

# OUR **KIDS** ARE ALRIGHT!

A GUIDE FOR **PARENTS**  
AND **FAMILIES** OF  
**LESBIAN, GAY,**  
**BISEXUAL**  
**OR QUESTIONING**  
**PEOPLE**





# "I THINK MY CHILD IS GAY, WHAT DO I DO?"

**THIS GUIDE** AIMS TO HELP YOU ANSWER THAT QUESTION, IT GIVES PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND LOVED ONES ADVICE AND SUPPORT, IF YOU'RE UNSURE ABOUT WHAT TO DO OR HOW TO REACT IF YOUR CHILD OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU HAS 'COME OUT'.

Lots of mums and dads have shared their stories about how they responded, and talk about some of their concerns, the support they gave their children and received themselves. In some cases, their children also share experiences of the courage it takes to come out to parents and family, and the fear of rejection and the unexpected.

Whether you're the parent of a lesbian, gay or bisexual person, or think your child might be questioning their sexual orientation, we hope that this guide will be able to help you understand, support and continue to love your child for who they are.



**IF YOU'RE THE FRIEND  
OF A PERSON WITH A  
LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL  
CHILD AND THINK THEY  
MIGHT NEED A HELPING  
HAND UNDERSTANDING  
THEIR CHILD'S SEXUAL  
ORIENTATION, PLEASE PASS  
THEM THIS GUIDE, OR ASK  
THEM TO CALL THE LGF ON  
0845 3 30 30 30**

# "I THINK MY CHILD IS GAY, WHAT DO I DO?"

Some people can spend years building up the courage to come out to their friends and family, only to find out that their parents have known all along. Some parents recognise that their son or daughter may be lesbian, gay or bisexual before they've had a chance to come out – but how are you supposed to bring this up?



**BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE AND OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER CAN HELP THEM FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE TALKING TO YOU.**



**DON'T BROACH THE CONVERSATION ASSUMING THAT YOUR SUSPICIONS ARE RIGHT AND DEFINITELY AVOID MAKING THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON THEIR BEHALF – GIVE YOUR SON/DAUGHTER A CHANCE TO COME OUT THEMSELVES.**

Contacting a service such as the LGF means you can talk to someone in confidence, who won't judge you. The chances are, if your child thinks that you would have a problem with them being gay or bisexual, then they're not going to feel comfortable with coming out.

**EVEN IF YOU'VE MADE ANY NEGATIVE VIEWS CLEAR IN THE PAST, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO SHOW THAT YOU'RE ACCEPTING OF PEOPLE NO MATTER WHAT THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS.**

## MYTH

**If they were gay they'd have told me by now.**

## FACT

For many, the coming out process doesn't start until well into adult life. For others, they may have had difficulty coming to terms with their sexuality and have been having heterosexual relationships for years. Many people don't fully understand their sexuality until later in life, so don't assume that all people coming out are all in their teens or early adulthood.

## MYTH

**Children who don't conform to gender stereotypes are more likely to end up being gay, lesbian or bisexual.**

## FACT

It's a common and unfair assumption that boys who play with dolls and girls who are tomboys will grow up to be gay, lesbian or bisexual. If your child is gay, then there's nothing that can change that, no matter what toys they choose to play with.



# SO WHAT NOW?

**So, your son or daughter has told you that they're gay.** You might have known all along. Your reaction may have taken you by surprise, so where do you go from here? Don't feel bad if you feel a bit uncomfortable to begin with. The important thing is that you reassure your son or daughter and use this time to speak to someone impartial to help you get your head around things.

You might not be surprised at all, you're just glad that they've been able to tell you and you're pleased that they are happy.



## ALWAYS REMEMBER...

AS HARD AS THE  
NEWS MIGHT BE,  
REMEMBER THAT  
THEY'RE STILL YOUR  
CHILD, WHETHER  
THEY'RE 14 OR 40 AND  
THE CHANCES ARE  
THEY'LL STILL NEED  
YOUR SUPPORT.



# MYTH

**It's all my fault. I must have done something wrong as a parent.**

## FACT

Being gay, lesbian or bisexual isn't caused by anything that someone does; it is just the way some people are. Acting as if it's something you've done wrong might make the person feel like their sexual orientation is a problem and something that needs to be 'fixed'.

