

## What to say

## What not to say

...if your child comes out to you as not straight

Say you love them and thank them for telling you

Don't ignore them, pretend it didn't happen, or say that it's just a phase

Before your child came out to you, they first had to come out to themselves – something that can be hard and scary. By the time they feel able to tell someone, it's already something they've thought about a lot.

Ask what support they need

Don't tell people / don't tell a specific person about this

People come out because they need to be free to be their true self, but the uncertainty of not knowing who will support you makes it very scary. Asking your child to stay silent validates those fears by showing that you don't support them and you don't expect other people to either.

Commit to being an ally and to learning about LGBTQ2+ experiences and challenges

If only I did [ ] differently

Blaming yourself tells your child that you think that there is something wrong with them that could have been prevented, and also shifts the focus to you and away from your child's needs.

Tell them you will always love and support them

This is against our religion / not in my house

Forcing your child to choose between their relationship with you and their ability to remain part of your family will be tremendously damaging to your child's well-being and to your relationship. Tell your child explicitly and emphatically that you will always love and support them.

Use Google and the library to educate yourself

Expect them to teach you everything you should or want to know

Your job is to support your child, not the other way around. There are tons of easily accessible resources on the internet and at the library you can use to educate yourself.

## What to say

## What not to say

**...if your child comes out to you as not cisgender  
(transgender, non-binary, genderfluid, or agender)**

**Get support from someone outside the family if you need it**

**Tell your child / other immediate family about grief or sadness you feel**

Process any grief about your gendered ideas about your child's future with someone outside the family, so that your child doesn't feel that you see their "new" self as inferior to their "old" self.

**Get someone to help you practice using the correct name and pronouns**

**Continue using their old name and pronouns without making any effort to change**

The best way to change old habits is practice. Get someone to have a practice conversation about your child using their new name and/or pronouns where you can get it wrong and correct each other without judgement. This will also reduce your anxiety about getting it wrong!

**Apologize and correct yourself when you use the wrong name or pronoun, then move on**

**Make a big fuss about apologizing every time you use the wrong name or pronoun**

Accept that mistakes are inevitable. When you slip up, correct yourself briefly, apologize, and move on. (IE "sorry, I mean Alex said..." or "sorry, I mean they said...") Don't go overboard with your apologies, because then the focus is on you and your feelings.

**Support their need for medical transition**

**Don't push them to medically transition before they're ready**

Take your child seriously if they tell you they need to transition medically and help them make it happen! Dysphoria is incredibly distressing and damaging to mental health. But don't push your child into medical transition if it's something they're questioning or unsure about. Transition doesn't look the same for everyone, and many people who are trans don't pursue medical transition. If your child needs time to think about what they want, then give them space.