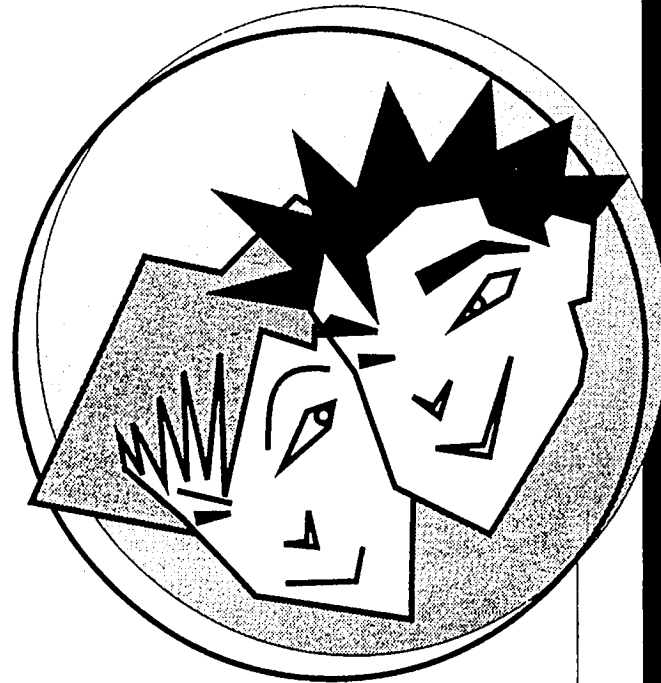


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LESBIAN

Gay

BISEXUAL



Transgendered

This brochure is also available in Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Japanese, and Korean .

coming out

DO YOU HAVE TO COME OUT?

For some people coming out is really important.

- There's no language to use! I'm trying to come up with words I can use that my parents would understand.
- My parents would probably throw me out, where would I live?
- My parents are getting quite old. I don't think it's worth going through this with them. I'm worried about their health too.
- I am already out in the community, it seems hypocritical of me not to come out to my family?
- Why do I have to come out? What I do in my bedroom is my personal business.
- I really want to come out because I want to stop lying to my parents.
- I've been thinking of coming out for some time, I feel strong and supported, I'm ready.
- A lot of people won't like it if I come out, but I'm doing it for myself.

The choice is yours. You can decide WHEN to come out, and TO WHOM you want to come out.

CONSIDER:

- why it is important for other people to know,
- whom you would like to know, and
- the benefits and consequences of telling them.

MANY PEOPLE CHOOSE TO COME OUT TO FRIENDS BEFORE FAMILY. SOMETIMES IT HELPS TO GO TO AGENCIES, LGBTQ EVENTS AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS WHERE YOU COULD MEET NEW FRIENDS WHO MAY GIVE YOU SUPPORT.

Introduction

GenerAsians Together is a social support group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Queer (LGBQ) people and their families and friends in East and Southeast Asian communities. We work together to promote happier and healthier relationships between LGBQs and their parents, family and friends.

GenerAsians Together

Being Asian, and LGBQ is great but hey, it's also really tough! Sexuality affects many aspects of our lives.

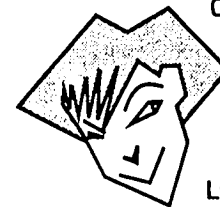
I don't want my parents to feel disappointed in me.

I am not so sure if I like boys, or girls, or both.

I REALLY LIKE WHO I AM, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF THEY CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

WHERE CAN I GO AND HANG OUT WITH OTHER QUEER ASIANS?

What does coming out mean?



Coming out means different things for different people.

For some, it means accepting feelings of attraction to someone of the same sex. It involves unlearning what society has taught most of us – that being LGBQ is a sin or an abnormality. It also involves accepting ourselves and realizing that who we are is natural and normal.

Coming out could also mean telling people who are important to us about our sexuality. Often, this means telling friends or family members who seem positive and non-judgmental. It can also mean participating in LGBQ events and socializing with other LGBQs.



