

## Considering Coming Out as Gender Variant or Transgender to Your Friends?

Coming out to your friends can be a very scary thing. You are unsure how they will react and if they will still like you and want to be around you. You may worry that they will tell others because you may not have told your parents or others yet.

You must understand that just like your parents, your friends are all individuals and may react differently than others in the same situation. Sometimes the people you expect to be the least supportive can surprise you and be extremely supportive. On the other hand, the ones that you think will be most supportive can surprise you too by not being supportive at all. Remember to prepare for the worst and expect the best. Here are some things to consider prior to disclosing to friends:

- Which friend(s) do you believe you can trust enough not to out you to anyone else before you are ready, *whether they agree with you or not*? How has this friend(s) reacted to other situations in your life that you have entrusted them with information about? Have they shared information that you asked them to keep private? Are they supportive of difference when others aren't? Are they open to learning about new things and accepting things that may be considered to be "wrong" or "different"? If you answered yes to those questions, then that is a friend that you may want to consider disclosing to first.
- Your friend must understand the difference between "a secret" and "private". What you are about to share with them is not a secret. A secret implies something shameful or wrong. You are about to share something private. What is under your clothing is private. The fact that your gender identity doesn't match what is under your clothing is private. A secret implies something shameful or wrong. Your gender identity or the way you present yourself in society is not shameful or wrong, therefore; it is not a secret. It is just who you are and is solely your decision to disclose or not. (People don't introduce themselves and say, "Hello, my name is Jane and I have a vagina." Or "Hi, my name is John and I have a penis.") Why should you or any other person (transgender or not) have to do this? A secret implies something shameful or wrong. Your gender identity or the way you present yourself in society is not shameful or wrong, nor is it a secret. It is just who you are and is solely at your discretion whether you disclose it or not.
- Disclosing to your friends is very similar to [disclosing to your parents](#). You go through basically the same steps. Make sure you have done your research. Provide your friend(s) with as much or as little information as you desire about

your plans to transition or not. They will likely have a lot of questions and doing your research will better prepare you for answering them calmly and effectively.

- Determine whether you should disclose in writing or in person. Remember that disclosing in writing gives your friend(s) time to digest the information and work through initial reactions that may be hurtful to you.
- Direct your friend(s) to the [TYFA website](#) for information and the [Recommended Reading List for Teens/Children](#) during your disclosure. Let them know how much their friendship means to you and how much you want/need their support.
- Expect the worst, but prepare for the best. If someone can't or won't accept you for who you are, are they worth calling a friend? Be prepared to lose them as a friend if they are not willing to be accepting. **YOU DESERVE to be respected and accepted for who you are. You should never settle for any less.**

Remember first and foremost that **YOU** are an important part of their lives and an important part of this world. You must take care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally; **REGARDLESS** of what your friends, family or anyone else says, thinks or does. Whether you transition now, later or never, love yourself for who you know you are and seek support from a therapist, friends/loved ones or an organization like the ones listed below to help you accomplish that.

[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

[www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.org)

[www.ftmentors.org](http://www.ftmentors.org)

[www.mtfmentors.org](http://www.mtfmentors.org)

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