



HOW TO RESPOND WHEN SOMEONE COMES OUT TO YOU AS **LGBTQ**

DO

- Listen without judgment. Try: *Making eye contact, nodding, and paying attention.*
- Respect the person by keeping the information to yourself, unless they say otherwise. Honor their privacy at all times. Try: *"I will keep this information confidential, until you say otherwise. Thank you for trusting me."*
- Express gratitude for their trust in you. Try: *"It means a lot to me that you feel comfortable telling me." "I'm glad that you trust me enough to come to me."*
- Ask how you can be supportive. Try: *"How can I help you feel more comfortable and safe?"*
- Ask if they would like help getting connected to resources – but don't assume the person needs help. Try: *"Do you feel safe [at school/work/home]?" "Let me know if you want any help finding some LGBTQ resources."*
- Appreciate the person's bravery and resilience. Try: *"I know it can be hard to talk about stuff like this sometimes and may take a lot of courage."*
- Be a role model of acceptance. Try: *"I appreciate who you are."*



DON'T

- Tell this information to the person's family, friends, or anyone else, unless you have permission.
- Respond with silence or dismiss the person. Avoid: *"I don't care how you identify." "That doesn't matter to me."*
- Question their certainty. Avoid: *"How do you know? It's likely just a phase."*
- Tell them you already knew/guessed or that they don't "look" LGBTQ. Avoid: *"I thought so." "But you look so feminine."*
- Tell the person that they will have a harder life. Avoid: *"You'll never have a long-lasting relationship." "Your family will reject you."*
- Communicate ambivalent feelings. Avoid: *"I don't agree with it, but I still like you." "I accept you; I just don't agree with your choice."*
- Imply that their identity may be shameful. Avoid: *"That information would best be kept to yourself."*

