COMING OUT: Living Authentically as LGBTQ Asian and Pacific Islander Americans

hrc.im/APIComingOut या
nqapia.org/wpp/api-parents-who-love-their-lgbt-kids-multilingual-psa-campaign/
No matter who we are or whom we love, we all deserve the right to live out our lives genuinely, completely and honestly.

Our race, ethnicity, language, religion, cultural dress, sexual orientation or gender identity should never be barriers to us living our full lives. For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, coming out as our true selves is often a significant part of reclaiming this right and living authentically.

Coming out is a personal choice, and the lifelong coming out experience is different for everyone. For those of us who identify as LGBTQ and as Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, the coming out process can be even more complex to navigate.

This resource is designed for those embarking on their own coming out journey at the intersections of LGBTQ and API identities. We hope that it can provide you ideas and advice during this process. This resource and its accompanying English-language translation can also be shared among your close family and friends, some of whom may still be learning how they can best support you during your journey.

Before coming out, create a safe space for yourself and evaluate your unique circumstances. Look for supportive people you can turn to during times of need, especially if you believe you may face disapproval from others. Depending on your individual situation, pick a place and time to come out that makes you feel the most comfortable and safe.

In too many places, LGBTQ people who live openly can face discrimination and even violence. If you fear this mistreatment, it is important to remember that there is nothing wrong with you. The problem is not you, but rather the prejudice and discrimination that many of us learn from our society and cultures.

You are not alone: Know that there is a history of resilience in our community of LGBTQ API Americans, family members and allies who support and love you exactly as you are.
Many LGBTQ people report that after coming out, they are able to communicate better with their family and friends. While the LGBTQ API experience is as varied and diverse as the many cultures within our community, in the following sections we will discuss common issues during the coming out process.

**API अमरीकीयों के लिए यौन झुकाव स्वीकारना**

कई LGBTQ लोग बताते हैं कि अपना यौन झुकाव स्वीकारने के बाद, वे अपने परिजनों और मित्रों से साथ बेहतर ढंग से संवाद करने में समर्थ हो गए। जबकि LGBTQ API अनुभव उतना ही अलग और विविध से है जो जितना हमारे समुदाय की अंदर की संस्कृतियों, जैसे आपने वाले अनुभागों में हम अपना यौन झुकाव स्वीकारने की प्रक्रिया के दौरान आने वाली आम समस्याओं के बारे में चर्चा करेंगे।
“I was terrified of coming out to my family. The potential for rejection or being thrown out of the house all seemed like very real possibilities. When I finally told my mom, she was silent for a few very awkward moments. But then she told me that although it would be difficult for her to handle and understand, she would support me because, she said, ‘You’re my son, and I love you. Nothing can change that.’”

–Prateek Choudhary

Although coming out to family is difficult for many LGBTQ people, it can pose additional challenges for those who grew up in traditional API cultures that emphasize parental sacrifice and familial duty. Given that more than 6 in 10 API Americans are immigrants, many API youth are raised by parents who left their home countries, family and friends in search of a better life. These parents work hard to ensure that their children have greater educational and occupational opportunities.

Growing up amid these significant sacrifices, API American youth often feel indebted to their parents. They fear disappointing their parents, and will avoid doing anything that might humiliate them or bring shame upon the family among the wider community. Especially in cultures that stress familial duty or conformity, LGBTQ API youth can carry a weight of expectations rooted in traditions that define success through rigid gendered norms. This sense of duty may be passed along to future generations and be reinforced across communities.

Coming out is a deeply personal decision, but many LGBTQ API people must also contend with the impact this may have on others in their families and wider community, including:

- the ancestors who bring us good fortune.
- our family line and good name.
- extended family members.
- relatives “back home” in our countries of origin.

