

THAT SONG IS ALREADY 10 YEARS OLD?!: Intergenerational Reference Points, LGBTQ+ Leadership, and You

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Out & Equal 2023 EXECUTIVE FORUM, MEETING IN A BOX

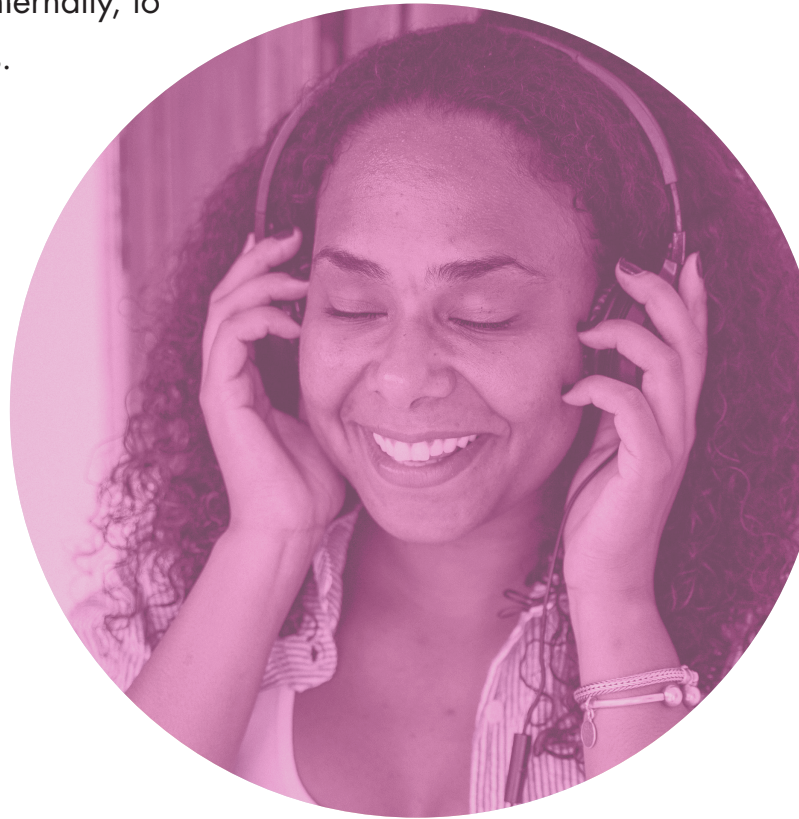
// Belonging is fostered by the recognition that our diverse life experiences enrich us as a collective, rather than divide us. When we talk about 'LGBTQ+ history' we need to recognize these differences and ensure that we account for them in creating reference points that compel action and forge understanding."

DEENA FIDAS, Managing Director,
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OVERVIEW

Have you been caught off guard that the song you've been singing is already a decade old? Where does the time go? And how do our generational reference points manifest in our LGBTQ+ leadership? Based on the hit workshop premiered at the 2022 Executive Forum, this resource is now a meeting in a box, providing you with the tools you need to replicate this activity internally, to foster greater connection across generations.

This meeting in a box may be used in conjunction with the Out & Equal live, virtually facilitated version of this workshop. Leverage both resources to learn how to facilitate effective, storytelling-based, intergenerational dialogues with your ERG, or team.



BUILDING COMMUNITY ACROSS THE GENERATIONAL LINES

Finding that you and a colleague share a similar history, or connection to a generational reference point, can be a powerful thing. It may establish a communication shorthand or even build trust, both of which produce that sense of belonging.

To find this common ground, we tell stories—about our histories, our families, our hobbies. It's through this storytelling that we foster connection across teams and we build empathy for our co-workers who carry histories different from ours. We also develop greater, more complex understandings of how our identities relate to the world around us.

What happens when we don't find these shared points of connection? Sometimes, nothing. But our personal histories also inform our unconscious biases—both against people who are different, and towards people who are “more like us.” Learning how to identify when we feel the pull of either bias is critical. It's in these moments when our ability to find connection to the people we work with becomes directly correlated to our efficacy as a leader.

