

So...

*you think  
your child is*

**GAY**



**ANSWERS**

*to some of the*

**QUESTIONS**

*you may have.*

*I have inklings that my child might be gay, but...*

## **HOW CAN I BE SURE?**

Until your child comes and tells you that they are, or might be, lesbian, gay or bisexual, you can't know. Just like straight people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people come in all shapes and sizes. So don't make assumptions.

Steer clear of prying though; you want them to come and tell you in their own time. If you try and pressure them, it'll probably make them close up – the opposite of what you want.

**What you can do is create an environment where your child feels able to tell you they're LGBT, knowing you'll be supportive.**

For example, say positive things about LGBT people when they're on TV and don't allow people to say negative things about LGBT people under your roof. If your child is – or thinks they might be – LGBT, they'll probably be very alert to attitudes about LGBT people in your home.

*Remember...*

...the more confident your child is that you'll be OK with them talking to you about it, the more likely it is that they'll think it's OK to tell you.

How can they be sure  
it isn't just a

# PHASE?

We all know that growing up is confusing, particularly where feelings are concerned. Some young people might take a long time to come to terms with being LGBT; others will be clear about it very quickly. Sometimes someone goes out with someone of the same sex but may not be sure they're gay. Some young people may be bisexual. This means they're attracted to both sexes. This is not a phase on the way to becoming 'fully gay'. Let them define themselves.

*If your child does tell you  
they're LGBT, they'll have plucked  
up a lot of courage to do so.*

Dismissing it as a phase will make it seem like you're not taking them seriously and undermine their confidence, which

will make them less likely to open up to you in future. If they tell you they're LGBT, you've got to take their word for it.

*Did I do something wrong?*

**ABSOLUTELY  
NOT.**

**There is no link between ways of parenting  
or a young person's experiences and the  
likelihood of being LGBT.**

Joe Bloggs, with 2 parents, 1.4 siblings and a dog  
who grew up in suburbia is just as likely to be LGBT as  
Jack Smith with a pushy mother and an absent father  
who grew up in Glasgow.

LGBT people grow up in all sorts of families and come from all sorts of backgrounds and there's nothing you could have done to influence it.

You can influence how likely your child is to tell you about it, and how they feel about it, by creating the sort of environment where they think they can.

# BUT

*I don't agree with it.*

**(Or at least some of my family don't)**

**The truth is, if you've got a problem with the idea of your child being LGBT, you're going to have to live with it and accept it.**

The best thing you can do is to put your feelings about 'being gay' to one side and remember that, regardless of your child's sexuality, you love them and want them to be happy. The fact that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual doesn't change that.

There's no way to 'turn them straight'. If you reject it, all you'll do is damage your relationship with your child, hurting you and them. Rejecting it also denies you the opportunity to share in a really important part of their life.

As for your relatives, some family members, particularly older relatives, might need some help getting their heads around the issue (although older people are often a lot more accepting than we give them credit for). If they don't react well initially, put some rules in place and establish what can and can't be said in front of your children. It's not always easy, but often, it is.

## *I don't like their partner!*

It's perfectly natural for any parent not to be too keen on their child's first partner. But that's nothing to do with their sexuality.

If you don't like your child's partner, the first thing to consider is whether it might be worth taking a step back; if you try and stop them seeing one another you could end up encouraging them. Chances are it won't last that long anyway. But if you do decide to intervene, make it clear that you're not reacting like this because of the gender of their partner, but because of problems you have with their partner as a person.

## *Talking about it is a good thing.*

One thing you can do is give them the information that they need to approach relationships and sex responsibly. LGBT young people often lack access to information about sex and staying safe so, even if you feel like you can't talk about it personally, you should at least be able to point them in the direction of the information they need. For all the awkwardness these conversations bring, the evidence shows that young people who can talk to their parents tend to delay sex until later and to have sex safely.

# *Are they going to be bullied in school?*

Schools have transformed over the past few years and they're now better places to be gay, lesbian and bisexual than they have ever been. But of course it's still not perfect.

**Good teachers know that stamping out homophobic and biphobic bullying is an important part of their job in creating a safe school environment, where all young people can realise their potential.**

*Still, growing up different can be difficult for any young person, because they're gay or lesbian or because of anything else that makes them stand out.*

That's why it's so important that they feel they can come and talk to you about these things. Bullying makes school miserable and so

if they're being bullied you want to know about it. If the school hasn't yet taken the right steps to stop it, that's where you can step in.

# DOES THIS MEAN I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE GRANDCHILDREN?

*Nowadays, it's much easier for gay, lesbian and bisexual people to start a family.*

Same-sex couples now have the same rights to adopt and access fertility services as straight people, as well as the right to marry. There are more than 10,000 same-sex parent families raising children today.

Same-sex couples will have to do a little more planning and research into having children than most mixed-sex couples, but organisations such as Stonewall have published guides on the options available to same-sex couples on having children.

**The bottom line is that being gay, lesbian and bisexual is no barrier to having children, if that's what your child wants.**



**Will we still be welcome at**

# **CHURCH?**

**All religions have LGBT  
believers and all religions have  
groups for LGBT believers.**

With a bit of research you should be able to find a place of worship where your family can feel welcome. Until you know for sure, protect them from anti-LGBT sentiment and try to balance out any opinions they might hear in your place of worship.

*All religions and places of worship  
are different and reflect the views of the  
specific community they serve.*

In some cases certain churches, temples, synagogues or mosques might hold anti-LGBT views. But that doesn't mean the whole of your religion is anti-LGBT.

## Won't being LGBT make their life HARDER for them?

What makes life hard for lesbian, gay and bisexual people is people rejecting them. And that's even harder if it's their parents. But society's attitudes towards LGBT people have transformed in recent years. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people now have full legal equality. There are more lesbian, gay and bisexual role models in the arts, politics and sport and those people who have a problem with LGBT people are an increasingly small minority.

In the world of work, companies not only follow strict equality laws to protect LGBT people's rights, but they know that people work best when they can be themselves and want a workforce that reflects their client base. Of course discrimination still exists and that's why organisations like **Stonewall** continue to work with employers and the UK and Scottish Governments to stamp it out.

As with all young people, it's important your child knows about practising safer sex and being responsible and you're going to have to provide a shoulder to cry on occasionally and make sure

they're not taking risks online. But in modern Scotland, gay, lesbian and bisexual young people can grow up, live happy lives and fall in love with people just like anyone else.

*So, what do I say?*

*"I love you."*

For further advice and support please contact  
08000 502020 or [info@stonewallscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@stonewallscotland.org.uk)

*"How can I be sure?"*

"Did I do something wrong?"

*"Does this mean I'm not going  
to have grandchildren?"*

"Will we still be welcome at church?"

*"What do I say?"*



**Stonewall**  
S C O T L A N D

For parents of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people

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