

Coming Out

at **dentsu**



dentsu
PRIDE

United States



United Kingdom

For internal use only



Contents

This guide is designed to support employees who are coming out, considering to come out, or already out and are looking for resources that are available to them. This guide is also for managers to aid them in best supporting all employees.

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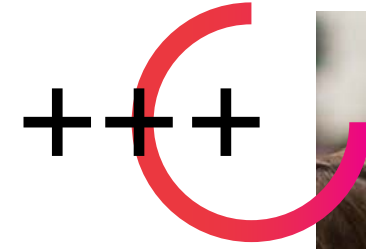
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01.

Coming out

what is it all about?

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What is “coming out”?

Coming out is the process of telling people something about yourself that is not immediately obvious. For an LGBTQ+ person, this is the self-disclosure of their **sexual orientation** or **gender identity**.

Why is it a thing?

For all LGBTQ+ people, identity is an aspect of their personal life, history and experience which has shaped who they are today. For some, the decision to be open comes with careful consideration of how others may receive this information.

Coming out is a highly personal moment. It is more difficult for some than others. Hiding who you are can be a draining experience and can affect many aspects of a person's life. Coming out allows people to be honest about who they are. The society we live in is cis- and hetero-normative, meaning that the assumed identity of people is



that their gender matches the one they were assigned at birth, and that they are heterosexual (straight). Individuals who identify outside of these assumptions may want to intentionally communicate their identities, to be seen and supported.

Who decides when people come out?

The decision to come out is a personal one. No individual should ever be outed without their consent, or pressured to share their identities. Some people may choose to be out in one part of their life, but not in others. For example, some people will be out at work, but not with friends and family.

What is coming out NOT?

Coming out is not something a person does once. Many films, books and other media give the impression that coming out is a big momentous event which transforms a person's life moving forward – and for some, it can be – but the reality for most people is that every new interaction represents a choice: Do I want to share my authentic self here, or would I prefer to allow default assumptions? Examples include mentioning a partner of the same-sex when talking about life outside of work, disclosing one's identity via they/them pronouns at the start of a meeting or in an email signature, or bringing a guest to a holiday party.

Every individual's coming out experience is different and there's no right or wrong way to do it.

The purpose of this guide is to make it clear that dentsu endeavors to provide a safe environment for employees to share their authentic selves.



02.

Our culture

of inclusivity at dentsu



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Hello!

You're a part of a company that invites you to bring your full self to work and celebrates you for it. You have a community, a support network, and leadership that is invested in you being you.



As Jacki Kelly, our Americas CEO, says

“To build an inclusive culture in the world around us, we need to start by building an inclusive culture at dentsu. And while our leaders play a key role, it’s everyone’s responsibility to support, join and lead by embracing and enabling diversity at dentsu through all of our daily actions and decisions.”

It’s not just at the top but flows through everything we do. You can join the **dentsu US Pride Business Resource Group (BRG)** and participate in social networking events across dentsu and across our industry.

You can also find out more and participate in our other **employee networks**:

- Enablement
- Interfaith
- Military
- Multicultural
- Parents
- Pride
- Women’s



03.

Risks & benefits

of coming out for employees & for managers



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There is a wealth of research that shows being able to be your authentic self at work leads to a happier and more productive individual/team.¹ However, each person will have had a broad range of experiences which impact their propensity to ‘remove the mask’ and be their authentic self at work.

Those who come out at work can benefit from no longer having the stress of hiding or misleading their colleagues.² Other research shows trans individuals have fewer incidents of suicidal thought/less depressive symptoms simply by using their chosen rather than given names.³

It’s important to keep in mind, however, that a risk/benefit analysis is being made every time an LGBTQ+ individual meets someone new, including in the workplace. Around 50% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported having to come out at work at least once a week.⁴ The creation of an alter ego that enables employees to bring what they perceive as an ‘acceptable persona’ to work can begin from childhood, so the habit can be harder to break for some, while trans employees may see their new identity as the only one that matters and prefer not to disclose their history.⁵

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dedehehley/2019/12/14/how-to-be-your-authentic-self-at-work-and-why-it-matters/?sh=6bb24b065b77>

2. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-at-work>

3. <https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20180406/risk-for-depression-suicide-drops-when-transgender-youth-use-chosen-names>

4. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/lgbtq-plus-voices-learning-from-lived-experiences>

5. <https://hbr.org/2018/10/7-myths-about-coming-out-at-work>

Concerns regarding coming out, and how dentsu is working to mitigate them:

- Potential rejection by management and other staff as well as a negative impact on career progression – dentsu international has policies in place to encourage equal opportunity hiring and continually monitors and improves this approach. LGBTQ+ inclusion is ingrained in our business values and a wealth of resource has been allocated to alleviate concerns for new and existing employees.
- Unconscious Bias and Conscious Bias: managers have a responsibility to monitor team sentiment for inclusion, including attending diversity and bias training, leading by example through allyship (see chapter 6), and calling out unacceptable behaviors.
- Identities are fluid – being out at work can allow employees to explore and understand this more in a supportive environment. A wide spectrum of intersecting identities is represented across the dentsu international network with resources available wherever needed.
- Previous experiences in coming out to others – dentsu international has existing policies and values that emphasize inclusion and acceptance and a robust community to provide support, including the dentsu Pride BRG and other groups.
- Normalizing use of pronouns: Through efforts such as a placeholder to add pronouns to the global dentsu international email signature template, **dentsu’s Pronoun Guide**, and suggesting use of pronouns when introducing yourself (large events, meetings with new individuals, etc.) we are seeking to create awareness, understanding and make everyday more inclusive.

Benefits of coming out at work

Bringing one's 'full self' removes the weight of any 'masking' or 'covering' an individual may feel they need to fit in with their colleagues. Studies show that if an LGBTQ+ person is out at work, they are 67% more likely to be satisfied with their sense of achievement.⁶



6. <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/en/topics/blogs/being-out-at-work>



Benefits of being out at work include:

- Ability to bring ones 'whole self' to work emboldens employees to explore wider interests and build real, meaningful personal and business relationships
- Builds trusting working relationships
- Coming out gets easier and easier over time, increasing opportunities for growth and connections
- Ability to contribute different opinions, experiences and perspectives that can benefit a project/brief – in a London Annual business survey, groups with a diverse team were more likely to develop products that went to market than non-diverse teams⁷
- Ability to bring partners to corporate/social events or openly share your life outside of work will alleviate anxieties around accepting and allows employees to share more of themselves
- Ability to form deeper relationships with colleagues/clients
- Coming out requires strength and courage, these qualities will be applauded by management and colleagues, even celebrated
- Helps to break down barriers in understanding for those less exposed to LGBTQ+ individuals

7. <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter>

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04.

Support

available to you

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04 Support available to you



While this guide is primarily from an at-work perspective, we recognise that depending on where you are in your journey, you may be coming out to your friends and family as well. [The Human Rights Campaign's Coming Out Page](#) is a valuable resource. Dentsu international has policies that outline and explain our commitments and standpoints on diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as:

Employee Handbook – for our stance on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and our Anti-Harrassment and Nondiscrimination Policy.

It is our commitment to you to provide an inclusive and safe place to work, that cultivates a positive environment for all. If you see or experience any inappropriate behavior or issues which go against our **Code of Conduct**, **Employee Handbook** or our **people policies**, we encourage you to speak up.

To raise a concern, please speak with your manager, senior member of your team, HR, or use the Speak Up [@dentsu portal](#), operated independently by Convercent, which allows you to report anonymously or to provide your details if you feel comfortable in doing so.

This portal is free to use and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via toll-free numbers or at [speakup.dentsu.com](#). Confidentiality is maintained to the fullest extent possible.

