

# Ways Parents Can Influence The Health Of LGBTQ+ Youth



How to be Supportive	How Does This Help?
Be affirmative and supportive	Sexuality and gender identity are not things that can be changed and often present over time as individuals engage in self-discovery. Help your teen embrace this topic and feel safe being open and honest with you.
Be empathetic	Try to understand and imagine what feelings your teenager is experiencing. This will help inform your perspective as you guide them through this time.
Stand up for your child	Listen to your teen, and take it seriously, if they tell you they are being bullied.
Hold zero tolerance for jokes or slurs regarding the LGBTQ+ community	Address the issue when you encounter this type of behavior in your community.
Be mindful of your teen's mental health	Watch for warning signs that your teen may be in distress. Some of these signs may be persistent anxiety, insecurity, depression, low self-esteem, and emotional problems.
Help your teen connect with LGBTQ+ organizations	This will help your teen find a sense of community with others who are having, or have had, similar experiences.
Celebrate diversity	Introduce your teen to ideas, media, and personalities that/who exhibit positive traits and belong to the LGBTQ+ community. It is important that your teen recognizes there are positive examples when considering the existence of social stigma.
Engage in your teen's self-expression	Through supportive conversations, find out what your teen is trying to express through their choices in clothing, jewelry, hairstyle, and room decorations.
Stay involved	Keep informed of what your teen is doing and whom they are spending time with. By doing this you are passively communicating to your teenager that you care about their well-being and safety.
Keep learning	Stay informed and educated on the facts and issues that surround the LGBTQ+ community.

Keep in mind that even if your child is not part of the LGBTQ+ community, they most likely know peers or others who are. To be supportive of the healthy development of all teens, everybody should be familiar with the protective factors in the table.

For more information review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fact sheet *Parents' influence on the health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens: What parents and families should know* at [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents\\_influence\\_lgb.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents_influence_lgb.pdf)

## References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017, June 21). *LGBT Youth*. Retrieved November 10, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>.
- Rafferty, J. (2021, June 7). *Gender-diverse & transgender children*. HealthyChildren.org. Retrieved November 10, 2021, from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Diverse-Transgender-Children.aspx>.

