

# LGBTQ+ COMING OUT: DO'S AND DON'TS FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS



<u>Do</u>	<u>Don't</u>
<b>Do</b> listen to what your loved one's life is like, and what kind of experiences he or she has had in the world.	<b>Don't</b> blame your own feelings on your loved one.
<b>Do</b> take the time to seek information about the lives of GLBT people from parents of GLBT people, friends of your loved one, literature, and, most of all, directly from your loved one.	<b>Don't</b> rush the process of trying to understand your loved one's sexuality or gender identity.
<b>Do</b> get professional help for anyone in the family, including yourself, who becomes severely depressed over your loved one's sexuality or gender identity.	<b>Don't</b> assume that your loved one should see a professional counselor or encourage them to participate in "reparative therapy."
<b>Do</b> accept that you are responsible for your negative reactions.	<b>Don't</b> criticize your loved one for being different.
<b>Do</b> respect your loved one's right to engage in loving relationships.	<b>Don't</b> try to break up loving relationships.
<b>Do</b> try to develop trust and openness by allowing your loved one to be who she or he is without pressure.	<b>Don't</b> try to force your loved one to conform to your ideas of proper sexual behavior.
<b>Do</b> be proud of your loved one's capacity for having loving relationships.	<b>Don't</b> blame yourself because your loved one is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
<b>Do</b> look for the injured feelings underneath the anger and respond to them.	<b>Don't</b> demand that your loved one live up to what your idea of what a man or woman should be.
<b>Do</b> defend him or her against discrimination.	<b>Don't</b> discriminate against your loved one.
<b>Do</b> support your loved one's individual goals, even though they may differ drastically from your own.	<b>Don't</b> force your own life goals on your loved one.

*Source: Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Case Western Reserve University*