



National Coming Out Day

First observed in 1998, National Coming Out Day is October 11 each year in the United States. This Multicultural Moment will give background information on the observance, share testimonials of individuals from the LGBTQ + community, and present resources, including those at MC, to support individuals in coming out.

Overview. What is the purpose of National Coming Out Day, and how did it originate?

- **Origin of National Coming Out Day.** National Coming Out Day is observed on October 11 each year on the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for LGBTQ rights. (see [Coming out as LGBTQ - Lindsey Danis.](#)) The term “coming out” (or coming out of the closet) can be seen as a reference to coming out of hiding or reference to the comparison between the elaborate drag events that were modeled after traditional debutante balls where young people formally “came out to society.” (see [National Coming Out Day | History & Origin | Dictionary.com](#))
- **Purpose.** National Coming Out Day aims to “shin[e] light on individuals within the LGBTQ+ community and their decisions to share their gender identities and sexual orientation with the public,” according to a 2021 *People* article by Skyler Caruso. (see [National Coming Out Day: Everything You Need to Know](#))
- **Data.** According to a 2021 [Gallup report](#), 5.6% of the U.S. population identifies as LGBT. As advocates worldwide fight for rights and equality for the LGBTQ+ community, data shows that acceptance is growing globally, with the United States, India, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, and Japan showing the largest increase in acceptance rates since 2002. Read more about this study in the 2020 *U.S. News* article, [LGBTQ Acceptance Growing in the U.S. and Other Countries Over Time](#) by Juhie Bahatia.

Coming Out Stories. Despite growing global acceptance, coming out to one’s friends and family can be a challenging experience. While some risk isolation or rejection from their families and communities, others express feelings of pride and liberation or feel called to action. From

- **Research on Feelings about Coming Out.** In [LGBT Voices: The Coming Out Experience | Pew Research Center](#), Adam Nekola presents quotes from a 2013 survey of nearly 1,200 LGBT adults who shared stories of their coming out experiences. You can search and sort the quotes by identity, age, and milestones, such as when they first shared their experience with someone.
- **An Indigenous Coming Out Testimony.** In a poetic Ted Talk, [How I’m Bringing Queer Pride to My Rural Village](#), Katlego Kolanyane-Kesupile recalls her first time being “out” how she indigenized her queerness in her home village in Botswana.
- **A Coming Out Story Between Two Friends.** Two best friends narrate their experience leading up to one friend coming out to the other in this TED Talk, [Amelia Jobe, Sophia Mullin: Coming Out: Both Sides of the Story | TED Talk](#). The friends recount their different perspectives, challenges, and lessons learned while cautioning against thinking in the extremes often portrayed in coming-out stories.
- **Celebrities Coming Out Stories.** In April 1997, when comedian and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres came out on T.V., her actions opened the door for other celebrities to do the same. It is

common for celebrities to come out on live T.V. or social media, and several media outlets now maintain lists of all the celebrities who came out during the year. Athletes from gold-medal Olympian Caitlyn Jenner coming out as a transgender woman in 2015, to then Oakland Raider Carl Nassib, coming out as the first openly gay NFL player in 2020, have used their respective platforms to publicly embrace their identities and promote acceptance and understanding.

Resources to Support Coming Out. Individuals who feel empowered to come out need support and resources just as those who choose to suppress their feelings. Various

- **Human Rights Campaign (HRC).** The Human Rights Campaign offers many resources to support individuals living openly and authentically. Their [Coming Out resources page](#) offers materials for youth and families and resources to help the faith community create welcoming and inclusive environments.
- **American Psychological Association (APA).** APA publishes resources to support youth and families of youth coming out and to address issues of prejudice and misunderstanding. Visit their [Resources for Coming Out Day](#) for more information.
- **MC Resources.** Montgomery College is committed to creating an inclusive environment for students and employees. The [MC Pride and Allies](#) webpage includes information on student clubs and Safe Zone Training and offers resources that include guidance for coming out and how to be/become an ally.

May we avoid blaming or bias based on our circumstance and continue to be grateful for the gifts of the global community.

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