



Sexuality Resource

It can be difficult to know if you are attracted to someone of the same or other sex; it differs for all people. It could take a while, and there is no need to rush. Some gay, lesbian, or bisexual people say they felt the beginnings of sexual awareness from an early age. They had crushes on friends, but it took a while to think of themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Sexuality, like many things in life, develops over time. Don't worry if you aren't sure. Being young is a time of figuring out what works for you. Experimentation and exploration are often part of that. Over time you'll find out who you are drawn to, mostly to men or women - or both. Remember a label is something you need to feel comfortable with, you don't have to label yourself today or ever, the choice is yours.

Coming out

"Coming out" often has to do with realising you are attracted to people of the same sex, perhaps calling yourself gay, lesbian or bisexual and then deciding to tell others about your feelings and attractions. For all, it is a learning experience. You may feel comfortable going through this process by yourself or you may like to draw on the experiences of other people. Organisations, such as Twenty-10, often run workshops around coming out. Alternatively the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service, an anonymous service, has counsellors who are experienced in discussing these issues. You may want to tell someone else you trust to be understanding and supportive that you are gay, lesbian or bisexual. You might choose a friend. You will probably want to meet other gay, lesbian or bisexual people for friendship or a more intimate relationship. You may not feel able to tell someone about your feelings at the moment and you may feel that you have to keep your sexuality a secret. Remember, who you tell and when you tell them is your decision. The important thing is to be honest with yourself.

What should I do if I get hassled?

People within our society discriminate and can even be violent towards people who are perceived to be different. However, attitudes about sexuality have been slowly changing for the better and are more positive in many places. There are also many groups working to make things better for everyone. No matter the reason harassment or abuse, whether verbal or physical, should not be tolerated. This does not mean you have to take it on yourself. Factors like your own safety and well-being need to be considered. Sometimes it is easier to ignore people who try to hassle you. However, you have the right to feel and be safe. Nobody deserves violence or harassment; you are not responsible for other people's attitudes.

See [suggestions for dealing with harassment](#).

How will people react if I come out?

Just as you are unique, so is everyone around you and so they will all react differently. Some people will have no problems with your sexuality and be happy for you, some may have already suspected and were just waiting for you to tell them. For others it will challenge their feelings towards you. They may feel worried angry or responsible. It may be necessary to allow them time and space. Shock, denial, and feelings of guilt are often experienced by people when they are told someone close to them is gay, lesbian or bisexual. Remember you have probably given your sexuality a lot of thought, but it may be new to them. You may want them to understand and grasp this important part of your life right away and give you support. However, you may need to allow people time to express their own feelings. Try to be patient. You may also need to explain things a few times. Just because you've said something once does not mean they have heard it. Later they may be ready to ask questions, listen to answers and acknowledge their feelings. If your family or friends reject you because of your sexuality, it is hurtful and can be difficult to cope with. Remember you are sharing an important part of yourself. If people choose to ignore this, they are missing out on knowing who you are. Hold onto

who you are. Hold onto the fact that you are special and are individual. There are people who will help you reach out for their support.

Useful links

If you are sexuality active, ensure that you have safe sex. **Kids Helpline** provides information for people up to 25 years old.

For more information dealing with "coming out" and other topics on sexuality visit: **Reach Out**

See next



LGBTIQ support

ALLY Network



Sexual misconduct

Harassment, assault, rape



Harassment

Know your rights

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