परिवार में स्वीकार, यता

“मैं मेरे परिवार के सामने अपने यौन झुकाव से भी स्वीकार करने को लेकर बहुत डरा हुआ था। अपने बीते जाने पर से बहार निकाल देने की संभावना काफी हद तक सब लग रही थी। आखिरकार जब मैंने अपनी माँ को बताया तो वो बहुत पस्त बने, बुझ गये और बहुत अजीब पस्त थे। पर फिर वो मुझसे मोटी कहलाकर उनको लगे इस बात को संभालना और समझना बुझ गये, कवर होगा, पर वे मेरे साथ बाहर नहीं आये। उन्होंने कहा कि, “तुम मेरे बेटे हो और मैं तुम्हें पूरा पार करूँगी।” और कोई भी परिवार इस बात को बदल नहीं सकती हैं।”

–प्रतीक थोड़ीरी
Though LGBTQ acceptance has seen encouraging developments throughout Asia and the Pacific Islands, LGBTQ people still face stigma in many countries and cultures. Some people believe that being LGBTQ brings shame upon their family. It’s important to know that your LGBTQ identity should not be the cause of shame or pain. Pain comes from the prejudices around you, not from who you are or who you love.

“As a Korean American mom, I’m so grateful that my child came out as a transgender man and has included me in his journey to live his authentic self. It wasn’t easy in the beginning due to my limited understanding of LGBTQ topics, but we now have close relationship that any parent would dream of having.”

–Korean mom Clara Yoon

“जबकि संपूर्ण एशिया और पूर्वी द्वीपों में LGBTQ की स्वीकार्यता में उत्साहजनक विकास देखने को मिला है, पर अभी-भी बहुत से देशों और संस्कृतियों में LGBTQ लोगों को कलंक का सामना करना पड़ता है। कुछ लोगों का मानना है कि LGBTQ होना उनके परिवार के लिए शर्म, मदद की कारण बनता है। यह जानना जरूरी है कि आपकी LGBTQ पहचान शर्म या दर्द का कारण नहीं होनी चाहिए। दर्द आपके इर्द-गिर्द मौजूद पूरे दुनिया से आता है, इससे नहीं कि आप कौन हैं या आप किसी प्यार करते हैं।

“एक कोरियाई अमेरिकी मां के दृष्टि में, मैं बहुत आभारी हूँ कि मेरे बच्चे ने एक ट्रांसजेंडर रूप में अपनी जीवन यात्रा का कारण बनाया। वे अपने असल रूप में सही मानवों में जीवन जीने की आपराधिक यात्रा में मुझे समर्पित किया है। LGBTQ विषयों की मेरी सीमित समझ के कारण आरंभ में यह सब सरल नहीं था, पर अब हमारा आपका संबंध इतना गहरा है जिसकी सभी माता-पिता आशा करते हैं।”

–कोरिया माता क., लेना यून
“When my son first came out to me, I retreated into shame, sadness and fear as a mother who failed in her most important responsibility. But I love my child and have never stopped loving him. And it is this love that has helped me process through my negative feelings to stand by Aiden and watch him successfully live his life as his true self. He makes me so proud.”

–Japanese American mother Marsha Aizumi

Some family members may embrace the news immediately, while others may require time to work through concerns or fears they have regarding the unfamiliar or unknown.

Unfortunately, the absence of comprehensive education and exposure to LGBTQ people may lead some family members to mistakenly believe that being LGBTQ is a choice, preference or temporary phase. This process can be especially challenging for immigrant parents who were raised in places where information about LGBTQ identities was less widely available. It can be further exacerbated by language barriers that make it challenging to directly translate LGBTQ terminology or make it impossible to find equivalent words to describe LGBTQ identities and experiences.
Some facts:

- Parents cannot, and did not, “turn” their children LGBTQ because of some parenting mistake. Parents and their LGBTQ child have done nothing wrong; in fact, there is nothing wrong.
- There are no known environmental factors that “cause” a person to be LGBTQ.
- LGBTQ people generally do not choose their sexual orientations or gender identity. Many LGBTQ people become aware that they are different at an early age.
- The vast majority of LGBTQ people go on to live successful, happy and healthy lives — especially when they are embraced for who they are and who they love.

