



# Be Yourself

## Questions & Answers for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Youth

Sexual orientation and gender identity are complex issues, and figuring it out can be difficult and confusing for anyone. Coming out as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) youth or can be especially complicated and fraught with questions.

As a questioning or LGBT youth, you are at a time in your life when you are becoming an adult, yet you might not have adult rights. Your relationship with your parents, guardians or family is changing. You're becoming more independent, and are having to accept that you're not their little girl or boy any more. That's not easy for either of you. And all of a sudden, something you didn't think about a few years ago – sex – might feel like the most important thing in the world.

If you're a LGBT teenager – or if you think you might be or wonder if you are – it's even more confusing, because probably no one ever prepared you for that. Growing up, your friends and family may have teased you about liking girls if you're a boy or boys if you're a girl. Maybe they talked about dating, falling in love and getting married. But they probably never talked about when you grow up and fall in love with another guy, or about marrying a woman just like you, or what it would be like to feel that your physical sex doesn't match up with how you feel inside. In fact, in your family or at school you probably have heard "gay," "fag," or "dyke" used as an insult or witnessed – or experienced – harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Popular culture is still dominated by heterosexual images. TV, movies and magazines mostly show men and women together. Most music you hear is about falling in love with the opposite sex. If you're a guy, your friends are probably talking about girls, and if you're a girl, they're talking about guys. And, while most people your age seem to fit neatly into expected gender roles, you may feel you don't – or don't want to. All of that makes things hard if you're LGBT – or think you might be – because you don't have much that relates to you.

### **We are here to let you know three things above all else:**

#### **One: It is ok to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.**

Being LGBT is as much a human variation as being left-handed. Your sexual orientation and gender identity are just another piece of who you are.

#### **Two: It takes time to know who you are.**

It's OK to be confused; it's OK to be unsure if you're LGBT, and it's OK to take your time finding out. There's no need to rush.

#### **Three: You're not alone.**

Right now, there are tens of thousands of other youth, all thinking they're LGBT or wondering if they are, all wondering if they're the only one, all trying to find someone to talk to about it. Hundreds of thousands more, however, have already traveled that road. One of them or another helpful person will be on the other end of the line if you call any Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) support line or email any PFLAG chapter.

To learn more about common questions and answers for GLBT youth and young adults check out the full length Be Yourself resource at [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org) or find a chapter in your area.