



When Someone Comes Out to You as 2SLGBTQI+ identified

Thank the person for having the courage to tell you.

Please keep in mind that an 2SLGBTQI+ person cannot accurately predict your reaction to their coming out to you. You have lived in a society that often teaches intolerance of 2SLGBTQI+ people. Therefore, by telling you, this person is putting a large amount of trust in just a few words. At that one point, they have the possibility of losing you as a friend or family member, so often times the decision to first share that piece of their life is not one taken lightly. Do not judge the person, if you have strong religious or other beliefs about 2SLGBTQI+ identities keep them to yourself. Ensure that you respect this person's privacy and confidentiality and tell them you still care about them, no matter what.

Understand that the person has not changed.

They are still the same person they have always been. You might be uncomfortable or surprised by the news at first, but make an effort to understand why you are surprised or uncomfortable. Also, this person may share things with you related to this part of their life. Do not assume this person is coming on to you or finds you attractive.

Ask Questions.

You can ask questions of the individuals, but understand that they might not have all the answers. If you want to learn more, say so. It helps to admit to yourself out loud that you are not an authority on the subject. Also, understand that it is not this person's job as an 2SLGBTQI+ person to educate you fully; be prepared to do your own research. You may want to keep the conversations going and provide a way to contact the person in the future. This interaction lets the person answer your questions at a pace that is their own.

Helpful Responses for Discussion Around 2SLGBTQI+ Identity:

- ✓ It's okay if you are 2SLGBTQI+ identified.
- ✓ I can appreciate how difficult it must have been for you to tell me this.
- ✓ If you are 2SLGBTQI+, what are the kinds of things that worry you most?
- ✓ What kind of support do you think you need from me?
- ✓ I may not have all the information, but I can find more for you?

Potentially Damaging Responses:

- How do you know? Are you sure?
- You're too young to make a decision like that.
- How can you know if you've never had sex with someone of the opposite sex?
It's just a phase you are going through.
- A lot of people experiment or fantasize; it doesn't mean that you are 2SLGBTQI+.
- It's fine that you told me, but you shouldn't tell.
- Maybe you just haven't met the right person yet.