

PARTNER AND PLAN HOSTING A STONEWALL OUTLOUD EVENT

A StoryCorps OutLoud event can be as simple as having a few friends over for dinner, or creating a public event in partnership with a nonprofit organization, elder home, or faith community. Regardless of what you do, you can infuse the event with a celebratory spirit of Pride while acknowledging that, for some, the stories and memories that come up may be challenging. There are many ways to structure an event that will honor and bring attention to this important moment in American history. Here are some formats to consider:

o CONTACT

Contact your local LGBTQ center, an inclusive faith community, or public community center to host a Stonewall OutLoud Story Party.

o GATHER

Gather a group of friends in your home and invite each one to bring someone from outside your age group.

o WORK

Work with people or groups planning Pride events in your community to identify an opportune time and place for storytelling.

o FIND

Find a space in your community that has historic meaning and host a Stonewall OutLoud event there.

o WORK TOGETHER

Work together with a senior center, one that houses LGBTQ people or one committed to eliciting and sharing the wisdom and stories of its residents.

o CONTACT

Contact youth groups or youth-led organizations to introduce a new generation to the history of Stonewall and the power of storytelling.

SAGE, a StoryCorps partner that works with LGBTQ elders across the country, has created a series of [SAGE Table](#) events to create intergenerational community over a shared meal. It offers some advice for planning an intergenerational event with special consideration for difference across physical ability and income:

- o Consider the sound level — will everyone be able to hear?
- o If there is a cost associated with your event, will you offer a sliding scale or suggested donation that varies for those for whom the cost might be prohibitive?
- o Is there an elevator and/or flexible seating for people who have difficulty walking or are using wheelchairs?

STONEWALL-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The story of Stonewall is one that invites reflection on the intersecting identities of many LGBTQ people. Sharing the history of the Stonewall riots and fostering connections across generations suggests some special considerations:

HONOR THE LEADERS.

The Stonewall riots were begun by transgender women of color who fought back against police violence and harassment. Fifty years later, transgender women of color are still [disproportionately affected by violence and harassment](#). As such, it is an important time to recognize their contributions to this important history and the urgent need to protect their rights.

WELCOME EVERYONE.

LGBTQ elders in general community settings, and others, may not feel free or safe to be “out” about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Furthermore, people in different parts of the country, even in different parts of the same state, have differing access to care, services, and acceptance based on their sexual and gender identity. If your event is welcoming to all, everyone will feel welcome and that their attendance won’t bring unwanted harm or attention, or out them unintentionally.

HOLD SPACE FOR EMOTION.

Elders in the community who remember the beginnings of the LGBTQ rights movement may hold traumatic and difficult memories of what life was like before and since Stonewall. Young people might also be reminded of difficult events in their own lives. Before your event, check with your local LGBTQ center or access national resources like these listed on StoryCorps’ partner [GLSEN’s website](#) for helping hotlines and resources to offer support.

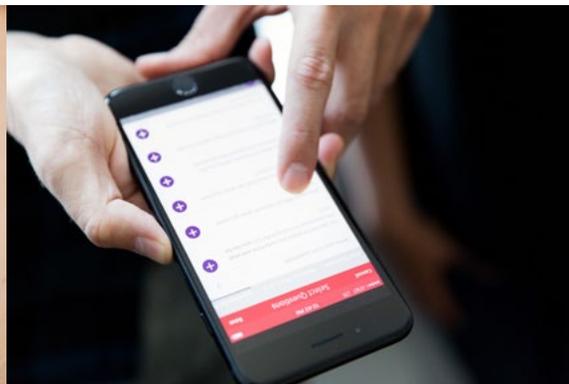
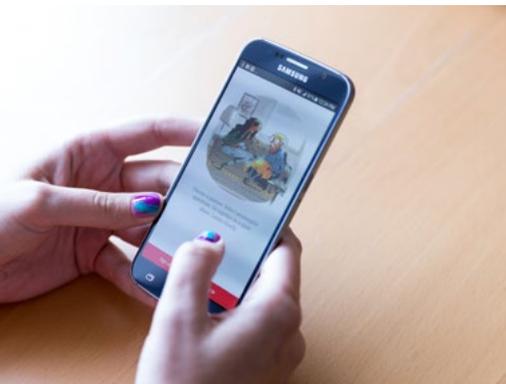
PAY ATTENTION TO WORDS.

