

6 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUR LGBTQ LOVED ONES

Written by Reina Gattuso

As rainbow streamers fill the air and LGBTQ representation fills the streets, June is a time to celebrate LGBTQ identity and the contributions of the queer movement. Pride is a joyful time for the LGBTQ community and allies alike.

1. Question your Biases

While you love your LGBTQ friends and family, and support LGBTQ rights, we all have implicit biases that can cause us to act in a discriminatory manner without being aware of it. To support the LGBTQ people in your life, first work on yourself.

Learn about LGBTQ identities, the LGBTQ movement, and the issues facing the LGBTQ community. Question your own assumptions about love, and what it means

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Being Yourself is
Never the Wrong
Thing to Do.

Quotes sourced from [Self By Design](#)

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Book of the Month Recommendation

Headcase: LGBTQ Writers & Artists on Mental Health and Wellness

by Stephanie Schroeder

Headcase is a groundbreaking collection of personal reflections and artistic representations illustrating the intersection of mental wellness, mental illness, and LGBTQ identity, as well as the lasting impact of historical views equating queer and trans identity with mental illness. The featured pieces offer personal views from both providers and clients, often one and the same, about their experiences.

to be part of a relationship or a family. It's okay to have questions or make mistakes as part of the learning process. By educating yourself first, you can acknowledge these mistakes and grow from them to better support your loved ones.

2. Respect Their Identity

Respect the identity of LGBTQ people in your life by affirming how they choose to live, love, and identify. Use their chosen gender pronouns, respect how they choose to dress and present themselves physically, accept the gender of their partners, and don't pressure them to conform to your or society's idea of self-expression, family, or love.

3. Don't "Out" Them Without Their Permission

While there's nothing shameful or secret about being LGBTQ, everyone has the right to make choices to facilitate their own comfort and safety. Follow the lead of your LGBTQ loved one in terms of how open they wish to be about their identity, and make sure they know you support them however they choose to express themselves.

4. Have Their Back

If your relative is queer, you can educate other family members on LGBTQ identity, and support them if they're faced with discrimination from family members. In the workplace or educational space, you can advocate for diversity trainings and gender neutral bathrooms. And anywhere you go, you can call out anti-LGBTQ words and actions when you see them.

5. Support Them in Accessing Mental Health Resources

Everyone needs support, whether it's a friend whose shoulder we can lean on or a therapist to help us work through trauma from our past. Supporting the mental health of your LGBTQ loved ones requires all the conventional skills of being a good friend: be present, make sure they know you are there for them, and don't hesitate to reach out if you notice they're going through a hard time.

6. Donate, Donate, Donate!

We can make a big difference in our personal relationships, but movements don't run on friendship alone — they also need monetary support. This Pride Month, support LGBTQ mental health by donating to LGBTQ-friendly mental health and anti-discrimination organizations like Fenway Health, the Anti-Violence Project, and Trans Lifeline.

For more information or advice, contact eni online at:

www.eniweb.com

7 Quick Mental Health Tips

Stay in touch with family and friends.

Give yourself time to adjust to major life changes.

Keep busy with mentally stimulating activities.

Consider getting a pet.

Exercise.

Get enough sleep.

Practice optimism and good humor.