Finally, another common reaction that family members may have is fear. They may be afraid that you will suffer and be mistreated as a result of your LGBTQ identity. In these instances, remind your family members that supporting you and providing a safe haven is the greatest gift they can give in the face of prejudice and challenges.

When considering if, when or how to come out to your family members, consider the full range of reactions that could arise from your LGBTQ identify being disclosed, especially if you are financially dependent on any of them.

Your safety and security always come first.

“When I came out, I was 21 and my parents spent three months at first shocked and then they joined PFLAG… they became so political and they realized that being gay wasn’t a huge crisis that couldn’t be overcome. They needed to be educated so they took steps to do that; it’s nice to have that support.”

—Openly lesbian actor and model Jenny Shimizu, on her parents’ initial reactions and journey through acceptance
Recognize that just as you are on a coming out journey, your family members are taking their own journey as well. You can help them through this process by directing them to resources available to educate parents and other family members about LGBTQ identities, including sources that help with overcoming myths and misconceptions.

Many LGBTQ APIs are fearful that if they come out to their parents, they will be disowned or thrown out of the home. While these are possibilities, countless LGBTQ APIs have come out to their parents and were not abandoned. At the same time, only you can determine when or how is the best time or way to come out to your parents. Only you can fully evaluate your own physical safety, emotional support system and financial circumstances.

During this sensitive time, stay strong and acknowledge their feelings. But also remember to honor and assert your own feelings. It is also not uncommon for coming out to family members — especially parents — to take several years. Over time, it is quite common for individuals to move from feelings of disappointment and confusion, to simple tolerance, to understanding and finally to acceptance. Many API parents move beyond acceptance to fully embrace and celebrate their LGBTQ children, both in public and private.

The Coming Out Continuum

Denial → Opposition → Tolerance → Recognition → Understanding → Acceptance → Celebration

“We are concerned about our family and the huge fear of rejection we may face. It’s true that many Asian parents tend to be very conservative and protective of their children. But once you can get them behind their kids, they will take on the world!”

– Trinity Ordana, longtime activist for LGBTQ rights
Religion and Faith

Around the world, more and more faith traditions are now openly embracing LGBTQ people. Many LGBTQ APIs are raised in Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Islamic, Sikh or other faith traditions, each with varying levels of LGBTQ acceptance and affirmation both in the U.S. and abroad.

Sometimes, it may feel difficult to reconcile your religious beliefs or those of your family with your LGBTQ identity. However, millions of LGBTQ people are people of faith, including many who are learning to reconcile their own identities with the religious traditions of their families and communities.

Some South Asian and Pacific traditions have long histories of scriptural inclusion of LGBTQ identities and multiple perspectives of God(s), Goddess(es) and Divine Spirits. Many religious communities and denominations that were once non-affirming now recognize that embracing LGBTQ people is in line with the strong religious and spiritual values of compassion, love and the commitment to treat others how they would like to be treated. Today, countless congregations openly welcome and affirm their LGBTQ members, including blessing their weddings and welcoming their full participation in worship and religious activities.

Just like any group of people, religious communities vary greatly in their attitudes and level of inclusion of LGBTQ people, even within the same denomination or sect. Moreover, the number of LGBTQ-affirming religious communities across the country is steadily increasing, and that is true among API religious communities as well.
Religion and Faith

Remember, only you can decide the degree to which faith plays a role in your life and how you choose to integrate it with living an authentic life. As you approach this topic, you might wish to pursue some of the following suggestions and resources:

• Identify supportive and allied members in your existing religious community who may be able to provide assistance should you decide to come out.
• Read the stories or writings of other LGBTQ people and allies from your same denomination, ethnic or racial backgrounds to learn from their faith journeys.
• Explore LGBTQ-affirming places of worship and congregations.
• Seek support from LGBTQ API religious organizations that may be able to direct you to others who have had similar experiences.

To learn more, visit HRC’s Religion & Faith resources.
The immigrant experience is intricately tied with the lived experiences of many LGBTQ API Americans. API Americans are the nation’s fastest-growing ethnic or racial group, largely as a result of immigration.

