



## **Someone Came Out to Me. Now What?!**

### Dos and Don'ts during this Important Conversation

- Recognize that there are many gay, bisexual, and lesbian young people. Until now, you may not have been aware of their sexual orientation, but this is the same young person they were before coming out to you.
- Be yourself.
- Remember that the young person may be terribly afraid of your reaction and that of society.
- Use the vocabulary they use. If they say "homosexual," follow their lead. Likewise, if they say "gay" or "lesbian," use that term. Use the term "same-sex feeling" if they appear uneasy with other vocabulary.
- Be aware of your comfort and limitations. Do not add pain resulting from your judgment about sexuality, in general, or homosexuality, in particular.
- Do your homework. Find out about sexuality and sexual orientation. Check out the Kaleidoscope website: [www.kycohoio.org](http://www.kycohoio.org). PFLAG, a support organization for parents and friends, can also help: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)
- Remember, it does not take an LGBTQ adult to help an LGBTQ young person.
- Thank the young person for trusting you.
- You have an obligation to respect the young person's right to privacy and confidentiality. Don't discuss their personal details with others.
- If the young person is having trouble with harassment or abuse because of their sexual orientation, complete an incident report and refer the young person to BRAVO (614) 294-STOP.

#### **Ask yourself these questions:**

- Does the young person have friends he or she can trust with the information?
- Do parents know? What would happen if they knew?
- If parents cannot be supportive, are there other adults available for support?

#### **Don't say:**

- How do you know?
- Are you sure?
- You will get over it when the right man/woman comes along.
- I don't agree with it, but I still like you.
- Have you tried dating the opposite sex?
- You will grow out of it. It's only a phase.
- Do you think God is punishing you?
- Some of my best friends are.
- Have you tried to change?
- I accept you, but I don't agree with your choice.
- You are not normal! You are sick.
- You don't look like one.
- How did that happen?
- Don't you want to have children?
- I don't want to hear about it.
- You do have a problem.
- What is wrong with you?
- You are going to get AIDS. It's a gay disease.
- I don't dislike homosexuals. It's what they do that I dislike.
- Your family will reject you. You won't be able to have a happy life.
- Why don't you try to act more masculine (or feminine)?
- You will embarrass your family.