Dentsu has a zero-tolerance policy against retaliation of any kind against individuals who speak up in good faith.

BenefitsPlus – resources and support. You can always find the most updated information on our benefits and more on our BenefitsPlus page.

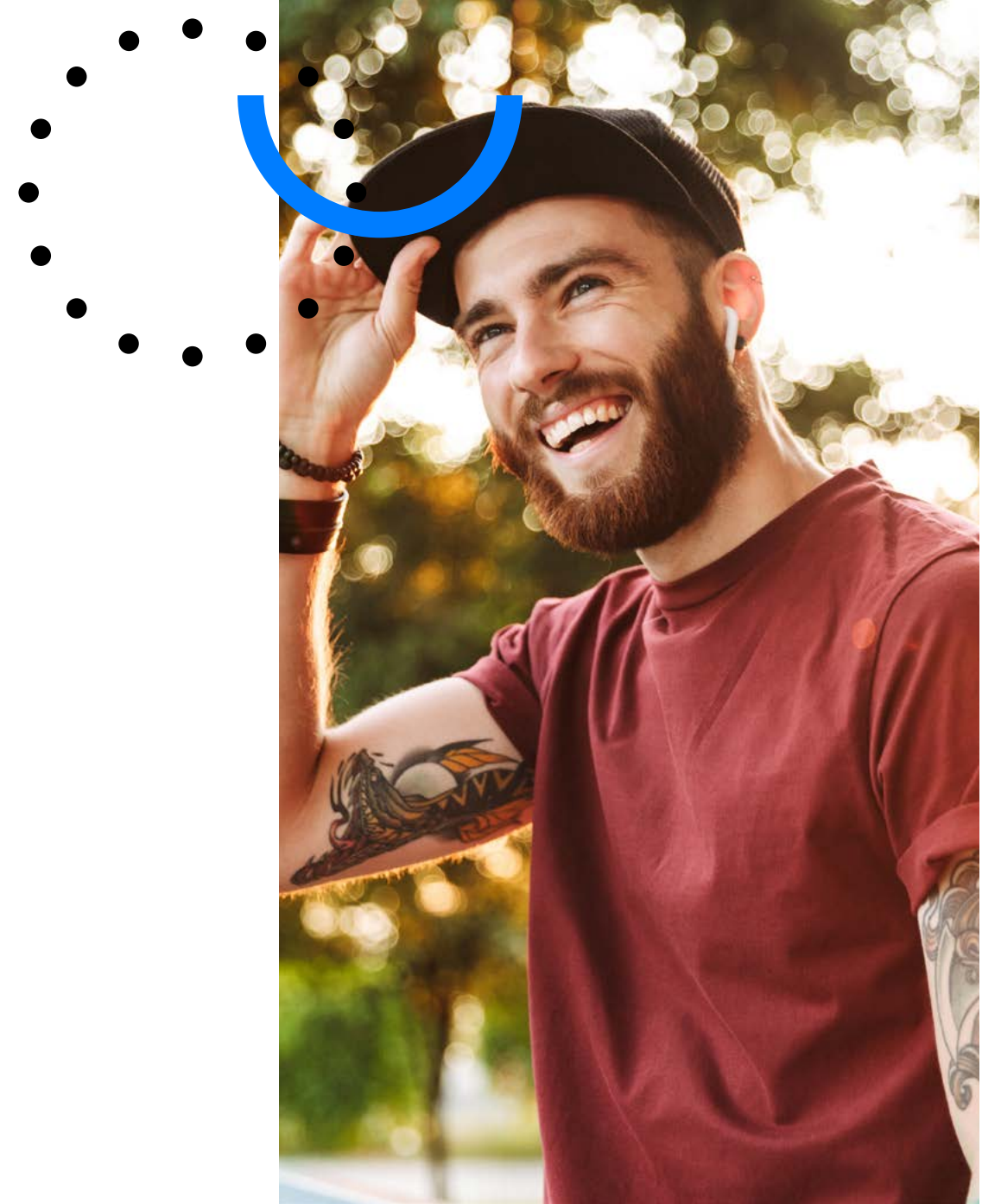


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05.

