



FACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

**GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TRANSGENDER YOUTH:
NAVIGATING POST-ELECTION TIMES
WITH CARE AND COMPASSION**



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Introduction

The post-election period can be challenging, especially in our current polarized climate where both inflamed rhetoric and threatened policies directly impact transgender and non-binary youth. As a parent, your love and support can provide an invaluable anchor for your child and other vulnerable youth in your circles.

This guide offers practical advice for fostering emotional resilience and safety during this time, while also empowering them with tools to navigate challenges.

Each section below provides practical strategies for addressing critical areas of support: engaging in meaningful conversations, managing complex emotions, building resilience, and ensuring safe and joyful holiday experiences.

1. Having Conversations with Your Teen

Conversations about one's identity, politics, and the larger societal landscape can be complex, but they are also essential. For transgender and non-binary youth, feeling heard and understood by you and other authority figures can alleviate anxiety and foster trust. Open, affirming dialogue allows your child to express their thoughts and emotions while strengthening your bond.

As a parent, you don't need to have all the answers. Instead, your focus should be on listening with empathy and validating their thoughts and experiences. This is also an opportunity to show solidarity and affirm your commitment to their well-being, no matter what external challenges arise.

- **Start with Listening:** Ask open-ended questions like, "How are you feeling after the election?" or "What's been on your mind lately?" This shows you care without pushing them to share more than they're comfortable with.
- **Validate Their Emotions:** Reflect back what you hear. For example, "It sounds like you're feeling scared and frustrated, and I understand why this is tough for you." Avoid dismissing their fears, even if they seem disproportionate.
- **Share Age-Appropriate Information:** Be honest about the current landscape without overwhelming them. Highlight positive stories of community resilience and changemakers who are working to make the world safer for trans individuals. **[Start here, with these profiles of changemakers with the HRC Trans Justice Initiative.](#)**
- **Identify Trusted Adults:** Talk with your youth about other adults at their school and in your community that they trust and that affirm who they are. Highlighting the network of trusted safe adults your teen trusts not only helps to affirm that countless LGBTQ+ and allied adults care about them and their well-being, while also highlighting helpers in the community your teen can turn to for help.

2. Holding the Hard Emotions

In times of stress, your teen may grapple with heavy emotions like fear, anger, or sadness. These feelings are natural responses to the challenges they face in a world that doesn't always understand or accept them, and in a world filled with laws that deny their access to healthcare, bathrooms, and basic respect for their name and pronouns in their school. As their parent, your role is to provide a safe space where they can process these emotions without judgment.

Holding difficult emotions doesn't mean solving all their problems. It means being a steady presence — someone they can rely on when the world feels overwhelming. By modeling compassion and emotional regulation, you can help your teen build resilience while reassuring them that they're never alone.

- **Be a Steady Presence:** Acknowledge that it's okay to feel anger, sadness, or fear. Say, "It's normal to feel this way, and I'm here for you no matter what."
- **Model Healthy Coping:** Share your own feelings in a measured way to normalize emotional expression. For instance, "I'm also frustrated, but it helps me to talk about it and think about ways we can take care of each other and maybe even advocate for changes."
- **Use Calming Techniques Together:** Practice deep breathing, grounding exercises, or creative outlets like art, journaling, or music.

3. Developing Coping Mechanisms

Coping skills are essential for navigating life's challenges, especially during uncertain times. By helping your teen develop strategies for managing stress, you empower them to take control of their emotional health. Effective coping mechanisms also promote self-esteem and provide tools for navigating difficult situations with confidence.

Resilience grows when your child learns to focus on what they can control, connect with supportive communities, and balance advocacy with rest. Together, you can explore creative, physical, or mindfulness-based coping methods that resonate with their personality and needs.

- **Focus on What You Can Control:** Help your teen set small, achievable goals, like writing to supportive lawmakers, engaging in affirming activities, or volunteering for local or national LGBTQ+ organizations.
- **Encourage Connection:** Build a support network with affirming friends, family members, or local LGBTQ+ groups. If in-person options are limited, online spaces like [The Trevor Project's TrevorSpace](#), [CenterLink's Q Chat Space](#), or local LGBTQ+ Discord servers can provide community.
- **Limit News Consumption:** While staying informed is important, too much exposure to negative news can heighten anxiety. Set boundaries around media consumption and curate positive or uplifting content.

4. Creating Emotionally Safe Spaces During the Holidays

Holidays can be a source of joy, but they can also bring stress, particularly if family gatherings include individuals who may not affirm your child's identity or family members who offer personal support while voting against your child's best interests. The second group can be the more difficult or painful one to engage with. This season, prioritize creating environments that celebrate your teen for who they are. Whether you're at home or traveling to family gatherings, your child should feel safe, respected, and loved.

Celebrating with affirming friends and chosen family can offer a meaningful alternative to traditional gatherings if they aren't supportive. By planning ahead, setting boundaries, and centering your child's comfort, you can ensure the holidays remain a time of connection and belonging.

- **Set Clear Boundaries:** If extended family may not be supportive, discuss your teen's comfort level in advance. Let them know you'll protect their pronouns, name, and identity during gatherings. Set boundaries with other family members about not discussing politics or asking your child intrusive questions.
- **Have an Exit Strategy:** Create a plan for leaving an unsafe situation, whether that's a private walk, a "code word" for needing a break, or skipping certain events altogether.
- **Focus on Chosen Family:** If biological family is unsupportive, prioritize spending time with friends and allies who affirm and celebrate your teen. Create new traditions that emphasize joy and belonging, like bingeing [LGBTQ+ holiday movies](#) or finding trans artists and businesses to support when purchasing gifts or making wish-lists.
- **Bring the Comforts of Home:** If traveling, pack items that make your teen feel grounded, like a favorite blanket, book, or affirmation journal.

5. Taking Care of Yourself to Better Support Your Child

As you focus on providing support for your transgender or non-binary child, it's easy to overlook your own emotional needs. Parenting through challenging times can be overwhelming, especially when advocating for your child's rights and navigating a landscape of political and social uncertainty. Taking care of yourself is not just beneficial for your well-being — it's also essential for showing up fully and effectively for your child.

Self-care allows you to maintain the emotional stamina needed to support your child and family with patience, compassion, and resilience. When you prioritize your mental and physical health, you model the importance of self-care for your teen, showing them that taking time to rest and recharge is a healthy and necessary practice. Whether it's scheduling time for a hobby, reaching out to a friend, or seeking support from a therapist, remember that your emotional health directly impacts your ability to create a stable, affirming environment for your child.

Parenting can bring moments of guilt when you take time for yourself, but self-compassion is vital. Acknowledging your own fears, frustrations, or grief allows you to process these feelings in healthy ways rather than letting them build up. Consider connecting with other [parents of LGBTQ+ youth through advocacy groups](#), support groups, or online communities where you can share your experiences and find solidarity. By nurturing your well-being, you strengthen your capacity to be the unwavering advocate and source of love your child needs.

Closing Thoughts

Your consistent love and affirmation are the greatest gifts you can offer your transgender or non-binary teen during uncertain times. By showing up as their ally, protector, and biggest supporter, you help them feel seen, valued, and ready to face the challenges ahead. Remember, you don't have to have all the answers or navigate everything perfectly — what matters most is that your child knows they are unconditionally loved. Together, with openness, resilience, and community, you can create a foundation of hope and strength that carries you both forward.



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