

EAP Newsletter: Employee

LGBTQ+ parenting & mental health: Building a family & finding support



[Adapted from Mental Health America](#)

Building a family as an LGBTQ+ person can take many forms. Whether through birth, adoption, fostering, surrogacy, or chosen family, these journeys are grounded in commitment, care, and intention. LGBTQ+ families may still face stigma or discrimination, which can impact mental health. This article offers tips and resources to support your mental health as an LGBTQ+ adult as you build a family.

Mental health challenges faced by LGBTQ+ parents and families

LGBTQ+ families may deal with discrimination, legal barriers, and financial stress, which can impact mental health. Facing discrimination can increase stress, anxiety, and depression among LGBTQ+ parents and caregivers. This can lead to feelings of isolation that make mental health struggles more difficult. These challenges can be even greater for LGBTQ+ families who are also navigating racism, disability, or economic hardship.

LGBTQ+ families may face legal barriers to creating a family. For example, in some states, adoption and foster care agencies may discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals. This legal barrier can reinforce the harmful idea that LGBTQ+ parents aren't "real" parents. LGBTQ+ parents may face financial barriers to building a family when faced with the high cost of fostering, adopting, or surrogacy, increasing stress, and negatively impacting mental health.

Transgender and nonbinary parents and caregivers may also experience stress if they feel they need to hide their gender identity to protect their children's safety. This can add emotional strain to an already full load of parenting.

page 1 of 2

Mental health support and treatment options

LGBTQ+ families, parents, and caregivers can receive mental health support in a number of ways. Support options include seeking individual therapy, relationship counseling, family therapy, or peer support groups.

Working with providers that are LGBTQ+ affirming is an important foundation for any treatment option. Family traditions and cultural pride also support the mental health of LGBTQ+ families. A provider that acknowledges and celebrates all aspects of your family's identity will provide the most effective care.

FCH EAP counselor matching

We match you with providers tailored to your needs. For help getting the right provider, call or connect with us online.

800-777-4114

www.FirstChoiceEAP.com

You deserve treatment that respects all aspects of your identity. It is always okay to change providers if you do not feel they are a good fit. Finding supportive treatment can allow you and your family to grow and heal.

Advocacy

Allies can support LGBTQ+ families by using inclusive language, creating welcoming spaces, and sharing their stories. Actions to become an ally to LGBTQ+ families can include:

- Using inclusive language and avoiding assumptions about parents' genders. For example, use words like 'parents,' 'caregivers,' or 'adults in your life,' rather than 'mom and dad,' especially when talking with children.
- Creating welcoming environments in schools, clinics, and public spaces. For example, advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in the school curriculum can help LGBTQ+ families feel a sense of belonging.
- Elevating LGBTQ+ voices and family stories to ensure they are heard. For example, share social media content from LGBTQ+ family-building advocates or organizations, or create opportunities for LGBTQ+ families to share their stories at school, church, community centers, etc.
- Support inclusive organizations and campaigns by donating, volunteering, or sharing resources.

LGBTQ+ families are strong and diverse

LGBTQ+ people build families in many ways, including birthing, adoption, fostering, surrogacy, and co-parenting. They may also include chosen family and strong community connections.