

## On-line resources

### National Organizations

[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)—American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
[www.binetusa.org](http://www.binetusa.org)—BiNet USA  
[www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)—Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders  
[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)— Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation  
[www.ginh.org](http://www.ginh.org)—Gay & Lesbian National Hotline  
[www.gpac.org](http://www.gpac.org)—Gender Public Action Coalition  
[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)—Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network  
[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)—Human Rights Campaign  
[www.iglss.org](http://www.iglss.org)—Institute for Gay & Lesbian Strategic Studies  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)—Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund  
[www.ncrights.org](http://www.ncrights.org)—National Center for Lesbian Rights  
[www.ngltf.org](http://www.ngltf.org)—National Gay & Lesbian Task Force  
[www.scoutingforall.org](http://www.scoutingforall.org)—Scouting for ALL

### Youth Resources

[www.lambda10.org](http://www.lambda10.org)—GLB Greek Issues  
[www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org)—National Youth Advocacy Organization  
[www.outproud.org](http://www.outproud.org)—National Coalition for GLBT Youth  
[www.youthresource.com](http://www.youthresource.com)—Youth Resource

### Family Resources

<http://www.altfammag.com> Alternative Family Magazine  
[www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org) Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere  
[www.familypride.org](http://www.familypride.org) Family Pride Coalition  
[www.gayparentmag.com](http://www.gayparentmag.com) Gay Parent Magazine  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org) Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
[www.ldsfamilyfellowship.org](http://www.ldsfamilyfellowship.org) LDS Family Fellowship

### Faith & Religion

[www.cathedralofhope.com](http://www.cathedralofhope.com) Cathedral of Hope  
[www.changingattitude.org](http://www.changingattitude.org) Gay Anglicans  
[www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org) Gay Catholics  
[www.gaychristians.org](http://www.gaychristians.org) Gay Christians  
[www.rainbowbaptists.org](http://www.rainbowbaptists.org) Gay Baptists  
[www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org) Gay Buddhists  
<http://www.glbtxjews.org> Gay Jews  
[www.lcna.org](http://www.lcna.org) Gay Lutherans  
[www.affirmation.org](http://www.affirmation.org) Gay Mormons  
[www.al-fatiha.net](http://www.al-fatiha.net) Gay Muslims  
[www.mlp.org](http://www.mlp.org) Gay Presbyterians  
[www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org) Gay United Methodists  
[www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org) Soulforce - interfaith  
[www.ucccoalition.org](http://www.ucccoalition.org) United Church of Christ  
[www.ufmcc.com](http://www.ufmcc.com) Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

### Magazines Online

[www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com) The Advocate  
[www.curvemag.com](http://www.curvemag.com) Curve  
[www.gayscribe.com](http://www.gayscribe.com) Extensive listing of Gay/Lesbian Publications  
[www.lesbiannews.com](http://www.lesbiannews.com) The Lesbian News  
[www.planetout.com](http://www.planetout.com) Planet Out

Confidentiality is strictly maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and professional ethical codes.

## Counseling and Psychological Services

# “Coming Out”

The College of New Jersey

Eickhoff Hall, Rm 107

Ewing, NJ 08628-0718

(609) 771-2247

psycouns@tcnj.edu

[www.tcnj.edu/~sa/counseling](http://www.tcnj.edu/~sa/counseling)

# The “Coming Out” Process

Coming out is a process of understanding, accepting, and valuing one's sexual orientation/identity. Coming out includes both exploring one's identity and sharing that identity with others. It also involves coping with societal responses and attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people.

- “Coming Out” is a process that is unique to each individual.
- There are many factors that contribute to it being easier for some than for others.
- Some people are aware of their sexual identity at an early age; others arrive at this awareness only after many years.
- Coming out is a continuing, sometimes lifelong, process.
- The decision to come out is always personal. Whether to come out and, if so, when, where, how, and to whom are all questions you must answer for yourself.
- It is important to know yourself and evaluate your own situation. Do not allow yourself to be pressured to come out by anyone else. You are the best judge of your particular circumstances.

*As you begin to explore the possibilities of coming out to others, consider the following:*

1. Recall the process you went through in coming out to yourself. Recall thinking/doing/feeling things like...
  - *Maybe I'm misunderstanding something...* distrust of your own feelings; awareness of heterosexism
  - *How could this have happened to me...* a search for an explanation; awareness of heterosexism
  - *Maybe it's because I liked sports or played with dolls...* incorporation of society's stereotypes
  - *Dating members of the opposite sex...* denial of true feelings, attractions and needs; awareness of heterosexism
  - *Participating in, or perpetrating anti-gay activity or speech...* adopting society's homophobia
  - *Retreating to strict religious doctrines/beliefs...* believing that you are “bad” and in need of reform
  - *Driving yourself to perfection to make up for your own belief that you are “defective”...* awareness of society's rejection
  - *Fear...* awareness of violent acts that are committed against LGBT people
  - *Embarrassment...* awareness of majority standards and of being different from these
  - *Disgust...* an internalization of society's homophobia and the homophobic belief that being LGBT is mostly about **sexual activity** and that your feelings are “not normal”

2. Consider who you want to come out to and what you want to say.
3. Choose a time and place that would be best for all involved.
4. Present yourself honestly and openly and remind the other person that you are the same individual you were yesterday.
5. Consider your own expectations about how others will react to your “news.” Are you expecting them to bypass all of the same thoughts and feelings that you experienced in coming to terms with your own sexual identity?
6. Allow others time to react...as you did. Don't give up hope if they don't initially react the way you wanted. Some people need more time than others to come to terms with what they have heard.  
  
It is often said that when children “come out of the closet” their parents and others often “go into the closet” (at least for a while). Expect that this might happen; try to understand it and allow for the possibility that they could “come around.”
7. Have friends and other trusted individuals available to talk with you later about what happened.

Counseling and Psychological Services is available to provide help and support with your “coming out” process. To make an appointment, stop by 107 Eickhoff Hall or call 771-2247 during office hours (M-F, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm).