



CHOSEN FAMILY & BELONGING

BUILD CONNECTIONS WHERE YOU CAN BE KNOWN AND RESPECTED

Family can include relatives and also partners, friends, elders, mentors, neighbors, community members, and others who consistently show up with care.

CHOSEN FAMILY IS REAL SUPPORT

- Chosen family can provide emotional support, practical help, celebration, caregiving, traditions, and a sense of home.
- It does not require rejecting biological or legal family relationships that are healthy.

LOOK FOR HEALTHY BELONGING

- Can you disagree without being punished or excluded?
- Are boundaries, consent, identity, disability, culture, and relationships respected?
- Can people celebrate you without controlling you?

AVOID REPLACING ONE CONTROLLING SYSTEM

- A community can call itself affirming and still become coercive.
- Watch for pressure to cut off everyone outside the group, surrender money, tolerate sexual pressure, accept humiliation, or prove loyalty.
- Healthy belonging leaves room for autonomy.

CULTURE & IDENTITY TOGETHER

- You may belong to LGBTQ+, racial/ethnic, disability, immigrant, religious, secular, professional, recovery, and other communities at the same time.
- You do not have to choose one identity to make another legitimate.

CREATE TRADITIONS

- Build holidays, meals, rituals, celebrations, caregiving agreements, check-ins, or shared creative practices that fit your people.
- Spiritual or secular meaning-making can become part of chosen-family life when freely chosen.

MAP YOUR PEOPLE

- Who can I call for emotional support? Practical help? Celebration? Crisis support? Cultural or spiritual connection?
- Where is my network strong, and where is one additional connection needed?
- Connectedness and supportive relationships are protective for health and wellbeing.

Belonging should make room for your whole self - not require you to disappear to keep your place.

RECOVERY • HEALING • RESILIENCE • YOU
WWW.RECOVERARRIVEBECOME.ORG

Sources: CDC, Social Connection (2024); CDC, Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth (2024); The Trevor Project, Project SPARK protective factors.