Approximately 22.5 million Asians and Pacific Islanders live in the United States. Roughly six in 10 is foreign born, and 1.45 million are undocumented.

There are more than 1 million LGBTQ immigrants in the U.S., including 40,000 who are LGBTQ API undocumented immigrants.

All LGBTQ immigrants seek the opportunity to better their lives in the United States, to be safe from discrimination and to be free to live their full lives as LGBTQ people.

Many LGBTQ API immigrants come from countries that may be less accepting or even intolerant of LGBTQ people. In some countries, LGBTQ identities are still criminalized. In too many places, LGBTQ people are censored, jailed, tortured or even put to death. Others might come from conformist societies in which the LGBTQ community may be shunned or ostracized.

For LGBTQ Latinx immigrants in the United States:

- Coming out as LGBTQ does not affect one’s chances of facing deportation or visa revocation.
- It may be possible to obtain political asylum if LGBTQ people are persecuted in a person’s country of origin (consult with an attorney).
- LGBTQ immigrants, whether undocumented or documented, who fall in love with American citizens can legally marry, and U.S. citizens can petition for their spouses to remain in the U.S. and become citizens themselves (consult with an attorney).
Unfortunately, some LGBTQ API people still encounter racial profiling when entering government buildings or boarding planes. Sometimes their gender presentation and/or perceived differences from their gender-marker on their IDs, in combination with their ethnic, racial or religious presentation, may trigger heightened scrutiny. It is important to be vigilant, careful and aware of potential discrimination. It is equally important to identify supportive friends, family and community that affirm who you are, regardless of where you were born or how you choose to live out your identities.
Living in a Bicultural World

For many API Americans, especially those who are immigrants or the children of immigrants, it can feel like living in a bicultural world, where you must grapple with norms and expectations of both American and API American cultures. Determining when, if and how to work through these overlapping realities — especially if they conflict — may first require identifying what is important to you personally. Indeed, the role your LGBTQ identity plays in relation with your API identity may vary depending on the context and your current situation.

Part of this often means engaging with bilinguality and cross-cultural communication. This may include speaking two or more languages with varying levels of regularity, whether at home, in places of worship, when among family or at community events. It can already be difficult for many people to express their sexual orientation or gender identity, especially when they are first coming out. For those who must express it across multiple languages or cultures, it can be even more challenging. For API youth who speak a primary language different than their parents, this linguistic barrier can make it even harder to express feelings or emotions. Moreover, in some languages, there may not be equivalent translations of LGBTQ terminology or concepts.
Living in a Bicultural World

When confronted with these challenges, you might consider:

- Seeking out LGBTQ-affirming resources specific to your native language and/or the language of your parents.
- Getting assistance from supportive loved ones who can help translate or facilitate difficult conversations across languages.
- Looking for LGBTQ-affirming stories and media specific to your native language and/or country of heritage or origin; international and culturally specific movies, TV shows, online videos and other media featuring LGBTQ people are increasingly accessible in the digital era.
- Reading the stories of LGBTQ API people and other LGBTQ people of color who learned how to navigate their own bicultural identities.
- Finding community with others of a similar background who are also LGBTQ and/or allies, which you may find through in-person support groups, organizations like the ones listed in the end of this guide and online communities.

Just as there is no singular American or API American experience, there is no single way to live out your own ethnic or racial identity. Especially in the absence of prominent LGBTQ figures in Asia and the Pacific Islands, it can sometimes feel like LGBTQ identities are not compatible with your API identity. Above all, know that there is no specific API "mold" you have to fit, even as you may feel pressure from your family or community. Being LGBTQ does not make you any "less" Asian, Pacific Islander or any other national heritage or ethnic or racial identity you may hold.

"I didn’t want to come out to my mom in English. I came out to her in Urdu because I wanted her to know that coming to terms with my orientation was solely about me and not about my attending Berkeley or becoming Americanized."

–Aleem Raja, former board member of Trikone, a San Francisco non-profit organization for LGBTQ people of South Asian descent
Other Coming Out Considerations

यौन झुकाव स्वीकार करने संबंधी अन्य वचिरार
Coming Out at School

Coming out at school can be a significant decision for many young people, especially in communities or at campuses where LGBTQ people may not yet be fully embraced. At the same time, many school districts, colleges and universities actively and openly support their LGBTQ students, faculty and staff. Before deciding to come out at school, you may first consider:

- Does your city, state, school district or university have non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies to protect LGBTQ students, faculty and staff?
- If you are not fully out in your community or to your family, can your physical safety and privacy be guaranteed if you are out at school? For some college students who rely on their parents for financial support, you may need to carefully weigh your specific circumstances when coming out.
- Can you seek out classmates, teachers, counselors and other adults at school whom you can trust and go to for support during your coming out process?
- Does your school have a dedicated safe space or LGBTQ-affirming organizations, including a queer-straight alliance, LGBTQ resource center or LGBTQ and API organizations?

For more information about this topic, please refer to Lambda Legal’s Know Your Rights for LGBTQ teens and young adults in school.

स. कूल में यौन झुकाव स. दीक्षित करना

स. कूल में यौन झुकाव स. दीक्षित करना बहुत से युवा लोगों के लिए एक बड़ा नर्तक हो सकता है, विशेष रूप से उन समुदायों या परिसरों में जहाँ LGBTQ लोगों को अभी तक पूरी तरह अंगीकार नहीं किया गया है। साथ-ही-साथ, कई स. कूल झोंड़े, स. रेट, कॉलेज और यूनिवर्सिटी अपने LGBTQ छात्र, छात्रा और स. ट्रेफ का सक्षम, संघर्ष और खुल कर समर्थन करते हैं।

स. कूल में यौन झुकाव स. दीक्षित करने का नर्तक पर विचार करने के लिए आप इस विषय को जानकारी के लिए लेम्बा लेगल के, स. कूल में LGBTQ अथवा आर्थ. स. लेक्सियन, लेक्सियन, LGBTQ संस्था को त्रेफ, स. और लेग. एस. एपी संस्था शामिल हैं?

इस विषय को बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए, लेम्बा लेगल, स. कूल में LGBTQ अथवा आर्थ. स. लेक्सियन, लेक्सियन, LGBTQ संस्था को त्रेफ, स. और लेग. एस. एपी संस्था शामिल हैं?
Coming Out at Work

Just as in other facets of life, being open at work can be a daunting challenge. But it can also relieve the daily stress of hiding who you are. At the same time, however, no one wants to put their job security or opportunity for advancement in jeopardy. Before choosing to come out at work, you may first consider:

- Does your employer have a formal non-discrimination policy that specifically covers sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression? Check the official Equal Employment Opportunity statement (usually found on the company website and in the employee handbook).
- Does your state or locality have a non-discrimination law including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?
- Is your company ranked on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index? If so, what rating has it earned?
- Are your employer’s health benefits fully LGBTQ-inclusive, including covering transition-related health care and domestic partner benefits?
- What is the overall climate in your workplace, including whether other LGBTQ people are out in the office and whether co-workers make derogatory or supportive comments about LGBTQ people?

For more information about this topic, please refer to HRC’s Coming Out at Work and Workplace Equality resources.
“As both an individual, and as an educator, I have experienced and witnessed bullying in its many forms. And as the proud jichan, or grandpa, of a transgender grandchild, I hope that my granddaughter can feel safe going to school without fear of being bullied. I refuse to be a bystander while millions of people are dealing with the effects of bullying on a daily basis.”

-Japanese American Representative Mike Honda (D-CA), founding member and vice chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus

If you have a friend, family member or co-worker who is coming out, you can help them by being a supportive ally. However, be aware that they are the only person who can make the decision about how and when to come out with their LGBTQ identity.

You can help by researching and sharing culturally competent, linguistically appropriate resources, making introductions to others who are LGBTQ and allies and speaking up when others make anti-LGBTQ jokes and gender assumptions. You can be an advocate for LGBTQ equality and fairness. You can speak out. Educate others, especially those for whom LGBTQ identities may be unfamiliar. Share information. We must all work together to build a better world that embraces diversity and personal freedom. To learn more about how you can get involved, visit HRC’s Ally resources.
“Being gay and Asian in America is like fighting a two-front battle. One not only has to fight racism and homophobia in society in general, but also stereotypes and lack of representation in the gay community. With more awareness of gay Asian issues, and as more Asians become involved, I have confidence that there will be victory.”

–Edward Kai Chiu

Racial discrimination continues to be a pervasive issue in our society, and LGBTQ people of color often must face heightened challenges in many facets of daily life. Unfortunately, just as it is in any community, the LGBTQ community is not untouched by these issues — and as you seek love and acceptance, there may be times where you may have to confront that reality.

As you choose to come out and live authentically in your own way, you may find it helpful to surround yourself with others who recognize and affirm your identities — including both API and LGBTQ. Many LGBTQ people, including those who may not find full support among our families or communities of heritage, find love and support from “chosen family,” who fully embrace us for who we are.

Most importantly, know that you are not alone: Far beyond the proud community of LGBTQ API Americans, there are many who stand with you and who will accept you for who you are.
LGBTQ API
History and Culture

इतिहास और संस्कृति:
A Historical Appreciation of Sexual & Gender Diversity in Asia and the Pacific Islands

Although many LGBTQ API people still face discrimination and persecution in many countries, LGBTQ people have existed and been well-documented throughout history in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

In **China**, as far back as the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), the Golden Orchid Society (Jinglanhui) was a women’s organization that celebrated “passionate friendships” and embraced same-sex relationships between women. Meanwhile, many regard Guanyin, the “Goddess of Mercy” to be a transgender deity.

**Japan** has a well-documented history of same-sex relations, including among the samurai and Buddhist monks.

**Korea** had Hwarang warriors, “flower boys of Silla,” the dynasty that united the Korean peninsula in 7th century. These elite archers who dressed in long-flowing gowns have been interpreted by many historians to hold LGBTQ identities.

In **South Asia**, the term Hijra includes transgender people, intersex people and non-binary people. These individuals, who have been well documented since antiquity, are officially recognized today by governments in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Many Asian cultures have long had terms for LGBTQ individuals who may not fit within Western or other traditionally binary gender structures. These terms, sometimes treated as a third gender, include phet thi sam in **Thailand**, meti in **Nepal**, the khanith in the **Arabian** peninsula, bakla in the **Philippines** and mak nyah in **Malaysia**.

Meanwhile, the **Pacific Islands** have a multitude of broadly LGBTQ traditions and identities, including mahu in Hawai’i, fa’aafafine in **Samoa**, fakaleiti in **Tonga**, vaka sa lewa lewa in **Fiji**, rae rae in Tahiti, fa’afine in Niue, akava’ine in the **Cook Islands** and whakawahine among the Maori of **New Zealand**.
LGBTQ equality has seen encouraging forward momentum in recent years in Asia and the Pacific Islands, led by the courage and persistence of local activists and allies even in many countries where LGBTQ identities are still ostracized or persecuted.

Taiwan, well-known for hosting the largest annual LGBTQ pride event in Asia, is set to become the first in the region to have marriage equality by 2019, after a constitutional court ruling ordered the government to recognize same-sex marriage. In Japan, several localities have begun registering same-sex partnerships, a clear sign of growing acceptance. Meanwhile, Nepal's Supreme Court ordered the government to “study” the possibility of legalizing marriage equality in a 2007 ruling.

In Southeast Asia, Thailand passed a Gender Equality Act in 2015 prohibiting anti-LGBTQ discrimination and is likely to recognize same-sex relationships in the near future. Although same-sex couples still do not have legal recognition in Vietnam, the country recently repealed a ban on same-sex marriage.

