

The **Rainbow Resource Centre** is a non-profit, community-based charitable organization that serves as the central agency offering support, information, counselling, referrals, library, and public awareness on issues related to sexual orientation, gender diversity, and anti-homophobia education.

CONTACT US

General Inquiries: (204) 474.0212 Ext. 201
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Counselling: (204) 474.0212 Ext. 201
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The Rainbow Resource Centre is open:
Monday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tuesday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Wednesday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Thursday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Friday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
(closed weekends and statutory holidays)

Please visit our website:

www.rainbowresourcecentre.org

The **Rainbow Resource Centre** envisions a society in which diverse sexual and gender identities are included, valued and celebrated as a result of our active commitment to promote and maintain dignity, human freedoms and human rights.

Coming Out

For individuals who want to learn more.

COMING OUT

Coming out is an expression people use when they **voluntarily disclose** their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to others.

Coming out is also a process of embracing and acknowledging ones own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

This process generally occurs on three levels: personal (with ones self), private (family and friends), and public (at work or in the community at large).

- Adapted from the Human Rights Campaign. "Coming Out: A Journey." www.hrc.org, (2006).



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WHY COME OUT?

Coming out is a different experience for everyone; for some it can be very positive and for others it can be very negative. Coming out, nonetheless, is one of the most empowering things someone can do for themselves.

Whether you are curious, questioning, or know how you identify, **coming out to yourself** is the first part of your journey, congrats!

The best time to come out is **when you are ready**. To help you understand, explore, and embrace your sexual orientation or gender identity you may wish to gather objective information through the public library, local LGBTTQ* Centre (such as the Rainbow Resource Centre), school guidance counselor, work and community resources, help lines, or reputable websites.

*This may be overwhelming,
but may also be extremely beneficial.*

Coming out to others is generally the next step. It takes a lot of courage to come out to others. So take your time, do it when you are ready, tell those you trust, and only when you feel it is safe to do so. There is no right or wrong way to come out to others.

While some may choose to open up to family or friends first, some individuals chat with supportive coaches, teachers, guidance counsellors, LGBTTTQ* community resource people, social workers, counsellors, or national helplines.

If you choose to disclose your sexual orientation or gender identity to anyone, **be sure it is someone you trust, someone who is a good listener, who will respect confidentiality, and will be encouraging.**

Think about why you are going to tell this specific person/people about your sexual orientation or gender identity – is it because you are proud of who you are, need help figuring things out, or can't bear to hold it in anymore? Ask yourself, "Is this person open-minded?"

Some individuals may assess their friends', families, co-workers', and teachers' views on sexual orientation or gender identity through the things they say or do (or don't say or do), prior to coming out to them.

Discussing items from television shows, internet, newspapers, films, radio shows, lectures, politics, and so forth that relate to sexual orientation or gender identity, may be one avenue to assess someone's views. If and when you are ready (there is no "right time" to come out), let this person know that you trust and respect them, and have something you would like to share with them.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Personal safety should always be considered when coming out to anybody.

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia exists all around us. People often base their opinions of LGBTTTQ* individuals on the negative and inaccurate stereotypes which have been portrayed throughout history. There's a good chance that people may judge you based on those stereotypes, no matter how open-minded you might think they are. On the other hand, it is often surprising who among your friends and family are the most supportive. You'll learn many valuable lessons about what the word "friendship" means.

- Adapted from the *Resource Guide to Coming Out*, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Washington, D.C. (2004).

Coming out is a life long journey. You will often have to make decisions about who you come out to over the course of your life – whether that be your health-care providers, your employers/coworkers, teachers, family members, etc . You may encounter obstacles and/or joy when on this journey. Remember, you are not alone in this. There have been same-gender partners and multi-gender individuals throughout history, in every age group, in every culture, and in every community. **It may be risky to come out; you never can know how anyone will react.**

There are resources available in your community as well as people who are willing to support you.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Local Links:

Klinic Community Health Centre

24 Hour Crisis Line:

(204) 786.8686
Toll free 1.888.322.3019
TTY 784.4097
www.klinic.mb.ca

Women's Health Clinic:

(204) 947.1517 or
TTY 956.0385
www.womenshealthclinic.org

Men's Resource Centre:

Intake phone line: 956.9528 or
Toll free at 1.866.672.3422
www.elizabethhill.ca/mrc.html

Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre:

(204) 477.1123
www.fgwrc.ca/Home.htm

Transgender Café:

www.transgendercafe.com

Nine Circles Community Health Centre:

(204) 940.6000 or
Toll free 1.888.305.8627
www.ninecircles.ca

STI Info Line:

945.2437 (in Winnipeg) or
Toll free 1.800.782.2437

RAY (Resource Assistance for Youth):

24 hour helpline: 1.800.668.4663
www.rayinc.ca

SERC

(Sexuality Education Resource Centre):
(204) 982.7800 (Winnipeg)
(204) 727.0417 (Brandon)
www.serc.mb.ca

The Facts of Life Line:

(204) 947.9222 or
Toll free 1.800.432.1957

Outwards Inc.

(local LGBTTT* magazine):
www.outwards.ca

National and International Links:

COLAGE

(Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere):
www.colage.org

Egale Canada:

www.egale.ca

Human Rights Campaign:

www.hrc.org

PFLAG Canada:

www.pflagcanada.ca

GLSEN:

(Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network)
www.glsen.org