Coming Out Guide for Teachers
What to do if a student comes out to you

Coming out is different for everyone. Some people might choose to come out earlier in life, while others choose to come out later. But whatever the timing, coming out is never easy, especially for young adults and teenagers who are still trying to find out exactly where they belong and how they fit in to society. It can also be difficult to know how to react or what to say if a student should happen to come out to you. It is important to make the student feel comforted, validated and proud, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. We have put together some tips for teachers just for this purpose.

BEFORE A STUDENT COMES OUT TO YOU:

In order to prepare for this situation, it may be a good idea to educate yourself about the GLBTQQ community on your own so as to be able to offer the most support possible. This might include looking into various places for GLBTQQ support in your community, reading about coming out, or educating yourself on a topic you feel you may not know enough about. If your school has a GLBTQQ-friendly, Rainbow Alliance, GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) or Diversity group, these might be good places to start.

IF A STUDENT COMES OUT TO YOU:

1. **Be discreet.** Whom and when the student decides to come out to is up to them, and not up to you. You must be prepared to support whatever decision they make in that regard.
2. **Reassure them that they are, in fact, normal,** and that it is **okay** to fit into a different mold than our “heteronormative” society would dictate. The way they choose to identify themselves has no bearing on the type of person they choose to be!
3. **Make sure they know they are not alone.** It can be very isolating when someone comes out, as society is not always appreciative of diversity.
4. **Thank** the student for trusting you with such information, and reassure them of **confidentiality.**
5. **Let them know of various places for support** in your community, should they feel the need to talk to someone with more experience and if they are interested.
6. **If the student expresses the desire to come out to others** (school community, parents, etc.), offer your **support** in this endeavor.

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