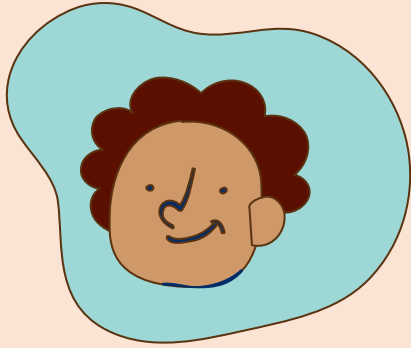




# Why It Matters: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth and Your Journey as a Caregiver

Be Well- April 30th, 2022  
Dublin, Ohio

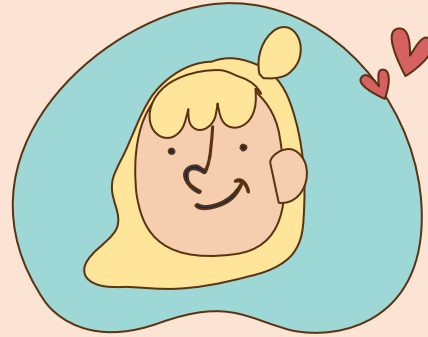
**Hello!**



**Malerie**

**Torres, LPCC**

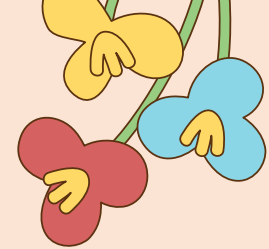
She/They



**Kathleen**

**Cruse-Grasser, LPCC-S**

She/Her



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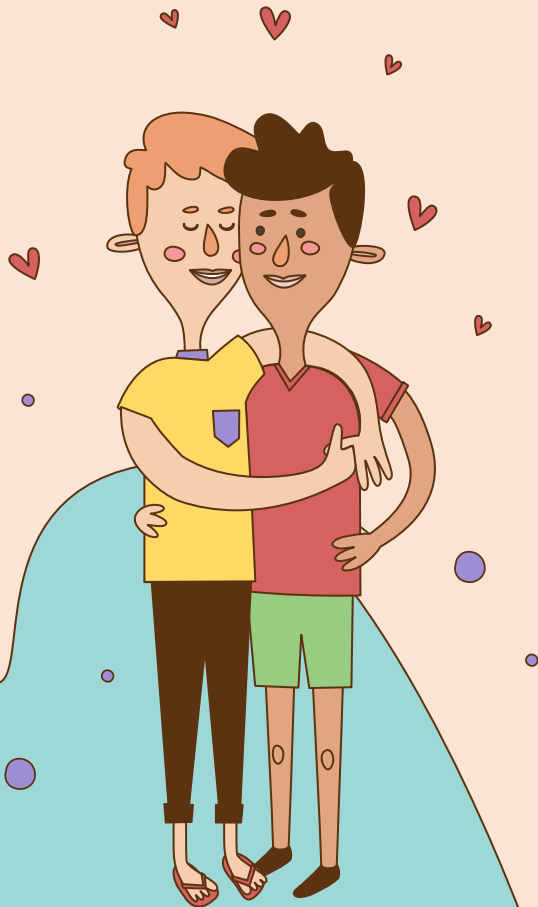
**01.**  
**Introduction**

