to meet other LGBT New Yorkers at the center closest to you.
- SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline a 24/7 hotline available for older LGBT people in English and Spanish. Call 1-877-360-5428 for support, information, and referral.

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (lgbtagingcenter.org/comingout) - providing resources and education on LGBT aging including coming out resources.

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (oloc.org/) – provides list of virtual events and chapters across the country.

PFLAG (www.pflag.org/)-provides 400 chapters across the country providing support to LGBTQ+ people, their family, friends, and allies. There are also a number of faith-based resources including Christian, Jewish, and Muslim).

PrimeTimers (theprimetimersww.com/) - provides list of chapters and events across the country designed to enrich with lives of gay and bisexual men.

Zami Nobla (zaminobla.org/) - National Organization of Black Lesbians on Aging provides list of resources and events.