If you decide to come out...

Where can you get support?

It is helpful to check out agencies like *Generasians Together* or others listed in the back to see what type of assistance or support you can get. It helps not to be alone through this.

The support you need will depend on the reactions you get. Who do you usually go to for emotional support? Is there someone to talk to right afterwards?

How do you prepare yourself?

Read books and watch videos about 'coming out'. Once you feel comfortable using terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, you'd sound more confident about what you are talking about. LGBTQ agencies have materials (though few are specific to Asians) that can inform you, help you learn 'coming out' language to use; and can help you feel better about yourself too.

Decide how you will 'come out' to people. Writing all the points you want to make may help with your "speech". One-to-one may be a good way to 'come out' or consider telling the whole family at once. Some write their families, others find it better to call on the phone. You know your family best.

Practice 'coming out' to people you sense would be okay about it. You may go to a family member you are close to and ask them for support before 'coming out' to your parents. They might even help you 'come out'. Your parents may find comfort talking to them.

Talk to other people who have come out. It's comforting to know that you are not alone.

Disadvantages

Advantages

Being honest with yourself and feeling comfortable with your sexuality.

Growing closer to family and friends.

Being relieved from the stress of always having to hide.

Being able to share more of your life with people you care about.

Having more LGBTQ friends and expanding your social life.

Being able to openly recognize/ celebrate your relationships.


Broaden your social network and support.

Becoming a role model or resource for other people in similar situations.

Family and friends may feel ashamed of you.

Communication at home may become awkward and uncomfortable.

Family/friends may alienate you and treat you differently.



On the other hand, **NOT COMING OUT** are: you could wait for a better time, you would be more mature, you will increase your control in the process and you will have more time for introspection and seeking resources.

Q: How could you bring shame to the family?

- There's nothing to be ashamed of, just like I'm not ashamed of being Filipino/Chinese...
- I think it is people who are judgmental who should be ashamed. We don't judge others why should we let them judge us?
- Many families have accepted their LGBTQ sons or daughters they're not ashamed of them.
- I feel bad that you have to deal with homophobia around us.

Q: Was I a bad parent? What did I do wrong?

- You've been very good parents! Many LGBTQs are successful and happy people. I am happy and I can be successful.
- You don't have to blame yourself for this. You have showed me love and support all my life and I need it now more than ever.
- There's nothing wrong with you, nor me. I am still the same daughter you have.

Q: What if you are being influenced by your friends that you hang around with?

- Not all my friends are LGBTQ, besides I have my own mind, I know my preferences.
- It's not easy to be LGBTQ in this society, peer pressure won't make me anything I'm not.
- Having to come out to my friends have been so hard. They're not supportive at all.

Here are some questions your parents or your friends may ask.



Q: How do you know that you are LGBTQ?

- It feels natural to me. Just like my parents know that they're heterosexual.
- I felt that I have always been different.
- I feel attracted to someone of the same sex.

Q: What if you are going through a phase?

- I'm so sure about how I feel.
- Yes, It's possible, but this is where I am and I have to be true to that.
- Even if I am going through a phase, I think it's fine and normal to be confused about my sexuality.

Q: Do you think you need to see a psychiatrist?

- I don't think so, I am happy with my choices and myself.
- I am not sick and being LGBTQ is not an illness.

HIV and AIDS is a reality.

TAKE Care

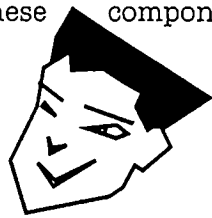
In the midst of all this coming out stuff, it's important to remember to take care of yourself. In every way.

HIV is the virus that is believed to cause AIDS, which is the breakdown of the body's immune system.

Basically, there are **3** components to HIV infection. Check out the stuff you're into doing, and see if they have all these components.

1 A source of the virus

i.e., someone with HIV (though you can't tell if someone is living with HIV or not).