**02.**  
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**03.**  
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**04.**  
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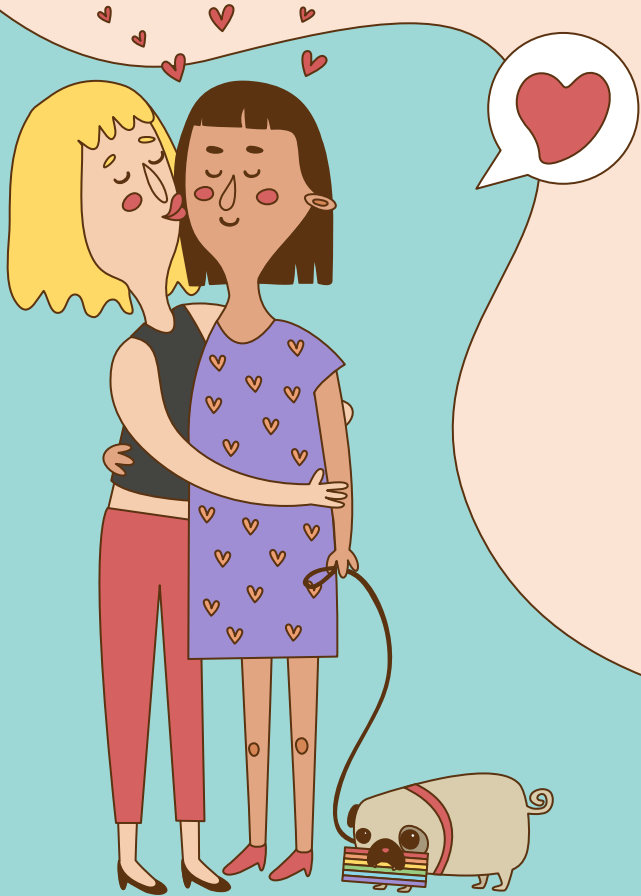
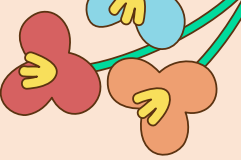
**05.**  
**Caregiver Best  
Practices**





01.

**Introduction**



# 13,000,00

Number of people in the US, ages  
13+, who identify as LGBTQ+  
(The Williams Institute, 2020)

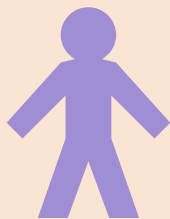


# LGBTQ+ Identities



**L**

**Lesbian**



**G**

**Gay**



**B**

**Bisexual**



**T**

**Trans**



**Q**

**Queer**



**I**

**Intersex**



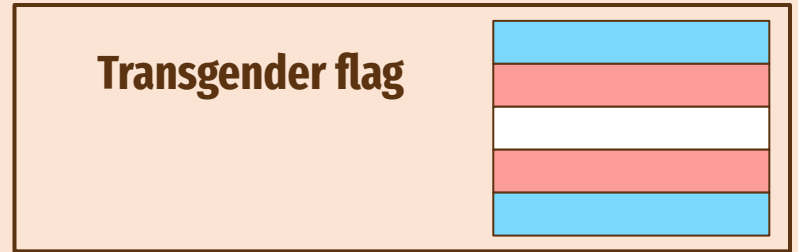
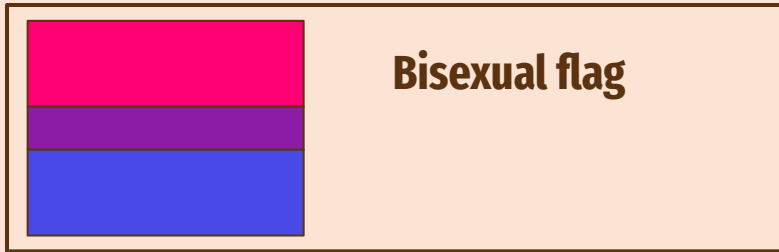
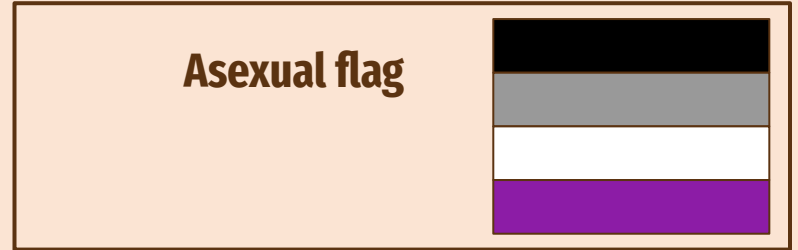
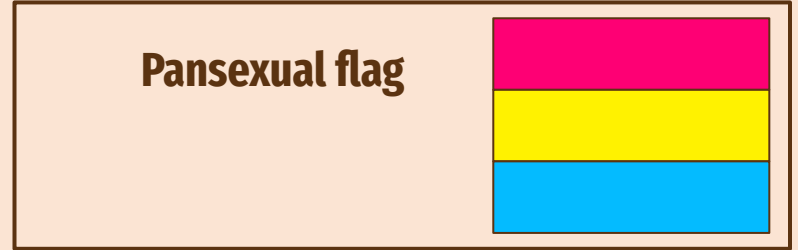
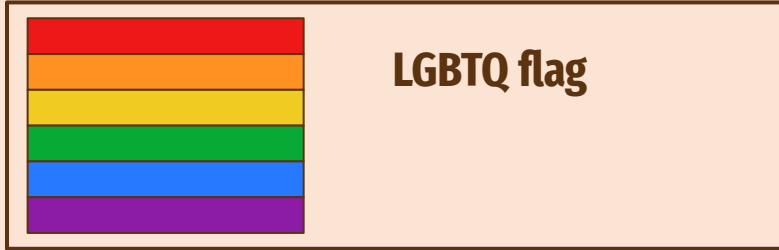
**A**

