

Summary: Evaluation of Community Storytelling Events

Prepared for Telling Queer History



I care about these people and their stories, even though I don't know them. It's still a little bit of me in everybody's story, even though it's not at all. So yeah, I guess it just makes me feel more connected and less lonely in the world. – TQH storytelling event attendee

In 2022-2023, Telling Queer History (TQH) and Wilder Research collaborated to continue evaluation efforts of TQH's storytelling events. These events are one way TQH aims to create community connection through storytelling and share history.

TQH and Wilder Research collaborated by updating an existing participant survey for evaluation, and conducting 19 interviews with event participants, both community attendees and storytellers. These methods focused on measuring impacts related to: participants' sense of community and belonging, impact to the broader queer community as a whole, level of satisfaction, and suggestions for future events. These findings primarily draw from the 19 interviews, as at the time of reporting there were relatively few survey responses to include. However, preliminary survey results generally support interview findings.

Key findings

- Participants are often motivated to attend TQH events by a desire for community and connection.
- TQH offers opportunities for participants to find and build community by making a queer-centered space to gather. Particularly, participants have chances to be together, share together, and learn from one another.

I don't feel like an outsider. [That] just feels really refreshing given how much of the world is so hetero-focused that I'm in a group of folks where being queer is the norm and that feels like a breath out. – TQH event attendee

- TQH creates a multigenerational environment to share across generations.

I think this type of project allows for folks to tap into a family tree history that we might not have access to otherwise. – TQH event attendee

- Storytelling personalizes the nuance and multidimensionality of the Queer community and highlights the diversity and intersectionality of the community.

I think one of the things that I love about a lot of what Telling Queer History puts on is that it is so focused on personal experience and sharing our histories, because for so long, nothing was documented, nothing was archived, people couldn't be safe telling their histories. And a lot of that is still really true. And it's not that Telling Queer History is an archival project or anything, but the fact that you get to bear witness to people's stories that you wouldn't ordinarily have the opportunity to hear is super powerful and exciting. – TQH event attendee

Of course, everybody's different and all these different identities, we all have different challenges and joys, and I guess to be able to see all of that and see the nuance and see like, "Oh, LGBTQ+, a monolith? No, not really. Not at all." So just to see the little stories, but also to look back at it and see the bigger picture and oh, look how we share a lot of things in common. – TQH event attendee

- Storytelling is an effective way to harness community strength and power, including feelings of hope, resilience, and resistance.

Community suggestions for future programming

- Continue offering virtual or hybrid event options for accessibility.
- Find additional methods to spread awareness and increase outreach, including increased marketing in local newspapers and magazines.
- Offer a broader variety of events, such as a broader range of times, open-mic nights, less formal events, and more formal events.
- Offer storytelling coaching or mentorship, for both storytellers and attendees.
- Continue and increase focus on the multigenerational environment.
- Continue and increase focus on partnership with other similar organizations, such as Quatrefoil Library and Tretter Collection.
- Continue and increase responsiveness and collaboration between TQH and community members.
- Explore specific event or topic suggestions (in alphabetical order): allyship in action, erasure, increased history focus, queerness and neuro-divergence, queer erotic stories, queers in trade careers, queer zines, queer youth, and rural queer experience

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For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *Evaluation of Community Storytelling Events, Prepare for Telling Queer History*.

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