Out elected officials and other leaders provide hope and strength for local LGBTQ communities, including:

- Sunil Babu Pant, longtime Nepali LGBTI rights and HIV activist and Asia’s first openly LGBTQ national-level legislator.
- Geraldine Roman, the first openly transgender woman elected to the Congress of the Philippines.
- Manvendra Singh Gohil, an openly gay prince who has been a strong advocate for LGBTQ rights in India and around the world.
- Japan’s Tomoya Hosoda, the world’s first openly transgender man elected to public office.
- Groundbreaking Japanese politicians Aya Kamikawa, a transgender woman, and Taiga Ishikawa, a gay man, who both have continuously advocated for LGBTQ rights.
- Kanako Otsuji, the first openly LGBTQ member of the Japanese House of Representatives.
- Audrey Tang, the first openly transgender cabinet official to serve in Taiwan’s Executive Yuan, after she was appointed to lead the government’s digital innovation efforts.

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- Groundbreaking Japanese politicians Aya Kamikawa, a transgender woman, and Taiga Ishikawa, a gay man, who both have continuously advocated for LGBTQ rights.
- Kanako Otsuji, the first openly LGBTQ member of the Japanese House of Representatives.
- Audrey Tang, the first openly transgender cabinet official to serve in Taiwan’s Executive Yuan, after she was appointed to lead the government’s digital innovation efforts.
LGBTQ Progress in the 21st Century

Even in countries with limited legal or political progress, emboldened activists and a growing acceptance of LGBTQ identities provide an optimistic outlook for future. For instance, after Chinese social media giant Weibo announced that it would begin censoring LGBTQ-related content, a massive user-led protest by LGBTQ Chinese and allies led to the company reversing its decision.

At the same time, many LGBTQ people in Asia and the Pacific Islands continue to face discrimination and even violence, including recent waves of state-sponsored persecution in Central Asia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iraq and Malaysia. As LGBTQ API Americans and believers of equality, we must continue to stand with communities abroad and advocate for global LGBTQ equality.
Today, we celebrate the myriad stories and contributions of LGBTQ API Americans who continue to provide leadership, visibility and pride to our diverse community.

In 2012, Representative Mark Takano (D-CA), a career educator, became the first openly LGBTQ person of color elected to Congress. Georgia’s Sam Park similarly became the first openly gay man elected to the state’s general assembly in 2016. Benjamin Cruz, who made headlines for being openly gay when he was first nominated for judgeship in the 1980s, became the Speaker of the Guam Legislature in 2017. And Kim Coco Iwamoto, a descendent of World War II internees, became the nation’s highest-ranking openly transgender elected official in 2006 when she was elected to the Hawai’i Board of Education.

In local communities and across the nation, we celebrate the work of advocates like Geena Rocero, Glenn Magpantay, Mia Frances Yamamoto, Sasanka Jinadasa, Jim Toy, Pauline Park, Ben de Guzman, Urooj Arshad, Cecilia Chung, Dan Choi, Mohan Sundararaj, Pabitra Benjamin, Kham Moua and Faisal Alam, who challenge us to question the bias, discrimination and prejudice that disproportionately affect LGBTQ people of color in America.

We also look to artists and writers like June Millington, Parvez Sharma, Jose Antonio Vargas, Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla, Helen Zia and Kit Yan, who share our stories and intersectional perspectives through their work. Meanwhile, athletes like Esera Tuaolo, Amazin LeThi and Julie Chu fight for equality both inside and outside the sports arena.
Although LGBTQ API Americans are often underrepresented in mass media and entertainment, trailblazing artists continue to pave the way to share our stories. Celebrities from Margaret Cho, Bryan Chan and Alec Mapa, to Rex Lee, Jenny Shimizu, Maulik Pancholy, BD Wong and Gia Gunn live proudly, openly and authentically, inspiring others to live their truth and serving as role models for API youth.

Meanwhile, LGBTQ cinema and television are on the rise in Asia and the Pacific Islands, bolstered by the wider accessibility provided by digital platforms. Although LGBTQ films have flourished in the region for decades, mainstream media platforms and networks increasingly feature LGBTQ actors, storylines and themes in Taiwan, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong, but also in countries where LGBTQ people face greater societal barriers, including China, Malaysia and the Philippines.

