

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER

How do I come out to my family and friends?

KEY WORDS

choice | support | expression



This text is for you if you've found out you're not straight and you've accepted your sexuality. First off: congratulations on embracing your true self! It takes courage and honesty to live as your true self when you feel different than others.

Now, you may think that it's time to share this realisation and 'come out' to people you know. And it sure is an important step to living an authentic life!

But if you're stuck on whether other family or friends will take the news easily, here is some advice to follow which may help you in carrying out your decision:



- **Be prepared**

Consider possible reactions from family and friends and be prepared for any questions that they may have. Have any of them ever expressed homophobic attitudes? It's important to note that speaking negatively against homosexuality may not be homophobia, but instead a lack of knowledge and insight. Maybe someone will need time to digest the situation and accept your "new" sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Telling your parents might seem like it's most difficult. In case they have an unpleasant reaction, try to put yourself in their shoes by understanding that they belong to a different generation and that, despite everything, they care about your happiness. If you think you might be disowned or even kicked out of the house if you come out, wait for the moment when you're independent to disclose your sexual orientation to your family.

- **Understand that you don't have to tell everyone at the same time**

Tell each person or group of people separately when the right opportunity arises. In any case, as has already been stated, if you are worried that your statement may cause you serious problems from a family point of view, come out of the closet after you have gained your independence and security. However, if you feel comfortable with the people around you, the sooner you tell them how you feel, the better. Break the news first to supportive and non-judgmental people. This could be a relative or friend that you trust and that you know will give you all their support.



- **Decide on which method you'll take for announcing the news**

You could say it during a planned face-to-face conversation or throw it out there in a more relaxed way, showing that you have accepted yourself for who you are and that you feel comfortable in your shoes. Or if you have fears of rejection and aggression, write it in a text message.

- **Be proud of yourself.**

Walk with your head held high and don't let anyone make you feel inferior or ashamed of who you are. Learn not to care what people think. Coming out is about being true to yourself. It's okay to prioritise your well-being throughout this process.

So, surround yourself with supportive people, and know that you're not alone, and can even turn to online communities for help and advice. If you're still struggling and would prefer in-person assistance, consider reaching out to LGBTQ+ support organisations or school counselors who can provide guidance and resources.



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