

# *Coming Out Guide*



*By queer youth, for queer youth*



# *Introduction*

Coming out can be a very vulnerable experience for queer youth, and something that many have to do often. The fear of rejection and the potential reality of not being supported can be extremely intimidating. To top it off, how does one know what to say in such a stressful situation?

To help queer youth navigate coming out, Queer Youth Assemble has created a coming out guide, with sections on staying safe, breaking the ice, finding the right words, and much more.

**Content warning: general discussion of queerphobia**



# *Safety First*

**Your safety is always a priority.** Before you think about coming out, judge your level of safety. Are you in a safe environment? Do you have a place to go if things escalate?

If you're unsure of your safety, make a safety plan just in case so you are prepared no matter what happens.

Here are some things to include in your plan:

- Make a list of emergency contacts & locations
- Have a bag ready with essentials: (water, food, a change of clothes, meds, money, etc)
- Prepare for receiving insensitive or ignorant comments
- Make plans for self care before and after coming out



# Coming Out Methods

How you come out is and should be your decision!

There are many different methods to coming out, such as:

- writing a letter
- sending a message
- making a video
- creating an art project
- waving a pride flag around
- having a conversation, whether it be virtual or in-person



You don't need to do it alone! You can have a friend, significant other, or support group help you along the way.

Whichever method you choose, it should be the one you are most comfortable with. **You do not need to sacrifice your comfort for others.**



# *Breaking The Ice*



**While there are no magic words, saying what feels right and understanding your audience is important.**

You can try:

- Jumping right in and stating your identity
- Starting off with a story from your day or a funny memory

Be sure to consider where the conversation occurs as well

- If you think it will go well, a good place to come out may be in the car or over dinner so you have time to discuss
- If you're concerned about bad reactions, a note or discussion before you go to school or leave the house may be preferable



# *Knowing Your Audience*

Knowing your audience is a very important part of coming out, especially for understanding how familiar they are with queer topics.

- If you are coming out to family or friends who aren't too familiar with queer topics:
  - It may help to slow down and explain specific terms for them, even if you've used them a million times
  - Queer terms can seem very intimidating to people who have never heard them before, so it never hurts to over-explain
  - If you think you may struggle with this, have beginner resources on queer identities handy that you can refer to

Regardless of who your audience is, remember to explain at your own pace. **You are not obligated to explain everything at once, or anything at all.**



# *Here Goes Nothing...*

Now that you've assessed your safety, know what you're going to say and know how you're going to say it, you're ready to come out!

It is perfectly ok to feel nervous or uneasy. This can be extremely difficult conversation to have, and it may be hard to focus. **Start by taking a deep breath.**

If you feel like you'll forget what to say:

- Bring a script and read off of it word for word
- Bring a notecard with discussion points to bring up

Be sure to slow down, and pronounce your words clearly.

- You can also try a method that isn't face to face, like a letter or text, if you find the nerves are impacting you too much!



# ***Bad Reactions***

If the people you come out to have a bad reaction, first, make sure you feel both physically and emotionally safe. Assess whether your situation is one you can remain in comfortably and is not dangerous

- If you find you are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable, use your safety plan and get into a safer environment and/or headspace

Try to give the people you come out to the time and space to process everything.

- Everyone reacts differently to change, even if they are not directly affected by it
- If you feel it will help, try having a follow up discussion
  - you can share more about your identity, and clarify any questions or concerns the people you came out to bring up



# ***Before You Go...***

**Always remember that your identity is something you have complete control over disclosing.**

You do not have to come out just because you feel obligated to, or others tell you to.

- Above all, you know yourself and your situation the best. **There is no shame in being in the closet, whether it's out of necessity or by choice.**

Finally, remember that regardless of how your coming out experience goes, you will always have a community supporting you every step of the way.



*Thank you for  
reading!*



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