

Caregiving for Children in the LGBTQ+ Community with Grief and Loss

Part One: Listening To Your Child

4 Steps to Active Listening

1. Your Body Language

- Log off your computer or phone and stop watching TV
- Be seated and facing your child
- Make consistent eye contact
- Keep your body in a relaxed pose
- Sit to the side of your child or at an angle
- Maintain a consistent tone in your voice

2. Stop and Think

- Notice your body and any feelings that may be coming up
- Take a few breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Before responding, stop and ask yourself:
 - What did I hear them say?
 - How do I want to respond?
- Postpone responding for later if you are unable to be present, and set a specific time
- Tell your child you are thinking of how you want to respond to them, if there is a pause when you're thinking about how to respond

3. Ask Open-Ended Questions

- When listening to your child, ask questions they can answer with more than a yes or no response. Some examples:
 - Can you tell me more about that?
 - What happened?
 - What did you do?
 - How did you handle that?
 - What do you think about that?

4. Say it Back to Check

- In your own words, repeat back to your child what you heard them say
- Ask if you got it right
- Thank them for sharing with you
- Ask them if they would like you to check in with them at a later time about what you talked about

Part Two: Guiding Your Child

Safety Planning is something you or someone your child trusts can create with your child. Children in the LGBTQ+ community who are grieving often can feel isolated, and their safety may be at risk both physically and mentally.

Safety planning helps youth figure out what exactly it means to be safe and unsafe: **who** is safe to talk to, **where** are safe places to go, and **what** are safe things to do. Safety plans can and will change depending on what is going on in your child's life, how old they are, etc. Please note that your child may want to complete a safety plan with a teacher, counselor, coach, or other family or adult family friend. A safety plan can be written or typed and can be stored on paper or on the phone. If your child is at an age where they would feel more comfortable completing this by themselves encourage them to share with you or another adult after they have completed it.

The 1, 2, 3s:

1. People:

- Identify 3 trusted adults your child can talk to when their safety is at risk, via text, messenger, phone, in person, etc.

2. Places:

- Identify 3 places your child can go and how they can get there if their safety is at risk.

3. Things:

- Identify 3 activities your child can turn to when their safety is at risk, such as breathing exercises, stress toys, games on their phone, books, or music.

Self Expression

LGBTQ+ youth need safe spaces to authentically express themselves and share their feelings. As a caregiver, helping them create these spaces will directly impact their happiness, well-being, and safety.

At Home

Allow and encourage your child to use different names, pronouns, type of dress, makeup, or hair.

Sometimes even at home, children may not be able to openly express themselves because of other family members living at home.

In these cases, encourage your child to express themselves through reading, writing or drawing who they are and who they want to be part of their support system. If space allows, your child can express themselves in their room or in the bathroom.

At School

Check if your child's school has a GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance) Club. Ask your child to identify teachers, counselors, and friends with whom they feel safe to express themselves, and encourage them to connect with those people.

Have your child join a team or club that would affirm their gender or sexuality. Often times certain sports teams, drama clubs, or similar can give your child the opportunity to be fully who they are and be involved with others who support them.

In Community

Find communities where your child can express themselves (LGBTQ+ centers, with certain family members, with chosen family, or similar). Check the **List of Resources** at the end of this tip sheet, which includes LGBTQ+ centers in Philadelphia for youth.

Part Three: Caring For Your Child

Comfort Care is taking care of yourself first. This is the number one way you can care for your child.

- Begin to think about ways that you are already caring for yourself.
- Continue to do those things for yourself.
- Some examples: napping, alone time in your room, showering, reading, movement, breathing exercises, a small food treat, journaling, drawing, etc.

Family Care is thinking about the family as a whole: what does care of the entire family look like?

- Family Time Together is setting up a weekly activity you and your child/children and family can do each week. This is something that you and your child can look forward to as it is consistent, lasts 1-2 hours, and costs little to no money to do and your child helps to choose what you do
- Examples could be going to the park, playing games at home, creating a TikTok dance together, going for water ice or pretzels, etc.

Social Care is having your child be a part of a community that celebrates them and supports them.

- Help your child to be a part of multiple communities where they feel safe and celebrated in their identity.
- Examples could include a youth LGBTQ+ center, a pro-LGBTQ+ youth church group, attending events such as Pride, and socializing with groups of friends and family friends who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ+ Resources for Youth and Caregivers

For Youth

1. The Trevor Project

- 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678; [thetrevorproject.org](https://www.thetrevorproject.org)
- National suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) young people.

2. Trans LifeLine

- 877-565-8860; [translifeline.org](https://www.translifeline.org)
- National hotline that connects trans people to the community, support, and resources they need to survive and thrive.

3. Attic Youth Center

- 215-545-4331; [atticyouthcenter.org](https://www.atticyouthcenter.org) and info@atticyouthcenter.org
- Philadelphia-based programs and services designed to provide youth with the support and skills needed to transition into independent, thriving adults.

4. Restorative Connection Therapists

- restorativeconnection.com/resources.html
- Philadelphia-based network of trauma-informed, somatic therapists for people who are queer, transgender, nonbinary, LGBTQIA, and/or who have survived trauma or systemic oppression.

5. LGBTQIA+ at the School District of Philadelphia

- philasd.org/studentrights/lgbtqia/
- Celebrates the experiences and affirms the identities of LGBTQIA+ students, staff, parents, and family members.

LGBTQ+ Resources for Youth and Caregivers, continued

6. Valley Youth House (Runaway Hotline)

- 610-691-1200; valleyyouthhouse.org
- Philadelphia-based organization that helps homeless youth find housing and provides one-on-one mentorship to foster and non-foster youth.

7. Galaei

- S.P.L.A.T. Program; galaeiqtbipoc.org/splat
- Galaei's SPLAT program works to support the empowerment and leadership development of queer youth of color through individual coaching, group support, and community engagement.

8. Philly HopeLine

- 1-833-745-4673 or 1-833-PHL-HOPE; upliftphilly.org/philly-hopeline
- Free and private helpline answered by clinicians from Uplift Center—with specific Queer & Trans Youth hours—for callers grieving the death of someone close to them, seeking emotional support or resources, and signing up for grief support groups at Uplift Center for Grieving Children.

For Caregivers

1. Gender Spectrum

- genderspectrum.org/articles/gender-spectrum-groups
- National organization that facilitates social groups for parents, guardians, grandparents, and other family members and caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth, providing them a space to explore their own feelings, and to find a community that can support them as they navigate their child's journey.

2. PFLAG

- pflagphila.org
- PFLAG is the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies. Includes links to nearby support groups in Collingswood, Media, and Bucks County.

3. Philly HopeLine

- 1-833-745-4673 or 1-833-PHL-HOPE; upliftphilly.org/philly-hopeline
- For Caregivers grieving the death of someone close to them, seeking emotional support or resources, and signing up for caregiver grief support groups at Uplift Center for Grieving Children

[Click here for the full caregiver training](#)

- YouTube
- Facebook

For more information or to request services, please contact Uplift's Philly HopeLine, 1-833-PHL-HOPE (1-833-745-4673)

Monday– Thursday: 10 a.m.– 8 p.m.	Hours with LGBTQIA+ clinicians:	Hours with Spanish-speaking clinicians:
Friday: 1– 4 p.m.	Tuesdays 4 p.m.– 8 p.m.	
Closed federal holidays	Wednesdays 4 p.m.– 6 p.m.	Mondays 10 a.m.– 1 p.m.
& Uplift office closures	Thursdays 4 p.m.– 6 p.m.	Fridays 1 p.m.– 4 p.m.