**Asexual**



<https://www.torontopflag.org/lgbtq2-s-terms-to-know>

# LGBTQ+ infographics



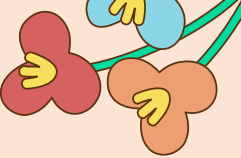
02.

## Mental Health

Let's examine what research tells us about LGBTQ+ youth mental health







# Youth Mental Health

**49.5%**

Percentage of adolescents who have had a mental health disorder at some point in their lives (NIMH, 2021).

**116,981**

Number of youth, ages 10-25, that died by suicide between 2001 and 2020 (CDC, 2020).





# LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health

## Generalized Anxiety Disorder

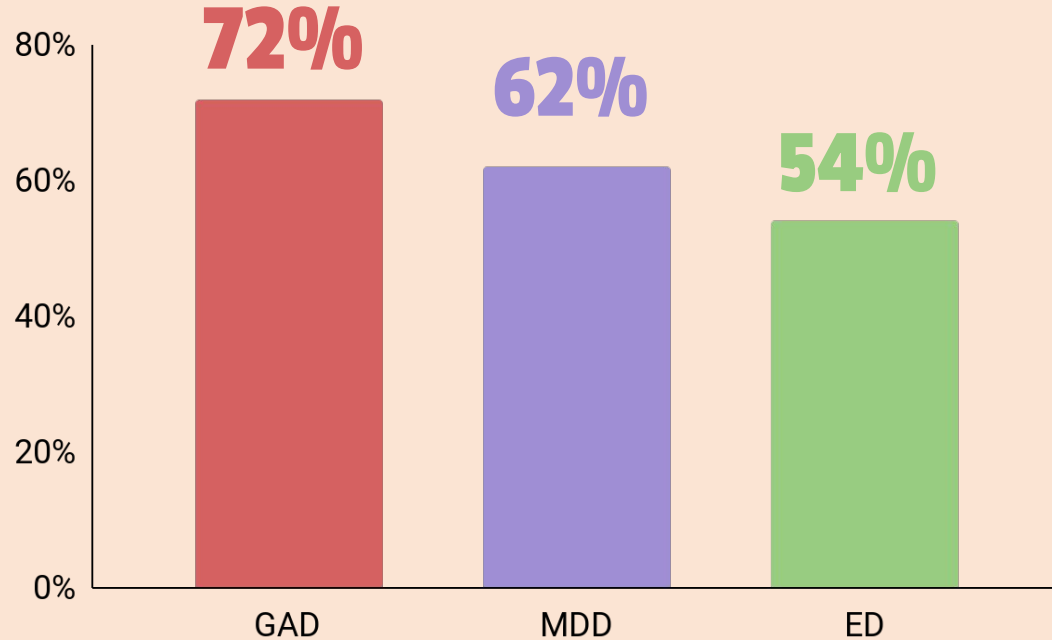
LGBTQ+ youth reporting symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder

## Major Depressive Disorder

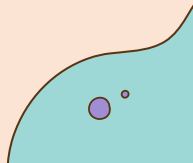
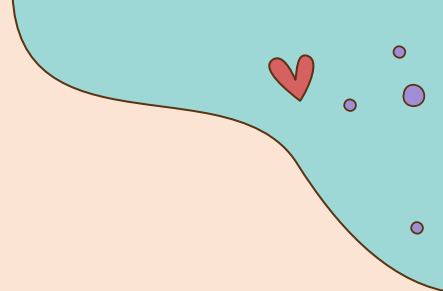
LGBTQ+ youth reporting symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder

## Eating Disorders

LGBTQ+ youth who have been diagnosed with an Eating Disorder in their lifetime



Information from: The Trevor Project (2021) and Parker & Harriger (2020)



# LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health

<b>19%</b>	<b>LGBTQ+ YOUTH AGES 13-18</b>	Reported attempting suicide in the past year.
<b>8.3%</b>	<b>LGBTQ+ YOUTH AGES 19-24</b>	Reported attempting suicide in the past year.
<b>42%</b>	<b>LGBTQ+ YOUTH</b>	Reported seriously considering suicide in the past year.

The Trevor Project (2021) estimates that more than 1.8 million LGBTQ youth (13-24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. — and at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds.

# Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Youth



**52%**

Report being bullied in person or online in the past year.

**75%**

Report experiencing discrimination based on their SOGIE.

**13%**

Report being subjected to conversion therapy

# Protective Factors for LGBTQ+ Youth

## Social Support

Support from parents and family, teachers, and peers is one of the strongest protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth.

## Affirming Environment

Environmental factors such as inclusive language, visual cues, and safety measures can go a long way in supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

## Affirming Policies & Practices

Putting policies in place that support and protect LGBTQ+ youth has a positive impact on their wellbeing.



## Role Models

Having access to LGBTQ+ and ally role models, such as teachers, politicians, tv characters, and athletes, improves the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth.

## Coping Skills

All youth fair better with coping skills to use when faced with challenges.

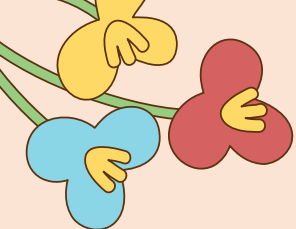
## Engaging in Activities

Participating in extracurricular activities, with affirming practices in place, improves mental health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth.

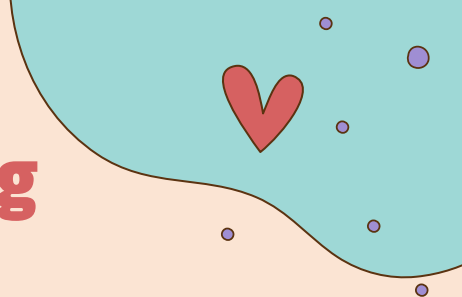
03.

**SOGIE  
Development**

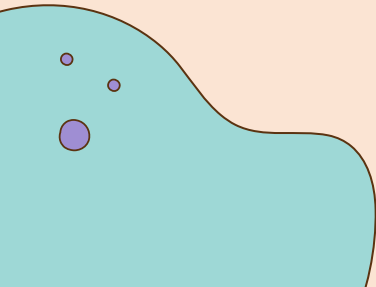




# Gender and Social Conditioning



- Gender is **taught, learned, and reinforced**
  - Objects assigned gender
- Behaviors/expectations of each gender are shaped over time
- **Gender socialization** determines for a child:
  - What to wear
  - What toys to play with
  - What kinds of toys are allowed
  - What they should be interested in
  - What skills they're encouraged to develop



# Developmental Stages

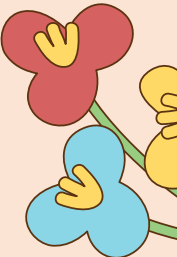


## Ages 2-3

- Gender identity emerges, Association of sexuality and good and bad
- Babies, toddlers can identify people by gender presentation and voice recognition
- Toddlers are learning quickly from adults and peers the “gender” of toys and clothing

