

COMING OUT - ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

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As a parent, you may have understandable questions or concerns if you think that your child might be lesbian, gay, bi and/or trans (LGBT). We've answered some of the most common ones below.

I think that my child might be LGBT. How can I be sure?

Until your child comes and tells you that they are, or might be LGBT, you can't know. Try not to make assumptions and let them come and tell you in their own time. Create a positive environment where your child feels able to talk to you about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. For example, say positive things about LGBT people when they're on TV and don't allow others to say negative things under your roof.

But I don't agree with it

The truth is, if you've got a problem with the idea of your child being LGBT, you're going to have to live with it and accept it. The best thing you can do is put your feelings to one side and remember that, regardless of your child's sexual orientation and gender identity, you love them and want them to be happy. As for other family members: if they don't react well initially, put some rules in place and establish what can and can't be said in front of your child.

Talking about it is a good thing

One thing you can do is give them the information they need to make good decisions. LGBT young people often lack access to information about their rights, where to access support, sex and staying safe - even if you feel like you can't talk about it personally, you should at least be able to point them in the direction of the information they need. You can contact Cayman LGBTQ Foundation for pointers and support groups.

Won't being LGBT make their life harder for them?

One of the hardest things for LGBT people to face is rejection from their friends and family. New laws have made our country fairer and more equal. Same-sex couples can now get married and have children, and there is legislation to protect LGBT people in the workplace. There are more LGBT role models in the arts, politics and sport, and those people who have a problem with LGBT people are an increasingly small minority.

Support if your child comes out as bi

At Stonewall, we use 'bi' to mean anyone who is attracted to more than one gender. This includes, but is not limited to, bisexual, bi-curious, fluid, pan and queer. If your child comes out as bi, the best thing you can do is to recognize this identity as real and valid in its own right. While it may be tempting to assume your child is just 'going through a phase', this can be really damaging to bi people as it suggests what they're experiencing is temporary and unimportant. Unfortunately, some members of the LGBT community may also suggest that bi identities are not real or valid, so if you reassure your child that their identity is valid, this can be really helpful.

While sometimes coming out as bi may be a part of someone of coming out as a lesbian or as gay, any assumptions about this can reinforce the idea that bi identities are temporary. We'd encourage you to always be led by your child in terms of how they describe their sexual orientation, and not to dismiss their feelings or experiences at any stage.