



OUT LEADERSHIP

# OutNEXT

10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GLOBAL SUMMIT, SEPTEMBER 2023

POST-SUMMIT REPORT



Todd with Mila Jam, Out Leadership's Senior Adviser for transgender initiatives, who MC'd this year's summit

Over two days in September 2023, Out Leadership's 10th annual OutNEXT Global Summit took place at the Citi headquarters in New York City, made possible with the invaluable support of our partner RBC Capital Markets and proud sponsor Citi.

At the Summit, over 200 young LGBTQ+ leaders from a wide array of Out Leadership's global member companies heard from a plethora of outstanding speakers including Delaware State Senator Sarah McBride, Olympic medalist and soccer champion Ali Krieger, and Citi's own Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Global Head of Talent, Erika Irish Brown.

I'm proud that over 12,000 young leaders have participated in the OutNEXT since we started 10 years ago, and that we now have programs in New York, London, Sydney, Hong Kong, Toronto, and Los Angeles with plans to expand further around the globe.

In hindsight, the takeaway from this summit that most moved me was that connection catalyzes change. Every single participant came away committed to taking what they learned, the experiences they had, and the tools they were given back to where they work and to use them to strengthen LGBTQ+ equality in their own lives and in the lives of their coworkers.

Each and every time we connect we get stronger and we bring that strength back home. Whether you attended this year's summit or will join us for the next one, I hope you fill your time by creating strength through connection – it's how we'll build a better environment for LGBTQ+ people around the globe.

**Todd Sears**  
Founder & CEO  
Out Leadership

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# Key Learnings

## Talk is cheap. Take action.

Every person is responsible for driving change. Diffusion of responsibility slows progress: when everyone assumes another will take responsibility to advocate for equality, no one steps up to the plate. Leaders deputize themselves to make active choices to push for greater diversity and inclusion. OutNEXT speaker **Nina Kennedy** noted that she encourages white gay males (as a traditionally privileged group within the LGBTQ+ community) to be the first to initiate contact with someone of another community and ask what they can do to help others.

**Push yourself to make an introduction**, even if it pushes you out of your comfort zone. Nina recounted a story of a white woman who, seeing a table in the office with four black women, assumed she would not be accepted by them and was intimidated. Nina notes how these four Black women are likely sitting together for community and support in a predominantly white space. What the white woman perceived as rejection from the Black women was actually the opposite. By moving beyond our assumptions to create real connections with others, we can create a greater sense of belonging. Similarly, **Victor**

**Jeffries** noted that on Fire Island, whose community tends to be predominantly white, he makes a point to say hello to every fellow Black person he sees. Inclusion, therefore starts by creating deliberate and specific connections with others.

The anti-LGBTQ+ movement has a clear and focused vision for the future. When we allow ourselves to be distracted playing defense against their vision, we sometimes forget to build our own. To win, the equality movement must play offense. Organizations like the ACLU are developing a long-range vision to strategize an intersectional civil rights defense.

## Diversity is just the start. Belonging is the end goal.

It is no longer sufficient to merely include people of differing backgrounds. Leaders and organizations must **take actionable steps** to create a sense of belonging, where people of all backgrounds are meaningfully involved in the processes, decisions, and operations of an organization.



(L-R): Eugene Smith II, Diversity Project Manager, Chief of Staff to the Global Head of Diversity, Citi, Nina Kennedy, Concert Pianist, Conductor Award-winning Filmmaker, Anna Parisi, Artist, Writer, Educator, Geoff Lipson, Photographer, Victor Jeffreys II, Artist, Activist.

## Empathy effects change.

Direct human connection is the antidote to the anti-equality movement. Debates over LGBTQ+ equality are often reduced to political abstractions, hypothetical issues, and inflammatory edge cases. By arguing in the abstract, anti-equality voices do not have to address the direct impact their policies have on real people.

**When LGBTQ+ people demand to be seen as human – familiar and essential members of our community – we can command the personal respect necessary to secure our rights.** This proposition isn't just rhetorical. Person-to-person communication, as opposed to abstract discourse, generates a real, physiological response in the brain between communicators. In common parlance, this response is called empathy.

In the Delaware legislature, a bill to end the LGBTQ+ panic defense had passed the House along partisan lines. But when **Senator Sarah McBride** – who is transgender – announced her candidacy for United States Congress, the publicity prompted new and alarming threats against her life from transphobic reactionaries. To address these threats, the Delaware State Capitol implemented new security measures.

