

Top 10 Tips to Supporters when someone comes out to them as LGBT+

1. Provide a safe and private space if the person requests a quiet word. Stay calm and let them know that there is no hurry and to take their time with what they have to say. If they can't say it out – offer to allow them to write it down or type it out.
2. Take time to listen and don't try to jump in and guess what they have to say. You have to appreciate that this has taken a long time for the person to reach this point and they will be nervous. Let them know that you are aware how difficult this is for them.
3. Clarify the situation if they come out in code. Be aware that they may not be fully sure as yet if they are Gay, Lesbian, Bi, trans or non-binary. They may not fully understand exactly how they feel about it themselves and won't have all the answers.
4. Thank them for trusting you and reassure them that you respect them and that you will keep the disclosure private. They might be fearful of being rejected by you, by their family, by their friends and colleagues/classmates. They might have catastrophized what will happen and might be fearing the worst.
5. Reassure them that they are a perfectly normal human being and that there are around 700million others just like them on earth. Let them know that you will not have all the answers to their challenges, but that you are going to be there with them along their journey for as long as they need your support.
6. Help them to plan the next Steps and offer to help them to make further disclosures.
7. Help them to find links to other supports. Youth groups, websites like belong2.org , spunout.ie , reachout.com, lgbt.ie etc.– and the associated helplines. Where appropriate, suggest that they link in with counsellors, friends & family.
8. Offer to meet them again the next day if possible. One conversation will not cover all the items and the process can be exhausting. Make sure the person has somewhere safe to go and something nice to do that evening.
9. Set up regular meetings to provide continuity to their journey.
10. Respect the process when they feel ready to fly solo.

Top 10 Tips for “Coming Out” if you are LGBTQIA+

1. The person you come out to first should be someone you trust. Ideally an adult who can keep the news in confidence. Good examples are Parents, Teachers, Doctors, Friends, Relatives, Counsellors, Team Coaches, Youth Workers and trusted Neighbours.
2. You may tell them in person, by phone or by writing it on a piece of paper and handing it to them. You will benefit from getting some instant feedback and re-assurance so try to avoid texting it or sending it in an email or through social media.
3. If you don't have a trusted adult in your life that you can tell – then look up the nearest LGBT+ Helpline in your area and speak to them. They are trained to listen without judgement and will be able to advise you and let you know what other supports are available in your area.....www.belongto.org... Text “LGBTI+” to 50805 or phone 01 670 6223..... LGBT+ Helpline www.lgbt.ie or phone 1890 929 539... Samaritans Ph:116123
4. If you decide to come out fully and tell everyone that you are LGBTI+ - try to avoid coming out to your friends and family through social media. People will prefer to hear the news first hand from you personally and can support you better that way.
5. Try to tell your closest friends in person before the rest of the world knows. They deserve to hear it from you before they hear it from others. This allows them to show that they are OK with it and also allow you to answer any questions or deal with any concerns that they might have.
6. When you tell your parents – give them time to take in the news. They may be in shock, confused, annoyed, angry, upset, delighted, anxious or indifferent. Either way, they all need time to take it in and will probably have a lot of things to discuss. Just take it slowly and if you don't know the answers to their questions, just tell them so in a calm manner. You are probably fairly new to all this also and won't have all the answers, even for your own questions.
7. In relation to School – If you have come out to your family and friends, it is easier to be in control of the news by coming out in school before someone outs you (even by accident). Once you declare that you are LGBT+ – this disarms the bullies as they see you are proud and in charge of your life and they have nothing to hold over you.
8. When you come out, you don't necessarily need to change anything about yourself just because you have come out as LGBT+. You can dress, walk, talk, act and behave just as you did before. You are the same you and you don't have to fit into any stereotypes. That said – don't be afraid to show some of your creative flamboyance if that's your thing.
9. If anybody bullies you for coming out LGBTI+, report them to the school authorities or the police. Bullying is a really serious matter and you deserve to live a peaceful happy life, free of bullies.
10. If there is a youth group for LGBT+ people in your area, it is really useful to join up as you get to meet other young LGBT+ people who are also going through similar experiences as you are and this can be a really supportive environment. If there is none in your locality you should join recognised LGBT+ online forums which offer similar support. www.belongto.org