

LDS & LGBTQ+ Support: For Parents

When your child comes out as LGBTQ+, especially in the cultural context of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints, it can be challenging. This guide is to help you navigate these waters with as much love and compassion as possible, along with the video found on tjcounseling.com/videos.

It's helpful to remember that all available research shows that being LGBTQ+ is not caused by social pressure, pornography, exposure to other LGBTQ+ people, sexual abuse, or any of the other past-believed explanations. The Church states it has no position on the cause of same-sex attraction, and recognizes it is not a choice. If you haven't already, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the Church's current official positions on LGBTQ+ individuals on their website.*

When your child comes out:

- ◆ **Take a breath.** Remember how blessed you are to have a child who trusts you with this.
- ◆ **Love first.** Your fears/questions can come later. This is the moment for only love.
- ◆ **Be specific** about the extent of your love. Something like this works well:
"No matter who you are, no matter who you love, who you date, or what your future church involvement, you and your partner will always be welcome in our home and with our family."
- ◆ **Thank them** for trusting you, assure them it changes nothing about your love for them.
- ◆ **Mirror language.** Use the same terms/labels they do to show you trust and support them.
- ◆ **It's not too late.** If your child's coming out didn't go the way you'd hope, you can always implement these steps right now and offer an apology for your first reaction.

"As a family member, the least productive prayer is, "Why?" A close second is, "Please take this away right now." The most helpful question you can ask is, "How?" How can I help? How can I be the support my loved one needs? How can we learn from this?" -from the Church's website*

"What if this is just a phase?"

If it is a phase...

- ◆ Fighting against it will make them feel they must prove themselves, cementing it deeper, and actually making it less likely for them to admit it if the phase ends.
- ◆ Accepting and loving them will prove your love and trust for them no matter what, making it more likely for them to feel safe enough to reverse course if the phase ends.

If it is not a phase...

- ◆ Fighting against it will likely drive a serious wedge between you and your child, which may be difficult to repair, as they feel you are rejecting who they truly are.
- ◆ Accepting and loving them will set up you and your child for the best possible chances of a close and happy future relationship.

Remember:

- ◆ You may be grieving the loss of the life you envisioned for your child. That's normal. Don't let that get in the way of loving and being involved in the life your child will actually have.
- ◆ "No empty chairs" in the next life is a wonderful goal. But don't be so focused on that goal that you end up creating empty chairs in this life - at holidays, around the pool, at the dinner table.

Resources:

Find a more comprehensive list on tjcounseling.com/resources

- ◆ **Lift + Love** - podcast & groups run by LDS mothers of LGBTQ+ kids, advice and help for parents
- ◆ **Questions from the Closet** - podcast answering questions about the LDS & LGBTQ+ experience
- ◆ **Listen, Learn, and Love** - podcast guests share their stories and experiences as LDS & LGBTQ+

* <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/gay>