

Optum



Relias Spotlight Series June 2022

Hello Providers,

Welcome to the Optum Idaho **June Relias Spotlight Series** – a series devoted to offering you access to **free, accessible and continuing education unit-eligible** online education about topics that are important to behavioral health providers. This month we are highlighting LGBTQ+ Pride Month and sharing the significance of June 28, 1969.

On June 28, 1969, a gay establishment called the Stonewall Inn was raided by the New York City police. This raid sparked a six-day demonstration of protests and riots, which triggered the gay civil rights movement in the U.S. It is referred to as the single most important event that led to gay liberation. That date also paved the way for June to be celebrated as Pride Month.

The definition of pride conjures both positive and negative thoughts, however Pride Month is intended to be celebratory and affirming. The nationwide festivities increase visibility to the LGBTQ+ community and awareness toward the pursuit of acceptance and equality for

the LGBTQ+ population. While there is still much work to be done, we have come a long way in the last 100 years in acknowledging, understanding and supporting LGBTQ+ rights.

Gay rights activism can be traced back as early as the 1920s. Henry Gerber, a gay rights activist from Chicago, was instrumental in leading the organization Society for Human Rights. This organization published a newsletter, *Friendship and Freedom*, from 1924 to 1925. While short-lived, it opened the door for others to make their mark in history by showing support and raising awareness about the disparities gay and lesbian individuals faced.

The 1950s and 1960s became an oppressive time for this population. We saw medical experts and the U.S. government pathologize and exclude gay men. In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) included homosexuality as a mental illness and stated that homosexuality was a sociopathic personality disturbance. Shortly after this was publicized, President Eisenhower signed an executive order in 1953 stating homosexuals are banned from the military, as they were thought to be a security risk.

As the 1950s and 1960s continued to vilify the LGBTQ+ community, many Americans supported the notion that gays and lesbians were deplorable. However, it seemed that all the steps taken to repress the ever-increasing awareness and equality efforts resulted in even broader counteractions across the U.S. through televised documentaries, decriminalization of homosexuality and advocacy expansion. Several advocacy groups continued to spring up. One such group was the Personal Rights in Defense and Education (PRIDE) group. They were a political organization that formed in 1966 to fight the government's actions against rights and equalities for gay and lesbian individuals. This group continues to publish *The Advocate* newsletter, which is the longest running publication supporting the LGBTQ+ population. *The Los Angeles Advocate* was renamed to simply *The Advocate* after the Stonewall Inn raid. Additionally, in 1961, Illinois became the first state to decriminalize "homosexuality." Following the raid in 1969, many events and milestones drove more support, but opposition also continued.

As we moved into the 1970s, there were significant liberating changes. In 1973, a mother publicly marched alongside her gay son. Her courage and support helped bring others together, and this event led to the formation of Parents and Friends of Gays. The parents and friends support group became today's largest ally organization: Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Also, later in 1973, the APA removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders, and the first federal gay rights bill was introduced in 1975. Unfortunately, it was never signed, but the 1970s also saw many firsts, including openly gay and lesbian people elected to public offices.

The 1990s were also rich with change, but not all as hoped. However, there was some movement forward as mentioned here. In 1995, the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act became part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act giving a judge the leeway to impose a harsher penalty if evidence demonstrated a crime occurred due to discrimination. Also, less than three months after President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, stating that a marriage is between a man and a woman, Judge Chang from Hawaii ruled that a state has no right to deprive same-sex couples the right to marry.

Fast forward to the 21st century, the first same-sex marriage occurred in Massachusetts in 2004. As state rules waxed and waned in support of same-sex marriages, President Obama publicly supported marriage for LGBTQ+ couples in 2012. Another crucial advancement was decided on June 26, 2015, as Obergefell v. Hodges overturned Baker v. Nelson and required all states to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and to recognize same-sex marriages validly performed in other jurisdictions. This established same-sex marriage throughout the U.S. and its territories. In 2018, we heard that the Pentagon confirmed the first transgender person in the U.S. military. We also saw the allowance of benefit privileges for same-sex couples. Lastly, June 15, 2020, marked the day that the Supreme Court ruled that federal law protects LGBTQ+ individuals from work discrimination.

The above are only a few examples of the trials, tribulations and successes of the LGBTQ+ community's journey through history. As we see the progress and movement toward equality and inclusivity, Optum Idaho wants to take the opportunity to encourage you to continue your own journey to supporting and understanding the needs of our LGBTQ+ members and how better to serve them. We suggest referencing PRIDE365+ as an available resource for you and your clients. Also, below is a list of Relias trainings to consider as you show your Pride this month.

101 Terms and Skills for Counseling LGBTQIA+ Population	1152517
Working More Effectively with LGBTQ+ Children and Youth	REL-BHC-0-WMELGBTQC
Working More Effectively with the LGBTQ+ Community	REL-BHC-0-WMELGBTQC
Prevalence and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders in the LGBTQ+ Community	REL-BHC-0-PTSUDLGBTQC
Overcoming Barriers to LGBTQ+ Affirming Behavioral Health Services	REL-BHC-0-OBLGBTQABHS

Thank you again for the work that you do each day with our members so that Idaho can continue to improve access to behavioral health services. Optum Idaho is excited to offer these resources to you.

Sincerely,

The Optum Education and Training Team