



**Out &
Proud
Program**

fact sheet

When Someone Comes Out To You

“Coming out” or telling others about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or transsexual is an important step in self-acceptance. Like most people, LGBT people are more likely to accept themselves if they are accepted by others.

Someone who is coming out to you feels close enough to you and trusts you enough to be honest and share with you that part of their life. It is difficult to know what to say and do and how to be supportive to someone who has come out to you. Because they have chosen you to tell does not mean they are “coming on” to you. Here are some suggestions you may wish to follow:

Thank them for having the courage to tell you. It means they have a great deal of respect and trust for you.

Do not judge them. If you have strong religious or other beliefs about homosexuality, keep them to yourself for now. There will be plenty of time in the future for you to think and talk about your beliefs in light of their orientation.

Respect that they are probably not ready to tell others right away and may want to tell them in their own way. Unless they tell you otherwise, do not share this news with anyone else.

Tell them you still care about them no matter what. Be the friend you have always been. The main fear for people “coming out” is that their friends and family will reject them.

Do not be overly serious - humour used carefully may ease the tension that you are probably both feeling.

A simple pat on the back or a hug (with permission) can let them know that you still care and that you don't think you will “catch” anything.

Ask any questions that you may have but be prepared that they may not have all the answers. You can save some for later, or better yet, you could find some of the answers together.

If they have a boyfriend or girlfriend, include them in plans as much as you would with any other friend.

Be prepared to include them in more of your plans. They may have lost the support of other friends and family and your time and friendship will be even more precious. This may include family times such as spiritual/religious holidays.

Offer and be available to support them in telling others.

**Fostering Safe Spaces For People Of All Sexual And Gender Diversities:
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgendered, Intersex,
Queer, Questioning And Others**