# MYTH

**They're going to have a really difficult life with all of the stories I read in the papers about issues like homophobia and bullying.**

## FACT

It would be unfair of us to say that life for every lesbian, gay and bisexual person is a walk in the park - but then when was life like that for anyone? Yes LGB people can face homophobia, biphobia, discrimination and exclusion, but times are changing and with organisations such as the LGF campaigning to end homophobia and achieve equal rights, things can only get better. If you are worried about homophobic bullying contact [exceedingexpectations@lgf.org.uk](mailto:exceedingexpectations@lgf.org.uk)

**IT CAN MAKE LIFE A WHOLE LOT EASIER FOR ANY LGB PERSON IF THEY HAVE A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO WILL BE THERE FOR THEM NO MATTER WHAT.**





# HOW TO REACT...

**TRY YOUR BEST TO STAY CALM AND  
LET THEM SPEAK**

**"I LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT,  
YOU'RE STILL THE SAME PERSON TO  
ME YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN."**

**LISTEN!**

**"OK, WELL I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS,  
IS IT OK IF I ASK YOU?"**

**"I'M REALLY GLAD YOU'VE TOLD ME."**

**"I'M HERE IF YOU NEED ANYTHING."**

**"AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY THAT'S  
ALL THAT MATTERS."**

**ASK IF THEY NEED ANY SUPPORT  
TELLING OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS  
AND FRIENDS.**



# HOW **NOT** TO REACT...

**"WAS IT SOMETHING I DID?"**

**DON'T JUST BRUSH IT UNDER THE CARPET; LISTEN! COMING OUT TAKES A LOT OF COURAGE AND THEY MIGHT HAVE SPENT A LOT OF TIME PREPARING THEMSELVES.**

**"ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T JUST A PHASE?"**

**"AS LONG AS YOU KEEP WHAT YOU GET UP TO, TO YOURSELF"**

**"THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF WE'VE KNOWN FOR YEARS."**

**SUGGEST THAT THEY KEEP IT TO THEMSELVES AND DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE.**



# ANDREW'S STORY

**"I FIRST KNEW THAT I HAD GAY FEELINGS WHEN I WAS 14, BUT I DIDN'T COME OUT UNTIL I WAS 24. FOR 10 YEARS I MANAGED TO LIE TO MYSELF AND THOSE AROUND ME.**

My family and friends never gave me any impression that they were homophobic but I was absolutely convinced that, if I admitted to myself, my friends and my family that I was gay, I would lose everything. I'd heard homophobic language directed at me and other kids at school, and representations on television weren't exactly encouraging. Homosexuality was never even mentioned at school, so as far as I was concerned it was only a handful of people that felt the same way as me. I therefore believed that being gay was something to be completely ashamed of and hidden at all costs.

It wasn't until I was 24 that I started to come to terms with being gay. I came out to some friends that I'd had from University, who were all very supportive. I then ended up coming out to my brother and friends from home in the pub. He asked me what I would do about telling my parents.

My first reaction was that I would only tell them if there was a reason to do so, such as if I met someone. My brother pointed out that, since I had now told friends who knew my parents, it would only take someone bumping into them in the street and letting something slip for them to find out.

Knowing that he was right, I realised that I would have to tell them. In fact, I ended up leaving my brother and heading straight over to their house."



# ANDREW'S **DAD'S** STORY

**"ONE EVENING I ARRIVED HOME FROM WORK TO FIND MY WIFE AND SON SITTING IN THE LOUNGE. I KNEW IMMEDIATELY SOMETHING WAS UP – MY WIFE SIMPLY SAID THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING ANDREW WANTED TO TALK TO US ABOUT. HE TOLD US HE WAS GAY.**

I still don't remember what happened next. I don't think we reacted badly. We didn't get angry. We were shocked, we were surprised but at NO stage did either of us feel in anyway ashamed, uncomfortable or disgusted.

We were both concerned about Andrew, even now there is a bad reaction from parts of our society toward the gay community.

Over ten years later, we are still immensely proud of him, we love him, we support him and feel very fortunate that he felt able to come to us and tell us he was gay.

Andrew is still the same person he has always been – sexuality doesn't make a person, it is their individual contribution to life, society and family that defines who they are and the mark they leave.

Telling you that their sexual orientation may not be what is considered 'normal' does not change the person standing in front of you, someone who has been your Daughter or Son for all those years. Just like with Andrew – he is our Son; we love him as we have always done."



