

Who may knock on your door...

The curious

- What does that sign mean?
- Are you gay?
- Is your name Ally?
- Why do you feel a need to advertise?

The sharing

- I saw the Ally sign outside your door. I just want to say how cool it is that you have it up.
- I want to explain why I've been so down lately. My family is really upset because they found out I'm gay.
- My partner and I are celebrating our three-year anniversary. Do you have any ideas for a romantic evening out?

The questioning

- Where can I find other gay people?
- I don't want to label myself, but I'm thinking about sexual orientation. Where can I find more info?
- I think one of my friends is trying to "come out" to me. How can I let him know it's okay to talk to me?
- Do you know anything about transsexual people?

The alarmed

- I'm afraid my roommate is gay. I'm really uncomfortable about maybe having a gay roommate. What should I do?
- I'm thinking about coming out to my family, but I know they will freak out. Do you think I should tell them?
- I am very unhappy with the way my church talks about homosexuality. I feel very defensive, but don't know how to "argue the Bible." Where can I learn more about homosexuality and the Bible?
- I don't know what to do. I haven't ever told anyone that I might be gay. I'm feeling really isolated and alone...

Making referrals:

Be honest – be direct in why additional assistance may be welcome and helpful

Become knowledgeable – describe the source's capabilities and how they can be useful

Demonstrate respect – allow them to assume responsibility & control over decision-making

Personalize the referral process – provide the name of a specific person

Role-play or practice – help them to formulate questions to ask or approaches to take

Carefully assess the need – if they do not wish to seek additional assistance, consider:

- You can accept their decision not to seek more assistance
- You can offer more encouragement by explaining explicitly why they might need help
- You might offer to go with them to make initial contact
- If there is potential danger to others or to themselves, contact a professional for assistance immediately

Follow-up – encourage them to get back in touch with you about the referral