



## LGBTQ+ coming out support guide for youth and young adults | Aetna

Youth and young adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer (LGBTQ+), can face stigma and discrimination. This can put them at an increased risk for mental health concerns.

As a trusted parent or caregiver, your support matters.

### Understanding your child's identity

Sexual orientation includes different forms of attraction, behaviors, and identities. Gender identity is the personal sense of gender — this can be the same as their sex assigned at birth or can differ from it. Their identity is determined by them.

Gender expression is not the same as identity. Their identity can match gender expression, or it cannot. Common pronouns used to describe one's gender expression are seen below.

- He/Him
- She/Her
- They/Them
- He/She/They
- Ze/Zir

Honoring your child's whole identity fosters inclusion, respect and acceptance.

## Critical conversations

Being a teen today is full of challenges. It's important to let your child know first and foremost that they are not alone.

Give your child the chance to share their thoughts, feelings and interests. Show similar and affirming interests, whether that be LGBTQ+ celebrities, characters or influencers.

Practice active listening and hear them for who they are.

Your care, love and support is what's most important. Let them know you are hearing, you are listening and you are there.

## Resources for support

These resources are available 24/7 for support and guidance however you best need them. You and your child's mental health is important.

### Suicide prevention lifelines:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **1-800-273-8255**.
- The Trevor Project Lifeline, **1-866-488-7386**.

### Resources for parents and caregivers:

- **Human Rights Campaign: Parenting**
- **The Trevor Project: Friends & Family Support Systems for LGBTQ Youth**

### Resources for your child:

- **Find an LGBTQ community center, CenterLink**
- **The Trevor Project resource guides**

## Acceptance<sup>1</sup>

Parents play a vital role in the mental health of their LGBTQ+ children. In fact, having strong family supports, safe schools and caring adults in their lives can help protect them from depression and suicide. **Here are some important numbers to consider.**

Your child's identity may surprise you. Take time to reflect, and consider connecting with a support network of your own. Remember to care of yourself, too. Your child's life depends on it.



<sup>1</sup>The Trevor Project. [2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#). Accessed May 2022.

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