

# The Holiday Checklist for LGBTQ+ People

Holidays can be challenging times for LGBTQ+ folk. It is a time when families traditionally get together and engage in family and religious rituals. For LGBTQ+ folk whose families are not affirming, it may mean making a choice between being with your family of origin, being with a family of choice, or celebrating alone. Here are some tips to navigate the holidays from some of our LGBTQ+ experts:

## Make a plan

- ✓ Before you go to family events, think about what you are anticipating will occur, what you are willing to ignore, and what you will not stand for.
- ✓ If your family belongs to a religious community that is not accepting of your identity, let them know that you may want to skip or limit that part of the family holiday ritual.
- ✓ If you typically visit with an extended family member who is not accepting of you and you prefer not to visit with that person, let your family know you don't want to join activities with that family member.
- ✓ Develop a plan for how non-supportive behavior will be addressed. For example, if someone misgenders you, do you want your mom to jump in with a correction? It might be helpful for her to role-play that correction so she knows how to address it if it comes up. How will you address behavior if it is not supportive?
- ✓ Have a supportive person on speed dial or ready by text when you need them. Sometimes a friend tasked with sending cute gifs or funny memes can help brighten up a heavy mood.
- ✓ Be sure you have plans to have some fun while you are home with people and in places that affirm and celebrate YOU! This could be planning a fun or relaxing activity after your family event that will give you something extra to look forward to.
- ✓ If not being around your family during the holidays is the plan, that is okay too! How would you like to spend the holiday? Perhaps you can create new alternative traditions with those who love and affirm you. Or perhaps you would rather spend time doing activities that you enjoy and engaging in your own self-care as part of a "me-giving" holiday?

## Share your plan with the family

Your family may be as anxious as you are about the upcoming holiday rituals. This is especially true if you have recently come out, started dressing differently, going by a different name, or announced you have a partner. By developing some ground rules for the visit, you are helping everyone to know what to expect and how to be affirming. Most families want to be supportive and sometimes need help knowing what that looks like. So be as clear as possible about what you need.

- Accurate use of pronouns and names... check! ✓
- Welcoming your new partner and deciding if you will be sharing a room or a bed... double check! ✓✓

Literally go through the rituals of the day(s) and think about what questions or decisions need to be made ahead of time and discuss them with your family before you arrive. It may feel awkward at first to discuss, but better to have your concerns considered before you arrive than be confronted with harmful behavior after you are already there!



## Plan stress reduction activities



Plan a good escape, load your favorite music or shows on your phone or computer and bring headphones so you can immerse yourself in some escapism.

What helps you de-stress and how will you incorporate those things into your trip? If working out helps, be sure you know a good local gym where you can get a day pass or go for a run or walk outside and bring along that supportive sibling to vent with.



Bring a passion project or hobby with you that you can work on if you need some time away from the group.

## Practice good self-care

If you know the holidays are going to be stressful, plan to treat yourself well and have some things to look forward to after the holidays. This is good advice for anyone! There are often inflated expectations of what the holidays will bring and happily, they often do! But sometimes they can leave you feeling let down at the end. Have something planned that will help you to get over any post-holiday blahs.



## Remember to take deep glorious breaths and ...

- ✓ Believe that you are loveable, worthy, and enough
- ✓ Practice asking for what you need because you are worth it
- ✓ Know that you deserve to embrace your true self, even if it makes others feel uncomfortable
- ✓ Remind yourself that there are so many communities of people who support you and want you to thrive