

Supporting Someone As They Come Out

Top 4 Tips

1) Thank them - "Thank you for trusting me with your authentic identity!" Validate the person and let them know you love them for who they are and are so glad they felt comfortable enough to share this piece of them.

2) Ask them who else knows - Who are they out to? This is so important because it can be a matter of safety for the individual. Maybe it is not safe for them to be out at home or to other teachers/health providers but with you they are comfortable. "is this the name and pronoun you want me to use for you in private or around others?"

3) Ask what that means for them - Don't assume that just because someone self identifies in one way they fit the perfect definition or base it on what you see in the media. Everyones self identifiers are unique to themselves.

4) Be an Active Ally - "How can I best support you"- Ask them what you can do to support. They may say nothing, they just wanted to share with you. Or, they may ask you to help support in more tangible ways. Regardless, attending Pride and continuously increasing your knowledge of LGBTQ+ never hurts!

Avoid the following:

- "How long did you know?"
- "It doesn't matter to me" - This minimizes the persons feelings. It took a lot of courage for them to come out.
- "I had a feeling! I was waiting for you to come out!" (This downplays the significance of them coming out)
- Outing them to others
- "What did you look like pre-transition? Can I see a photo of you?"
- Asking a person who is trans if they are going to have surgery? This is not part of everyone's journey and taking a medical route doesn't make anyone more or less trans.
- What's your real name?
- Asking a million questions - let the person share what they want when they are ready.
- Pressuring the person to tell others in their life - they may not be ready.