Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth

During Pride Month this year and beyond, it’s vital that caregivers provide support, guidance, and love to LGBTQ+ youth. As youth mental health has become a nationwide crisis, these children need active and caring support systems to help them thrive now more than ever. Read on for some ways you can get started today.

Listen & Respond

In any conversation with the young person, it’s important to listen to them. They need to feel heard. Too often, LGBTQ+ youth are not taken seriously or dismissed when they talk about their feelings, experiences, and thoughts. Make sure you’re actively listening to them and providing them with a safe space to express themselves.

In many situations, LGBTQ+ youth just need to be heard. It can be a confusing and frightening time as they begin to form their identities. There can be many worries racing through their minds. They may not know who they can confide in. Make an active choice to check in with them and try to pick up on any subtle issues that may be bothering them. If they open up to you, make sure you’re listening to each thing they say and responding. Try to establish a regular cadence with them so that these conversations become more natural and relaxed.

Don’t Judge

If your child chooses to approach you about their LGBTQ+ identity, above all else do not pass judgement. Too often phrases like “you’re confused” or “it’s just a phase” are thrown around. These can be incredibly damaging. LGBTQ+ youth need to be validated and lifted up. While it can be scary for you as a caregiver to think about your child potentially being discriminated against by their peers, your support and lack of judgement will help them feel more confident and secure. Try doing some research or connecting with other caregivers to see how they handled their child’s coming out process.

Establish a Support System

Advocate for your child is one of the best ways you can be an active supporter. Different parts of the country have different levels of tolerance for LGBTQ+ issues and topics. Some youth may need more advocacy than others. Try getting a sense of how LGBTQ+ topics are represented at your child’s school. What about the school’s policy toward bullying? Meet with teachers, school board members, state representatives; anyone who can help you advocate for change. If a local LGBTQ+ youth group doesn’t exist, start one!

Featured Resources

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Therapeutic Summer Camp

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Featured Resources

Supporting Transgender & Gender-Nonconforming Youth in Massachusetts

LGBTQ+ Youth in Massachusetts: Are the Kids Really Alright?

LGBTQ+ Youth and Mental Health

LGBTQ+ Youth and Depression