



NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

Coming out can be a significant and joyous milestone in affirming your identity, but for some, it can be a difficult journey with barriers to overcome.

What may be right for one person, may not be right for all, and your safety and well-being should always come first.

Levi's® and MINUS18 invited a panel of LGBTQIA+ guests on National Coming Out Day to explore coming out experiences so we all can learn and make an impact.

No two stories are the same. Learn how to support intersectional experiences and celebrate individual coming-out journeys.

View the panel discussion over at www.facebook.com/minus18youth

PANEL GUESTS



KIM LEUTWYLER (SHE/THEY)

Kim is a queer Sydney-based visual artist known for exploring notions of gender identity, and has been exhibited in galleries around the world. Kim spoke about the many moments of affirmation in her coming out journey and shared the importance of knowing support is there for anyone thinking about coming out.



I came out at 12, but didn't bring a girl home until I was 23 or 24. I just brought her to my parents' house unannounced and they didn't make a fuss about it - they've been very accepting and supportive ever since. We're really lucky to have had that experience, and I know a lot of people might not have. There's support and resources out there, and an amazing, beautiful queer community that's going to be ready to embrace you when you're ready to take the leap."



HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE COMING OUT



MAY-A (SHE/HER)

Maya is an artist that wears her heart on her sleeve, sharing her experiences with identity, first loves and heartbreak through her songwriting. Maya spoke about her inclusive coming out experience in an accepting space, surrounded by allies and queer supporters who were solid in their identities.



I had a girlfriend but still thought I wasn't gay. It's not that I couldn't come to terms with it—because I went to a really accepting high school—but I kept telling myself that I wasn't gay or straight. I didn't really come out to my parents either, I just told them I liked a person and that same girl happened to come over the next day. I really wasn't ready to fully come out to my parents yet, but I guess she kind of did it for me without knowing."



TIPS FOR COMING OUT



MITCHELL COOMBS (HE/HIM)

Mitch is a Sydney-based podcast host, comedian and social media superstar who grew up in regional NSW. Mitch spoke about navigating coming out as a child in a regional environment with limited queer representation (much to his surprise, he found out many years later there were a lot of queer farmers in his regional town). He mentioned that he received a message many years later from someone who listened to his podcast and went to the same high school, thanking Mitch for giving them the courage to come out at school.



I didn't come out until after school, when I was 18. I built coming out in my head to be a huge thing, but everyone was like 'alright,' which is better than them being not alright, but I wanted them to be alright with a bit of gusto! My friends were fine with it, my family were fine with it and they didn't want to say the wrong thing, so they just said nothing really. The silence was deafening! But fast forward to now and everything is totally fine, so I had no reason to be nervous."



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD COMES OUT



RUDY JEAN RIGG (THEY/THEM)

Rudy identifies as an autistic and non-binary trans content creator, host, advocate, writer and pop-culture feen! Rudy spoke about their abstract identity as a 'three-way prong' of autism, sexuality and gender. They've explored different identities through constantly evolving their coming out journey in multiple ways and for multiple reasons. They explained that knowing in themselves what they want to say and what they want to share is what really matters, and if being confident in advocating for yourself means leaving the room if something gets too much - that's okay.



Across my life I've gone in and out of, 'What's my gender? My most memorable conversation was telling my mother what it meant to be non-binary due to the lack of representation, so it was an interesting conversation and experience explaining what it means."



I JUST CAME OUT AS NON-BINARY, HERE'S WHAT THAT MEANS



ADRIAN MURDOCH (HE/THEY)

Adrian is proudly queer and has coordinated Minus18's campaigns for the last five years. Adrian discussed their coming out experience growing up in Darwin, being shaped by a lack of visibility and connection to community. Coming out was a process for them to understand you won't necessarily 'get' everything straight away. Finding different spaces helped Adrian understand that they had a small understanding of what community meant and their lenses of being gay or queer didn't give them the knowledge to understand LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity.



Safety is a really big thing. We [panel speakers] are lucky to have tolerance when coming out, which is a lot more than other people might experience. Ensuring that you're safe is really important and that might mean you have to navigate through school or work or moving out into a situation where you feel safe to do so. Don't feel ashamed to want to feel safe and have a network of support, because building that support is really important and there are so many types of support out there."



IT'S OKAY NOT TO COME OUT

Watch the full coming out panel discussion and view the educational resources at www.minus18.org.au/news