

**LGBTQ+**  
**POWER**  
**PLAYERS****ARTHUR FITTING**  
LGBTQ+ Program Manager  
VNS Health

*Lea Tomaswick, June 01, 2023*

As the celebration of Pride Month begins, we look to honor New York's LGBTQ+ Power Players — leaders in government and policymaking, education, health care, corporate industry, and social and civic advocacy. With a historic number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills being proposed throughout the country in 2023, these individuals continue to fight tirelessly for equality on all fronts, from working alongside lawmakers to providing resources and safe spaces for those in need. Their remarkable contributions continue to shape the state, inspiring countless others to dream, to act, and to create a world that celebrates every individual for who they are. While we honor these incredible individuals in the month of June, their excellence and leadership is not contained to a single month. True support and solidarity must be practiced and reaffirmed every day, every month, all year long.

**Arthur Fitting*****LGBTQ+ Program Manager, VNS Health***

Arthur Fitting, BSN, RN and LGBTQ+ program manager at home and community health nonprofit VNS Health, has dedicated his extensive career to addressing health care disparities within the LGBTQ+ community. Entering the community health field as a frontline nurse in NYC during the AIDS crisis, Arthur has remained committed to improving health care access and quality for all by promoting compassionate, patient-centered care through deeper integration of culturally sensitive practices in home health care.

**Which LGBTQ+ icons do you look up to?**

During the start of HIV/AIDS, many of us felt voiceless, but the bravery of Larry Kramer and ACT UP were the voices I needed to hear. They instilled momentous changes to the health care system that still stand today. Another hero for me is Marsha P. Johnson, for bringing public recognition to queer liberation, and

ensuring Trans voices were part of the movement. Their courage gave me my voice, and the strength to be courageous too.

**What actions do you hope to see the government taking to support the LGBTQ+ community?**

One action I would like to see taken, is for the government to ensure that all of us are guaranteed life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and that new laws cannot be passed that impede those basic rights. Within health care, I would like to see all levels of government work together more closely to create better pathways for LGBTQ+ people to have greater autonomy and control over their own healthcare and to be counted.

**What do you wish people outside of the community knew about the LGBTQ+ community?**

I would encourage people who identify as straight to try to imagine what it is like to be asked to not be your authentic self. If someone told you that you couldn't "act" straight, what changes in your life would you have to make to carry on your life? Because when you must start making those changes and move away from your true self, that impacts all aspects of well-being, including health.

**Can you recommend any top book, film, or TV shows that represent the LGBTQ+ experience?**

These days, too often I find myself buried in medical and health journals reading about the latest developments in LGBTQ health! However, there are so many great accessible entry points for LGBTQ culture in books, music, film, and more. I'd be remiss if I didn't encourage people to watch the play *Angels in America*, and to read Randy Shilts' *And the Band Played On*, or Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story*.

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