# **SUPPORT** FOR **YOU**

**MEETING OTHER PARENTS WITH LGB CHILDREN CAN BE A GOOD FORM OF SUPPORT. TALKING TO OTHERS WHO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH CAN BE REALLY BENEFICIAL, AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO TALK ABOUT THOSE DIFFICULT FEELINGS WITH PEOPLE WHO WON'T JUDGE YOU.**

If you don't feel comfortable speaking face to face with someone, then LGF's confidential helpline is staffed between 10am and 10pm by trained advisors who are there to listen, and not judge if you'd rather talk over the phone.



**YOU'LL FIND  
A LIST OF  
USEFUL  
CONTACT  
DETAILS IN  
THE BACK  
OF THIS  
RESOURCE.**



# SUPPORT FOR THEM

COMING OUT ISN'T ALWAYS AN EASY PROCESS, EVEN IF THE PERSON HAS THE FULL SUPPORT OF THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, THEIR SEXUALITY MIGHT BE SOMETHING QUITE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO COME TO TERMS WITH.

During this time, it might be helpful for them to talk to someone impartial and in confidence, like a counsellor, to help them to make sense of their feelings whilst knowing they won't be judged.

If you're concerned about the wellbeing of your son, daughter or any other friend or family member who is coming out, it's important that they know where to get help.

**Internalised homophobia can bring on feelings of depression, isolation and despair, but there is help out there.**

Encouraging them to talk to their GP can be a good first step to getting support, but if they don't feel comfortable going to their doctors, they can call the LGF on 0845 3 30 30 30.



# "WHERE DO I GO

**IF YOUR CHILD, FAMILY MEMBER OR LOVED ONE HAS COME OUT TO YOU AS LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL THEN IT CAN BE A CONFUSING TIME FOR YOU AS WELL, AND RAISE A NUMBER OF UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES AND QUESTIONS.**

It is most likely that your child has had some time to get used to the emotions which they are feeling, and whether it be through TV shows, the internet or magazines, they may have started to explore gay culture. However, it's highly likely that it will be all new to you and you'll need some time to get used to a different kind of "normal" for your child.

The most important thing is keeping the channels of communication open, they need to know - now more than ever - that you still love them no matter what.

Now your child has come out, you might find that you'll have to come out too. It's only natural that talk at work or with friends and other family members might turn to the love lives of your children, and for many this kind of situation can be awkward.

You don't have to come out about your child's sexuality in these situations - it's up to you and your child. Ask them if they want other people to know, they might not just yet, or on the other hand they might want your help and support to tell other members of the family.

# FROM HERE?"

**Manchester Parents Group** advise, "The decision to tell family and friends about your child's sexuality should always be with the child. Parents have to 'come out' just like their gay children. Telling someone will help relieve some of the stress of keeping a secret. 'Coming out' to friends and family may be difficult but it can help you to get the support you need and help you in other ways too. You may get some negative responses from people you tell but you may be surprised to find many people will be supportive." *Feb 2011*

**THE MOST IMPORTANT  
THING IS BEING THERE  
FOR EACH OTHER,  
TALKING AND MAKING  
SURE YOUR CHILD  
KNOWS THAT YOU LOVE  
AND SUPPORT THEM.**





# NEGATIVE RESPONSES

**If you get the green light from your child to be open about their sexuality, you'll find that the majority of people will be supportive, but you still might have to prepare yourself for some negative reactions.**

There is still a lot of misunderstanding about LGB people and issues, but this isn't always based on homophobia, often it's a lack of understanding, the best way to raise awareness and change attitudes is to simply talk about it.

If you feel that that someone is being homophobic or biphobic in response to your news, there is lots you can do. Get in touch with the LGF and we can tell you about your rights, or sign up to [lgf.org.uk/enough](http://lgf.org.uk/enough), for news on positive actions you can take to support you and your child.

## CULTURAL BARRIERS

**In some parts of the world being lesbian, gay or bisexual is still illegal, and punishable by imprisonment or even the death sentence.**

Many people and families from these countries, or with roots in these countries, hold the negative views of their culture, tradition or religion when it comes to gay and bisexual issues.

As a result it can be even more challenging for people from these communities to come out, and for their parents to confide in other people.



**Families Together London** highlight that some Black, Minority and Ethnic parents “live in fear of their communities finding out that they have a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT) child. They fear for their son or daughter’s safety if it were to become common knowledge.” *Feb 2011*

Visit [www.familiestogetherlondon.com](http://www.familiestogetherlondon.com) and [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk) to see the huge range of supportive faith and cultural groups aimed at LGB&T people.

