

# COMING OUT: A 50 YEAR HISTORY

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR AMERICAN SPACES

*This discussion guide is designed for programming at American Spaces. American Spaces should work with their Public Affairs Section to ensure that this movie is appropriate for American Space audiences.*



### FILM INFORMATION

**Year Release:** 2017

**Rating:** NA

**Duration:** 57 minutes

**Director:** Phil Siegel

**Starring:** Jazz Jennings

**Themes:** LGBTQI+ Rights,  
Activism, Diversity in America

#### [Kanopy Link](#)

*Kanopy films are accessible through [eLibraryUSA](#) and can be screened at American Spaces through our agreement with eLibraryUSA. American Spaces can also screen these films online in closed forums.*

### MOVIE CONTEXT

*Coming Out: A 50 Year History* is a documentary in which high school and college students interview several older members of the LGBTQI+ community about how their identity impacted their lives. The interviewees' experiences span five decades as they recount a time when there was little acceptance of the LGBTQI+ community. They tell stories about the challenges of coming out, gay rights activism, family relations, and queer norms and culture. The documentary also shows how harsh attitudes toward the LGBTQI+ community have eased over time.

The documentary is narrated by the transgender teen, activist, and TV personality Jazz Jennings. The powerful imagery presented in the film serves as a backdrop to these individuals' stories.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of STATE  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

## **American Spaces LGBTQI+ Pride Month Resource Toolkit**

### **KEY VOCABULARY**

**Coming Out** – The acknowledgement of one's sexual or gender identity, either to oneself or publicly

**AIDS (Acquired immune deficiency syndrome)** - A life-disease of the immune system that plagued the American LGBTQI+ community in the 1980s.

**Tenderloin District** – A neighborhood in downtown San Francisco known for arts, theatre, restaurants, nightlife, and a robust LGBTQI+ community.

**The Ladder** – First nationally printed lesbian magazine starting in 1956

**"Off the curbs, and into the streets"** – A slogan referring to bystanders leaving the sidewalks (curbs) and joining gay rights protests in the streets.



### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- *Why do you think the LGBTQI+ individuals in the film experienced discrimination?*
- *Was there any particular story or interviewee that stood out to you? Why?*
- *What were the key moments that sparked the American gay rights movement?*
- *How did Felicia's experience as transgender interviewee vary from the gay and lesbian experience?*
- *How have attitudes changed toward lesbian and gay individuals in the United States?*
- *How are members of the LGBTQI+ community treated in your country?*
- *LGBTQI+ rights are human rights. How can we help build an atmosphere of inclusion regardless of personal or religious views?*