As the LGBTQ+ panic defense bill was brought to the Senate floor for debate, Senator McBride was prepared to defend her humanity, like trans people so often must do in public debate. To her surprise, every single Republican senator, from the most moderate to the most conservative, stood up to declare their support for the bill. Seeing the threats to their colleague, each Senator understood on a personal level the impact of their decisions. As the Republican Senators voiced their support, each one of them looked into Senator McBride's eyes in a show of respect for her as a person and colleague as they added their names as cosponsors one by one.



Sarah McBride, Delaware State Senator, on a panel with Jeffrey Trachtman, Kramer, Levin, Naftalis & Frankel, LLP and Brian Sims, Managing Director, Public Policy & Government Affairs, Out Leadership.

**Senator McBride acknowledged that this gesture from her fellow senators – demonstrating that LGBTQ+ people should be safe from violence – is the bare minimum in terms of support for the community.** However, in a bitterly divided political climate where bipartisanship is increasingly rare, the actions of the Delaware Senate that day exemplify how powerful, synaptic connections from cultivated interpersonal relationships can advance concrete results for the equality movement.



Soccer Star Ali Krieger, speaking with Jane Barry-Moran, Managing Director, Programs & Research, Out Leadership.

## Choose greatness and you'll never miss an opportunity.

Success is directly correlated to effort. While the challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community may have a multitude of systemic causes and external influences outside of the control of any one individual, one can begin to overcome obstacles by focusing on the factors they are able to control: their personal behavior and effort.

**In the words of World Champion Ali Krieger, "If I'm just average every day, then I am going to continue to be average. But I consider myself elite, and so I always want to be that day-to-day in everything that I do."**

The Olympic mindset demands consistent excellence and how one does anything is necessarily how one does everything. From prompt attendance to dedicated effort and effective teamwork, leaders who choose to give their best to overcome adversity and push for greatness achieve Olympic-level results.





Scenes from OutNEXT 2023

## Demand respect.

"I wake up every day and decide I won't be made less than I am." - Anna Parisi

**When facing adversity, the bravery to demand respect is half the battle for acceptance and equality.** Only when we stand up for ourselves, create environments where others can speak up against injustice, and advocate for equality – even when it may be uncomfortable – can we hope to create progress.

Furthermore, when members of the LGBTQ+ community command respect as individuals, they create a positive example for more junior colleagues and community members. These strong leader figures empower younger generations to also demand respect, thus creating a cascading effect of greater tolerance, authority, and inclusion.

## Facts win.

**Advocacy becomes unimpeachable when supported by data, evidence, and records.** Keep detailed and contemporaneous notes from calls and meetings to prevent malicious actors from undercutting your work.

Victor Jeffries recounted how he countered a dishonest request from a difficult client by providing clear and detailed records of previous conversations between the parties. By playing back the tape of what had previously been agreed to, the opposing party had no ability to counter the factual record.

Be armed with research to support your arguments, and be prepared to answer anti-equality lines of thinking with evidence-backed responses.





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# About Out Leadership

Out Leadership is the world's premier global platform for businesses to drive LGBTQ+ equality.

We work closely with the world's leading companies to develop extraordinary talent, produce cutting-edge research, advance powerful advocacy, and improve business outcomes.



Out Leadership is a **certified B Corporation**, which means we have voluntarily met the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

Join us and play a part in the fight for equality.

To get involved: [info@outleadership.com](mailto:info@outleadership.com).

# About OutNEXT

OutNEXT is the first and only global talent program for emerging LGBTQ+ leaders, proudly sponsored by RBC Capital Markets and Citi.

The OutNEXT curriculum has been honed over 10 years to help LGBTQ+ leaders understand their **OutVANTAGE™**, leadership skills that are unique to the LGBTQ+ experience.

The **OutNEXT curriculum** was developed in partnership with McKinsey and PwC, and in the past 10 years, has become a world class global leadership development program.

Every year, we invite our member companies to nominate the **best and brightest LGBTQ+ and ally emerging leaders** to attend OutNEXT programs around the world.

## Out Leadership Member Companies





Get involved: [info@outleadership.com](mailto:info@outleadership.com)