

SUPPORTING LGBTQ YOUTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Parents and caregivers can follow these tips to support their LGBTQ youth during physical distancing...



DO



- **Encourage and facilitate access to friends and online social support.** Access to positive social interactions and support are important to mental health and wellbeing.
- **Let your love show.** Express love through words and actions, even when there is conflict.
- **Advocate for your youth.** If someone is not supportive of your youth's identity or uses hurtful language, ask them to keep their thoughts to themselves. Standing up for your youth may help them to feel safer at home.
- **Give your youth space to have feelings.** They may have many reactions to missing out on important events such as graduations, summer programs, and other activities.
- **Support healthy coping strategies.** Encourage use of helpful strategies, like social supports, therapy, and creative, athletic, or intellectual outlets.
- **Take care of yourself.** Practice good sleep habits, move your body, limit your intake of news, and engage in pleasant activities. Your youth may follow your lead when they see you doing these actions.



DON'T



- **Share your distress about your youth's identity with them.** Instead, connect with a parent group, therapist, or friends. This may prevent you from saying something that may be hurtful or that you may regret later.
- **Force difficult conversations about identity while everyone is stuck at home together.** It's okay to delay talking about difficult topics until people have more space and feel less stressed.
- **Don't dismiss or ignore your youth's feelings.** Try to acknowledge the way they feel without trying to "fix" the problem.
- **Allow anti-LGBTQ statements (about anyone) in your home.** Your youth picks up even subtle and unintentional messages they hear.