That Song is Already 10 Years Old?! will help you identify those moments of connection (or those moments of discomfort where you don't share any references), and, in both cases, move beyond your knee-jerk reactions towards true relationship building.

How? By facilitating a conversation about a shared thing—LGBTQ+ history—and carving out intentional space for everyone to listen, and be listened to.



HOW TO USE THIS FACILITATION GUIDE

Out & Equal's Meeting in a Box comes complete with everything you will need to add your voice to the conversation, and can be used with groups of any size (although we recommend having at least four people, including the facilitator, to start). Prior to leading the workshop, the facilitator can watch the recording of the Out & Equal session, "*That Song is Already 10 Years Old?!!*" to learn tips and tricks for ensuring an authentic and productive conversation. Then run through the activity below, either virtually or in person with your ERG or team. Finally, turn to the discussion questions attached and take time to reflect as a group on what you saw, heard, and felt.

If you are working through these questions and activities as a group, we recommend establishing conversational—or group—guidelines prior to starting your discussion. These can help ensure that everyone feels safe to engage with the material, and that conversation stays focused on the content at hand.

EXAMPLES OF GROUP NORMS ARE:

- Encourage one speaker at a time
- Be mindful of how much airtime you are taking up compared to your colleagues—encourage equal contribution from your group's members
- Lean into discomfort: learning is hard! Practice building up that muscle that is your curiosity, and lean in to the new ideas and conversations



ACTIVITY: GALLERY TOUR (IN PERSON FACILITATION GUIDE)

ESTIMATED SET UP TIME: 10 MINUTES **TIME TO COMPLETE:** 20 MINUTES

The goal of this activity is to foster open and honest dialogues about the impact of a community's history on the individuals you work with. This activity will ask participants to share their personal relationships to key historical events by anonymously sharing one of three responses with the room. However, the exercise doesn't end there. Each of the potential responses also brings up the event's generational impact. Depending on their chosen response, attendees can indicate whether they personally lived through any of the events that significantly impacted them. This helps the group better understand the weight of the diversity of experience in the room, and is the first step towards building (or deepening) feelings of authenticity, trust, and inclusion.

SUPPLIES

- Large Sticky Note Papers or Poster Board and Tape
- Markers
- Large room with wall space
- 4 different colored sticky note pads
- Pens/markers for participants



In order to start these conversations, your group is going to participate in a Gallery Tour exercise. Gallery Tours are interactive activities that require participants to be able to move throughout a room freely. Please ensure the space is mobility-accessible (in a flat vs. sloped seating, space to maneuver accessibility devices with ease).

The facilitator starts with a list of significant, community-specific historical events, that they write on individual pieces of paper and stick or tape up around all sides of the room. Participants, using sticky notes of varying colors, can then visually note things like which events they feel a personal connection to, which they personally lived, and which hold no personal or significant meaning to them.

STICKY NOTES

Colors are arbitrary, but it is important to ensure that each “meaning” receives a different color. E.g:

ORANGE = I did not have any significant or personal connection to this event

PINK = This event has profoundly impacted me, but **I did not live it**

GREEN = I lived through this event, and it holds great personal significance

BLUE = This is another *not already listed* event that has profoundly impacted me



SAMPLE EVENTS AND PEOPLE, LGBTQ+ HISTORY (IN THE US):

