Queer Dating Apps Come Together for Fighting Online Stigma in NiceAF Campaign

A joint statement from Building Healthy Online Communities and dating platforms for gay and bisexual men, including POZ Personals.

June 4, 2020 By POZ Personals

In the first ever cross-site collaboration of this kind, Building Healthy Online Communities (BHOC) and dating platforms for gay and bisexual men (Adam4Adam, Daddyhunt, Grindr, POZ Personals, SCRUFF and Jack'd) have teamed up to make their online communities nicer — and kinder for everyone — with the NiceAF.org campaign.

"Racism and other kinds of bigotry and stigma have no place in our society, whether it's on the streets or online," said Jen Hecht, director of BHOC, a partnership of dating apps and HIV/STD prevention organizations working together to support gay, bi and trans men's health.

"Many minority men find themselves either objectified and stereotyped with phrases such as 'white guys only — just a preference'. Where's the community? Where's the respect? 53% of our users are non-white," said Adam4Adam's David Lesage. "Adam4Adam is for everybody."

"It's more important than ever that we come together as one community to address these issues of abuse and discrimination online, and we are proud to stand alongside other leaders in this coalition," said Grindr's Global Health Projects Manager, Emmett Patterson. "We want to encourage a thoughtful dialogue in the queer community around how we can be more respectful and inclusive, both online and in-person."

The team behind NiceAF.org has compiled a number of videos featuring men telling stories of how they keep the online experience NiceAF. Starting June 3rd, the collaborating apps will invite their users to vote for the video that does the best job of embodying NiceAF's mission of promoting nicer, kinder interactions between users.

On social media, in news websites, and in nearly every comments section on the internet, people often say things they would never say to each other in person. The anonymity, and the fact that they may never meet, makes it easy for people to leave their real-world manners behind once they go online.

The problem is the insults can often have profound, lasting effects. This kind of behavior is too common in dating sites, when people are often at their most vulnerable. Among gay men, these same dynamics can have an even stronger impact. John Pachankis, a Yale psychiatrist who has done extensive research on gay men's mental health, says "The data are clear. When gay men experience stigma coming from other members of their own community, it can have even worse effects than when it comes from the outside."

Seeing messages like "no fats, no femmes, no Blacks or Asians, white guys only," when you open a dating app can turn what should be a playful, hopeful experience into a stressful one. "It takes a toll on your health," says Hecht. "We're excited to bring the apps together to help their users find the partners they want, while encouraging them to treat everyone respectfully, whether or not they're a match."

"As a community we've made giant strides in addressing the way the outside world treats us," said Hecht. "Now, we have a great opportunity to change how we treat each other."

"POZ has long fought HIV stigma in all its forms and is thrilled to be a partner with NiceAF.org with the shared goal to make the online dating world a more welcoming place for everyone," says Ian Anderson, president of Smart + Strong, the parent of POZ Personals.

Adam4Adam, Daddyhunt, Grindr, POZ Personals, and SCRUFF/Jack'd all joined BHOC and will each put out messages encouraging their users to go to the NiceAF.org site and vote for the video that does the best job of embodying NiceAF's mission.

Carl Sandler, CEO of Daddyhunt, says, "When we launched Daddyhunt in 2005, we implemented the 'Daddyhunt Code.' One of the code's principles is that members treat members with mutual respect. We're participating in NiceAF because we believe that shaming people for their HIV status, use of PrEP, age or race is not something we want to see happening on Daddyhunt nor in the gay community at large."

"The queer community has overcome many challenges throughout history," said Hecht. "We're confident we can address this challenge as well."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/queer-dating-apps-come-together-fighting-online-stigma-niceaf-campaign