2 A carrier fluid

the major ones are blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk

3 An entry point

a cut or an open wound, a needle puncturing the skin, gums right after you brush or floss, and all parts of the body that get a lot of friction action (like the vagina, anus, etc.)

Or, of course, another way to lower your risks is to eliminate them, through abstinence and/or self-pleasure!

To lower your risks when having sex, you can put a latex barrier between #2 and #3. That can be a latex glove, a dental dam, or a condom.

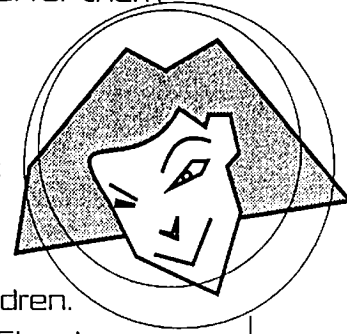
To lower your risks when using needles (for drugs, piercings, tattoos, whatever), clean your needles, or don't share them with anybody at all.

How can I help my Parents through this?

Just as it took time for us to accept ourselves, it will

take time for your parents to accept you and your sexuality. Think of your own process and see what helped you; these may be helpful for them too. In some cases they may need to adjust their expectations they had of you, they may worry about your happiness.

Your parents may have other feelings and questions that go through their minds.



- This means I will not have grandchildren.
- How can she take care of herself? She does not have a man in her life, will she be ok?
- It's not what I expected my son to be, and I still love him.
- It's not easy being LGBTQ in this society, I'm proud that she is so strong and brave.
- I knew it all along. Now I feel better knowing for sure.
- I'm glad that we can talk about things more openly now. I knew he was hurting before but I couldn't do anything to help.

HERE ARE SOME OTHER TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- I left books, videos and materials hanging around in my bedroom, I know they've checked them out.
- I asked my mother to some socials where she could meet other moms.
- I wrote them a letter asking them what they need to help them feel better about this.
- Patience, patience, patience. In the end, I felt our love for each other helped us.

Resources



GenerAsians Together is a project sponsored by the Asian Community AIDS Services.

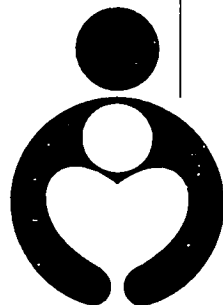


Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS) provides HIV/AIDS education and support to the East and Southeast Asian communities.

For information on HIV/AIDS prevention, STDs and sexual health, counselling and support, please call ACAS at:
(416) 963-4300

GenerAsians Together

c/o ACAS, 33 Isabella St. Suite 107
Toronto, ON M4Y 2P7
Phone: (416) 963-4300 ext.55
E-mail: generasians_together@yahoo.com
Website: www.acas.org/gt



<i>GenerAsians Together (GT)</i>	416)963-4300 ext.55
<i>Gay Asians Toronto (GAT)</i>	(416) 961-8239
<i>Queer Asian Youth Social Group</i>	(416) 963-4300 ext. 29, 26
<i>Asian Community AIDS Service</i>	(416) 963-4300
<i>Planned Parenthood of Toronto</i>	
-The House	(416) 927-7171
-Teen Sex Info Line	(416) 961-3200
-Teen Educating and Confronting Homophobia(TEACH)	(416)961-0113 ext230
<i>Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays(PFLAG) Toronto</i>	(416)406-1727
<i>519 Church Street Community Center</i>	(416)392-6874
<i>Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAP)</i>	(416) 599-2727
<i>Central Toronto Youth Services - Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Program</i>	(416) 924-2100
<i>Support Our Youth Project</i>	(416)924-2100 ext 264
<i>Toronto District School Board, Human Sexuality Program (Triangle Program)</i>	(416)397-3755
<i>Christos M.C.C.</i>	(416)925-7924
<i>Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCC)</i>	(416)406-6229
<i>Meal Trans Program</i>	(416)392-6874
<i>East Metro Youth Services</i>	(416)438-3697

Funded by:

