

Someone has 'outed' me.

What now?

Coming out is a decision that only belongs to you, and you should have control over what this looks like. Being 'outed' is when this decision is taken out of your control, and it might leave you feeling overwhelmed or even betrayed.

Being outed can leave people feeling overwhelmed, anxious about their social, family, or cultural groups and can have a significant impact on someone's mental health. If this happens, people may worry about how their disclosed identity will be perceived by others and this is an entirely normal emotion.

If being outed happens, it's important to reach out for support so that you are not alone in getting through a tough time. There are lots of great services and organisations who can support you to take back control of your journey and feel confident in your identity.



.....
"For my first long-term partner, coming out wasn't an easy process. Her mother threw a shoe at her and cried out 'it's just not possible ... you can't be gay, you wear make-up!' Acceptance grew over several years, to the point that when we visited my partner's Mum in Sydney, we found that we were set up in a double bed, whereas during the two previous visits, we'd been allocated single beds. That was a huge moment, to know that we were accepted, our relationship was accepted, and we could feel 100% comfortable being ourselves". - Sandy
.....

What supports are available at VACCA?

If you would like support in your coming out journey, your VACCA family can help. If you feel comfortable to, speak to your VACCA worker about your plans to Come out and ask for their support with this journey.

If you can't speak to your VACCA worker, you can connect with VACCA's LGBTIQ+ Quality Advisor by emailing rainbow@vacca.org

If you would like more information on developing your identity or want to know what services are available to support you, you can visit <https://www.deadlystory.com/page/identity/LGBTQIA>

If you would like resources to support you on this journey, you can speak to the receptionist at your VACCA office or email rainbow@vacca.org to have these sent to you.



LGBTIQ+

Coming out & Being Your Amazing Authentic Self



VACCA
Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL
CHILD CARE AGENCY

'Coming out' is a process that some LGBTIQ+ 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 your identity journey. Coming out is different for everyone and sometimes, there can be challenges to overcome.

When thinking about coming out, it is important to think about where you are in your identity journey before telling the people around you.

Remember, everyone's identity journey is unique and there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to affirm your identity to other people.

.....
"Don't come out unless you want to. Don't come out for anyone else's sake. Don't come out because you think society expects you to. Come out for yourself. Come out to yourself. Shout, sing it. Softly stutter. Correct those who say they knew before you did. That's not how sexuality works, it's yours to define." - Dean Atta
.....

Resources

Qlife - Qlife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships. - 1800 184 527

Rainbow Door - Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support, and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family. - 1800 729 367

What should I think about before Coming out?

The decision to come out belongs only to you. There is no rush for you to come out and how you do this is entirely up to you. If you do decide to come out, it's important that you feel ready and supported to do so. Before coming out you might want to consider:

- Is this something I am ready to do right now?
- Who is going to support me in this journey?
- What does coming out look like for me?
- Will I be safe if I come out?
- Should I connect with a service for support?

It's important to remember that it's okay for you to change your mind. Who you share this part of your personal life with is totally up to you.

I think I'm ready to Come out. Now what?

Now that you are ready to take another step on your identity journey, there are some things you might want to do or think about so that you can make this unique experience the best it can be

- **Find Support** – Coming out can be daunting. Having someone who can support you, such as friends, family, teachers, or mob could make things easier. Consider if there is a significant person in your life who would be a good support person. You may want to speak to others about their journey. You can do this through online communities or services in your area.
- **Find the words and the way** – Take some time to think about what you might want to say and how you want to say it. There are lots of ways you can come out. You might want to have a conversation, write a letter, send an email or make a social media post. Remember this is your journey so you can decide what it looks like.
- **If you're unsure how someone will react, test them** – If you are unsure of how someone might react to you coming out, you could have some conversations around sexuality or gender with them first to test their reaction. Talk about LGBTIQA+ news or events to get an understanding of how they might react.
- **People might need time** – Whilst you may have spent weeks, months or even years contemplating your identity, for the people you come out to, this could be new and sometimes unexpected information for others or those close to you. You may need to allow time and answer some questions if people don't understand. Answering questions is your choice. Having some resources assembled may be helpful too.
- **Negative Reactions** – Sometimes, we don't receive the reaction we hope for when coming out. It can be useful to have a plan on what to do if this happens. You might need to think about having a support person with you or having somewhere to stay if home becomes uncomfortable. Remember there are lots of LGBTIQA+ services you can access for support.

It's important to let people know whether you would like them to share information about you: whether people need to know about your journey is up to you.

.....
“When I finally came out to my family, I felt the weight of the world lift off my shoulders and my body felt lighter. It was like my parents hadn't seen the real me for years and finally, I was able to show them my true self. I knew the future wasn't going to be easy and they had lots to learn but in that moment, I was just happy for them to see the me I wanted to be for so long.” – Dan
.....

I've come out but the people around me are taking time to adjust

The people around you may need some time to adjust to your identity. Sometimes coming out has many stages for people. For example, someone might decide to tell people their gender identity and then socially transition with their appearance, pronouns, name, and mannerisms. Sometimes the people around us can take some time to get things right and to understand our personal journey.

If the people around you are taking some time to adjust to your identity, you could think about how you can help them to understand who you are. You don't have to do this alone and reaching out for support can be super helpful. Some ways you can communicate your identity might be:

- **Making sure people are aware of your identity** – If you are using different pronouns, changing your name or would like to be addressed differently, you need to tell the people around you. You might want to speak to someone you trust and ask them to help you with telling other people.
- **Look at resources or networks that can help people understand** – There are lots of resources that can help people understand your journey. You might want to share these resources to help people understand who you are.
- **Have support to change your environment or appearance** – Having someone you trust to support you with your journey is important. There may be some changes made to the environment around you and having someone to help you with this can ease the mental and emotional load of coming out.

