



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Coming Out and Identity Groups

These groups bring together LGBTQ+ people navigating the process of understanding, accepting, and disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Coming out is not a single event but an ongoing process that unfolds across time, relationships, and contexts, and looks different depending on age, culture, family, and faith. The group offers a supportive space for that work: community with others at similar stages, and often professional facilitation. They're offered through LGBTQ+ centers, university counseling, PFLAG, and affirming faith communities, many of them population-specific by age or identity.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit for anyone navigating coming out who wants affirming peer community.
- Only in explicitly affirming settings. Confirm a group's stance before joining.
- Never conversion therapy, which is harmful and discredited. These affirm identity.

What it's for

LGBTQ+ people at any stage, from first self-acknowledgment to ongoing disclosure.

For decisions about whether, when, and how to come out more broadly.

Also for processing family rejection, bullying, or workplace discrimination.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Sessions run 60 to 90 minutes, weekly or biweekly.

2 Peer groups are open discussion; clinician-led ones may follow set topics.

3 You need not be out elsewhere. The group meets you where you are.

Coming out follows documented, normative patterns.

- A review of 30 studies found awareness in early adolescence, self-identification around **age 17 to 19**, and coming out to others around **19 to 23**, with wide individual variation.¹
- Affirmative CBT addressing minority stress shows positive effects on **depression, anxiety, and internalized homophobia**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

You're not exceptional here. For many, the first room where they need not explain.

Learn in real time. Peers share what worked, and what didn't, with disclosure.

There's no finish line. Coming out keeps unfolding, and that's normal.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is this peer-led or facilitated by a licensed clinician?
- 2** Is it for my age group or specific identity, or broadly inclusive?
- 3** How is confidentiality held, given I'm not fully out?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Coming Out and Identity Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Hall, W. J., Dawes, H. C., & Plocek, N. Sexual orientation identity development milestones among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology* (2021), 12, Article 753954.
- 2 Tudor-Sfetea, C., & Topciu, R. A systematic review of evidence-based cognitive and/or behavioural interventions targeting mental health in LGBTQ+ populations. *Clinical Psychology in Europe* (2024), 6(3), Article e11323.

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