The language people use to refer to themselves and others may be very different for older and younger people, for people of color, for people from rural and urban areas, etc. For example, while the word “queer” represents a proud identity for many people in the younger generation, elders may hear the word as an insult. Conversely, words older people use may sound off-putting to young people. Invite guests to get curious about these differences. The best practice is to learn about why people use the words they do, and respect the language choices people make about themselves.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STONEWALL OUTLOUD EVENTS

If you are planning an event, the following ideas can be used separately or together to build towards recording stories and uploading them to the StoryCorps App with your event attendees. Whatever your intention, remember that some people may be experienced with telling their story, while for others this may be the first time they have shared this part of their lives. Keep in mind that the tone and feel of an event may be quite different if you invite the public and people are meeting one another for the first time than it would be if you invite a group of friends or colleagues who know one another well.

If you are hosting an event in partnership with or at an elder living center, please consult this fact sheet from SAGE for tips on working with LGBT elders.





EVENT IDEA: LISTENING

The centerpiece of any StoryCorps event is listening. Listening is a skill to be learned and honed. Here are the steps to hosting a listening event.

- Open the event with an exercise to enable your guests to get to know each other in a way that centers on listening.
- Have guests pair up with a person they don't know well. If your event has an intergenerational theme, invite them to pair with someone they perceive to be a different age from themselves.
- Explain that the pairs are going to get to know one another with a listening exercise. They'll decide between them who will be the first listener and the first speaker. The first listener will pose a thoughtful question. The first speaker will then get ten seconds to think, and one minute to answer. During that time, the listener's job is simply to listen. They can ask a probing question if the speaker gets stuck, but can't offer new information about themselves. After that minute, the pairs change roles. The second listener will choose a question and offer the second speaker ten seconds to think and one minute to answer.

Here are some sample thoughtful questions recommended by StoryCorps partner SAGE, whose [SAGE Table](#) events bring people of mixed generations together to share a meal and create community:

- In your opinion, what was the defining event of your generation?
- Tell me about a person in your family, or your chosen family, with whom you are particularly close. What's a favorite memory of them?

When both in the pair have had a chance to speak and to listen, ask the group to talk about their experience.

- How was this different than normal conversation?
- How did it feel to listen without responding?
- How did it feel to speak to someone whose only job was to listen?
- What does the group think this exercise has to do with storytelling?

After your listening exercise, invite the group to watch and/or listen to a few StoryCorps stories from the playlist or from the [StoryCorps OutLoud](#) collection. After each, elicit discussion by asking:

- What did you hear in this story that stood out to you?
- Why do stories like this one matter?
- In what ways does listening to this story make you reflect on our own life?

You can close the event by reflecting on the experience with a paired or group discussion.

- What was the experience like of listening to this collection of stories?
- What was different about these stories than everyday conversation you have with people you are close to?
- What does storytelling mean to you and your community?
- Did the stories make you think of someone in your life whose story you would like to learn more about?
- What will you share with your friends or family about this event?





EVENT IDEA: SHARING

With this event, use the initial steps of the listening event, but make story sharing a big feature of the event. Limit the number of StoryCorps stories to one or two, and then transition to eliciting stories from one another. Consider showing these StoryCorps videos with tips for active listening and asking great questions:

- [Tips for Active Listening video](#)
- [Four Tips for Effective Interviews](#)

Afterwards, invite guests to tell stories to one another. This can be a warm-up before recording their future StoryCorps story, or just an opportunity to get to know a new person in the community.

Ask guests to choose a reflection or question to share with a discussion partner that came up while they were listening to their partner or a StoryCorps story. Or, use the Stonewall theme to suggest some topics:

- What does Stonewall mean to you?
- Where were you in 1969, when the riots happened? What did you hear about them?
- In what ways has your life changed since Stonewall?

As the listener, consider carefully how to ask great questions to learn more about the speaker's story.

- Open-ended questions can't be answered with a "yes" or "no." For example, "Did you like that time in your life?" is closed, but "What did you like about that time in your life?" is open.
- Probing questions ask for more information, "Tell me more about how it looked/sounded/felt..." and "Why has this story been important to you?"
- Listen carefully for details and emotions and check for understanding and clarity.

