



# IF & WHEN TO COME OUT TO A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER

Coming out as queer, trans or non-binary is a highly personal decision each individual must make for themselves. There is no easy answer as to when, where or how. And there is no right or wrong choice. A well-informed choice is the best choice. These points may help inform your thinking as you reflect on what the right choice is for you.

Timing	Advantages	Disadvantages	Considerations
On the job application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honesty</li> <li>Peace of Mind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be harder to find work, but potentially fewer issues when you do</li> </ul>
During the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to mention briefly and positively in person</li> <li>Discrimination less likely face to face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puts the responsibility on you to handle in a clear, non-threatening way</li> <li>Too much emphasis on this issue may shift focus away from your capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How comfortable are you discussing your identity/s?</li> <li>Are you prepared with tools / tactics to maintain a focus on the job &amp; your relevant skills / experience?</li> </ul>
At time of offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your disclosure changes the offer, there may be legal recourse*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is possible an employer will question what else they don't know about you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could impact your negotiating power</li> </ul>
After you start work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to establish yourself, build relationships and demonstrate competency before coming out</li> <li>Can evaluate culture /climate before coming out</li> <li>You may be protected by law in the face of discrimination*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nerves / fears of being outed prior to coming out</li> <li>Could change interactions with peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may get harder to come out the longer you wait</li> <li>May be hard to decide who to tell, find a time that feels right to share, or know how to say what you want</li> </ul>
Never	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Privacy</li> <li>May avoid having to deal with bias or discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having to hide</li> <li>May perpetuate misunderstandings of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, queer, trans &amp;/or non-binary folks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coming out can help pave the way for future applicants (which may lead to additional queer or trans colleagues) and help foster an affirming climate</li> </ul>

\*Laws vary by state, and sometimes by municipality, and are changing rapidly.

Online resources, like these two, can help you find up-to-date information:

[www.hrc.org/state-maps/employment](http://www.hrc.org/state-maps/employment)

<https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/employment-general>

*\*Adapted from University of Vermont and Boerner, LeeAnn (1994) Job Seekers' Workbook and Stout Vocation Rehabilitation Institute, University of Wisconsin.*

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