

# LGBTQ+ & PRIDE RESOURCE

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## GUIDE ON COMING OUT

### ACCEPTING YOURSELF

Being open and honest with yourself about your identity is the first step to coming out. Accepting the fact that you may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, opposes society's heterosexual mold, and shows that you are able to forge your own path. It is completely normal to feel vulnerable, unsure, and afraid throughout the coming out process. This, however, is what makes coming out such an empowering, liberating, and affirming experience!

### MAKING THE CHOICE

When weighing the pros and cons of coming out, it is essential to remember that you are in charge. You can decide who to confide in, when, and how. Although your sexual orientation and gender identity are important pieces of yourself, they do not define you. You have the power to refrain from coming out under circumstances when doing so would make you uncomfortable.

### FORMING A PLAN

Once you have made the decision to come out, you will be tasked with preparing for the occasion. Try to predict the reactions that you will receive by considering the things you have previously heard your peers say about the LGBTQ+ community. Make sure that you are well-versed on LGBTQ+ issues and are able to answer any questions with ease. If you are faced with a negative reaction, knowing your facts will help disprove misinformation and accurately portray the LGBTQ+ experience. Prepare what you are going to say. There is no right or wrong way to go about this. It is best to find a quiet place to talk, and make sure that you have sufficient time to have an in-depth conversation. Sometimes, light humor will help diffuse tension. The most important thing is to be honest and make it clear that you are open to questions. Offering resources on how to learn more is a great way to educate friends and family!

### AFTERMATH

The responses that you receive may be varied and surprising. Once you have come out, the journey is far from over. There is still a transition to be made from "coming out" to "living openly". This change should operate on your own terms and timeline. Coming out will get easier over time with each person you tell. It is essential to remember that being openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, does not mean that you are defined by your sexuality. Rather, your orientation is a piece of the puzzle that makes up you!

## GUIDE FOR STRAIGHT ALLIES

### BE A FRIEND

One of the most important things an ally can be is a friend. Written by The Human Rights Campaign and PFLAG National, this guide "outlines the right and wrong things to do when a person comes out to them, dispels some common myths about LGBTQ people held by the general public, and outlines some simple ways to show support." One of the best things to do as a straight ally when a LGBT+ friend comes out is to take cues. Make the news as big or small a deal as they would like it to be!

### PROVIDE RESOURCES

Allies can make a huge impact by sharing necessary resources with struggling LGBT+ peers. The Trevor Project offers a 24-hour helpline for LGBT+ teens struggling with depression and suicidal ideation. They can be called toll-free at any time at 866-488-7386. Allies can also do research and find local resources, so that they can refer their LGBT+ friends to nearby places to get help!

### SHOW SUPPORT

As an ally, there are a number of ways that you can support and benefit the LGBT+ community. High school students can let their LGBT+ friends know that they are not alone by starting a gay-straight group in their school. To learn more, check out the Gay-Straight Alliance Network. College students can show support by creating a safe space on campus. Campus Pride is a great resource for "building future leaders and safer, more lgbtq-friendly colleges and universities":

## RESOURCES FEATURED

- The Trevor Project
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network
- Campus Pride
- The Human Rights Campaign and PFLAG National

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