

A stylized rainbow graphic with bands of pink, orange, and teal, arching over the title text.

Being Okay With Who You Are

Advice and Support for LGBT People

**FROM NAIRN ACADEMY'S
EQUALITY FORUM**





'Coming Out'

'Coming out' is a metaphor for LGBT people's self-disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The decision to tell others about your sexuality is completely up to you. There is no pressure to 'come out', and who you tell is also an individual decision.

Should you decide to tell others about your sexuality, remember that as long as you are happy with who you are, the opinions of others do not matter.



Preparing Yourself For Questions

It's highly possible that whoever you decide to tell will have questions. It's up to you if you choose to answer any questions and your answer will depend on how comfortable you feel with the question being asked.

One of the most common questions LGBT people are asked once they've told others about their sexuality is 'Are you sure? Or, how do you know for sure?'

It's important to note that society just assumes that most people are heterosexual because the LGBT community is currently the minority (based on those who have 'come out').

Just like straight people know they're straight, LGBT people know they are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender



Dealing With Bullies

Unfortunately, many LGBT people will experience bullying/homophobia at some stage in their life. Any kind of homophobic comments or bullying is not to be accepted. This includes name calling, being threatened, physically hurt, being excluded or having rumours spread about you. Don't let bullies be the reason you can't be happy with your sexuality. Always be yourself. Fortunately, there are many places you can go and lots of people who you can tell.

- Tell anyone you trust
- Report it to your guidance teacher at school
- Report it to the police - homophobia is a hate crime
- Contact victim support if you have been the victim of a hate crime at www.victimsupportsco.org.uk.



Reporting Hate Crimes

The law changed in 2009 to further protect the LGBT community from hate crimes - mentioned above.

The Police encourage reporting any hate comment made toward to by calling 999 in an emergency or reporting after it happened by visiting your local police station.

It's not advised that you retaliate to a hate crime as you can put yourself in a potentially dangerous situation.

The Police encourage you to never accept hateful comments but ask that you stay safe in dangerous situations.



The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000

This law equalised the age of consent for sexual intercourse at 16 for everyone. This means that the age at which sex between two consenting men is legal is now the same as that for a man and a woman.

The Employment Equality Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003

This law makes the discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, and colleges and universities illegal.

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The Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009

This piece of law gives further protections to all LGBT people who experience any crime which includes a homophobic element, for example if someone is physically harmed while homophobic comments are made.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

This law prohibits the discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, including retail, health care, education, leisure centres, hotels and public transport.



Mythbusting

Myth: Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is just a phase.

Fact: Lots of people do experiment with their sexuality, but for lesbian, gay and bisexual people, being attracted to the same gender or both genders all their life is no different to straight people being attracted to the opposite sex.

Myth: Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is unnatural.

Fact: There is nothing unnatural about being attracted to or loving someone regardless of their gender.

Myth: Bisexual people are just gay or lesbian people who haven't admitted it yet.

Fact: Some gay and lesbian people will identify as bisexual first as part of the coming out process but many people happily identify as bisexual all their life.



Useful Links & Websites

LGBT Youth Scotland
www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

Gay & Lesbian Youth
Northern Ireland
www.glyni.org.uk

Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org

International Gay &
Lesbian Association
www.igal.org

National LGBT Forum
www.scottishlgbt.org

Scottish Transgender
Alliance
www.scottishtrans.org
