This section is about the expectations people in our faith communities have about us, and the expectations people in LGBT+ communities have about us.

**In our faith communities people often expect us to be:**
- Straight
- Cisgender
- "Perfect" followers of our faith
- Similar to them – following the same lifestyle, career pathways, marriage etc.
- Experts on LGBT+ issues (if we're out)
- Deviant and sinful (if we're out)

**In LGBT+ communities people often expect us to be:**
- Non-religious
- Similar to them – following the same lifestyle, sharing the same political views, social interests etc.
- "Perfect" followers of our faith (if they know we have one)
- Experts on our faith (if they know we have one)
- Oppressed by our religious community (if they know we have one)

See any similarities?

Navigating both of these communities can be difficult for LGBT+ people of faith. Sometimes it can feel like we have to be one thing in our faith community and another thing in our LGBT+ community, but that neither of these communities lets us be our whole self.

“I also get a lot of surprised reactions from LGBT people when they find out I’m a person of faith. The Quakers are a relatively small faith group, and so not many people know much about them, but they do an incredible amount of work for peace and social justice, and so I find it quite frustrating when people assume that my politics would be any less progressive because of my faith.”

(Black, lesbian, Quaker, age 22)

Sometimes coming out as LGBT+ can feel as difficult as coming out as having religious beliefs!

If you’re finding these expectations frustrating, you’re not alone. There’s lots of work being done in faith communities and LGBT+ communities to make them better places for us, and to teach them about who we are and how they can respect and welcome us. That might not make it easier right now, but we can tell you that you aren’t alone, and that there are people and places that will accept you for all that you are.

“Only you know and decide who you are. Remember that and if someone doesn’t accept you, that’s their problem.”

(Young person of faith, Loreto College)

“Why not put the frustration to good use – you might be able to join groups who are campaigning for inclusivity in faith and/or LGBT+ communities and make a difference for other people like you.”

They just shouldn’t judge. All religions preach kindness, and being good to others, and that should be the way we interact with each other.”

(Bisexual, Muslim, age 23)