RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ ADULTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

If you identify as LGBTQ+ and are experiencing financial, housing, or legal difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic local, Los Angeles-based supports may be available. Even if you can’t walk-in, many agencies are still offering services by video or phone.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

These organizations provide online spaces and virtual/video groups to help you connect with other LGBTQ adults and supports.

- Trans* Lounge (LA LGBT Center) - translounge.org
- Gender Spectrum - genderspectrum.org/stay-connected
- My Trans Wellness - mytranswellness.org
- Believe Out Loud (faith and spiritual focus) - believeoutloud.com

LEGAL

The following organizations specialize in legal matters pertaining to gender identity, sexuality, and LGBTQ-related discrimination issues.

- Bet Tzedek - (323) 939-0506, or bettzedek.org
- LA LGBT Center - (323) 993-7670, or lalgbtcenter.org/social-service-and-housing/legal-services
- ACLU Southern California - (213) 977-5253, or aclusocal.org/en/contact-us
- Lambda Legal Western Division - (213) 382-7600, or lambdalegal.org/helpdesk

ONLINE COPING & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

These resources provide additional (free!) strategies to manage stress related to COVID and/or LGBTQ identity.

- UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center - www.uclahealth.org/marc
- Self-Compassion Exercises - self-compassion.org/category/exercises

CRISIS SUPPORT

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis or need immediate support, please use the resources below.

- LA Suicide Prevention Lifeline (phone/chat) - (800) 273-8255, or suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
- Trans Lifeline (24/7 phone) - (877) 565-8860, or translifeline.org/
- LA County Dept of Mental Health Access Line (24/7 phone) - (800) 854-7771

You can also read about COVID-19 related resources, including eviction rules, testing sites, and unemployment for LA County at covid19.lacounty.gov/
ONLINE/PHONE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILIES

Groups that provide support and/or information to parents and caregivers of LGBTQ youth include:

- Youth Advocates Coalition - lalgbtyac.org
- PFLAG LA - Helpline: 888-PFLAG-88 (888-735-2488), or visit them online at pflagla.org. You can also e-mail info@pflagla.org.
- Transforming Family - transformingfamily.org/our-programs
- Gender Spectrum - genderspectrum.org/groups

ONLINE SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

Organizations that provide moderated online spaces for youth to connect and seek support include:

- TrevorSpace - trevorspace.org
- Q-Chat Space - qchatspace.org
- Gender Spectrum groups - genderspectrum.org/groups

FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND COPING

Online resources that provide additional strategies for managing stress related to COVID-19 and/or LGBTQ identity include:

- Healthychildren.org - Information for Parents of LGBT Teens - healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Four-Stages-of-Coming-Out.aspx
Stay connected to supportive people. Schedule video chats with friends you cannot see in person to increase positive social interactions on a regular basis.

Connect to LGBTQ online spaces and media if you are feeling isolated. Check out LGBTQ-specific content on Tumblr, discussion groups, books, movies, and/or TV shows. Staying connected to supportive content and online spaces can help remind you that you are not alone.

Delay talking about difficult topics with your family right now. You may want to have these talks when people feel less stressed. Take breaks away from unsupportive people in the home.

Practice being kind to yourself. Recognize your strengths and turn down the negative self-talk.

Try to focus on the things you can control or influence. For example, choose to stick to a sleep routine, do something kind for another, practice a hobby.

Practice safe sex with consideration of physical distancing recommendations. Your safest sex partner right now is yourself. Call your local community clinic (e.g. APLA Health, Planned Parenthood, LA LGBT Center) to arrange STI testing.

Take medications as prescribed. For example, PrEP and birth control must be taken DAILY to be effective. Ask your doctor/clinic for refills when you need them. Talk to your doctor/clinic about Telehealth (video) appointments.

Ask your doctor about safe binding practices if you are ill. It is important to listen to your body, especially if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath.

Maintain healthy habits. Routines help reduce anxiety and stress. Keep them simple and stick to them!

- Move your body once a day
- Get fresh air
- Keep a regular eating schedule
- Avoid screen time in the evenings
- Stick to a regular sleep schedule
- Schedule pleasant activities each evening that do not require a phone, tablet, or computer screen
COPING DURING A PANDEMIC: TIPS FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

Despite increased isolation during physical distancing orders, LGBTQ youth can get support and find ways to improve their mood. The following tips may help.