- Yuri on Ice, named 2016 Anime of the Year, prominently depicts a same-sex relationship that has drawn praise from fans and international figure skaters alike in one of Japan’s most popular sports.
- More and more primetime television shows are featuring LGBTQ API characters, including Code Black’s Malaya Pineda, How to Get Away with Murder’s Oliver Hampton (a HIV-positive character portrayed by openly gay Conrad Ricamora), and Superstore’s Mateo Liwanag (an undocumented immigrant portrayed by openly gay Nicos Santos).
Additional Resources

Educate Yourself and Others. Support and resources are readily available.

Family is Still Family
The National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance and Asian Pride Project have many multilingual resources to help API parents who have LGBTQ children. Videos are available in seven Asian languages, translated informational leaflets in 25 Asian and Pacific Islander languages, live local workshops and parent support groups in many cities.

www.familyisstillfamily.org

PFLAG supports parents, families and friends who support their LGBTQ loved ones. Please visit www.pflag.org/blog/resourcesapifamilies for additional resources specific to Asian Pacific Islander families. Local chapters of PFLAG also offer API-specific resources and support, including chapters in New York City, the California San Gabriel Valley and Washington State.

The National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance is a federation of local LGBTQ Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander (APIs) organizations who support LGBTQ APIs.

www.nqapia.org

अतिरिक्त संसाधन

खुद को और दूसरों को शिक्षित करें। सहयोग और संसाधन सरलता से उपलब्ध है।

पौंडलिंग इंडेटीएच (PFLAG) अपने LGBTQ और इनके रिश्तों की सहयोग करने वाले माता-पिता, परिवार और मित्रों को सहयोग करने का एक संगठन है।

www.pflag.org/blog/resourcesapifamilies
Additional Resources

The South

• Asian Queers and Allies (AQUA), Durham, NC
• Collective of Houston Asian Americans (CHAA)
• Trikone- Atlanta, GA
• Khush Texas, Austin, TX
• VAYLA- New Orleans

Midwest

• Invisible-to-Invincible (i2i): Asian Pacific Islander Pride of Chicago
• Trikone-Chicago
• Freedom Inc. – Madison, WI

Mid-Atlantic/Metro DC Area

• Asian Pacific Islander Queers United for Action (AQUA), Washington, DC
• Asian Pacific Islander Queer Society (APIQS), Washington, DC
• hotpot!, Philadelphia, PA
• Khush-DC, Washington, DC

Greater New York City Area

• Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY)
• Q-WAVE
• SALGA
• PFLAG NYC Chapter – API Project
• Desi Rainbow Parents

New England

• Massachusetts Area South Asian Lambda Association (MASALA), Boston, MA
• Queer Asian Pacific-Islander Alliance (QAPA), Boston, MA

Pacific Northwest

• Asian Pacific Islander Pride of Portland, OR
• Trikone-Northwest, Seattle, WA
• UTOPIA- Seattle
• Project Q of APIFWSC-Chhaya, Seattle, WA
• Pride Asia, Seattle, WA

Northern California

• API Queer Sacramento Coalition (APIQSC)
• Asian Pacific Islander Equality-Northern California
• Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women and Transgender Community (APIQWTCE)
• Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA), San Francisco, CA
• GAPA Foundation, San Francisco, CA
• South Bay Queer and Asian, San Jose
• Trikone, San Francisco, CA
• UTOPIA- San Francisco

Southern California

• Asian Pacific Islander Equality-Los Angeles
• Barangay - LA
• Satrang
• UTOPIA- San Diego
• Viet Rainbow Orange County (VietROC)
• API PFLAG San Gabriel Valley, CA

Pacific Islands

• Pride Marianas, Saipan
• Guam Alternative Lifestyle Association (GALA)

National

• Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD)
• Desi LGBT Helpline (DeQH)
• Network on Religion and Justice (NRJ)
• Korean American Rainbow Parents (NY, DC, LA)