



HOW TO SUPPORT A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE WHO IS

LGBTQ+

Are you looking for the best ways to support someone who has come out to you as LGBTQ+? This guide will offer some practical tips to help you support your loved one.

How to Support Your LGBTQ+ Friend or Family Member



When loved ones 'come out' to us or invite us in to learn more about their sexual and gender identities, it can be challenging for them. There is often a lot of fear and anxiety about how loved ones, and the public at large, might react. Here are some simple tips that you can keep in mind as next steps for you as you support a LGBTQ+ loved one.

THANK THEM!

'Inviting in' (aka 'coming out') is hard. Acknowledging that difficulty and thanking your loved one for trusting you with deeply personal information helps reinforce trust and reduce anxiety and fear for them. While you're likely experiencing concerns as they open up to you, remember that in those initial moments it's important to show up with unwavering care and support rather than highlighting fear and doom.

ADOPT THEIR LANGUAGE

Even the most well-intentioned folks sometimes get it wrong. Instead of relying on your own understanding of what identities or terms your loved one might identify with, allow them to tell you what words or labels apply to them and adopt those in reference to your loved one, whether or not they're in your presence.



VOTE TO SUPPORT THEIR INTERESTS

LGBTQ+ people rely on advocates and loved ones to vote in support of their interests in many important areas of life such as access to competent healthcare, marriage, the ability to adopt and workplace protections.

ASK THEM WHAT THEY NEED

Sometimes just listening is all that someone needs in terms of support, but your loved one might need other things to help them feel safe and secure as they navigate 'coming out' and embracing their LGBTQ+ identity. Simply asking what you can do to support them moving forward goes a long way in communicating how much you care and love them.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's OK if you don't know a lot about LGBTQ+ issues and identities. There are many websites and sources of information that you can use to show your loved one that you're working on knowing more and applying that knowledge in daily life.



SHOW ONGOING SUPPORT

Living in your truth is often a long process and each person has different needs as they enter new phases of life. Continue to offer your support along the way as they enter new jobs, new relationships and hopefully enjoy the fullness that life has to offer.



FIND RESOURCES FOR YOURSELF

It's important to acknowledge that having a loved one who identifies as LGBTQ+ might also produce complicated emotions for you too. Having a safe, supportive space, such as a trusted friend or LGBTQ+ affirming therapist, can help you gain more support and understanding to best show up for your loved one and meet their needs. Local queer organizations or chapters, such as PFLAG, are often great places to start.