## RELIGIOUS BARRIERS

**If you are from a religious background it can sometimes be challenging to reconcile the teachings of your faith, with supporting your child, relative or loved one who has come out as lesbian, gay or bisexual; as some interpret the teachings of their religion to be against homosexuality.**

It can also be difficult to find the confidence to approach other family members, friends or colleagues who you know have religious, traditional or conservative views, for fear of a negative reaction, criticism, or rejection.

But they may just surprise you, after all isn't the basis of most religions tolerance and understanding? At the end of the day, they need to know that your son or daughter hasn't changed, they are still the same person who needs their love and support.

Also, there are many lesbian, gay and bisexual people of faith, and whether you are - Christian, Catholic, Muslim, Sikh etc - your son or daughter won't be the first person to come out.



**WELCOME**



# THE FUTURE

As we've said throughout this guide, different people and families will have different experiences through their very personal journeys, but there are some myths around this topic that need to be dispelled!

## MYTH

**It's just a phase**

## FACT

It takes a lot of courage to come out and it's not something that your child will do lightly. No one can predict the future and your child's feelings might well change as they make their way through life, but don't bet on it - at all times support and try to understand their decisions.

## MYTH

**I won't have grandchildren.**

## FACT

Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people go on to start families - whether that be through IVF, surrogacy, sperm donation, adoption or fostering. There are lots of opportunities for LGB people and couples to start a family if they want.

## MYTH

**I won't get to buy a big hat, or give my child away.**

## FACT

Although lesbian, gay and bisexual people do not have full marriage equality yet, we can still enter into a civil partnership with someone of the same sex. So you will still get to see your child make a legal commitment to their partner and have a big party! However, just like not all heterosexual people get married, not all LGB's will tie the knot either!

## MYTH

**I won't have to give "the talk".**

## FACT

Yes you will! You'll probably just be giving a different kind of talk than the one you might have been planning. You should be talking to them about good sexual health, safer sex, the prevention of STI's, HIV transmission and prevention and sexual health testing.

Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people will still need your support and advice around pregnancy, and starting a family.

If you're feeling at all nervous about this, don't hesitate to call us at The Lesbian & Gay Foundation, and we can give you support and send out helpful resources for you and your child.

## THE DAILY N

THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER



**Call LGF on**

**0845 3 30 30 30**

**Email**

**info@lgf.org.uk**

**Web:**

**www.lgf.org.uk**

# LGB SU EV

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation is a vibrant charity offering a range of services and support to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. We provide information and social support, as well as training and advice on discrimination and equality. We also provide support on many other issues affecting LGB people and their families.

# FAMILY SNAPSHOTS

**THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY OF COMING OUT, WHETHER IT'S FACE-TO-FACE, ON FACEBOOK, OR BY TEXT, THESE FAMILIES HAVE EXPERIENCED IT ALL.**

## PERSONAL STORY

"I didn't come out until I was 26 and I kind of got outed by Facebook so my family actually sat me down at a cousin's wedding and said, let's talk about this relationship you're having and the photographs on Facebook."

## PERSONAL STORY

"I came out by accident, I had a boyfriend who was 16. My parents had found a card from the lad I was seeing, so they asked me and that's how I came out - but we didn't really speak of it for a few years until I met my partner. It was a pretty traumatic experience, dad wanted me to see a psychiatrist, but he soon got over that."

## PERSONAL STORY

"I thought I would get disowned and that they wouldn't love me anymore. But when I actually told them it was absolutely fine. The next day my mum messaged me and said, 'Come home I still love you.' I worried more about what my dad's reaction might be. But he was fine and made a real effort to let me know that he's alright with it. I'm so much happier in myself and more confident."

# STUART'S STORY

## "BOTH MY CHILDREN ARE GAY, SO THAT'S A DOUBLE WHAMMY FOR ME!

John was the first to come out to me, although I asked him many times if he was, he always denied it. So when he eventually told me I was not surprised.

Since he came out we have become much closer than we were before. I believe John found it harder to tell me than it was for me to accept it.

Kate, who is 18 months older than John came round one evening, saying that she had something to tell me. I at first thought that she was going to tell me that she was pregnant, so when she told me she too was gay I was very relieved. Again this has brought us closer together.

