

TODAY, MY CHILD
**LOVES THEM-
SELF AND
LOVES LIFE!**

Supporting my

LGBTQ+*

child during the **coming out**
and the **transition**

* **L**esbian, **G**ay, **B**isexual, **T**ransgender, **Q**ueer.

A + sign or an asterisk (*) placed at the end of the acronym signals the inclusion of other potential identities that could not yet be represented by a letter.

GLOSSARY

As a parent, it is okay not to know
all the new terms...



THE GENDER IDENTITY designates the genre to which a person personally identifies. It can correspond to the biological sex assigned at birth, or not. Therefore, a person can identify either as a man, a woman, or somewhere between these two poles.

THE GENDER EXPRESSION is the appearance that our society generally qualifies either as feminine or masculine (clothing, hairstyle, makeup, body language) regardless of a person's gender. In this sense, the gender expression is not necessarily an expression of one's **GENDER IDENTITY**. The gender expression is also not necessarily set: the gender expression of a person can vary over a short or a long period of time.

HETEROSEXISM is the assumption that every person is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to any other sexual orientation.

HETERONORMATIVITY is the assumption that heterosexuality is the only valid norm, and that heterosexual relations are the benchmarks in defining what is normal (valid) and what is not.

TRANSGENDER is an adjective used in order to designate a person whose gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. There are multiple journeys and pathways to and through transition.

In order to properly affirm one's very own gender identity, these journeys can imply a:

- **Social transition**, especially through the coming-out of one's self-identification to loved ones;
- **Medical transition**, through surgeries and hormonal treatments;
- **Legal transition**, by changing one's name or mentioned sex to the Director of Civil Status (no medical treatment required);
- **Combination of the three.**

NON BINARY: A non-binary gender identity is situated outside the man-woman category. Non-binary people often prefer that we use gender-neutral pronouns when addressing them. It is an umbrella term that includes, among others, people that identify as a man *and* a woman, or neither of the two.

QUEER: Word describing people and actions that oppose and fight heteronormativity. The reappropriation of the term, once considered pejorative, is a form of empowerment. It is an umbrella word that encompasses all people who diverge from hetero- and homonormative genders and sexualities.

To question oneself is normal and exploring is sane! To inspire his or her child to learn to know themselves is a good way to help.

For some people, the sexual orientation and gender identity are clear to them very early on. For others, a little bit more time will be necessary to sort things out, regarding either sexual orientation or gender identity. It is a process that needs time and a choice that can also be unsettled.

The above definitions are taken verbatim from an already existing lexicon (Dubuc, 2017).

COMING OUT AND TRANSITION: decisive moments, a journey

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The period preceding a coming-out can be marked by great feelings of vulnerability.

- Young people often have different concerns when thinking of coming out to their parents. They can worry that they might experience a negative reaction, that their parents will be angry or worried, or that the relationship with them will break or change.
- For trans people, the level of distress is often even higher. The feeling of urgency to begin a transition can be so great for some young people that it can become difficult for some parents to truly understand what their child is experiencing and support him or her. However, it is of central concern for the well-being of the child.

FOR PARENTS

- Experiencing the process of coming out with his or her child can imply great upheavals. Multiple emotions and feelings can be experienced: sadness, joy, anger, guilt, relief, denial, worry, surprise...
- Reactions can be numerous, and sometimes contradictory. It is important to allow yourself some time to process every emotion and adapt to the new situation.
- For the parents of a transgender child, this process can take a little more time and generate even more intense feelings, like a sense of shock, or even of grief.

You are not alone. Do not forget the fact that other parents have been where you are now.

PARENTAL SUPPORT: an essential to a child's well-being

- Parent's reactions will influence the becoming of an LGB child, and those reactions can act positively or negatively on the psychological well-being of your child. The more the support from their family is important, the less young LGB will feel the need to find social approval of their sexual orientation and suffer from internalized homophobia*.
- A positive family climate is an important protection factor for young LGBTQ+ against discrimination. Parental support contributes to reinforcing children comfort and confidence towards their identity, and in improving stress-managing.
- For young trans people, the support from the family is also essential to their well-being, and it needs to be shown by continuous and sustained presence through the transition. Young trans children who benefit from the support and acceptance of their family are less at risk of developing mental health issues, like depression or suicidal thoughts.

* The feeling of guilt, shame or self-hatred because of one's own attraction to a person the same sex or gender, a feeling that comes from homophobia and heterosexism.



HOW TO BECOME AN ALLY TO YOUR CHILD

YOUR CHILD COMES OUT TO YOU AND SHARES QUESTIONINGS... WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Thank your child to put enough confidence in you to share personal feelings;
- Recognize, and name the courage that your child had to come out to you, and be proud of it;
- Tell your child that there is nothing to worry about concerning your acceptance and your unconditional love;
- Respect the needs of your child, especially if your child asks to keep the secret until he or she feels ready to come out to the person of his or her choice;
- Gather knowledge on sexual and gender diversity in order to better understand what your child is going through;
- Seek support. Even in cases where one needs to keep the secret...confidential support from specialists is available and accessible.

YOUR CHILD IS TRANS...

- Ask which name and pronouns your child would prefer that you use ;
- Be present and offer your support regarding the transition process.

THE WORDS TO AVOID: CHOICE, PHASE, TREND

- Realize that your child did not make a choice of being LGBTQ, but has choose to be happy and themself.

IF YOU HAVE DOUBTS...

- Promote and assure a climate of openness without trying to rush the coming-out of your child ;
- Take interest in your child, and do not assume heteronormativity when addressing him or her ;
- Avoid putting pressure on your child, instead, make yourself available and receptive.

TAKE A STANCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION!

Supporting your child, it's also:

- Not keeping silent when hearing inadequate comments ;
- Being aware of their rights.



Even if we have to keep it a secret ... resources are available in complete confidentiality.

RESOURCES FOR YOURSELF

YOUR CHILD COMES OUT TO YOU, WHERE TO TURN?

LGBT+ Baie-des-Chaleurs Association

581 886-5428
info@lgbt-bdc.net
Facebook Page

Center for Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention Bas-Saint-Laurent (also for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine) Support line :

1 866 APPELLE (1 866 277-3553)

The online platform and resources of GRIS Québec:

grisquebec.org

Interligne (bilingual service)

Interligne.co | 1 888 505 1010

Enfants transgenres Canada/Gender Creative Kids (bilingual service)

Gender Creative Kids Canada :

enfantstransgenres.ca

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