*Advice for Parents*

*of LGBTQ+*

*Young People*

If you’re reading this, you’re a parent who wants to support and help their child. This might be a challenging time for all of you, so take your time, give everyone space and try and make this a positive experience for all of you, even if you’re worried right now.

1. **Love**

However you are feeling right now, you love your child and that is the most important thing to show them. Give them a hug and tell them you love them and you are glad they feel able to talk to you about their feelings.

1. **Bravery**

Coming out is a big deal to almost everyone who does it. Your child has been thinking about coming out for a while and will really care about your reaction.

This may be completely new to you though. It’s OK to say, ‘This is new to me, I just need a bit of time to process it.’

1. **Needs**

Talk to your child about what they need right now. Chances are at this moment, they just need reassurance that nothing will change. Check with them if they want to talk about their feelings; if they would benefit from support from an external agency or teacher and if they are happy for you to tell anyone else. Being ‘outed’ against your will can be very upsetting and damaging.

1. **Kindness**

You may have already thought your child was LGBTQ+ but until they told you, you didn’t actually know. Try not to say, ‘We already knew’ as this can make some people feel self-conscious or embarrassed about something they thought was personal to them.

1. **Support**

Some parents are worried that being LGBTQ+ might make life harder for their child. The most powerful thing you can do is to make sure your child knows that you will always support them. This has a hugely beneficial effect on their self-esteem and ability to deal with any negativity. You can also help by sharing positive role models, watching tv programmes with positive representation and talking about how people who are LGBTQ+ live happy lives where being LGBTQ+ is often not the most important thing about them.

1. **Keep Talking**

Although it might feel difficult at first, keep the conversation going. Show your support by talking, asking questions and continuing to be supportive. Coming out isn’t something that happens once, it happens many times over a lifetime, but your support is the greatest gift you can give your child.

1. **Look after yourself too**

It’s OK to feel a bit overwhelmed, unsure or emotional about this. It may be very new to you. There is support for families and friends of LGBTQ+ people too. See below for further details.

**SUPPORT**

**Space Youth Project** [www.spaceyouthproject.co.uk](http://www.spaceyouthproject.co.uk) 01202 205279 07973 405280

*Free, Dorset-based youth groups for LGBT+ and questioning young people; 1:1 support for young people and advice and support for parents*

**Mermaids** [www.mermaids.org.uk](http://www.mermaids.org.uk)0808 801 0400 Mon-Fri 9am-9pm

*Support for transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse young people, empowering them with online communities, groups, helpline services, events and residential weekends.*

**Ricochet** [www.ricochet-dorset.org](http://www.ricochet-dorset.org) ricochet.enquiry@gmail.com

*Support for parents – if your child has recently come out as gay, lesbian, bi- or*

*pan-sexual Ricochet offer advice and a friendly chat via email or phone.*