

Pride Month: Celebrating Resilience, Confronting Challenges, and Building Bridges

By Mark T. Williams, BSN, RN, FMNLI, FCPP
Bridgeway Board Trustee

In a time of profound social change, LGBTQ+ adults are not merely surviving, they are thriving, creating, and leading with a vibrancy that reshapes our workplaces, neighborhoods, and civic life.

Today, more adults than ever before proudly identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer under the expansive umbrella of gender and sexual diversity. This generation of adults carries a profound sense of self-awareness and authenticity, building chosen families, launching advocacy movements, and redefining what it means to live openly and courageously at every stage of life. Their resilience is not a passive trait but an active, daily practice of joy, creativity, and connection, even when the world around them feels uncertain or unwelcoming.

Yet this resilience is forged under extraordinary pressure. Against a backdrop of rising legislative battles, cultural polarization, and persistent discrimination, LGBTQ+ adults face barriers to basic human rights, from employment protections and housing security to name changes on identification documents and freedom from harassment in public spaces.

Perhaps most critically, they encounter staggering obstacles to affirming healthcare, including mental health support, while navigating a system that often dismisses their identities. Studies show that these stressors contribute to disproportionate rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among LGBTQ+ adults, yet access to competent, compassionate care remains

inconsistent and, in many regions, increasingly restricted. For every story of professional or personal triumph, there is a parallel story of an adult fighting simply to be seen, heard, and treated with dignity in their own community.

At Bridgeway BHS, we believe that resilience must be met with action, not just admiration. This 2026 Pride month again gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to creating safe spaces where every adult in our extended community can access the resources they need, from inclusive workplace policies and trained healthcare providers to peer support networks and educational programming that celebrates diverse identities.

Bridgeway is committed to providing respectful, inclusive, and affirming care for LGBTQ+ individuals as part of its broader behavioral health services.

We invite our entire community, colleagues, neighbors, and allies, to stand alongside us in advocating for equitable healthcare, nondiscrimination ordinances, and policies that protect rather than punish. Together, we can transform societal stress into systemic change, ensuring that our LGBTQ+ adults do not have to shoulder the weight of their future alone. Their brilliance deserves not just our applause, but our unwavering solidarity.