## Ages 3-4

- Sense their own gender identity
- Increasingly aware of anatomical differences
- Motivated to learn about the sexes and incorporate this information into gender expectations/roles





# Developmental Stages

<b>Ages 4-6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Associating gender with specific behaviors</li><li>● Using gender scripts</li><li>● Same-sex friendships</li></ul>
<b>Ages 5-7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Children have an understanding of gender consistency and stability</li><li>● Once stabilized, fuller general expression of self and gender emerges</li><li>● Once through this period, gender identity is generally fixed for life</li><li>● Between this stage and the next:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Curiosity about sex emerges</li><li>○ Sexual fears and fantasies emerge</li><li>○ Interested in aspects of sexual development</li><li>○ Aware of self as a sexual being</li></ul></li></ul>



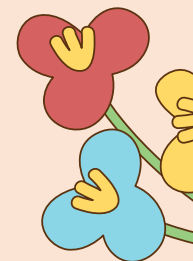
# Developmental Stages

## Ages 9-12

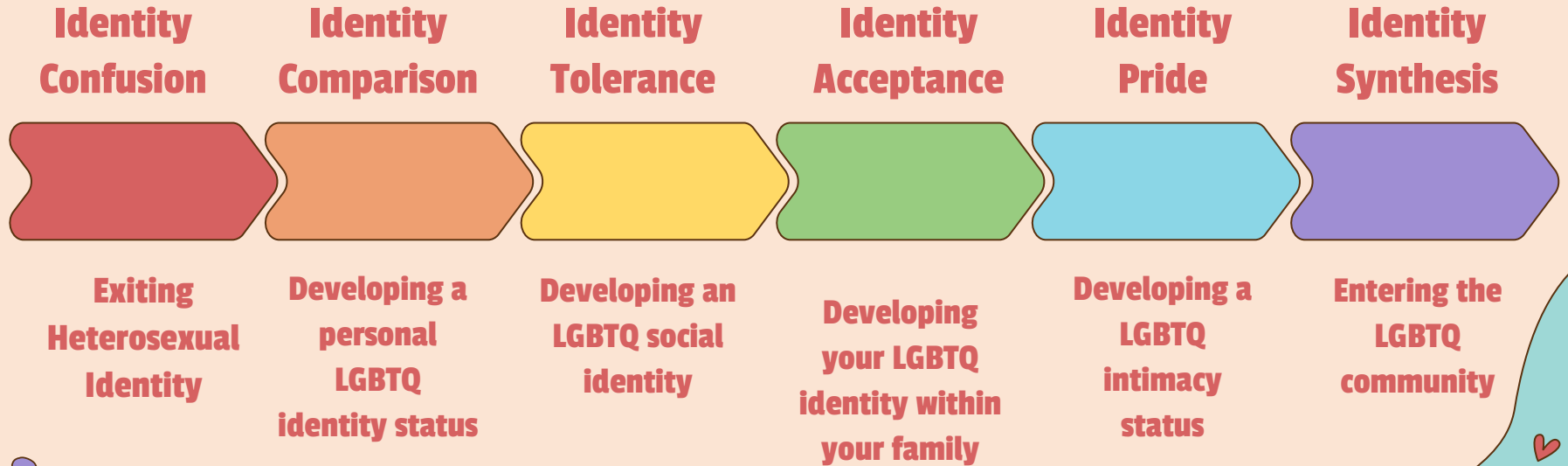
- Gender identity stabilizes
- Common for gender-variant/transgender children to reject self-expression now.
- Pubertal changes begin—gender dysphoria can emerge
- Concerns about body image

## Ages 12-18

- Gender identity becoming fully developed into early adulthood
- A clear signal for the person they are going through the “wrong” puberty.
- May entail: Severe social withdrawal and depression
- Responsibility for sexual activity
- Same sex friends
- Dating
- Intimacy in relationships learned



# Development of LGBTQ+ Identity



<https://tinyurl.com/lgbtqdevelopment>

04.

**Coming Out  
Stars**



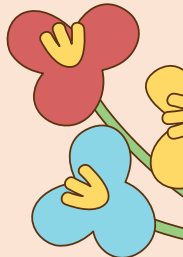
# Coming Out Stars

01.

Please draw a large star on your paper. Imagine that this star represents our world, with you in the center and those things or people most important to you at each point of the star. So we'll begin by writing your name in the center of the star—making it your very own star! Then, pick a point of the star to begin with. Choose a friend who is very close to you; someone you care about very much: a best friend or a close friend. Write their name in this point of the star.

02.

Next, think of a community to which you belong; it could be a religious community, a neighborhood, your college/university/workplace/profession, or just a group of friends. Write the name of this group that you are a part of in the next point of the star moving clockwise.



# Coming Out Stars

03.

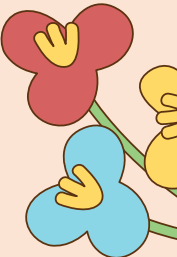
Now, think of a specific family member—someone that you have always turned to for advice. Maybe this person knows how to cheer you up when you're sad. It can be anyone you consider in your family. A mother, father, aunt, or uncle: any family member who has made a large impact on your life. Please write their name on the next point of the star.

04.

What job would you most like to have? It could be your boss's job or being President. Whatever your career aspiration is, write it on the next point.

05.

Lastly, what are some of your hopes and dreams? Maybe you want to be a millionaire; maybe you want a family. Think of a few of your hopes and dreams and write them on the last point of your star.



# Coming Out Stars

For the purposes of this activity, each one of you is an LGBTQ+ youth that is about to begin the coming out process.

There should be no talking for the remainder of this activity.





# Coming Out Stars

You decide that it will be easiest to tell your friends first; since they have always been there for you in the past and you feel they need to know.





# Coming Out Stars

With most of you having such good luck with your friends, you decide that your family probably deserves to know. So, you turn to your closest family member first so that it will be a little easier.



# Coming Out Stars

Having told your friends and family, the wheels have started to turn and soon members of your community begin to become aware of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



# Coming Out Stars

You have heard that rumors have started circulating at work regarding your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In the past, you made it a point to confront these rumors as soon as they began, but now you're not sure if that will do more harm than good.



# Coming Out Stars

Now your future lies ahead of you as an LGBT young adult. For some of you, your hopes, dreams and wishes for the perfect life are all that remain.



# Coming Out Stars Discussion

**How did it feel to take part in this activity?**

**Who had a red star? How did that feel?**


**Who had a blue star? How did that feel?**



**What about those with purple or orange stars?**

**What did you learn from this activity?**

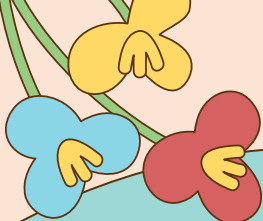
**What do you feel you can do to support LGBTQ+ youth?**





05.

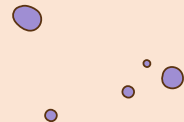
**Caregiver Best  
Practices**

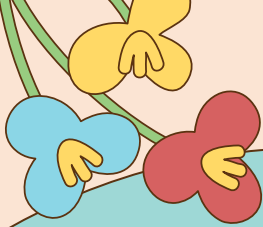


“What I first learned about trans teens terrified me. I have to be honest, I was falling apart. But then I realized—this is not my issue—my losing it will not keep my kid safe. It was a cop-out. I snapped out of it and started to educate myself and everyone around me... I know that I can make a difference. I have to make a difference. My kid, your kid, all of our kids need to know they are loved and valued and that their existence has value.”




**—Parent of a trans teen  
(Brill & Kenney, 2016)**





“The hardest thing [about talking to my parents about my gender identity] was knowing that they wouldn’t be able to relate to how I felt.”

—**Trans teen (Brill & Kenney, 2016)**





# Common Adult Fears About LGBTQ+ Youth (Brill & Kenney, 2016)



**Everything is about LGBTQ+**



**LGBTQ+ is a choice**



**This is my fault**



**This is a sign of mental illness**



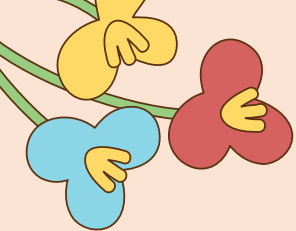
**This is a ploy to get attention**



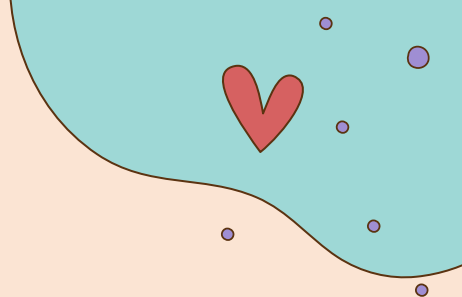
**This is just a phase**



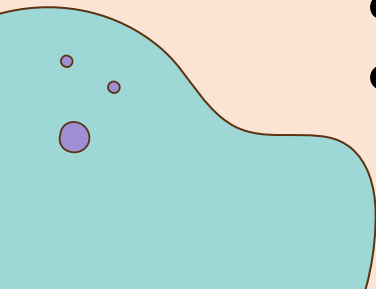
**Fear of harm**

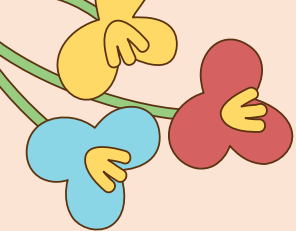


# What does this mean for me?

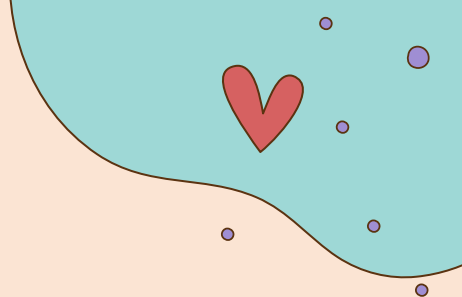


- Dealing with my strong and intense emotions
  - Shame, embarrassment, resentment, anger, loss, etc.
- Dealing with the thoughts and feelings of others
- Getting support for myself
- *Choosing your next steps...*

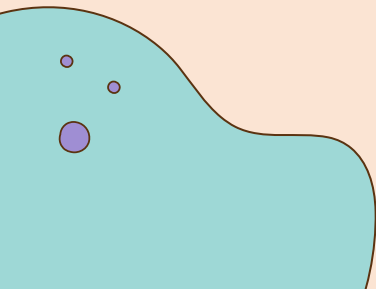




## Where to start...



- Simply listen. Don't ask any questions at first. (others will follow your lead)
  - Listen first. Then, **validate**. Acknowledge what they are saying.
- Confronting what information and messages you've gotten from society about gender



# Rejecting Parenting Vs. Supportive Parenting



Refusing to accept the child for who they are and using punitive, unkind, or unfriendly actions with them

Excluding the child from family activities

Blocking access to gender-variant friends

Establish a home and family culture where every member is valued

Express love and support (at the very least neutrality) for your child's gender expression.

Encourage children to find people to relate to where they feel safe

# Rejecting Parenting Vs. Supportive Parenting



Religion-based condemnation

Distress, Denial, and Shame

Silence and Secrecy

Pressure to Enforce Gender Conformity

Find ways to use religion as a way to support the child- Focus on providing a map for child to use religion as a point of solace and comfort as the child ages.


Question what is exactly threatened if your child has preferences for things that are considered to be for the “other” gender

Contain negative feelings-only tolerate kindness and respect toward your child.

