

## WHAT IS COMING OUT?

Coming out is the process through which an LGBTI+ person accepts their sexual orientation or their gender identity, as part of their overall identity. For most LGBTI+ people, this process of self-acceptance is a positive experience. 'Coming out' also means the act of telling other people about your LGBTI+ identity. This is usually not a 'once-off' event. Many LGBTI+ people find that they come out in different ways throughout their lives. This is because people tend to assume that someone is straight, unless they are told otherwise.

## TIPS FOR COMING OUT

- Take your time. Don't feel that you have to rush this process.
- If you are confused about your sexuality, or just want someone to talk to, don't be afraid to seek support.
- Coming out is a liberating experience but you needn't go through it alone - there are many people who have been there, and others who haven't but are allies, waiting to support you.

## SUPPORTING SOMEONE COMING OUT

- **Positive affirmation** is essential.
- If a young person comes out to you they need:
  - Someone to **listen** & be **positive**
- Thank them for trusting you & having the courage to tell you.
- You must have been doing something right for them to come and tell you - that's a great start.
- Focus on them & what they need. Don't make it about you.
- Don't dismiss it as unimportant.
- Acknowledge that lots of people are LGBTI+.
- Be led by the young person and what they need. They may just want to tell you and have a positive reaction or they may want further support and information.
- Assure your friend that you won't spread gossip or share their private information.



## MY UNIQUE INDIVIDUALITY (MUI)

MUI is a fun and relaxed group for LGBTI+ Young People and allies, run weekly by Carlow Regional Youth Service. MUI is affiliated to Belong To; Ireland's National LGBTI+ Youth Organisation. The group is for anyone of post-primary school age and is based in the Vault Youth Project, Burrin Street, Carlow. If you would like to meet other LGBTI+ young people, get involved in local and national LGBTI+ initiatives or simply want to make a difference come and join us! Find us on facebook (MUI Carlow) call or text 085 2722379 or pop into the Vault and say hi!

