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 accepts 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