Download the [StoryCorps Interview Tips](#) to help guide the listeners. If you choose to end your event after storytelling, invite further connection with these ideas from [SAGE Table](#):

- Decide if you want to meet or connect again and set a date.
- Seek out opportunities to take positive action in your community.



EVENT IDEA: RECORDING



For this event, make recording the focus. Use [the StoryCorps App](#) to encourage your guests to record and share their stories. Refer to the Record Your Story section of this guide for tips on using the app and creating interviews at your event or afterwards.

Remind your participants to tag their stories “Stonewall OutLoud” in the keyword section of the app to make sure others can find and listen to them.

Whether or not your event will include story recording, please share the app with your attendees so they can explore and listen to stories.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a starting place to help your event take shape.



One Month Prior

■ **SET A TIME, DATE, AND LOCATION.** Consider the format of your event. If you are planning to record stories, think of quiet spaces that will allow participants to share their stories. Reference [these tips](#) to think about sound quality.

■ **BRAINSTORM** and prioritize a list of possible community partners to support outreach.

■ **IDENTIFY** your guest list; secure community partners.

■ **DECIDE** on the format. Programming ideas for various events are included in this toolkit.

■ **SEND OUT INVITATIONS** with the time, date, location, and description of the event. A sample flyer is included with this toolkit; just fill in our organization, time, date, partners, and location. Also consider using social media to spread the word.

■ **WORK WITH** partners or allies in the community to make the invitation for the event active.

■ **SEND REMINDERS** to speakers and to guests. If people will be recording stories at your event, encourage them to download the [StoryCorps App](#) in advance

■ **MAKE SURE** you have downloaded the [StoryCorps App](#) and have access to all stories you want to share.

■ **COPY AND ASSEMBLE** any discussion materials or promotional handouts.

■ **ARRIVE AT LEAST AN HOUR PRIOR.** This allows for enough time if you need to set up the room, test the A/V equipment, greet guests and panelists, and review your agenda.

■ **TAKE A MOMENT** of gratitude at the end of the event, where speakers and listeners can thank and acknowledge one another.

■ **IF YOU RECORDED STORIES**, remind your participants to check and double-check preferences for confidentiality.

■ **BRAINSTORM** uniform tags and keywords like “Stonewall OutLoud” so that event attendees can listen to one another’s stories.

■ **ENCOURAGE** guests to share the stories they collected on the StoryCorps App and the experience of recording with others in their community.



Day(s) Before



Day of Event

CREATE A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR YOUR EVENT

The first step to consider for any event is inclusion. Inclusion is a central theme of the LGBTQ movement, and there are some general principles to follow to help your event feel like a welcome space for all:

BE EXPLICIT ABOUT YOUR INTENTIONS.

Begin every event by welcoming every person in the room — people of any age, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, physical ability, and any other aspect of identity. Acknowledging the nature of the event — though celebratory against the backdrop of Pride and of 50 years of activism since Stonewall — is necessary because of the exclusion and violence too many members of the LGBTQ community have experienced.



BE GENTLE. In this divisive moment in our nation, many people are feeling under attack because of some aspect of their identity. In such a charged time, words and phrases that mean one thing to you may be very painful to someone else. It's important to acknowledge this reality and that hurtful mistakes may happen. Let your guests know that you'd be grateful, if and when you make a mistake, if someone would be willing to offer their insight into their experience of it. In creating this kind of openness in your space, you can shift "call-out" culture to become "call-in" culture.





ASK FOR WISDOM FROM THE GROUP. Elicit ideas and tools from your group that have worked for them in the past when they've been in a group where they wanted to feel safe. Come to a consensus together about how to handle any "oops" or "ouch" moments.

TALK ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY.

Even if the intention of your event is to record stories, it is critically important to be checking in repeatedly about the group's understanding of what will be shared and when. Even if a story is recorded, the storyteller may choose not to have that story shared, or only to do so within the closed community of event attendees. The story of Stonewall itself reveals why many people in our communities who have been marginalized or systematically persecuted in many ways mistrust unfamiliar institutions and value privacy highly.



TWO CONSIDERATIONS TO BRING FORWARD:

[StoryCorps' privacy policy](#) details how StoryCorps will use private information shared through the App.

Come to an agreement with your guests about when and whether to share the stories generated during your event. When stories are uploaded the information within them about sexual orientation, gender identity and other identifying factors may be accessible to others. Protecting and respecting the confidentiality is of utmost importance.