

# Support LGBTQ+ Young People:

## A Guide for Families to Listen, Learn, and Act

### Key Takeaways for Families

63%

of LGBTQ+ young people perceive **online friends as supportive** compared to 33% of LGBTQ+ young people who perceive family as supportive.



"I've gotten so much validation and acceptance from my online friends for years, that I sometimes haven't gotten in person from others. They truly helped save my life and remind me I'm not alone. I often wish the "real world" was as accepting as my online friends are."

- White Young Adult Woman

29%

of transgender young people report **high levels of family support** compared to 43% of cisgender young people.



"When I was first exploring my gender identity, I did it completely with the help of online friends. Without them, I wouldn't even have known that I am trans."

- White Transgender Nonbinary Teen

28%

of LGBTQ+ young people with access to in-person spaces that supported their identity had **lower rates of depressive symptoms** compared to those without access to supportive in-person spaces (28% vs. 53%).

44%

of LGBTQ+ young people **feel very safe in online spaces** compared to just 9% in-person.

Source: Price, M., Hopelab, + Born This Way Foundation (2025). *Without It, I Wouldn't Be Here Today*: LGBTQ+ Young People's Experiences in Online Spaces.

LGBTQ+ young people aged 15 to 24 want their families to create safe and affirming environments. They also want their families to recognize the importance of online communities in their lives and support them in navigating those spaces safely.

This resource guide provides key statistics from [our research report on LGBTQ+ young people's experiences in online spaces](#), actionable strategies from focus groups with LGBTQ+ centers across the country, and key takeaways from discussions with LGBTQ+ young people and adult experts in the field.

Note: "Family" includes parents, guardians, caregivers, and any member who is part of an LGBTQ+ young person's life.

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### Recommendations from LGBTQ+ Young People + Adult Experts:

*Note: Adult experts included academic researchers, educators, practitioners, policy makers, and executives from LGBTQ+-focused community organizations.*

- **Be engaged, curious, and open-minded.** Practice active listening when speaking to young people about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions about what their identity means to them. Be accepting of their readiness to respond. *Example: “Is there anything you would like me to know about your identity?”*
- **Affirm their gender exploration.** Families can show their willingness to support by affirming their loved one’s gender expression and sexuality. One way to do this is by asking and using their pronouns and sharing your own pronouns.
- **Take the initiative to learn.** LGBTQ+ young people value when their family members seek resources and education about the LGBTQ+ community on their own accord. Taking personal initiative to educate yourself about the LGBTQ+ community demonstrates your investment to learning and relieves LGBTQ+ young people from the burden of educating others.
- **Express interest in LGBTQ+ online communities.** Engage young people in conversation about the online spaces they are a part of. While LGBTQ+ young people don’t expect family members to understand every aspect of their online lives, showing genuine interest can make a meaningful impact.

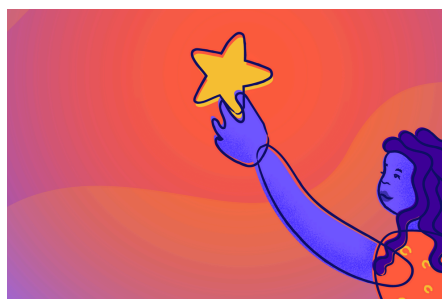
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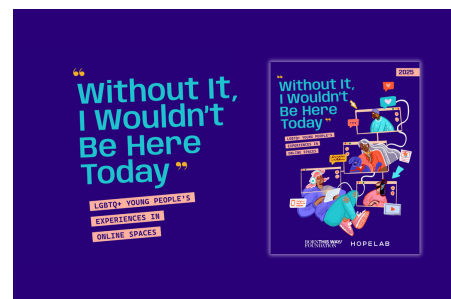
### Resources for Families:



Engage with resources and educational content for caregivers of LGBTQ+ young people within the context of their religious/spiritual/cultural worldviews, such as [the Family Acceptance Project](#).



Provide the young person in your life with educational resources, such as [The Coming Out Handbook](#) from [The Trevor Project](#), focused on self-acceptance and terminology specific to LGBTQ+ people.



Read our full report on [LGBTQ+ young people's experiences in online spaces](#) to better understand the importance of online communities for LGBTQ+ young people.



Attend a local [PFLAG 'Parent Support Group'](#) to connect with other parents and caregivers in your community, share experiences, receive support, and learn how to best advocate for the LGBTQ+ young person in your life.



Earn your [Be There Certificate](#), an online mental health course created by [Jack.org](#) in partnership with Born This Way Foundation, to learn how to recognize signs of struggle, support a young person's mental health, and foster safe and supportive conversations.



Explore [Born This Way Foundation's Find Help Page](#) for a list of mental health resources and evidence-based self-care tips.

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### If You Make a Mistake:

LGBTQ+ young people want you to know mistakes happen, and they are a normal part of difficult conversations. What is most important is making a point to repair ruptures in your relationship.

- **Apologize.** Acknowledge your mistake. A simple “I am sorry” can go a long way. *Example: “That did not land how I intended – I am really sorry about that.”*
- **Listen.** Invite the young person in your life to talk about how your actions impacted them. Listen, and then validate their experience. *Example: “I can see how that made you feel uncomfortable.”*
- **Find Opportunities to Reconnect.** Ruptures create opportunities for reconnection. Plan time to watch a show together or play their favorite game. Share with them the actions you are taking to rebuild connection and trust. *Example: “I signed up for that Parent Support Group today.”*



Scan for more resources  
and information on how to  
support the LGBTQ+  
young people in your life.

This resource guide was created in partnership with:

HOPELAB

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THE COMMUNITY OF LGBTQ CENTERS

