

Coming Out
Being Found
Out

Disclosure

The point at which a lesbian, gay or bisexual person openly acknowledges their sexual orientation to another.

It is not appropriate to use terms such as- “discovered, admitted, revealed, found out, declared”, to describe this phenomena. These are pejorative terms which suggest judgment and should be avoided by helping professionals.

Internal Stages of Coming Out

Pre-Stage One

No thought about your sexual orientation. Presumed heterosexuality.

Stage One

"Could I be gay?"
No, I am NOT gay

Stage Two

"Suppose I was gay."
Some exploration, but tell no one, possibly on-line exploration

Stage Three

"I think I might be gay or bisexual."
Maybe I need to tell one safe person

External Stages of LGBT Identity Development

Stage Four

"I think I am beginning to deal with the fact that I am gay."

In my own time, I think I will start to share this news with other safe people

Stage Five

"I am gay."

Out to safe and important people in life.

Stage Six

"I am Gay, It is an integrated part of my identity."

I am out in environments where I feel safe, and to people with whom I feel safe

A Process of Being Found Out

- **When a person is not prepared to come out**
- **A surprise/unplanned disclosure**
- **This can occur via phone calls, letters, LGBT related materials – i.e., a card from a gay youth group**
- **This is a family system in crisis**
- **Do professionals know how to preserve this type of family?**