Come up with agreed upon gender expression boundaries



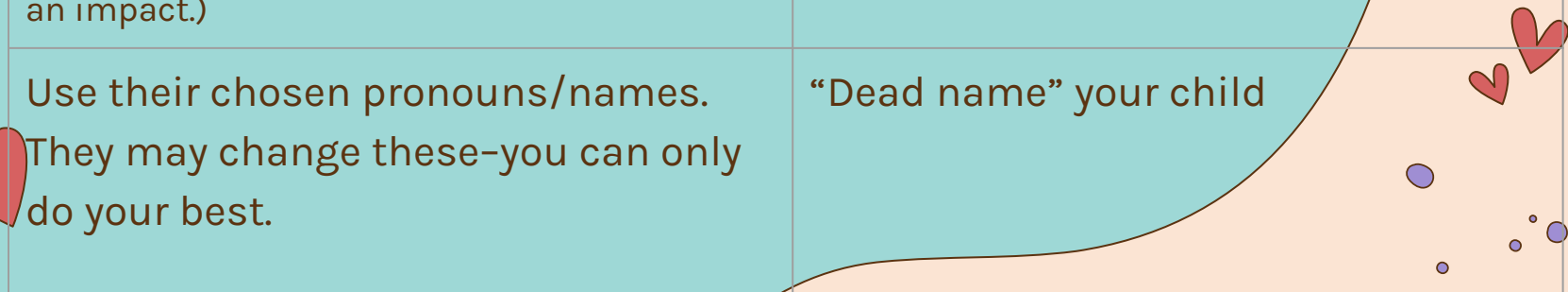
# Do's and Dont's

DO	DON'T
<p>Remember that coming out is hard (Something as simple as thanking your child for opening up to you will have a positive impact).</p>	<p>Tell relatives, school staff, family friends, community, etc. unless your child says it's okay. Your child should come out when (if at all), and to whom, they choose.</p>
<p>Ask them what would help them feel supported. They might be afraid to ask for it. *</p>	<p>Ignore the child's SOGIE. Not acknowledging it will not make it go away and can have a negative impact on their mental health and your relationship.</p>
 <p>Start showing your support in small ways, like introducing yourself to people with your pronouns or wearing an ally pin.</p>	<p>Expect your child to answer any and all of your questions about SOGIE. They will tell you what they are comfortable with and can only really speak for themselves.</p> 



# Do's and Dont's

DO	DON'T
Get your own outlet for your feelings	Process in front of (directly or subtly) the child
Speak up when you hear others invalidating your child's identity (Either directly or indirectly. They do notice and it has an impact.)	Stay silent when you hear others invalidating your child's identity or others'.
Use their chosen pronouns/names. They may change these-you can only do your best.	"Dead name" your child





**Ultimately your child is the  
only one who can figure  
out their identity**



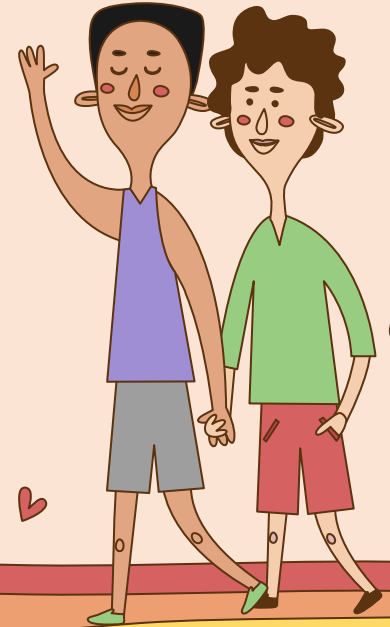
# References

Brill, S. & Pepper, R. (2008). *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*. Cleis Press Inc: California.

Brill, S. & Kenney, L. (2016). *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Teens*. Cleis Press Inc: New Jersey.

The Trevor Project. (2021). *2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health*. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project.

Conron, K.J. *LGBT Youth Population in the United States*. (September 2020). The Williams Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.



# Support Groups For Caregivers

PFLAG-Parent support group-Columbus chapter  
Kaleidoscope Youth Center  
THRIVE-Nationwide Children's Hospital  
TransOhio  
Gender Spectrum Education and  
Training-[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)  
Family Acceptance Project-  
<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>  
Gender Spectrum  
Family-<http://www.genderspectrum.org>  
Laura's playground  
[www.outproudandhealthy.org](http://www.outproudandhealthy.org)



# Thanks!

**Do you have any questions?**

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[crusegrasser\\_kathleen@dublinschools.net](mailto:crusegrasser_kathleen@dublinschools.net)

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