My children will always be the same to me, regardless of their sexuality, I will always be supportive of them, and there are enough detractors within our society, without unnecessary pressures from family and friends. All my family and friends have been understanding, and treat it as "no big deal". After all it's John and Kate's life to live as they wish, as long as they are happy so am I.



**LEARN TO UNDERSTAND,  
EMBRACE AND MEET THEIR  
FRIENDS YOU MAY BE  
PLEASANTLY SURPRISED."**

# GRAHAME'S STORY

**"I HAD TO WAIT 31 YEARS AND MOVE OVER 250 MILES AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE I FELT ABLE TO TELL MY MUM I WAS GAY.**

That's not to say that my Mum had never been anything but supportive and loving in those 31 years. She was (and still is) the most important person in my life. But what exactly are the right words when you have to tell your Mum that the chances of grandchildren are slim, and you fancy blokes?

I grew up in a fairly small town in Scotland, there were no opportunities to meet other gay men, and there was a risk that if anyone found out I could be in real physical danger. It was just safer if nobody knew.

I managed to get a job in Manchester, which was a dream come true as it meant I'd be living in one of the most gay-friendly cities in the world. It was at that point I decided my Mum should know. On one of my occasional trips back home I made a point of going with my Mum when she was walking the dog. I told her I had something important to tell her, and she looked nervous. When I told her I was gay she actually seemed relieved! She told me that no matter what, she would always love me and that as long as I was looking after my health and that I was happy then she would always be there for me. My only regret was not telling my Mum sooner.

**WE'RE CLOSER THAN EVER NOW, AND IT'S A LIFE SAVER KNOWING THAT SHE'S THERE TO LISTEN TO MY BOYFRIEND TROUBLES!"**





# JOE'S STORY

**"SO YOU THINK YOUR SON/DAUGHTER MIGHT BE GAY/BISEXUAL/LESBIAN/WHATEVER. MAYBE THEY ARE, MAYBE THEY'RE NOT. EITHER WAY, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. IT'S NATURAL TO BE AT A BIT OF A LOSS AT WHAT TO DO, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THIS:**

Whatever their sexuality, they are still the same person, they have not changed.

You have not been a bad parent, you haven't brought them up wrong. If your child has the courage to come out to you, then that's good. It shows they feel strongly enough to tell you.

One of the worst things you could possibly do when your child comes out to you, is tell them they're too young to know. Other than you saying you're going to throw them out of the house, it's the last thing they want to hear.

If you think they're too young to know what their sexuality is, keep that to yourself. Also, don't go into deep discussions with your child about it. Just let them know you accept them and love them no matter what.

This all sounds so simple, and it is!

**THEIR SEXUALITY DOESN'T CHANGE WHO THEY ARE AS A PERSON – IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT."**



# LOIS' STORY

**"OUR SON, JOE, WAS 16 WHEN HE CAME OUT TO US. THE PREVIOUS WEEKEND WE HAD BEEN SHOPPING IN MANCHESTER AND HAD WATCHED THE MANCHESTER PRIDE PARADE.**

His dad and I had suspected that he was gay for about two years prior to that and had tried to broach the subject on several occasions. However, watching his reaction to the parade confirmed in my mind we were right and, several days later, he confirmed the fact himself.

We had, and still have, no problem with Joe's sexuality but were still aware of society's attitude towards gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people. We are also fortunate that both my and my husband's families are non-judgmental and tolerant.

Therefore we were able to tell the family so Joe was able to feel secure in the knowledge that his whole family were there to support him. We have several gay and lesbian friends and one of them was on hand to give Joe a 'guided tour' of Manchester's Gay Village.

My husband works as a nurse and had no problems telling his colleagues; however, working in an office environment I felt that I needed to be more confident of my colleague's reactions. I was able to tell my closest friends at work and gradually, as my own confidence grew, I was able to tell all my workmates.

Part of this confidence was gained from attending the Manchester Parents Group. I was made to feel welcome as soon as I arrived and was included in the activities straight away. It was like coming home – the warmth and feeling of belonging were overwhelming.

I realised that, although we had no problems with Joe's sexuality it was still reassuring to be amongst people who could identify with the different direction that our worries took to those of parents of heterosexual children.

