



LGBTQ+ IDENTITY, BELONGING & STRENGTHS

AFFIRMATION, SAFETY, CULTURE, SPIRITUALITY, COMMUNITY, AND SELF-TRUST

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IDENTITY IS NOT THE PROBLEM

- LGBTQ+ identities are not symptoms, defects, or thinking errors.
- Distress may come from rejection, discrimination, concealment pressure, harassment, violence, barriers to care, family conflict, or being treated as though an identity must be defended.
- Support should not require someone to become less authentic in order to feel acceptable.

MINORITY STRESS AND SELF-TRUST

- Repeated stigma can make vigilance, fear of rejection, or self-protection understandable.
- Ask both: "What is happening inside me?" and "What is happening around me?"
- A current harmful environment may need safety planning, advocacy, boundaries, or change - not cognitive reframing alone.

DISCLOSURE BELONGS TO YOU

- You do not owe everyone information about sexual orientation, gender identity, transition history, relationships, or health.
- Coming out can be meaningful, but disclosure should consider safety, housing, finances, employment, family circumstances, immigration concerns, and personal readiness.
- Privacy is not dishonesty.

CHOSEN FAMILY AND BELONGING

- Family can include biological relatives, partners, friends, elders, mentors, community, and chosen family.
- Belonging may grow through affirming relationships where names, pronouns, boundaries, consent, and identity are respected.
- You are allowed to build connection in ways that fit your life and values.



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CULTURE CAN BE A STRENGTH

- LGBTQ+ people also belong to racial, ethnic, national, disability, language, family, and cultural communities.
- Culture may offer identity, history, humor, food, art, music, language, ritual, elders, storytelling, mutual aid, and ways of surviving hardship.
- You do not have to choose between parts of yourself to deserve belonging.

SPIRITUALITY, FAITH - OR NON-FAITH

- Faith or spirituality can be a source of meaning, identity, community, ritual, hope, and resilience for some LGBTQ+ people.
- Others have experienced religious rejection or trauma, or do not identify as spiritual or religious. That deserves equal respect.
- Explore what is affirming and freely chosen - not what someone else says you must believe.

STRENGTHS I ALREADY CARRY

- What parts of my identity help me understand myself?
- Who helps me feel seen without having to perform or explain?
- What values, traditions, stories, creativity, advocacy, humor, community, or spiritual/non-spiritual practices strengthen me?
- What have I learned about courage, boundaries, authenticity, or solidarity?

MY AFFIRMING SUPPORT MAP

- Safe people or chosen family.
- Affirming medical or mental-health care.
- LGBTQ+ community, cultural community, disability community, faith/spiritual or secular community.
- Advocacy, legal, workplace, school, housing, or crisis resources when needed.