Inclusive language

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It's important to remember that language is constantly evolving, especially in reference to identities and groups. Terminology below is not static, though familiarizing yourself here is a good start.

*Language, Please has an **excellent glossary**; available to inform deeper understanding and continued learning. The dentsu US Pride BRG also has a comprehensive 'LGBTQ+ 101' with definitions about sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, intersectionality, allyship, jargon-busting, and more.*

The LGBTQ+ 101 guide also has insights into LGBTQ+ spending habits, marketing trends, and demographics, and history.

LGBTQ+:

Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning. The order and letters included can vary, but LGBTQ is considered standard. The + is an important part because the community is constantly growing in both numbers and diversity and aims to acknowledge and include all people in the acronym.

Lesbian:

Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

Gay:

Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Bisexual/Bi:

Is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Transgender/Trans:

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender or Cis:

Someone whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Deadnaming:

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.

Gender:

Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is often assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

Heterosexual/straight:

Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women or to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men.

Homophobia:

The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people.

Nonbinary:

Gender nonbinary (or just nonbinary) refers to a spectrum of gender identities that are not confined to man or woman.

Outed:

When a queer person's identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

Pansexual/Pan:

A person whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.

Queer:

A term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Importantly, this term has historically been (and in some cases still is) used as a slur.

Questioning:

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

*Learn more using **dentsu's Glossary of Terms**.*

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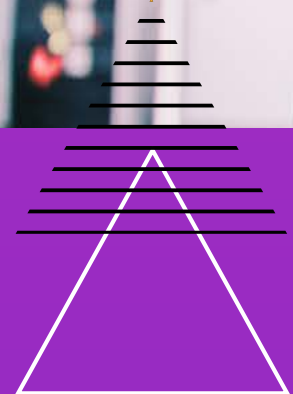
06.

Allyship

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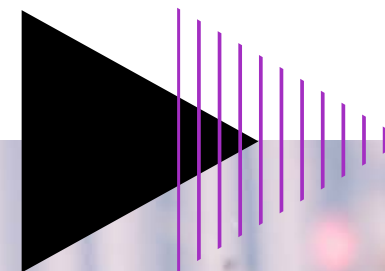


Ally:

An individual who takes a stand against social injustice directed at target groups. They actively call out microaggressions, challenge assumptions, and speak up for underrepresented communities.

Characteristics of Allies:

- Listen openly with respect
- Use **pronouns**, as simple way to start to create a more inclusive language
- Actively pursue self-education and take responsibility for learning about their own identities and those of others
- Understand the challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community
- Are mindful and sensitive to confidentiality
- Recognize that unlearning socialized beliefs is a lifelong process
- Take a public stand against discrimination, prejudice, and injustice
- Confident sharing resources and education with others
- Are willing to acknowledge and learn from mistakes
- De-center themselves and uplift underrepresented and marginalised individuals and communities

