

What To Do If A Student Comes Out To You

1. "Thank you for sharing"
2. Acknowledge how scary it may have been to share and show appreciation for the student's courage
3. Listen to youth and assess if they need resources, but don't assume the student needs help
4. Assure and respect confidentiality
5. Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion.
Some suggestions are:
 - *Who else have you come out to?*
 - *Has this been a secret you've had to keep from others or have you told others?*
 - *Do you feel safe in school?*
 - *What supportive adults are in your life?*
 - *What help and support do you have?*

Reasons To Respond to Homophobic Comments

1. Your response establishes YOU as a person who will not accept anti-LGBTQ comments or any other form of bullying or harassment.
2. You create safety for the person who is being targeted and for everyone else in your school.
3. You have a chance to remind the bully that respect for others is a core value of your school.
4. You can prevent the bullying from escalating to physical violence.
5. You serve as a role model for supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Tips For Responding To Homophobic Comments

1. Let the offender know why his/her language is offensive to YOU.
2. Refer to school or agency rules against bullying and harassment.
3. Call the person's attention to the meaning of their—they may have used the slur without realizing its effect.
4. Support the victim in ways that allows them to regain control and feel safe from retaliation.
5. Be clear about the consequences of using derogatory language – and follow through.

Ways to Stop Anti-LGBTQ Bullying

1. **Create a district-wide policy** that encourages respect for all and establishes consequences for those who bully or harass others.
2. **Train students, faculty, and administration** to respond effectively to harassment and to stand up for one another.
3. **Create a script or guidelines for all staff to use** so they can respond consistently to youth who bully others.
4. **Spend classroom time discussing the power of language.** Brainstorm alternatives to offensive phrases like “that’s so gay.”
5. **Be clear with bullies** that their language is offensive to YOU and to the school.

Ways to Support Transgender Students at Your School

1. **Keep an open mind** and respect youth’s ways of presenting and expressing their gender.
2. **Implement practices to ensure safety and comfort**, such as using the youth’s chosen name and pronoun and identifying single-stall, gender-neutral bathrooms and a safe place for them to change for gym.
3. **Do not “out” anyone without permission.** You can help them think through the coming out process, but the decision belongs to the individual.
4. **Include gender identity and expression** in your non-discrimination policy.
5. **Seek outside resources** for support and information.

Facts to Remember About Transgender Youth

1. Physical safety is often a major concern. High-risk places include bathrooms, locker rooms, and other gender-designated areas.
2. A person who identified as transgender feels that the gender they were assigned at birth does not fit them. They may identify as the other gender, both gender, or neither gender.
3. Some youth who identify as transgender first come out as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. A person who is transgender may be anywhere on the continuum of sexual orientation.
4. Persons who are transgender may or may not choose to access surgery and hormones. Adolescents who want these options must be referred to a medical professional with experience in gender identity issues for evaluation.
5. The coming out process is different – and often more difficult – than for GLB youth.

Terms and Definitions

This glossary is designed to provide basic definitions of words and phrases commonly used in discussions about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and related issues. All language is constantly evolving; new terms are introduced, while others fade from use or change their meaning over time. This remains true for the following terms and definitions. For terms that refer to people's identities, people must self-identify for these terms to be appropriately used to describe them.

Bisexual: The term bisexual refers to someone who is attracted physically and emotionally to persons of the same and different genders.

Coming out: A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity first to themselves, and then may reveal it to others. Publicly identifying oneself as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, however, may or may not be part of "coming out."

Cross Dressing: To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual orientation.

Drag: Dressing in the clothing stereotypical of another gender, or in a manner different than how one will usually dress (i.e. "corporate drag" or "military drag"). Drag often is theatrical and presents a stereotyped image. Individuals who dress in drag may or may not consider themselves part of the transgender community.

Gay: The term gay refers to a man who has a continuing affectional, emotional or sexual attraction for other men. Although "gay" may be used to include both men and women, it is most often used to refer to men.

Gender: gender is a socially-constructed notion of what is feminine and what is masculine.

Gender expression: The manner by which an individual expresses their gender to the outside world. One expresses their gender through behavior, clothing, haircut, jewelry, voice, or body characteristics.

Gender identity: An inner sense of being male, female, another gender, or in between.

Gender non-conforming: Refers to a person who is or is perceived to have gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations that are associated with their assigned sex.

Gender Role: Refers to characteristics and expectations attached to culturally defined notions of masculinity/male or femininity/female.

Gender Queer: Gender queer people reject the traditional two-gender system. There are different modes of being gender queer and it is an evolving concept. Some gender queer individuals feel they are both masculine and feminine; some feel their gender is in-between masculine and feminine; some feel their gender is neither masculine nor feminine, but something else. Others believe gender is a social construct and choose not to adhere to that construct. Some gender queers do fit into the stereotypical gender roles expected of their sex, but still reject gender as a social construct. Still other people identify as gender queer because they do not fit many of society's expectations for the gender in which they identify.

Heterosexual: The term heterosexual (or “straight”) refers to a person who has continuing affectional, emotional or sexual attraction for members of the other gender.

Heterosexual privilege: The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives that are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons simply because of their sexual orientation. For example, the assumption that all people are heterosexual is one form of heterosexual privilege.

Heterosexism: Systems and ways of thinking that reinforce a belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships, thereby negating the lives and relationships of gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

Homophobia: Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, or people perceived to be any of the above. It may also manifest as a person's fear of being perceived as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Homosexual: Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gays and lesbians. *Gay* or *lesbian* accurately describe people who are attracted to members of the same gender.

Intersex: Describing a person whose biological sex is ambiguous. There are many genetic, hormonal or anatomical variations which make a person's sex ambiguous (i.e., Klinefelter Syndrome, Adrenal Hyperplasia).

LGBT / GLBT: Acronyms for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender." LGBT and/or GLBT are often used because they are more inclusive of the diversity of the community. Sometimes the letter “Q” is added to this acronym to represent those questioning their sexual orientation and/or those who identify as queer.

Lesbian: A woman who has a continuing affectional, emotional or sexual attraction for other women.

Lifestyle: Term often used to denigrate the lives of lesbians and gay men. Avoid using this term, as there is no one straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual lifestyle.

Queer: is a controversial word used for and by people whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity differ from the norm: a unifying umbrella term for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning. In this usage, it is usually a synonym of such terms as LGBT.

Questioning: Questioning sexual orientation or gender identity. It is fairly common and very normal part of human sexuality to experience attraction to, engage in sexual intimacy with or fantasize about someone of the same gender, regardless of sexual orientation (e.g. Kinsey, 1948, 1953; Ellis et al., 2005).

Transgender: An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity or expression does not conform to the characteristics traditionally associated with their assigned sex. Sexual orientation and gender identity are different. For instance, transgender people can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Transexual: A person whose gender identity does not match assigned birth sex and corresponding gender role. This person may transition medically and/or legally. Unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is **not** an umbrella term, and many transgender people do not identify as transsexual.