

## Resources for families

### The Community Letter

A monthly LGBT newspaper serving the Kentuckiana area. Visit them online at [www.theletteronline.com](http://www.theletteronline.com) for more information.

### The Fairness Campaign

The Fairness Campaign (FC) is a grassroots organization working for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality within a broad social justice vision. Visit them online at [www.fairness.org](http://www.fairness.org) for more information.

### Kentucky Fairness Alliance

The Kentucky Fairness Alliance (KFA) seeks to advance equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people through leadership development, public education, and by encouraging participation in the democratic process. Visit them at <http://kentuckyfairness.org>.

### The Louisville Youth Group

Support and social group for LGBT youth ages 14-20. Weekly meetings every Friday at 8 pm. Visit them online at [www.louisvilleyouthgroup.com](http://www.louisvilleyouthgroup.com).

### PFLAG

Louisville's chapter of Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Visit them online at [www.pflaglouisville.org](http://www.pflaglouisville.org) for more information.

### Transwomen National

A trans-centric group-based portal that exists solely for the empowerment & support of all transgender women. Visit them online at [www.transwomennational.org](http://www.transwomennational.org).

### The Trevor Project

Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ youth. Call 866-488-7386 or visit their website at <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>. You can also receive help by texting "Trevor" to 202-304-1200 (standard messaging rates apply).

## Resources, continued

### Voices of Kentuckiana

A voluntary, not for profit chorus whose membership includes LGBT and ally voices. Visit their website at [www.voicesky.org](http://www.voicesky.org) for more information.

## Glossary of terms

**Sexual Orientation** – a person's emotional, sexual, and/or relational attraction to others. Sexual orientation is usually classified as heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual (lesbian and gay), and includes components of attraction, behavior, and identity. Sexual orientation is expressed in relationship to others to meet basic human needs for love, attachment, and intimacy. Thus, young people can be aware of their sexual orientation as feelings of attachment and connection to others before they become sexually active.

**Gender Identity** – a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Gender identity is internal, so it is not necessarily visible to others. Gender identity is also very personal, so some people may not identify as male or female, while others may identify as both male and female.

**Gender Expression** – the way a person expresses his or her sense of gender identity (through dress, clothing, body movement, etc.). Young children express their sense of gender through choices for personal items such as toys and clothes, as well as hairstyle, colors, etc.

**Gender Non-conforming or Gender Variant** – a person whose gender expression differs from how his or her family, culture, or society expects them to behave, dress, and act.

**Transgender** – a person who feels that his/her gender identity does not match his/her physical body and differs from the gender that others observed and gave him/her at birth (assigned or birth gender).



# SUPPORTING YOUR LGBTQ CHILD

*Lesbian – Gay – Bisexual – Transgender –  
Queer or Questioning*

*An introduction for parents and  
families*



*Information and graphics adapted from:  
A Practitioner's Resource Guide: Helping Families to  
Support Their LGBT Children (SAMHSA);  
Supportive Families, Healthy Children (FAP);  
A Guide for Understanding, Supporting, and  
Affirming LGBTQI2-S Children, Youth, and Families  
(SAMHSA, NASP, CMHS, DHHS)*



## Why does family acceptance or rejection matter?

Gay and transgender teens who were highly rejected by their parents and caregivers were at **very high risk** for physical and mental health problems when they become young adults (ages 21-25). When compared with gay and transgender young adults who were not at all or only a little rejected by their parents and caregivers because of their gay or transgender identity, highly rejected young people were:

- More than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide
- Nearly 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression
- More than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, and
- More than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases

## Common Misconceptions

- “LGBTQ people who keep their identity to themselves fit into society better.” *Young people whose LGBTQ identity has been openly accepted and affirmed by friends, family, and community are more likely to be healthy, happy, and successful.*
- “Being LGBTQ is a dysfunction that can be cured.” *Identifying as LGBTQ is not a mental illness and cannot be changed; however, mental health challenges can arise from being victimized, rejected, and isolated.*
- “My child can’t really be LGBTQ if he/she isn’t sexually active.” *Just like heterosexuals, people can know they are LGBTQ without ever being sexually active with another person.*
- “People choose to be LGBTQ.” *Sexual orientation and gender identity emerge early in life. People choose how they express themselves, but their sexual orientation and gender identity are not “lifestyle choices.”*

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*“When we hold our baby in the nursery for the first time, no one tells us that our baby might be gay. By the time we know who our children are, we may have hurt them in many ways. No one teaches us how to help and protect our gay or transgender children. We may think we can help by trying to change them – but we need to love them for who they are.” --Erica, mother of a transgender teen*

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**For parents and caregivers, a little change – being a little less rejecting and a little more accepting – can make an important difference in reducing a young person’s risk for serious health problems, including suicide and HIV.**

## Supportive Actions

- Talk with your child about his/her LGBTQ identity
- Express affection for your child when he/she tells you or when you learn that he/she identifies as LGBTQ
- Support your child’s LGBTQ identity even though you may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated because of his/her LGBTQ identity
- Require that other family members respect your LGBTQ child
- Bring your child to LGBTQ organizations or events
- Talk with clergy and help your faith community to support LGBTQ people
- Connect your child with an LGBTQ adult role model to show him/her options for the future
- Welcome your child’s LGBTQ friends and partners into your home
- Support your child’s gender expression
- Believe your child can have a happy future as an LGBTQ adult