



Exclusive: NGLTF Deputy Executive Director Darlene Nipper on mental illness and other queer issues

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It was my honor to interview Rev Darlene Nipper, NGLTF's new Deputy Executive Director, at the Creating Change conference. Darlene has a prestigious background both in and outside of the LGBT movement. From [her bio on the NGLTF site](#):

She has held leadership positions in the government, corporate and nonprofit sectors, including the city government of Washington, D.C.; Black Entertainment Television (BET) Foundation; the National Mental Health Association; and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), where she served as chief operating officer.

Nipper has an extensive background as a health advocate, working with those affected by HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, mental illness and other health issues. As senior director and then-vice president of public education for the National Mental Health Association, Nipper managed programs that worked with 340 mental health associations across the country.

To me, one of the more interesting aspects of Darlene's career was her work with NAMI. [I've mentioned before that I'm bipolar](#), but mental illness is one of the many aspects of LGBT life that no one ever wants to mention. A lot of time we (as a community) seem to be so damned interested in assimilating into straight culture and being the best little people we can be, that untidiness like disabilities, addictions, etc are swept under the rug.

I talked quite a bit with Darlene about the LGBT community and mental illness - including her promise to ensure that the topic is on the table at the next Creating Change conference. The video is broken up into two segments - both after the jump.