

Stuck in quarantine with your homophobic or transphobic family? Here are some tips on things you may be considering.

Quarantining is already hard enough, but now you may find yourself in a situation where you are spending extra time and space with people who you may not be out to or feel particularly safe with. Not being able to be our authentic self at home, or for extended periods of time can pose a lot of challenges and be a heavy burden to carry -- when it's the case with close family, that weight often grows. Here are some tips to help you navigate those dynamics:

Should you come out?

Weigh the **pros** and **cons** of coming out compared to not coming out.

- Is not being able to be your authentic self affecting your mood, adding stress and/or severely impacting your mental health?
- If your family is not supportive of your authentic self, will your mental health be worse off?
- Will it be harder to cope with hiding your authentic self than it is to cope with an unsupportive family?
- Do you feel safe to come out regardless of whether your family is supportive?



You must determine the relative safety of coming out. Here are some tips you can try.

**Disclaimer: No matter what we do, we can never be certain that we will be safe after coming out*



Test the waters. Bring up LGBTQI2S issues or representations in the media as casual topics of conversation around your family, see if they react negatively, neutrally or positively.



Find an ally. If you are able to determine that some members of your family are more open minded, confide in them first and have them advocate for you.



Have a plan. If you come out and your family is not supportive, do you have an alternative plan? An alternative plan can look like:

- Your own private space within the home to have some separation between you and those who are unsupportive.
- Your own means to live off of if you need to remove yourself from the situation.
- A safe place to stay if it becomes too difficult to live in that space.

If you determine that it is relatively safe to come out or that you must come out regardless

Things to consider when coming out

There is no right or wrong way but here are some things to consider:

SPACE

Whether you are coming out in the moment, or you have planned a family meeting, be sure to take the space and time to have a full conversation where everyone can pay full attention



STORY

Tell your story of how it has been like to live as an LGBTQI2S person, allow them an inside scoop to your perspective.



FEEL

Focus on letting them know that this is very important to you and that you care deeply about living authentically. Allowing yourself to live authentically amongst them is you placing a trust in them that they will respect and honour your identity. Emphasize that their acceptance will make you feel happy and safe.



CALM

Do your best to remain calm and clear, and leave little room for miscommunication



LISTEN

Listen to their concerns and issues, they may explain it to you in a way that is easy for you to dispel any myths or misinformation that they believe. Refrain from interrupting them and being too defensive.



TIME

Give them time. Be patient. This could be very big news and very different to how your parents/guardians have pictured your life to be. Allow them time to process and ask questions. Everybody processes information and emotions differently. Their first response might not be what you hoped for.



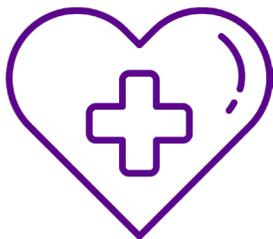
RESOURCES

Provide your parents with resources that can further educate them on LGBTQI2S issues. These are some handy ones to have.

- [What to do when your child comes out to you](#)
- [Pronoun tips](#)
- [The Genderbread Person and a list of definitions](#)
- [Supporting your intersex child](#)
- [Supporting your gender diverse child](#)
- [Anti-LGBTQI2S Cyberbullying](#)

[PFLAG Canada](#) also has some great resources for parents.

How to deal with NOT coming out



Don't diminish or demean your identity.

- Just because you cannot live authentically now does not mean that it is not important. It is simply more important to survive your current situation in order to get to a state where you can live your best life.
- There is no shame in choosing not to come out.

Set boundaries for yourself.



- You can choose to stay out of conversations your family has that involve politics related to LGBTQI2S rights. Remind yourself that you are not a bad person for staying out of it.
- You can choose not to be involved if your family is participating in homophobic, biphobic or transphobic forms of entertainment.
- If space is limited during quarantine, opt for a walk to preserve some space between you and your family.
- If being in the same physical space with your family is necessary, try to focus on tasks such as working out, cleaning or cooking. That way you are participating in the household without being directly involved with family members.

Find spaces where you CAN be your authentic self.



- There are plenty of online spaces where you can find LGBTQI2S community and allies, your authentic self can shine in those forums.
- Indulge in LGBTQI2S media. Things like movies, TV shows, books, and podcasts have created whole worlds of LGBTQI2S positive spaces.

Reassure yourself.



- Remember to affirm your own identity and do it often. Be kind and accepting of your own self.
- Challenge your own homophobic, biphobic and transphobic beliefs. Where did they come from and how can you tackle them head on instead of internalizing them?
- In case you need to hear it. You are valid, beautiful and perfect the way you are. There is nothing wrong with your identity, whatever it may be.
- Allow yourself to dream of a future where you can live as your authentic self!
- *Don't give up.* Quarantining and social isolation will not last forever, nor will having to live inauthentically. It gets better.