



LGBTQ HANDOUTS **for Sharing**

**Resources for LGBTQ
Youth & Families & Staff in
Maryland Montgomery County Public Schools**



LGBTQ Handouts

Handouts for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Staff For LGBTQ & Ally Youth & Their Families

Metro DC PFLAG hopes that you will find these Handouts helpful in communicating with & providing support & guidance to LGBTQ & Ally students, families, & staff. You can make additional copies to share.

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Coming Out As YOU!

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A Supplement to The Trevor Project's © "Coming Out As YOU!" Guide

"Coming Out" means sharing your sexual orientation and/or your gender identity with someone else. It can be incredibly affirming if things go well or hurtful if things do not. The thing to remember about coming out is it is something you do *for* you when you are ready.

WHAT Telling someone what your sexual orientation (i.e. a label that tells someone who you are attracted to) or gender identity (i.e. a label that tells someone how you identify – male/female/genderfluid/trans/etc.) can be very affirming and validating. The same label may mean different things to different people so it's okay to define yourself as you see yourself. You can come out to friends, family, to co-workers, teachers, etc. A person may be "out" in one environment (i.e. at school) but not another. What might surprise people is that you can come out many times using the same label or a new one.

WHY People come out for different reasons. They may be tired of hiding, want support, want to be accepted, want to feel free, want to be able to introduce their partner, or any number of reasons. Just make sure the reason is yours and you're only doing it for you.

WHO Who you come out to is no one's choice but yours. You can be out to some people and not others. Is the person likely to accept you and make you feel proud of who you are? If not, what are you hoping to gain by doing so?

WHEN You don't have to come out. It's a choice you make when you are ready to do so and when you want to do so. Your identity and orientation are not defined by how out you are. The important thing is to come out when it is safe to do so.

WHERE Where you come out is less important than knowing you're doing so in a place that is safe. You can be out in one place (like school) but not others (like home) if you choose to.

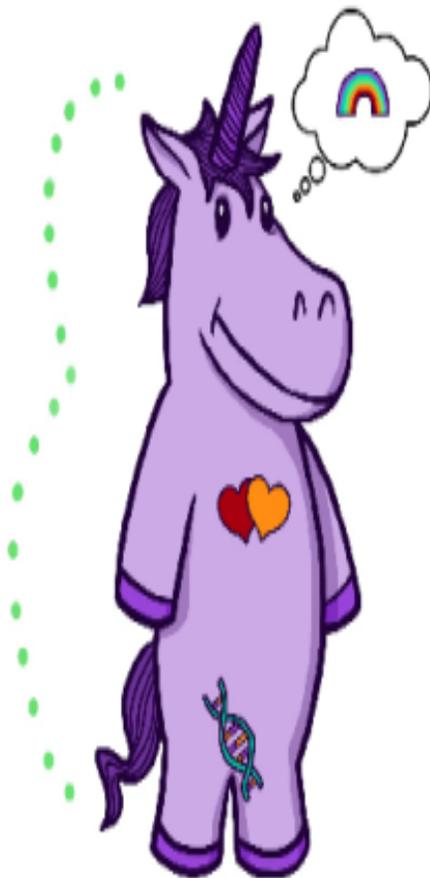
HOW This is the biggest question people have. You can come out on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, in Trevor Space, through text, in person, at home, at school, etc. The important thing to remember is there's no perfect way to come out, but it should be safe to do so. Unfortunately, not everyone you meet will be supportive and accepting. How does the person react to stories about LGBTQ equality and diversity in the news? Do they accept someone who is? How do you think they will respond when you come out? If the person is upset, will you be in danger or need to move out?

Step-by-Step

1. Decide **WHAT** you identify today as today. It's okay if it changes tomorrow or in the years to come.
2. Decide **WHY** you want to come out. If you don't have a reason, the time might not be right for you to do so.
3. Decide **WHO** you want to come out to.
4. Decide **HOW** you want to come out to them – in person, virtually, in a letter, etc.
5. Predict **HOW** they will respond. Will they be happy for you? Or angry?
6. Have a **safety plan** for if things don't go well – is there somewhere safe you can stay? Someone who you trust who you can call for help? Consider letting a friend know that you're planning on coming out and if you don't text them by a certain time you might need help because your safety might be in danger.
7. Practice **self-care**. Coming out can be stressful whether or not the response you receive is positive. It's important to take care of you. Listen to music, color, draw, talk to friends, cry in the shower, sip hot tea, take a nap, play with a pet, call The Trevor Lifeline.
8. Smile and be **proud** of who you are! You are worthy of acceptance and love and even if today you did not find it, tomorrow is another day. Remember you've known who you are for a long time and it might take others time to accept such. If you feel supported now, that's awesome. If you don't feel supported yet, know that how others see you doesn't change you or take away from your value.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Education Resources



Gender Identity

-  Female/Woman/Girl
-  Male/Man/Boy
-  Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

-  Feminine
-  Masculine
-  Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

- Female Male Other/Intersex
- 
 - 
 - 

Physically Attracted to

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by [I. andyn Pan](#) and [Anna Moore](#)

Definitions for
The Gender Unicorn graphic,
by **TSER** (Trans Student Educational Resources)

Gender Identity: Gender Identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same. Female, woman, and girl and male, man, and boy are also NOT necessarily linked to each other but are just six common gender identities.

