

## Topic

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### Coming Out to Parent(s), Friends, and family

- In many cases, your child or friend has been thinking about coming out to you for a lot longer than at this moment.
- Your child or friend has probably planned this talk with you for days, weeks, months, maybe even for years!
- You might inadvertently "out" your child or friend before they are ready. Only they should determine when and to whom.
- Due to potential bullying, loss of employment or promotions, housing, or being ostracized by friends or students/employees, coming out may be on a need-to-know basis.
- Dead silence to the coming-out pronouncement is probably your child's greatest fear next to a screaming match.
- It is okay to mourn. You and your child have lost something, but remember that the loss of the typical "life script" you had expected offers up other gifts to you and your child or friend.
- Whenever anything happens that might cause our child pain or put them at risk or in harm's way, we tend to blame ourselves as parents.
- When conversing about their coming-out, please try to be as gentle as you can.
- Avoid asking, "Are you sure?" If they are talking about this, they are pretty sure.

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### Suggested Do's and Don'ts

- 1) Do make this more than one conversation. Even if it feels uncomfortable, you are the adult and need to be there for your child and better understand.
- 2) Do affirm with love.
- 3) Do seek resources together. Find age-appropriate materials and take turns reading them.
- 4) Do be patient and compassionate. You're not perfect and neither is your child. As long as you make a real effort with love and respect, your child will see that and that love and respect will get you through many a parental missteps.
- 5) Do keep an open mind. If you were raised in a strict religious household, think about whether it's your job to judge your child or love them.
- 6) Do talk about age-appropriate expectations you have now, ex. sleepovers and parties may require several conversations.
- 7) Don't "Are you sure?" your child.
- 8) Don't judge, lecture, or assume. Listen, ask questions if you're not sure.
- 9) Don't scream, yell, or criticize their timing. If they are coming-out at a certain time, it happened for a reason.
- 10) Don't take it personally. This isn't about you. It's about them. And it's going to be okay