TIPS FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY

Below you will find some tips for navigating the holiday season and LGBTQ+ issues. Please note, these might not fit everyone’s experiences, but are general guidelines to help navigate sometimes challenging issues.

The Students and Staff from the LGBT Resource Center wish you a relaxing and rejuvenating winter break! Please let us know if you have any questions!

IF YOU ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND/OR QUEER...

Don’t assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation or gender identity — you may be surprised.

Realize that your family’s reaction to you may not be because you are LGBTQ+. The hectic holiday pace may cause family members to act differently than they would under less stressful conditions.

Remember that “coming out” is a continuous process. You may have to “come out” many times.

Don’t wait for your family’s attitude to change to have a special holiday.

Recognize that your parents need time to acknowledge and accept that they have a LGBTQ+ child. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it is your family’s turn.

Let your family’s judgments be theirs to work on, as long as they are kind to you.

If it is too difficult to be with your family, create your own holiday gathering with friends and loved ones.
If you are transgender, be gentle with your family’s pronoun “slips.” Let them know you know how difficult it is.

**BEFORE THE VISIT...**

Make a decision about being “out” to each family member before you visit.

If you are partnered, discuss in advance how you will talk about your relationship, or show affection with one another, if you plan to make the visit together.

If you bring your partner home, don’t wait until late into the holiday evening to raise the issue of sleeping arrangements. Make plans in advance.

Have alternate plans if the situation becomes difficult at home.

Find out about local LGBTQ+ resources.

If you do plan to “come out” to your family over the holidays, have support available, including PFLAG publications and the number of a local PFLAG chapter.

**DURING THE VISIT...**

Focus on common interests.

Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.

If you are partnered, be sensitive to his/her/hir/zir/their needs as well as your own.

Be wary of the possible desire to shock your family.

Remember to affirm yourself.

Realize that you don’t need your family’s approval.

Connect with someone else who is LGBTQ+—by phone or in person—who understands what you are going through and will affirm you along the way.

**IF YOU ARE THE FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER OF SOMEONE LGBTQ+...**

Setup support for yourself. It is important to realize you are not alone. Find the phone number of the nearest Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) chapter.

Take your time. Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings.
Don’t be nervous about using the “correct” language. Honesty and openness creates warmth, sincerity and a deeper bond in a relationship. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask for help.

Realize that the situation may be as difficult and awkward for your LGBTQ+ loved one as it is for you.

**BEFORE THE VISIT...**

Practice in advance if you are going to be discussing your family member’s sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.

Anticipate potential problems, but do not assume the reactions will always be what you expected.

Consult with your LGBTQ+ loved one when coordinating sleeping arrangements if he/she/sie/ze is bringing home a partner.

If your family member is transgender or gender queer, practice using the correct pronouns.

**DURING THE VISIT...**

Treat an LGBTQ+ person like you would treat anyone else in your family.

Take interest in your family member’s life. He/she/sie/ze is still the same person.

Don’t ask your LGBTQ+ family member to act a certain way. Let them be their natural selves.

If your LGBTQ+ family member is bringing a partner, acknowledge them as you would any other family member’s partner.

If your LGBTQ+ family member is bringing a partner, include them in your family traditions.

Ask your LGBTQ+ family member about his/her/hir/zir partner if you know they have one.

*Source: PFLAG Holiday Tips Worksheet*

**NATIONAL RESOURCES/HOTLINES:**

The Trevor Project  
(866) 488-7386

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender National Hotline  
(888) 843-4564
The GLBT National Youth Talkline
(Youth serving youth through age 25)
(800) 246-7743

The TransLifeline Transgender Crisis:
(877) 565-8860

The National Runaway Switchboard
1-800-RUNAWAY

I'm Alive Support Chat: www.imalive.org

Crisis Text Line: Crisis Text Line Serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via text. Simple text 741-741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly, helping you "move from a hot moment to a cool moment." Please note that this Crisis Text Line is not specific to LGBTQ+ people.

The following sites have information about family relationships and tips for interacting with family and friends:

HRC guide for coming out to your family and friends

Want to Know Common Questions Parents Ask?

Trans Related Support

Interested in changing/reviewing your Identity Documents over break? Check out PPSFL Out for Health’s guide here! The National Center for Transgender Equality maintains a broader guide here!

HRC Coming Out as a Supporter of LGBT people

TRAVEL RELATED RESOURCES:

LGBTQ+ Traveler Resources/Information

Airline Travel: Know Your Rights

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES:

PFLAG

Gender Inclusive Pronoun Usage
Non-crisis Methods of Comfort:

Your Holiday Mom

While not a method of direct communication, Your Holiday Mom has letters from "Holiday Moms" that write general letters to LGBTQ+/queer people in need of love, care, and affection during the holidays. Some of the Holiday Moms also read their letters out loud to create audio files so you can listen to them read their letter to you. If you struggle with your family over the holiday season and want feelings of universal support and parenthood, Your Holiday Mom is a great resource to make you feel less alone. The Fifth Season of letters starts US Thanksgiving Day 2016! Read and listen to letters from holiday moms here.

Find Resources Where You Are:

Find support in your community!