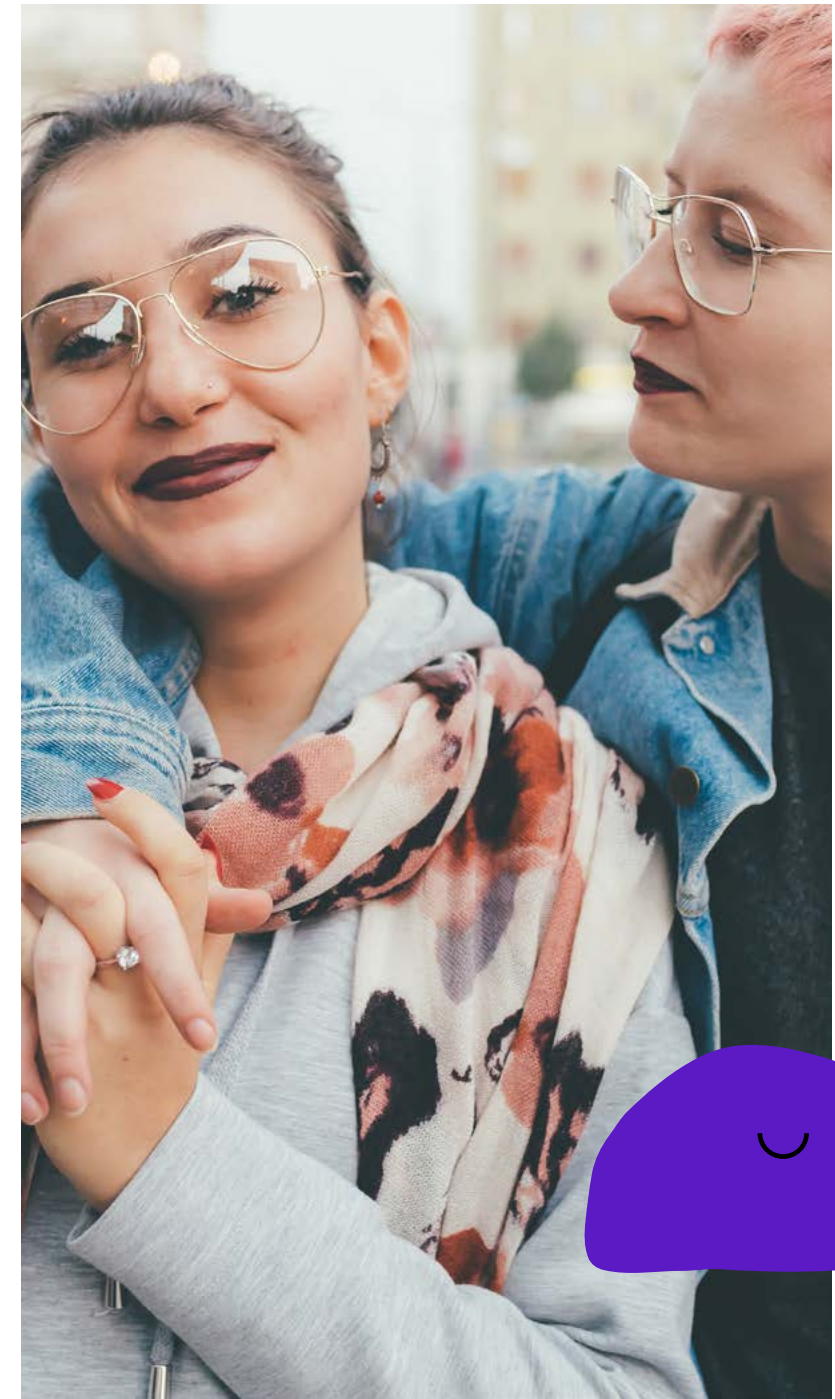




07.

How to manage

difficult conversations



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Dentsu is an equal opportunity employer, emphasizing diversity and inclusion in hiring practices and across our culture. Employees have several options if they feel a colleague is not fully supportive of their identities.

Whether direct discrimination is experienced, for example homophobic/sexist/racist comments aimed directly at you, or explicit comments about others in these groups, or you feel an individual is being unsupportive in words or actions, always open a dialogue with your manager, a senior member of your team, your HRBP or the **Speak Up at dentsu** portal. Employees should always feel safe, welcome and accepted at work.

- Cases where discrimination is perceived should be raised with HR immediately e.g. homophobic comments made on a Teams call or by email.
- Document all instances of discrimination and record the following information for reporting purposes:
 - Times
 - Names
 - Witnesses
 - Dates
 - Location
 - Description of what occurred
- Speak with a manager, senior member of your team, HR, or Speak Up for advice on whether comments/actions constitute discrimination.

As a manager:

- Listen to the employee, ask for relevant information, and report the situation to HR immediately.