## LGBTI+ SUPPORT NETWORKS

### LOCAL

#### CARLOW REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

Tel: 059 9130476  
Email: reception1@carlowys.ie



#### MUI (My Unique Individuality)

Tel: 085 272 2379 / 059 9133714  
Email: leanne@carlowys.ie

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#### FOLLAINÉ COUNSELLING

Call or text: 085 2780307

#### CRYS YOUTH CENTRES

The Vault Youth Project, Carlow

Tel: 059 9133714

Tullow Youth Project

Tel: 087 9568306

Bagenalstown Youth Project

Tel: 086 1449917

### NATIONAL

#### BELONG 2 (Dublin)

Tel: 01 670 6223  
www.belongto.org

#### TENI (TRANSGENDER EQUALITY NETWORK IRELAND)

Tel: 01 8733575  
Email: office@teni.ie  
www.teni.ie

#### CHILDLINE

24 hour free phone: 1800 66 66 66  
Text: 50101  
www.childline.ie

#### TEENHELP

Tel: 01 4553374

### ONLINE

SpunOut: www.spunout.ie

Headstrong: www.headstrong.ie

Reachout: www.reachout.ie

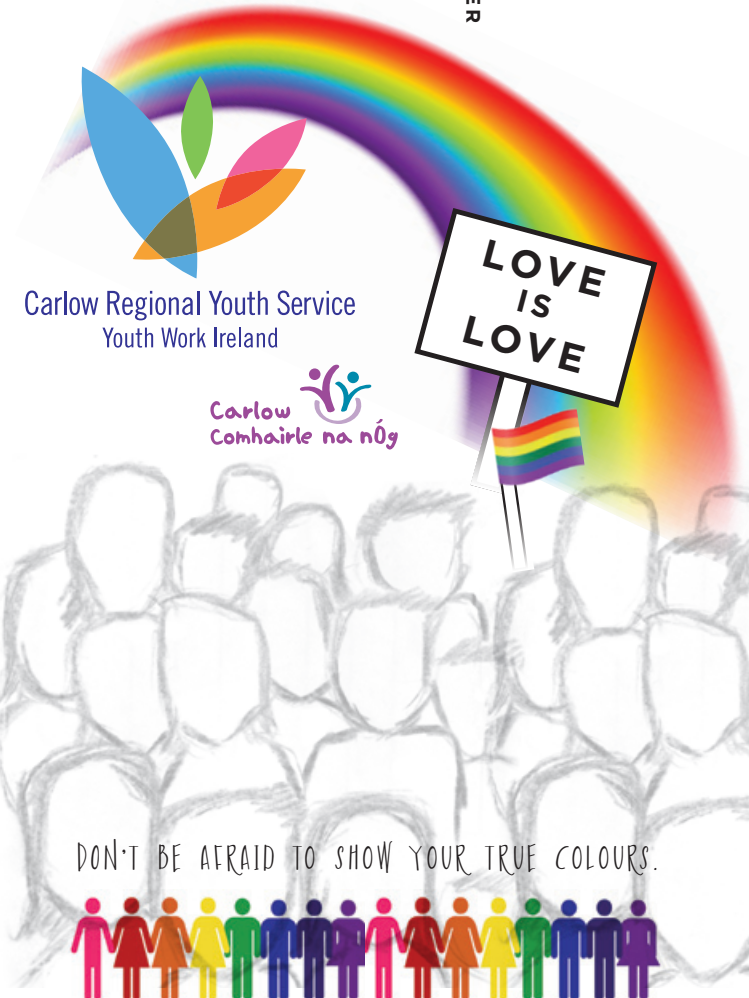
# LGBTI+

LIFE

GETS

BETTER

TOGETHER



Carlow Regional Youth Service  
Youth Work Ireland

Carlow  
Comhairle na nÓg

DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHOW YOUR TRUE COLOURS.

SUPPORTED BY:



## LGBTI+ TERMS

**LGBTI+** Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans+.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** Sexual and romantic attraction.

**LESBIAN** A woman who is mainly attracted to other women.

**GAY** Someone who is mainly attracted to people of the same gender.

**BISEXUAL** Someone who is attracted to two genders.

**PANSEXUAL** Someone who could be attracted to any person, regardless of their gender.

**HETEROSEXUAL** Someone who is attracted to people of a different gender.

**LGBTI+ BULLYING** Bullying based on prejudice or discrimination towards LGBTI+ people.

**GENDER IDENTITY** Our deeply felt internal experience of our own gender.

**GENDER EXPRESSION** How we show our gender through our clothing, hair, behaviour, etc.

**TRANSGENDER** People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were given at birth. Trans+ includes non-binary people.

**NON-BINARY** People whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female patterns, variations that are not seen as fitting in with typical male or female bodies.

**CISGENDER** Someone who is not transgender or non-binary.

**INTERSEX** People who are born with variations in their sexual anatomy or their hormonal patterns, variations that are not seen as fitting in with typical male or female bodies.

**ALLIES** An "ally" is someone who is supportive of LGBTI+ people. It encompasses non-LGBTI+ allies as well as those within the LGBTI+ community who support each other, e.g. a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community.

## MYTHS V FACTS

**MYTH:** Being LGBTI+ is a choice.

**FACT:** LGBTI+ people feel they are born with their sexuality/gender they associate with.

**MYTH:** Being Bisexual is greedy.

**FACT:** A study from the University of Illinois researched this topic and found that people who were Bi were no more likely to be promiscuous than another sexuality.

**MYTH:** All gay men are feminine and all feminine men are gay.

**FACT:** This is what we call "stereotyping". Gay men can be feminine, but they can appear quite masculine. How someone behaves can down to a personality trait and not necessarily their sexuality.

**MYTH:** Being LGBTI+ is just a phase.

**FACT:** People who are LGBTI+ would say that they often know by a young age (average age is 12) that they are LGBTI+ and this is extremely unlikely to change over the course of their lifetime.

**MYTH:** All Transgender people are straight.

**FACT:** People who are Transgender are often Lesbian, Gay, Bi or other as well as straight. It is personal and unique for each individual.



## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE

1. The most common age that people become aware of their lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTI+) orientation is 12 years of age.
2. The most common age that a young person will come out is 17 years – on average 5 years after they have first realised themselves.
3. More than half of LGBTI+ students have been called abusive names by fellow students – 40% have been verbally threatened.
4. One quarter of LGBTI+ students have been physically threatened by other students.
5. 1 in 5 LGBTI+ students have missed school because they fear being threatened or hurt because of their LGBTI+ identity.
6. In schools that have clear homophobic bullying policy, LGBTI+ young people are 60% more likely not to have been bullied.



## TIMELINE OF EVENTS FOR LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE DURING SECONDARY SCHOOL YEARS (age in years)

