

LGBTQIA+ History

Note: This summary of LGBTQIA+ history may be used as a psychoeducation exposure for sexual orientation or gender-themed OCD. Exposure examples include reading this summary silently or aloud, presenting what you've learned to someone else, or doing additional research on various elements of LGBTQIA+ history described here.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people have existed in all cultures across history. The acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people varies across cultures ranging from being revered to facing rejection and persecution. Due to the high prevalence of discrimination, the LGBTQIA+ population has a long history of fighting for acceptance and inclusion.

Historically, sexual orientation and gender identity have been **pathologized** by the medical field and widely viewed as abnormal or deviant. Until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) considered "homosexuality" a mental illness. Likewise, the pathologizing of gender identity continues today with the existence of Gender Dysphoria in the DSM. This perception has led to beliefs that LGBTQIA+ identities need to be "cured" which has detrimental impacts on the wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people. Conversion therapy was developed out of this context and has led to the traumatization of many LGBTQIA+ people who have been subject to practices aimed at changing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Not only is conversion therapy based on false beliefs about the development of gender identity and sexual orientation, but it has harmful effects on those who undergo this treatment.

In addition, LGBTQIA+ people face **discrimination** in numerous contexts including social, educational, political, occupational, and religious. Before 2015, same-sex couples in the United States were not allowed to marry in all 50 states. Some faith-based groups excommunicate members in their congregations based on holding an LGBTQIA+ identity. In the United States and around the world, LGBTQIA+ people are subject to hate-based violence with transgender women of color being murdered at alarmingly high rates. Today, LGBTQIA+ people continue to advocate for protection from discrimination in the workplace, the inclusion of transgender athletes in sports, and access to affirming healthcare.

Despite these hardships, LGBTQIA+ people and their allies have continued to **advocate** for the equal rights and acceptance that all people deserve. The fight for LGBTQIA+ liberation gained mainstream attention following the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969. On this date, patrons of New York City's Stonewall Inn fought back against police officers who had been raiding LGBTQIA+ bars. These patrons primarily consisted of transgender people of color who played an integral role in leading the movement for LGBTQIA+ liberation. Today, the month of June is designated as Pride Month and dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community through parades and rallies. As a result of this work, the acceptance and representation of LGBTQIA+ people continues to grow. In recent years, LGBTQIA+ advocacy efforts have focused on centering the voices of those most marginalized in the community including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, transgender and non-binary people, and others who live at the intersection of multiple identities and experience compounding discrimination. The LGBTQIA+ community is comprised of a diverse array of people across all identities who demonstrate incredible resilience and strength and are worthy of compassion and respect.

References

Pinciotti, C. M., Smith, Z., Singh, S., Wetterneck, C. T., & Williams, M. T. (2022). Call to action: Recommendations for justice-based treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder with sexual orientation and gender themes. *Behavior Therapy*, *53*(2), 153-169. doi: 10.1016/j.beth.2021.11.001

<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/history>

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/about-conversion-therapy/>