Those worries still involved the usual: good grades, good job, nice partner, nice home and all that goes with those goals. We had always tried to be open with Joe about sex and, indeed safer sex, ensuring he knew that it was about responsibility for avoiding STI's as well as unwanted pregnancies, but it

was a strange moment when I had to give 'that talk' from the perspective of the fact that it was still important to practice safer sex even though there was no risk of pregnancy.

Whilst we had never mapped out our children's futures Joe's brother has Autistic Spectrum Disorder, so Joe's coming out made us more aware that the likelihood of ever having grandchildren was reduced.

Due to the support of the Parents group we were reassured that nothing is impossible. And indeed, when commenting to my mother that the likelihood of having grandchildren was very slim, Joe appeared through the door proclaiming 'it may not be, I think that is a very homophobic remark!' So that told me!"

**MANCHESTER PARENTS  
GROUP** PROVIDE SUPPORT  
FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES AND  
FRIENDS OF LESBIAN, GAY AND  
BISexual PEOPLE. THEY MEET  
EVERY MONTH IN CENTRAL  
MANCHESTER. FOR MORE  
INFORMATION, VISIT  
**[WWW.MANPG.CO.UK](http://WWW.MANPG.CO.UK)**



# COLETTE'S STORY

**"I HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS AND THEY ARE BOTH GAY. I GUESSED KATE WAS GAY WHEN SHE WAS SIXTEEN ALTHOUGH I WASN'T SURE UNTIL THREE YEARS LATER.**

By then I was used to the idea and pretty relaxed about it. Then Lucy came out and it was a complete shock because I had no inkling and, of course, it meant that I now had no straight children. I was devastated for a while, in mourning for the daughters I had thought I had lost.

At first it was hard to know where to turn to get help. I didn't know how to broach the subject with my mother or my friends. I worried a lot about how people would react. I trawled the internet where there is plenty for gay people but nothing really for their families.

Then I found a wonderful support group called Families Together. Meeting other parents in a similar situation and talking openly about my feelings made an enormous difference.

Next I started reading books; one in particular - *Invisible Families* by Terry Stewart – provided answers to the questions spiralling round my mind. I learned that it wasn't my fault that the girls were gay, that it is probably genetic. I learned that homosexuality is just another version of normal, that in ancient times no-one worried at all about it, that homophobia is a relatively modern phenomenon. I learned that most families have a gay relation or two, whether they know it or not, and that having two gay children is not

exceptional after all. I also learned that these days lesbians can have children and that their children do not suffer at all as a result of having two mothers.

On the contrary, US research suggests they are more likely to have good self-esteem than children in heterosexual families.

They are fortunate to be born in the UK where generally things are pretty easy for the gay community and homophobia is much less prevalent than it was. They are 22 and 23 and their friends are completely relaxed about their sexuality. Both hope to fall in love, to marry and to have children. I look forward to getting to know their wives as

my daughters in law. It would be wonderful if all gay people could be quite matter-of-fact about their sexuality and all straight people could see that it is really neither here nor there, not an issue at all unless we choose to make it one.

**FAMILIES TOGETHER IS A LONDON-BASED SUPPORT GROUP FOR THE PARENTS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF LGBT PEOPLE. THEY HOLD MONTHLY MEETINGS WHICH ARE CONFIDENTIAL. VISIT**

**[WWW.FAMILIESTOGETHERLONDON.COM](http://WWW.FAMILIESTOGETHERLONDON.COM)**



# NEVER TOO LATE!

**WHEN WE DECIDED TO WRITE THIS GUIDE WE WANTED IT TO BE AS HONEST AS POSSIBLE AND HIGHLIGHT PEOPLES' NEGATIVE REACTIONS AS WELL AS THEIR POSITIVE ONES. WE ASKED PEOPLE TO SHARE THEIR STORIES WITH US TO HELP OTHER FAMILIES WITH COMING OUT.**



The stories that we received are overwhelmingly positive. There may have been some apprehension and time to adjust, but their love and support for their children shines out.

It's not the same for all families, the LGF get calls every day from children who have been rejected by their families; and parents who are guilty about their reaction.

We hope this guide might be the first step on your journey to understanding more about your child. It might take you some time, but it's never too late to get in touch to see if you can start again.

