



North American Drama Therapy Association Position Statement on the 53rd Anniversary of Stonewall

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In the early hours of June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York City. The Stonewall Inn was an illegal bar run by the mafia, one of the only kinds of places where gender non-conforming individuals could be out in public during a time when their existence and self-expression was actively criminalized.

Police raids of such bars in the 1960s NYC were routine and generally non-violent, a “cost of doing business” for the bar owners. This time, however, the police tried to shut down the bar and arrest patrons. The growing crowd of people collecting on the street outside the Stonewall Inn decided to fight back. Individuals in the crowd threw rocks, bricks, and molotov cocktails at the police, protesting the arrest of visibly queer and gender non-conforming patrons.

The resulting Stonewall Riots are generally seen as a landmark event that helped to raise public visibility of activist efforts for gay/lesbian/trans liberation. This historic moment is commemorated with PRIDE parades and festivals to this day. In 2016, the Stonewall National Monument was established as a way to honor the history and accomplishments of LGBTQIA2S+ communities.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted social tensions and systemic oppression throughout the US, further limiting spaces for individuals with marginalized identities to find full expression and reclaim their human agency. A sharp increase in anti-trans rhetoric, legislation, and violence throughout the US threatens the lives of the most vulnerable members of the queer community.

The NADTA wants to honor this legacy. The #BlackLivesMatter movement cannot be separated from the liberation of queer and trans people. We argue for holistic, participatory, inclusive, and emancipatory mental health approaches that integrate rights, multiple social dimensions, and diverse sources of knowledge and lived experiences, while promoting equity for all.

It is more important than ever to understand intersectionality, and how homophobia and transphobia are rooted in White supremacy culture. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were trans women of color instrumental in the gay liberation movement. Both are seen as the “mothers” of queer liberation in the US. Queer and trans people of color have been on the front lines of social movements throughout US history, and still face the highest rates of discrimination and violence.

Educational Resources

[You're Wrong About Podcast - The Stonewall Uprising](#)
[Stonewall National Monument \(US National Park Service\)](#)
[6 Major Moments in Queer History BEYOND the Stonewall Riots](#)
[Best LGBTQ Documentaries, From Disclosure to Paris is Burning](#)
[The Queer History Book List | Penguin Random House](#)
[Queer History | The American Historian](#)
[Sylvia Rivera | National Women's History Museum](#)
[Life Story: Marsha P. Johnson](#)

Advocacy Resources

[Petition | #EndTransDetention - Let's protect trans lives](#)
[Contact Your Representatives](#)
[RiseOut Mobile Advocacy Network](#)
[Join SAGE's Action Squad](#)
[Hope starts with a volunteer - The Trevor Project](#)
[Together | GLAAD](#)
[Advocacy | PFLAG](#)