- The Mattachine Society founded, 1950
- Daughters of Bilitis founded, 1955
- Frank Kameny, 1957 (Kameny is dismissed from the US Army's Army Map Service for being homosexual)
- Compton's Cafeteria Riot, 1966
- The Stonewall Riots, 1969
- Donna Burkett & Manonia Evans, 1971 (Burkett and Evans make national news when a federal judge denied their application for a marriage license)
- Homosexuality removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, 1973
- Anita Bryant founds organization, "Save Our Children," 1977 (An anti-LGBTQ organization based in Florida)
- *The New York Times* publishes an article with the headlines: "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," 1981
- The first AIDS Quilt, 1987
- Don't Ask, Don't Tell Signed into Law – Defense Directive 1304.26 issued 1993
- Rickie Vasquez (Wilson Cruz), *My So Called Life*, 1994 (Vasquez becomes the first openly gay actor to play an openly gay character on primetime TV)
- Ellen DeGeneres comes out, 1997
- Matthew Shepard is murdered, 1998
- Lawrence v. Texas, 2003
- Proposition 8 passed in, 2008
- Don't Ask, Don't Tell – Defense Directive 1304.26 repealed 2011
- Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015
- Pulse Nightclub Shooting, 2016
- Bostock v. Clayton County, 2020
- Pete Buttigieg appointed US Secretary of Transportation, 2021 (Buttigieg becomes the first openly LGBTQ person to hold a Cabinet-level position in the US Government)
- Florida HB 1557, "Parental Rights in Education," passed 2022

Optional: After everyone has placed their sticky notes, and before the group debrief, you can add an extra generational layer by choosing 4-8 key events, and writing down the age of an average, Gen Z-er entering the workforce. For example, on the Ellen DeGeneres Comes Out poster you would write, "one year before birth." On the Lawrence v. Texas poster, you would write, "4 years old." This provides additional context for the ways in which your current group members, and your new hires, may need to communicate and build connection without sharing the same understandings of these significant cultural events.

Give participants a moment to look around the room and reflect on the distribution of the sticky notes before moving on to the reflection questions.

GALLERY TOUR REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Processing these different historical events can be an emotional and vulnerable experience for many of your participants. Before moving to these reflection questions, be sure to leave space for people to discuss how they are feeling and why.

- How did it feel to compare your reference points compared to others in the room?
- How do your reference points impact how you navigate advocating for inclusive LGBTQ+ workplace practices?
- Are there any references points that stood out to you as especially impactful on your life, and why?
- What is your perception of other generations, and how has that perception shifted during this session?
- What about this activity surprised you? Did anything surprise you about your own answers?
- Where do you see these or other LGBTQ+ cultural reference points showing up in work/programming?
- What does it mean for you all to see that [Name of Event] doesn't hold much personal significance for the majority of the room?
- What does it mean for you all to see that [Name of Event] held that much significance for the group?
- What do you think the most formative LGBTQ+ events are for people 24 and under?
- What other thoughts are you having right now?



SESSION REFLECTION GUIDE:

After having watched “That Song is 10 Years Old Already?: Intergenerational Reference Points, LGBTQ+ Leadership, and You” and completing the gallery tour activity, please utilize the below discussion questions to facilitate a debrief and reflection of the experience. These questions may be answered in a larger group or in small break out groups.

MORE ON VIRTUAL FACILITATION OF THIS ACTIVITY:

You can also facilitate this workshop virtually using a number of different platforms. As you saw in “*That Song is Already 10 Years Old?!* ” Out & Equal was able to facilitate this content using a polling app called Mentimeter (any third-party polling app will do). You can also leverage additional technology, like a Miro Board, or Zoom’s Whiteboard feature, to more directly replicate the in-person experience of placing sticky notes under each event.

Regardless, you will need a visual platform with which to showcase the list of events, and an option for people to provide up to 3 responses for each event. In Mentimeter you can do this easily via the multiple choice, or sliding scale options. If you are using a white-board based visualization, participants can mimic the in-person activity by placing different colored “sticky notes” (or colored squares) under each event to represent their answer. Please note that you may need to run through the events in sections, as they may not all fit within the limits of your screen. This is OK, and we recommend adjusting the content’s timing to accommodate as needed.

The debriefs and final discussion questions can remain the same, although we highly recommend utilizing a polling platform to break the ice as sharing in a virtual setting can feel more nerve-racking for some than doing so in an in-person.

CONTRIBUTORS

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