

Cass Model of Lesbian and Gay Identity Development (adapted to include bisexual, transgender and recovery processes)

Stage I: Identity Confusion

Occurs when a person begins to realize that he/she may relate to and/or identify themselves with being LGBT; a process of *personalizing the identity*.

Tasks:	Exploration and increasing awareness
Feelings:	Anxiety, confusion
Defenses:	Denial
Recovery:	Having a confidential support person

Stage II: Identity Comparison

Occurs when a person *accepts the possibility that he/she might be LGBT*.

Tasks:	Exploration of implications. Encountering others like oneself
Feelings:	Anxiety, excitement
Defenses:	Bargaining and rationalizing
Recovery:	Meeting LGBT people in recovery

Stage III: Identity Tolerance

Occurs when a person comes to *accept the probability that he/she is LGBT*.

Tasks:	Recognizing social and emotional needs as an LGBT person
Feelings:	Anger, excitement
Defenses:	Reactivity
Recovery:	How to be LGBT and stay sober

Stage IV: Identity Acceptance

Occurs when a person *fully accepts rather than tolerates themselves as LGBT*.

Tasks:	Development of community and acculturation
Feelings:	Rage and sadness
Defenses:	Hostility towards straight culture
Recovery:	LGBT community building

Stage V: Identity Pride

Occurs when the person *immerses themselves in LGBT community and culture to totally live out the identity*.

Tasks:	Full experience of being LGBT, confronting internalized homophobia
Feelings:	Excitement and focused anger
Defenses:	Arrogant pride and rejection of straight culture as the norm
Recovery:	Sexuality, identity and recovery

Stage VI: Identity Synthesis

Occurs when a person develops a *fully internalized and integrated LGBT identity and experiences themselves as whole when interacting with everyone across all environments*.

Tasks:	Coming out as fully as possible; intimate LGBT relationship; self-actualization as LGBT
Feelings:	Excitement and happiness
Defenses:	Minimal
Recovery:	Maintenance