Gender Expression/Presentation: The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Most transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" because of the vagueness of the definition of sex and its place in transphobia. Chromosomes are frequently used to determine sex from prenatal karyotyping (although not as often as genitalia). Chromosomes do not determine genitalia.

Sexually Attracted To: Sexual Orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To: Romantic/emotional orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

5/2019, from: <http://transstudent.org/gender>

Advice for Parents of Trans* Kids, from Parents of Trans* Kids

Be open

- open your ears and listen to your child's life
- open your eyes to see who your child really is
- open your heart, letting go of YOUR wants, your preconceptions, your beliefs, expectations and plans for your child - relinquish them all to make room instead for your child's own dreams, plans and truth
- open your mind to receive what your child's life is teaching you

Don't make your child wait for your support

- you don't have to understand before you welcome, affirm and support your child
- you don't have to feel comfortable before you use the name and pronouns your child has revealed to you
- you don't have to agree with how your child is living their life before you love them as they are

Let go of control

Parents of young children (&/or kids with major emotional or cognitive challenges) may need to provide more guidance *

- trust your adult child to know best for themselves what they need to be well
- recognize as soon as possible in the process that like many things with our children, this really is outside of our area of control
- recognize when you are straying into controlling territory (e.g. "I'm just trying to be sure that..." or something along those lines) and make a different choice
- step back and don't offer advice to your adult child, unless it's asked for
- say the Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, & the wisdom to know the difference."

Follow your child's lead

****Parents of young children may need to provide more guidance****

- follow your child's lead in what pronouns and names to use (even if that changes as they progress in their journey of self-discovery)
- follow your child's lead for when and who and how to tell others
- follow your child's lead for what procedures and interventions they need, and at what pace they are prepared to move
- follow your child's lead for what photos they are comfortable displaying (but keep whatever photos are meaningful to you in a private place in your home and your heart)

Dump out, comfort in

- find other parents of trans kids to talk to about your emotions and struggles (Dump Outwards, to people who are further from the crisis)
- do not dump your uncomfortable feelings on your child; they have their own struggles to deal with, without having to feel responsible to help you with yours
- offer help, understanding and comfort towards your child (Comfort Inwards, to the person at the center of the crisis)

<shared by candice.haaga@gmail.com (2021) from PTK listserv group wisdom>

Don't add to your child's burden

- don't add to the suffering your child has experienced before coming out to you
- ensure that your child knows you will always be there for them - they have risked every relationship they have in order to survive - be sure they know they will not lose you
- be sure that your response to your child is not one of the many obstacles they must overcome in order to be true to themselves

Be kind

- be kind to yourself, your partner/spouse, and your child
- exercise radical self-compassion, and compassion for your partner/spouse, child
- recognize that it will be difficult, but so is every transition in life
- be gentle with yourself, understanding that you also are transitioning alongside your child, and it will take time for your heart and mind to catch up to your determination

Treasure your memories

- you don't have to give up your memories of the past to embrace your child's present and future
- you don't have to discard photos (but don't display ones that cause your child discomfort)
- give your child time and space to find their own way to embrace their past, the only past they have

Reach out for help and educate yourself

- don't consider it a weakness to ask for help
- understand the power and love you receive when you reach out and ask for help
- find a trans-friendly therapist if therapy could help you, your child, your family
- find an in-person or on-line support group (there are many)
- keep perspective by listening to other parents further along on the journey, to realize that life will return to normal one day
- read books to learn the facts and understand this shared human experience
- be gentle with yourself, realizing that although this is not all about you, addressing your own questions and issues will help you be most effective in supporting your child

Consider the impact of your words/actions

- be your child's staunchest ally, advocate, defender
- speak up against transphobia wherever you encounter it
- set the tone for how friends and family respond to your child - if you are positive and affirming, chances are they will be too (and the reverse is true as well)
- refuse the privileges of gender normativism - if your child is not welcomed and respected somewhere, then stand with your child

Nothing is more important than your love for your child and the strength of your relationship. In all of your interactions, the guiding question to ask yourself is: "Will this strengthen or weaken our relationship?"

<shared by candice.haaga@gmail.com (2021) from PTK listserv group wisdom>

**** BOOKS ****
For Parents, Counselors, & Allies of Trans* Youth & Children

- The Every Body Book: The LGBTQ+ Inclusive Guide for Kids about Sex, Gender, Bodies, & Families, by Rachel E. Simon, LCSW (2020).

- Gender: Your guide -- A Gender-Friendly Primer on What to Know, What to Say, & What to Do in the New Gender Culture, by Dr. Lee Airton (2019).

- Raising the Transgender Child: A Complete Guide for Parents, Families, & Caregivers, by Michele Angelo & Ali Bowman (2016).

- Thriving through Transition: Self-care for Parents of Transgender Children, by Denise O'Doherty, (2018).

- Transgender Children & Youth: Cultivating Pride & Joy with Families in Transition, by Dr. Elijah C. Nealy (2017).

- The Transgender Teen: A Handbook for Parents & Professionals Supporting Transgender & Non-Binary Teens, by Stephanie Brill & Lisa Kenney (2016).