

# # INVITING IN

BLACK AND OTHER LGBTQ+/SGL PEOPLE MIGHT “INVITE IN” PEOPLE THEY KNOW BY SHARING INFORMATION THAT MAY OTHERWISE BE SHROUDED IN STIGMA.

#INVITINGINDAY22



# INVITING IN



**INVITING IN** acknowledges that each of us has something that society tells us we should feel shame or stigma about in our life and the importance of everyone doing the work required to demonstrate compassion and increase competence, so people feel comfortable sharing important parts of themselves when they so choose.

- **INVITING IN** disrupts the idea of “coming out,” which affirms traditional power dynamics that do not center the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+, and same-gender loving (LGBTQ+/SGL) people.
- **INVITING IN** highlights the importance of bilateral relationships to build and strengthen community.
- **INVITING IN** reminds us that no one is entitled to information about other people’s lived experiences. This is especially true for Black people, given the burdens we already bear due to white supremacy and anti-Blackness.
- **INVITING IN** suggests that if someone puts in the work, they may be **INVITED IN**.

1 Same-Gender Loving: A term used by members of the African-American /Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of Anglo/European descent

# COMING OUT

is PROBLEMATIC...  
for a LOT of reasons



**“I would be OK with the idea of ‘coming out’ if it meant that everyone was expected to ‘come out.’ But that’s not how it works in practice. I’ve never seen a heterosexual person have to tell their ‘coming out’ story. It’s the way that cis, heterosexual people ask questions about queer identities where they are expecting an answer and are incapable of providing one that reminded me that [Inviting In] was a really important concept.”**

*—Dr. David J. Johns  
Executive Director, NBJC*

- Coming out is problematic when implying that queer, trans, and non-binary people are expected to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Everyone is not expected to “come out.” The expectation affirms the heterosexual agenda where cisgender heterosexuality is assumed to be natural, traditional, or the default. It is not.
- Coming out implies that in the absence of repeated and public disclosure, LGBTQ+/SGL people are hiding or not acknowledging important parts of who they are and how they show up in the world.
- Coming out is important, and it is also problematic, especially for people who are trans, queer, and non-binary in communities where there are policies and practices that render them not safe.

**INVITING IN** shifts traditional power dynamics that benefit people in positions of privilege (cisgender heterosexual people, especially white cisgender heterosexual men) by acknowledging that no one is owed or should expect to have access to information about people, especially people who they are not in a meaningful relationship with.

# INVITING IN

- Some LGBTQ+/SGL people, especially Black people, do not have the privilege of coming out.
- Many Black people live in the South—in states where it is still legal to deny people access to public accommodations based on sex, sexual identity, gender orientation, and gender expression—which can make it unsafe to disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- The Supreme Court only recently made it illegal to deny employment to someone based on sex, sexual identity, and gender orientation.
- Twenty-one states, many in the South, do not explicitly prohibit discrimination in public accommodations based on sex, sexual identity, and gender orientation. Public accommodations include hospitals, restaurants, gas stations, and hotels.

## INSTEAD OF COMING OUT

Black and other LGBTQ+/SGL people might “Invite In” people they know and love by sharing information about them that may otherwise be shrouded in stigma or that society might suggest should only be discussed in secret.

### What it Means to Invite In

INVITING IN  
REQUIRES  
COMPETENCE  
AND  
COMPASSION

COUNTERS  
THE IDEA OF  
"COMING  
OUT" TO  
DISRUPT  
TRADITIONAL  
POWER  
DYNAMICS.

HIGHLIGHTS  
THE  
IMPORTANCE  
OF BILATERAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

# INVITING IN DAY August 2

**Overview:** In 2021, NBJC celebrated the inaugural Inviting In Day on August 2nd. August 2nd is the birthday of civil rights activist and trailblazing writer James Baldwin, who unapologetically invited people into his full, multifaceted life as a Black same-gender loving man committed to truth telling and the pursuit of equity. On Inviting In Day, we invite you to think critically about your understanding of coming out and learn more about Inviting In by exploring NBJC's Inviting In resources. Consider sharing this toolkit with others as well.

**Ways to Participate:** NBJC would love for you or your organization to join us in celebrating “Inviting In” Day! Below are a few ways you can join in:

- Share your #InvitingIn Story with people who deserve to know more about important parts of who you are and how you show up in the world.
- Host an “Inviting In” party or social hour with other LGBTQ+/SGL people in your life.
- Share your #InvitingIn story across digital media platforms, and tag us @NBJCOnTheMove.
- Read or share other’s Inviting In stories by Accessing [NBJC’s library of Inviting In stories](#).
- Watch and share NBJC’s Executive Director Dr. David J. Johns talk about Inviting In [“Why Some Black LGBTQIA+ Folks Are Done ‘Coming Out.’”](#)



# INVITING IN MEDIA

Watch NBJC's and The Root's Inviting In Mini Documentary.  
["Honoring James Baldwin and His Legacy Through "Inviting in Day"](#)

[Honoring James Baldwin and His Legacy Through 'Inviting in Day' Article](#)

[Social Media Assets are available for download on our Inviting In page at \[nbjc.org\]\(#\)](#)

