

## How to Advocate for LGBTQIA+ Youth Among Unsupportive Family

1) **Put the power in your youth's hands.** Ask how they would like to handle conversations with unsupportive family members. Would space from these people be better for their mental health? Are they comfortable taking the lead in heavy convos? Would they like you to prep family for them? What boundaries would make them feel more comfortable when discussing gender ID & sexuality?

2) **Stick to the facts.** The suicide and mental health statistics for youth who are supported in their identities vs those who are not are well documented. Let your family members know that it is imperative for your young person's survival that they be supported in their identity. This is not political, it's life and death and it's important that your family members know their words have impact. QUEER Family can provide posters from The Family Acceptance Project to help with this task.

3) **Bring receipts.** It is much more difficult to argue over well documented facts printed on paper than it is to argue with a person you have emotions and history with. Remove yourself from the equation and make it a data centric conversation.

4) **Lay down boundaries and stick to them.** Let your youth help decide what these boundaries need to be. Make it clear that these boundaries are for your young person's mental health, and that doing what is best for them is non-negotiable.

5) **Practice makes perfect.** Practice these tough convos with your youth at home. Role play it out. Come up with solutions together. Make sure you and your young person can be a united front.

6) **Always have an exit strategy.** Make sure your young person knows you can leave the situation as soon as they need to. Make a code word. A signal. Loudly announce, "It's been real and it's been fun, but it ain't been real fun" and then storm off into the night. Whatever works for your family.

-NiX