**WE LEAVE THE LAST WORD TO ONE OF THE FANTASTIC PARENTS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS GUIDE...**

# LINDA'S STORY

**"WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF THE MIDWIFE COULD TELL US NOT ONLY WHAT SEX OUR NEW ARRIVAL IS, BUT ALSO THEIR SEXUALITY? THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS, OF COURSE, SO MANY PARENTS WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THIS BIG DEAL TO FACE UP TO.**

Except that, having "faced up to it" ourselves, it turned out that our son's bisexuality wasn't really a big deal after all. Turns out he's still exactly the same person - talented, funny, clever, leaves his stuff everywhere, puts empty cartons back into the fridge. But he's happier and more at ease and we've all learned something new. We know that he can relax and be himself with us and he knows that his sexuality doesn't impact on our love and respect for him.

Finding out made things better for all of us. I'm not saying it's not a bit unsettling the first time you see your son holding hands with his boyfriend, but it's hardly the end of the world either. So if you're trying to get to grips with your child's coming-out just remember who they are - the child you've always loved and who needs your love and acceptance more than anyone else's in the world. It may seem like a big moment, but it's one which you are fully-equipped to deal with.

We struggled to "understand" until we realised that we don't have to understand. We just have to accept and carry on.

**AND TRY TO GET HIM TO REMEMBER THAT EMPTY CARTONS DON'T NEED TO GO BACK IN THE FRIDGE."**





# HELP!

**THERE'S LOTS OF ADVICE,  
RESOURCES AND GROUPS  
AVAILABLE ALL OVER  
THE UK.**

**FAMILY & FRIENDS OF LESBIAN  
& GAYS (FFLAG)** supporting  
parents and their LGB children.  
**0845 652 0311**  
***info@fflag.org.uk***  
***www.fflag.org.uk***

**MANCHESTER PARENTS  
GROUP (MPG)** provides  
support and information.  
***ask@manpg.co.uk***  
***www.manpg.co.uk***

**FAMILIES TOGETHER LONDON**  
have excellent information  
for BME parents and those  
from religious backgrounds.  
***familiestogetherlondon.com***

**BIRMINGHAM PARENTS  
SUPPORT GROUP (BPSG)**  
**0121 742 023**  
***birminghamparentssupport***  
***group.co.uk/***

**NEW ROAD PARENTS  
GROUP** for parents in  
North-East Worcestershire  
**0121 742 0230**  
***www.newroadparents.org***

**BRISTOL FAMILIES & FRIENDS** is  
a support group, serving the West.  
***info@bristolfamiliesand***  
***friends.org.uk***  
***bristolfamiliesandfriends.org.uk***

**PARENTS ENQUIRY NORTH  
EAST (PENE)** is a voluntary  
organisation offering support in  
North East England.  
**0191 4552868**  
***www.parentsofgays.co.uk***

**SPLAG WALES** support for  
Parents of Lesbians and Gay Men  
in Wales.  
**0845 652 0321/0322**  
***www.SPLAGWales.org.uk***

**PARENTS ENQUIRY SCOTLAND**  
provide help, information  
and support for parents and  
families of LGBT children.  
***parentsenquiry@hotmail.com***  
***parentsenquiryscotland.org***

**PARENTS OF JEWISH GAYS &  
LESBIANS**  
**07806 636089**  
***parentsofjewishgaysand***  
***lesbians.co.uk***

## **THE LESBIAN & GAY**

**FOUNDATION (LGF)** is an organisation that supports lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**0845 3 30 30 30**

***info@lgf.org.uk***

***www.lgf.org.uk***

**STONEWALL** is a national charity for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**08000 50 20 20**

***info@stonewall.org.uk***

***www.stonewall.org.uk***

## **EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS**

Anti-Homophobic Bullying initiative - support for school staff, young people and parents

***exceedingexpectations.org.uk***

***exceedingexpectations@lgf.org.uk***

***org.uk***

## **TRANS CHILDREN**

The experiences of LGB people coming out are different to trans people who come out about their gender identity. For more support contact:

**MERMAIDS** support group for gender variant children and teenagers, and their families

**0208 1234819**

***www.mermaidsuk.org.uk***

**GENDER IDENTITY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION SOCIETY (GIRES)**

**01372 801554**

***info@gires.org.uk***

***www.gires.org.uk***

**TRANS EMPOWERMENT AND RESOURCE CENTRE (TREC)**

**07513 880647**

***www.transcentre.org.uk***

# **THANK YOU**

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We believe in a fair and equal society where all lesbian, gay and bisexual people can achieve their full potential.

This guide is available in large print by calling **0845 3 30 30 30** or email **info@lgf.org.uk**



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