

COMING OUT PROCESS FOR LGBTQ2+ INDIVIDUALS

Embracing one's sexual orientation is a life defining moment for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two spirited (LGBTQ2+). The process takes immense courage, reflection, bravery and determination.

There are many ways to come out and one way is not better than another. The graphic below outlines some of the major stages that an LGBTQ2+ individual will face along with a description of what this individual may face during each stage. The process is not meant to be a linear, but one where the LGBTQ2+ individual may experience some stages more than once.

1. Trigger Experience

You have an event or an experience which leads to the possibility of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or two spirited and it freaks you out!?!?

3. Comparison

You feel you are different than others. It bothers you that there is space for heterosexuals to be and act freely in society, but you feel this is not the case for you.

5. Seeking Support in Safe Spaces

You may reach out to trusted individuals to share your feelings, ask questions and get support. You may also seek help from professional who can assist you in processing your emotions, answer your questions around your sexual orientation and help explore your coming out options. You are also likely to look for support from other individuals who identify as LGBTQ2+ especially those who identify like you.

7. Coming out to People who are Closest to You

You may share your sexual orientation with a spouse, immediate family members and/or friends. You may wonder if these individuals will accept you or disown you or something in between. Each person will need to go through their own coming out process if they so choose.

9. Coming out to Individuals in Your Extended Network

- This could include your friends or extended family members. Each person will go through their own coming out process if they so choose.
- You hope your immediate family members don't get shunned because of your sexual orientation.
- You may play the role of educator to those individuals who come to you with questions or concerns.

11. Integration

Your sexual orientation is one part of your identity and doesn't define who you are. You are simply a being with a soul. You also create relationships with those that are supportive of you.

2. Making Sense of Plethora of Emotions

You may feel shock, anger, confusion, denial, embarrassment and/or shame about your sexual orientation. At the same time you feel excited to figure out who you are; and wonder how to reconcile your values related to homosexuality learned from your religion, ethnic community and/or country of residence.

4. Detachment

You may feel overwhelmed by the coming out process and feel helpless. Social isolation may also occur with the uncovering of your new truth.

6. Coming Out to Yourself

This is a huge act of self love as you are telling yourself who are matters and acknowledging your sexual orientation is one piece of you.

8. LGBTQ2+ Individual Begins to Live Life Boldly

You feel freedom, self assured and empowered at this stage. You also feel you can pursue anything that your heart desires without having to hide it. Relationships with people who are close to you can be built on an honest foundation. You also take steps to be part of the LGBTQ2+ community.

10. Pride in Your Sexual Orientation

You engage in acts of courage to move the LGBTQ2+ community forward or to advocate for equalities in your world.

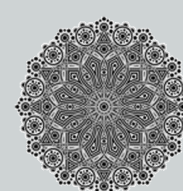
12. Coming out Process Continues in Life

As you move through different life experiences, you'll be faced with situations where you will need to decide if it's necessary for you to come out again. You will also face challenges because of your sexual orientation. At this point, you will have more assuredness to figure what works for you and allies to support you.

By embracing our sexual orientations, we can live a life where we feel free to be true selves in all spheres of our lives. The process can shift our world from being dark to colour. Our sexual orientation doesn't define who we are. We are whole hearted beings with a soul just like everyone else in this world.

Want to learn more or get more details? Great! How about a visit my website at:

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