



# Coming Out to Your Family When You're Scared They Might Not Accept You

An Empowering Guide for LGBTQ+ Youth from Safe Spaces Clubhouse

Coming out is a courageous step — and if you're reading this, you're already showing strength by thinking about it. This handout is your guide, written just for you, to help you feel more prepared, more supported, and more confident about being yourself with your family.



## Reading Your Family – Finding Allies and Warning Signs

- Look for clues in everyday conversations:
  - Do they speak positively about LGBTQ people or topics on TV, news, or in public?
  - Have they ever made jokes, slurs, or shown discomfort about LGBTQ issues?
  - Try casually bringing up a celebrity or show with an LGBTQ character and see how they respond.
- “Test the waters” with light conversation starters:
  - Ask things like: “Did you know [celebrity] came out?” or “What do you think about same-sex marriage?”
  - Their reactions may help you sense if they'd be open or critical when it's someone close to them.
- Think about how your family handles emotional or personal conversations:
  - Are they generally calm, respectful, and willing to listen?
  - Or do they react with anger, arguments, or avoidance during sensitive topics?
- Look for supportive allies within your family:
  - Do you have a sibling, cousin, aunt, or uncle you trust who might already be affirming or LGBTQ themselves?
- Recognize red flags and trust your gut:
  - If your parents have said things like “I'd never accept it if my child were gay,” that's important to take seriously.



## Choosing the Right Time and Place

- Pick a peaceful moment:
  - Wait for a time when your family is relaxed—not during a fight, family crisis, or right before school or work.
- Avoid big events or emotional distractions:
  - Don't come out during birthdays, holidays, or right before a major family gathering.

- Choose a safe and private space:
  - Your room, a cozy living space, or a quiet walk can give you and your family room to talk openly.
- Letters and messages are okay too:
  - You don't have to speak it out loud if that's too hard—writing a letter or sending a message can be just as powerful.

### **Build Your Support Network**

- Reach out to trusted people:
  - Confide in a friend, sibling, teacher, counselor, or another adult who makes you feel safe.
- Plan your support in advance:
  - Let someone know your plan to come out and ask if they can check in with you afterwards.
- Explore LGBTQ+ groups and safe communities:
  - Join local or online LGBTQ youth spaces like the Safe Spaces Clubhouse.
- Need help right now?
  - Use this download “Safe Spaces Clubhouse Coming Out Guide” or reach out to one of our caring counselors at (657)567- SAFE (7233).

### **Practice Makes (Almost) Perfect – Preparing What to Say**

- Write it out:
  - Jot down what you want to say. Even one sentence can say a lot.
- Practice aloud:
  - Try saying it in the mirror, to a friend, or as a voice note to yourself.
- Think about possible reactions:
  - Your family may be loving and curious—or surprised and unsure.
- Use your own style:
  - You can be direct, casual, or creative—do what feels authentic.

### **After You Tell Them – Handling Their Reactions**

- If they respond with love or support:
  - Celebrate that moment. Thank them for listening and offer to answer questions when they're ready.
- If they're quiet, unsure, or change the subject:
  - It might mean they need time to process. Follow up later with a calm check-in if it feels right.

- If the reaction is negative or hurtful:
  - Stay calm, protect your safety, and remove yourself from the situation if needed.
  - Contact Safe Spaces Clubhouse at (657) 567-7233 if you need someone to talk to.



### **Coping with Emotions and Building Resilience**

- Celebrate your bravery:
  - Coming out is a big step—honor yourself for taking it.
- Lean on your support system:
  - Talk to a friend, community leader, or counselor.
- Take care of your mind and body:
  - Try journaling, art, walks, music, or breathing exercises.
- Reach out for help if you need it



### **Moving Forward – Family Relationships in the Long Term**

- Give space for growth:
  - Some families need time and education to understand and accept you.
- Set healthy boundaries if needed:
  - Let them know what's not okay while protecting your peace.
- Lean on allies:
  - Supportive family members can help advocate for you.
- Remember: Family isn't just blood:
  - Build your chosen family—people who love and respect you.



### **You Are Loved and Not Alone**

- Your identity is valid. Your life has meaning. Your voice matters.
- Whether your family accepts you right away or not, there is a whole community here for you.



Download the Safe Spaces Clubhouse Coming Out Guide



Need to talk? Call a counselor anytime: (657) 567-7233

You belong. You are seen. You are loved — just as you are. 🌈



## Reflection Questions & Notes

1. How do I feel about my identity right now?
2. Who in my life do I trust the most to talk to about this?
3. What kind of reaction am I most afraid of, and why?
4. What would a supportive response look like for me?
5. What can I do to take care of myself after I come out?
6. If things don't go well, what's my safety plan or backup support?

Feel free to use this space to jot down your thoughts, make a list of people you trust, or write your coming-out message in draft form.

NOTES:

