



Now that you know: Coping with the news that a loved one is LGBTQ

For many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people, the coming out process is a very difficult process. At the same time, it can be just as difficult for the families and friends who hear the news. Following are tips to help you through the process:

- Give yourself time to adjust to the news.

- Recognize that everyone will react differently to the news. Feelings may include shock, denial, anger, disappointment, shame, resentment, guilt, and a sense of loss.
- Provide space to grieve the dreams you may have had for your loved one.
- Realize that your personal values, morals, religious background, and general liberal/ conservative beliefs will impact your views when hearing the news.
- Educate yourself about LGBT topic through books or internet resources.
- Ask your loved one any questions you might have, listen to answers, and acknowledge your loved one's feelings, as well as your own feelings.
- Know that you did nothing wrong and did not cause your LGBT person in your life to be this way.
- Do not assume that your loved one should see a professional counselor or encourage "reparative therapy."
- Recognize that is okay if you have known or guessed for a while before hearing the news, and you feel a sense of relief upon the person being open and honest with you.
- Explore your own stereotypes and prejudices, including possible homophobia.
- Understand that your loved one is the same person today that they were before you heard the news.
- Know that you are not alone. One in four families has an immediate family member who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and most people have at least one lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender member in their extended circle of friends and family.
- Find a friend, family member, or clergy person you trust to whom you may go for support.
- Consult with a mental health professional to get emotional support for yourself if necessary.
- Get involved with a support group, organization, or advocacy group.

Resources:

- Books:
 - Always My Child: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning Son or Daughter by Kevin Jennings and Pat Shapiro
 - Now That You Know: A Parents' Guide to Understanding Their Gay and Lesbian Children by Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward
 - Coming Out to Parents: A Two-way Survival Guide for Lesbians and Gay men and their Parents by Mary V. Borhek
 - Loving Someone Gay by Don Clark
 - Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is by Abigail Garner
 - The Other Side of the Closet: The Coming-Out Crisis for Straight Spouses and Families by Amity Pierce Buxton
 - Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out by Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu
 - True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism--For Families, Friends, Coworkers, and Helping Professionals by Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley

- Internet Sites:
 - Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) - www.pflag.org
 - Straight Spouse Network (SSN) - www.straightspouse.org
 - Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE) - www.colage.org
 - Families Like Mine - www.familieslikemine.com
 - PFLAG Transgender Network (TNET) - <http://pflag.org/TNET.tnet.0.html>
 - Family of Transgendered Persons Resources - www.gender.org/resources/families.html