

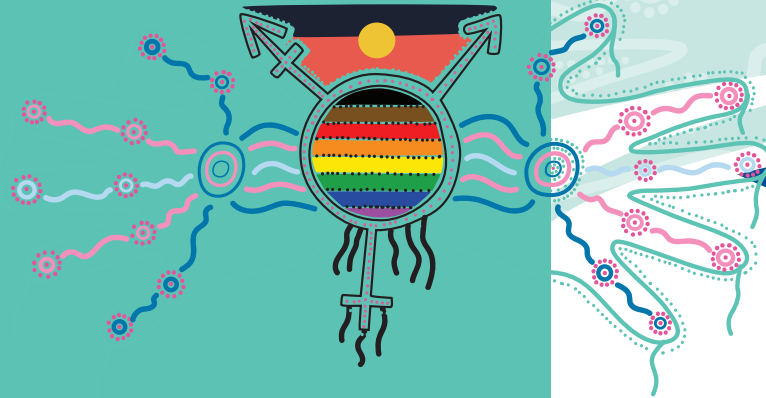
# LGBTIQA+

Supporting someone to come out



**VACCA**  
Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL  
CHILD CARE AGENCY



## What supports are available at VACCA?

For more information or support with your LGBTIQA+ identity journey, please speak to your case manager or a VACCA staff member. VACCA staff have access to LGBTIQA+ training, resources, referral pathways and can provide you with culturally appropriate and inclusive support.

For information about developing your identity and services that could support you in this process, you can visit Deadly Story - <https://www.deadlystory.com/>

For information about LGBTIQA+ Inclusion initiatives at VACCA or what else VACCA as an organisation is doing to support the rainbow community, you can contact VACCA's Snr Quality Advisor, LGBTIQA+ by emailing [rainbow@vacca.org](mailto:rainbow@vacca.org) or visit VACCA's Rainbow Tick Accreditation webpage: LGBTIQA+ Inclusion at VACCA - <https://www.vacca.org/page/stories/LGBTIQA-inclusion-at-VACCA>

'Coming out' is a process that some LGBTIQA+ people go through to let the world know who they are, how their identity has changed and how they would like to be seen.

Coming out can be an important and delightful milestone in someone's identity journey. Coming out is different for everyone and sometimes, there can be challenges that need to be negotiated as part of this process.

Deciding to come out is up to the person and should be based on their own individual journey and timelines.

There are lots of ways for someone to come out. It could be in a conversation, letter, or even via a social media post.

Everyone's coming out journey is unique and personal, and how you respond in that moment is very important.

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"I was very nervous about coming out to my Nan. I was surprised and astonished at her reaction, when she thanked me for sharing my story with her. She said she went over to her neighbour's house that night, and they both had a glass of champagne to celebrate me coming out". - Annie  
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## What can I do to help someone who is coming out?

There are some positive things you can do to make coming out easier for someone:

- **Listen** – Someone might spend a long time thinking about their identity, coming out and worrying about how people might respond. The best thing you can do is respectfully listen to what someone is telling you.
- **Tell them you care** – When someone is coming out, they are being honest and vulnerable so it's important to tell them you care. It is important to remember that this is their journey and to ask about how they are feeling.
- **Research** – Remember, it is not someone else's job to teach you about the LGBTIQ+ community. Take the time to do some research so you better understand LGBTIQ+ people and the community.
- **Celebrate diversity** – Show your support for someone coming out by being present and participating in LGBTIQ+ events or news. You could even consider wearing some materials that show your support as an ally.
- **Be an Ally & Advocate** – For some people, coming out means there needs to be changes to the environment around them. For example, they may require a different uniform or gender-neutral bathroom. Helping someone to make these changes can ease the emotional and mental load a person carries when coming out.
- **Reach out for support** – It is okay to ask for help. If you need help to understand someone's identity, contact services that can support you.

If someone comes out, it can take some time for the people around them to get used to these changes. People may make mistakes which is okay!

To support someone, you just need to try your best, correct yourself if you make a mistake and tell the person you care about them and are trying to improve your knowledge.

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"My Dad was the last person to find out I was gay because I was so nervous. I asked my Mum to tell him and once she did, she told me he was coming over which made me very anxious. He arrived with tears in his eyes, gave me a hug and said, 'I love you mate'. I couldn't have felt more relieved or loved" – Riley  
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## What should I avoid doing when someone is coming out?

To help someone with their coming out journey, there are some things you can avoid doing so that the person feels supported and respected:

- **Invalidate someone's experience** – Coming out is different for everyone and every journey should be treated with respect. Never dismiss or ignore someone's coming out journey.
- **Make assumptions** – It's important to never assume someone's identity based on how they appear. Have conversations with the person about how they would like to be addressed.
- **Limit Access to Community** – For some people, being connected to the LGBTIQ+ community makes them feel like they belong. People should be allowed to celebrate and be a part of the community.
- **Making it about you** – Whether you are happy, sad, scared or angry it is important to remember that this moment is about the person coming out.
- **Telling others** – It's very important not to share this information with anyone else without permission.