• Seek out online LGBTQ-supportive organizations and spaces. Online LGBTQ resources like the Trevor Project, Q-Chat, and It Gets Better can help remind you that you are not alone.

• Stay connected to supportive people. Try to video chat with friends you cannot see in person to increase positive social interactions. Consider scheduling a weekly online “hangout” to catch up or share a fun activity.

• Delay talking about sensitive topics like identity with your family right now if it creates conflict. You may want to have these talks when people feel less stressed and you have full access to your support system.

• Practice being kind to yourself. Recognize some of your strengths and be gentle and patient with yourself when you’re feeling down.

• Try to focus on the things you can control. For example, choose to seek support from a friend, do something kind for another person, or practice a hobby.

• Support and express your identity. Catch up on LGBTQ books, TV shows, and movies. Find an online blog or group that supports your identity. Paint, draw, and write about LGBTQ-related themes. Explore other ways of expressing your identity.

• Maintain healthy habits. Move your body, get fresh air, get plenty of sleep, and keep a regular meal schedule. Routines reduce anxiety and stress. Keep it simple and stick to it!

• Reduce screen time in the evenings to reduce stress and improve sleep. Try to schedule pleasant activities each evening that do not require a phone, tablet, or computer screen. Reducing screen time can also help reduce your exposure to anxiety-producing news.

• Avoid engaging in online arguments with people who make anti-LGBTQ statements. Instead, find ways of using your voice that feel empowering and productive.
DO

- Encourage and facilitate access to friends and online social support. Access to positive social interactions and support are important to mental health and wellbeing.

- Let your love show. Express love through words and actions, even when there is conflict.

- Advocate for your youth. If someone is not supportive of your youth’s identity or uses hurtful language, ask them to keep their thoughts to themselves. Standing up for your youth may help them to feel safer at home.

- Give your youth space to have feelings. They may have many reactions to missing out on important events such as graduations, summer programs, and other activities.

- Support healthy coping strategies. Encourage use of helpful strategies, like social supports, therapy, and creative, athletic, or intellectual outlets.

- Take care of yourself. Practice good sleep habits, move your body, limit your intake of news, and engage in pleasant activities. Your youth may follow your lead when they see you doing these actions.

DON’T

- Share your distress about your youth’s identity with them. Instead, connect with a parent group, therapist, or friends. This may prevent you from saying something that may be hurtful or that you may regret later.

- Force difficult conversations about identity while everyone is stuck at home together. It’s okay to delay talking about difficult topics until people have more space and feel less stressed.

- Don’t dismiss or ignore your youth’s feelings. Try to acknowledge the way they feel without trying to “fix” the problem.

- Allow anti-LGBTQ statements (about anyone) in your home. Your youth picks up even subtle and unintentional messages they hear.
RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ YOUTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Resources for coping with or combatting the negative mental health effects of COVID-19 include:

ONLINE CHAT/TEXT
Sites that provide online spaces and groups for youth to connect with each other and/or supportive moderators include:

- TrevorSpace - trevorspace.org
- Q-Chat Space - qchatspace.org
- Gender Spectrum groups - genderspectrum.org/groups

ONLINE SUPPORT AND MEDIA
Sites that provide information on dealing with stress during COVID-19 as well as LGBTQ-focused events and media to help you feel more connected include:

- Youth Advocates Coalition - lalgbyac.org
- It Gets Better - itgetsbetter.org
- YA LGBTQ Book List - familyequality.org/family-support/book-nook/young-adult

CRISIS SUPPORT
Resources that may help if you are experiencing a mental health crisis or need immediate support include:

- Trevor Project (24/7 phone/text/chat) - 866-488-7386, or visit thetrevorproject.org
- Trans Lifeline (24/7 phone) - 877-565-8860, or visit translifeline.org
- CA Youth Crisis Hotline (24/7 phone) - 800-843-5200, or visit calyouth.org/chat-with-a-crisis-counselor
- LA Suicide Prevention Lifeline (phone/chat) - 800-273-8255
- Teen Line (6PM – 9PM PST phone/text) - 310-855-4673 or text “TEEN” to 839863, or visit teenlineonline.org/yyp/edelman-mental-health-center