

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

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Youth and young adults are often the focus when speaking of coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+). The truth is people come out at all ages and stages in life. It's not uncommon for people to self-identify as LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+. 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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:

- SAGECollab is a network of LGBTQ+ programs across the country.
- SAGEYou provides an online community and resources built around community, care, and lifelong discovery.
- SAGE NYC Centers provides opportunities to meet other LGBTQ+ New Yorkers at the center closest to you.

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (lgbtagingcenter.org/comingout) - providing resources and education on LGBTQ+ 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.