

# How Do I Come Out?

Coming out can be an important process for some 2SLGBTQI people. It can feel like a declaration of your authentic self and serve as an invitation for those you care about to get to know you better. It is also important to note that coming out is not a requirement for everyone, and choosing not to come out does not make you less valid in your 2SLGBTQI identity.

Here are some factors to consider to help you navigate whether or not to come out, and how to structure coming out conversations.

## Before Coming Out

### *Should I, shouldn't I?*



Coming out is not a priority or requirement for every 2SLGBTQI person, coming out should be your choice to make. Make yourself a pros and cons list to weigh out whether or not coming out is a good decision for you in your own context.

For example:

Pros	Cons
Not being able to be my authentic self around this person is adding stress and impacting my mental health. Coming out to them would alleviate that.	This person's reaction to my coming out might have a negative impact on my mental health.
I want to deepen my connection with a person by inviting them to witness this part of my identity. Coming out will bring us closer together.	I am unsure if this person will react in a positive way, I don't want to risk losing them.
Coming out to a person and seeing their reaction would help me determine whether or not I want them to be part of my life.	My situation makes it difficult to remove unsupportive people from my life.

## Consider Safety



Your safety is of the utmost importance! We might not be able to determine for certain the safety of a situation, but here are some tips to consider:



### Test the waters

In casual conversation with someone you may want to come out to, bring up 2SLGBTQI issues or representations in media. See how they talk about these topics.



### Find an ally

If you have already come out to someone, assess their availability to see if they can support you before and after you have a coming out conversation with someone else. This is even better if the person is a mutual friend or family member of the person you're newly coming out to.



### Have a plan

If the conversation does not go positively, where do you take it from there? Do you revisit the conversation? What do you want your relationship with this person to look like if you need to reconfigure it? Will their negative reaction affect your daily life?

## During Coming Out

Consider the following when having your coming out conversation:



### Space

Whether you planned for this conversation, or the conversation has come up in the moment, try your best to make space. Put aside distractions and allow as much time for the conversation as needed. If you need to, ask them not to interrupt you while you speak.



### Calm

Do your best to remain calm and clear. This moment and space is for you!



### Story

Use this opportunity to tell them what your experience has been like. This can be an invitation to a deeper understanding of your perspective.



### Feel

Describe your feelings whether that's excitement to share a part of you, vulnerability as you share in your authenticity, or anxiousness at their potential reaction. Emphasize that their acceptance will make you feel affirmed, happy, and/or safe.



### Listen

If you have the capacity to, listen to any concerns, issues, or questions they may have. You may be able to dispel any myths or misinformation they believe. Refrain from interrupting them or being too defensive. If you do not have the capacity to address queries, state that boundary and suggest an alternate time to revisit the conversation or direct them to external resources (below).



### Consent

Let them know whether or not you would like to have this conversations be kept between the two of you or if they are free to talk to other people about your coming out conversation.



### Gratitude

At the close of the conversation offer any gratitude you might feel. This is a good way to ground you both in a conversation that might have contained a lot of vulnerability and heightened emotions. Remember that you don't have to know everything or have everything figured out right away, but gratitude can be a way you can affirm that this person you shared with is important to you in some way. Some examples of gratitude: Thank you for listening and holding space for me; I am grateful that I can feel vulnerable with you; I appreciate your curiosity and desire to know me better.



### Time

If this is big news, it may take the person you just came out to some time to process. Their first response might not be what you hoped for; everybody processes information and emotions differently.



### Resources

You do not have to have all the answers! There are plenty of resources to direct people so that they may learn on their own time. Here are some to get them started:

- [2SLGBTQI Terms and Definitions](#)
- [Pronoun Usage Guide](#)
- [Affirming and Inclusive Language](#)
- [Components of Human Identity](#)
- [Tips on How to Practice 2SLGBTQI Allyship](#)
- [Supporting Your Gender Diverse Child](#)
- [Draw the Line Against Transphobic Violence](#)
- [Anti-2SLGBTQI Cyberbullying](#)
- [How to Spot Conversion Therapy Practices](#)
- [Egale's Inclusive School Workshops](#)

## Choosing Not to Come Out

You may choose not to come out because of safety, differing priorities, or for various other reasons; there is no shame in choosing not to come out! If not coming out has some negative impacts on your mental health, here are some tips to navigate this:



### Set boundaries for yourself

- You can choose to stay out of conversations that happen around you regarding 2SLGBTQI issues. Prioritizing your safety always comes first.
- Choose to stay out of being involved in homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic practices, media, and/or conversations.
- If you can, create distance from those in your life who are explicitly not supportive of 2SLGBTQI identities.



### Find spaces where you can be your authentic self

- Dedicated online spaces, queer sports and social clubs, and GSA groups are all great spaces where you can be yourself.
- Indulge in 2SLGBTQI media. Find movies, TV shows, books, podcasts, fanfiction, and social media channels with positive representations of 2SLGBTQI people.



### Reassure yourself

- Don't diminish or demean your identity. You are not less valid if you don't come out.
- Remember to actively affirm your own identity; be kind and accepting of your own self.
- Challenge any homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic beliefs that you may have learned.
- Allow yourself to dream of a future where you can live in your authenticity.
- Don't give up! You are valid, beautiful, and perfect the way you are.