

# What should you do when a 2SLGBTQI young person comes out to you?

Coming out is often an experience that requires an immense amount of bravery, vulnerability, and honesty. This experience is also an invitation to understand and to know someone better; it is a privilege to receive this information from someone. This person will also likely have to go through this coming out process many times in their life with varying responses, your affirming reaction is important.

Here are some things to keep in mind during this experience:



## 1) Space

Whether the young person has 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.



## 2) Calm

Remain calm, attentive, and allow the young person to lead the conversation.



## 3) Listen

Listen to the younger person without interruption. They may tell you about what it has been like for them, how they have felt as they have come into their identity, what made them decide to have this conversation with you. This is a moment of authenticity and that can feel very vulnerable.



## 4) Reflect

Reflect back to them what they have told you to show that you have heard and understood them. Affirm that you continue to love and accept them! See if the young person is open to being asked questions if you need clarification. If the moment is too overwhelming, hold any questions you have and revisit them later.



## 5) Consent

If they are open to being asked questions, ask if you may share this conversation with other people or if they would like to keep it between you. If they are not in a space to answer questions, keep this conversation between you for now until you can ask for consent to share later.



## 6) 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 and affirmation can help let the young person know they made a good choice in having this conversation with you. Some examples of gratitude: I am thankful that you trust me enough to be vulnerable; I am thankful for this insight into your experience; thank you for letting me know this important information about yourself.



## 7) Feel

Whether you're a parent, a guardian, or a teacher, you are likely the person holding power in this dynamic, this means that you have a responsibility to show care to the young person trusting you. In this conversation, care means both holding space for the young person's feelings, and also holding any negative or difficult feelings you might have aside. Your difficult feelings are not the young person's responsibility to hold. This does not mean that you shouldn't feel! After the conversation, access your resources such as peers or community to find a space for yourself to feel and work through any difficult emotions you may have. This is especially important if your feelings contain anger, grief, or disappointment.



## 8) Learn

Learning about 2SLGBTQI related issues on your own time can equip you with tools in how to care not just for the young person who came out to you, but for all youth that look towards affirming adults for care and safety. Learn so you can teach other adults how to create safer and affirming spaces; an inclusive space is beneficial to every young person regardless of their identity. Below are some resources to get you 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](#)