



PFLAG's Tips For the Holidays

While for some people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) holidays mean celebration, joy, family, and togetherness, for others it can mean a time of stress, difficulty, and even sadness or depression...especially if one feels that they aren't able to come out or are not out to everyone in the family. No matter what, PFLAG is here to help provide you support and information this holiday season and beyond?

Sitting through a family meal, or visiting through an entire weekend or week, can be challenging enough, but what happens if you are not yet in a position to be true to your authentic self as you make your way through the meal or the week?

Below are some suggestions--both for people who are LGBTQ+ and for families and allies --for getting through family gatherings. And remember: if you need immediate support, you can find a PFLAG chapter at <https://pflag.org/find-a-chapter>, contact PFLAG on Facebook or Twitter, or call a helpline for crisis support: <https://pflag.org/hotlines>

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer...

- Don't assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation or gender identity--you may be surprised.
- Don't wait for your family's attitude to change to have a special holiday. Recognize that your parents and family may need time to acknowledge and accept that they have an LGBTQ+ family member. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it is your family's turn.

If you are transgender, be gentle but firm with unintentional pronoun "slips." Let your loved ones know that you understand how difficult this journey may be for them--and don't hesitate to remind them when it happens how much harder it is for you to hear.

Before the visit...

- Make a decision about which family members you intend to be "out" to, and how you will do so.
- If you bring your partner home, don't wait until late into the holiday evening to raise the issue of sleeping arrangements. Make plans in advance.

If you do plan to come out to your family over the holidays, have support available, including [PFLAG publications](#) and [the phone number of a local PFLAG chapter](#).

During the visit...

- Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.
- Remember to affirm yourself and take time for self care: read a book, listen to music, get out of the house and take a walk or see friends, whatever de-stresses you.

Connect with someone else who is LGBTQ--by phone or in person--who understands what you are going through and will affirm you along the way.

After the visit...

- If things went well with your family, be sure to follow up with them post-holiday to check in, see if they have any questions, and thank them for their love and support.

If things did not go as well as you had anticipated, be sure to contact your local support system, whether that be close friends, or members from your local PFLAG chapter. Reconnect quickly with those who love and affirm you as you are, and give yourself an opportunity to discuss and process the family event.

If you are a friend or family member of someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer...

Get support for yourself. Call the phone number of the nearest PFLAG chapter. (Colorado Springs PFLAG (719) 425-9567).

Take your time. Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings in an appropriate place.

Before the visit...

- Practice in advance if you are going to be discussing your loved ones sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.

If your loved one is transgender or gender expansive, practice using the correct pronouns.

During the visit...

- Treat an LGBTQ+ person like you would treat anyone else in your family.
- Don't ask your LGBTQ+ family member to act a certain way. Let them be themselves.
- If your LGBTQ+ family member is bringing a partner, include them in your family traditions.

If you are uncertain about how to address an LGBTQ+ family member, respectfully ask in private.

After the visit...

- If things went well with your LGBTQ+ loved one, be sure to follow up with them post-holiday to check in, see if they have any questions, and tell them how glad you were that they could be with you, authentically.
- If things did not go as well as you had anticipated, be sure to contact your local PFLAG chapter, and give yourself a moment to connect with those who will understand the challenges, and support you as you work toward reconnecting with your LGBTQ+ loved ones.

Do not let too much time go by before contacting your LGBTQ+ loved one, and let them know that you are committed to trying again.

By Liz Owen