OUTline Online

OUTline Online is a confidential and anonymous service provided by OUTline, the University of Guelph’s resource and support service for the LGBTQ2IA+ community. OUTline Online is the place to connect with volunteers in a discreet, confidential and private online environment about any questions surrounding sexuality, gender, identity, coming out, etc. We field questions ranging from how a professor should choose words related to LGBTQ+ questions in a classroom to how someone should come out to their parents, to where to meet other queer students on campus. All the volunteers who operate this service have had a coming out experience themselves and have extensive training in how to talk to you about any of the topics above.

Please take a moment to review the terms of service before you log into the system. Note that the username you chose will be logged by our online system (OLARK), and we recommend that you do not choose a username that may give clues as to your real identity. We also suggest that you use this chat somewhere where others cannot see your computer screen.

Terms of Service

OUTline Online is a confidential real-time chat service staffed by trained volunteers, supervised by staff at the University of Guelph. We provide confidential listening support, information, and referrals to persons with concerns about sexual orientation and gender identity. Chat transcripts are completely confidential and secure. Users are advised of the following:

1. OUTline's real-time chat service "OLARK" captures no identifying information. To ensure the highest level of confidentiality, OUTline recommends the users employ a pseudonym (nickname) that is not associated with their real name or usernames employed for other applications or web services. Users may choose to use the same username across multiple chats with OUTline volunteers.
2. Users should be mindful of where they chat. OUTline volunteers chat in a confidential, private space and all transcripts are kept in a secure online location and will never be shared with anyone. OUTline cannot assume responsibility for the location that a user chooses to use the service and the possibility of chatting with OUTline Online being detected by others around them.
3. Chat transcripts are confidential and secure. The volunteers, staff member and manager of OUTline have access to these transcripts. They will occasionally be reviewed to support volunteer development and to ensure a high-quality service is being provided.
4. Users should remember that their browser’s privacy settings may record their browsing history to OUTline Online, as well as any associated cookies or information recorded. We recommend users clear their cache and browsing history at the conclusion of a chat.
5. Chats may end suddenly and without warning due to technical issues. Our commitment to anonymity, and lack of contact information, means that we will not follow up with a user should a chat disconnect. We encourage you to attempt to reconnect when the service is back online. Notices will be posted to our website regarding service status.
By initiating a chat, users agree to the following conditions:

1. OUTline's chat program may capture your username.
2. You may have to clear your browsing history, cache and cookies to protect your privacy.
3. Your confidentiality may be at risk if you choose to access OUTline Online in a public place.
4. You will not use language that could be interpreted as abusive, threatening, or discriminatory to the volunteers operating the chat service.
5. You acknowledge that transcripts of the chat are recorded and stored securely, and may be accessed by volunteers, staff or manager.