Coming Out: Coming out to your community

"Coming out" is the process of self-acceptance as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+) person. Coming out can be both a difficult and liberating process. This article series offers information on making the very personal decision to come out to family, friends, co-workers, and others.

This is the third in a four-part series of articles on coming out which starts with "Deciding to Come Out." Read the previous article, "Telling Loved Ones About Your Sexuality."

Coming out to your community

In the process of coming out, you will also want to decide if there are others in your life and community whom you want to tell that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. Do you want to tell your neighbors? Your child's teacher? Your health care provider?

Here are some suggestions on coming out to people in your community:

Doctors and health professionals. Many health professionals are accepting of LGBTQ+ people and are also attuned to the unique health challenges that they may face. In some rare cases, a health professional may be homophobic or unaccepting. If this is the case, change health care providers. Out for Health has more information about choosing a health care provider, knowing your rights, and more.

Also know that most health care forms may ask about sexual activity, risks for pregnancy, and use of contraceptives. These questions are necessary for proper health care and can also help prompt you to inform or remind your physicians of your sexuality.

Your child's teacher. Schedule a private time to meet to have this conversation. In the meeting, tell your child's teacher that you have decided to come out and that you wanted to share this information with the teacher. Tell the teacher that you know that you both have the child's best interests in mind. Explain that you expect the teacher to take prompt action to stop any teasing or harassment of your child by other children who may decide that your family's makeup is something to be made fun of. Allow the teacher time to ask questions.

Your legal or financial adviser. You may want to come out to your legal or financial adviser in order to secure the best legal protections for you and your partner. For more information, see the article "Legal and Financial Issues for Gay and Lesbian People."

Your faith leader. Religion and homosexuality can have a complicated relationship. Some religions and denominations have historically been more accepting than others. Therefore, the decision to come out to your faith leader and/or religious community is a deeply personal one. One resource that may help is The Trevor Project's guide "LGBTQ+ Religion."

Pay attention to your feelings. Come out to people in your community as it makes sense to you to do so.

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