



FACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

**Post-Election FAQs, Guidance
& Resources for LGBTQ+ Youth**



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Introduction

In the wake of the election, HRC President Kelley Robinson said, “We are heartbroken, but not broken.” LGBTQ+ youth, you are not broken. You are incredible, you are powerful, and we need you.

We understand this moment feels uncertain, and that’s okay. The HRC and our LGBTQ+ community have faced challenges together before and we’re ready to face whatever comes next—together. You are not alone.

In this guide, we’ve gathered answers to some of the most common questions we’ve heard from LGBTQ+ youth. This is meant to help you and your family figure out what steps feel right for you during this time.

Some of the suggestions may require your parent or caregiver’s permission, but many do not. If you don’t have the support of a parent or caregiver, know that there’s a whole network of LGBTQ+ people and allies who care about your safety and well-being.

As you navigate this time, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Take care of your mental health and well-being.
- Find a trusted adult who can offer support, like a teacher, counselor, or faith leader.
- And always remember you are not alone! You have an entire community that’s rooting for you and ready to keep fighting for your rights.

While the guidance here is helpful, it is not legal advice. We encourage you to reach out to your parent or caregiver or speak with a legal expert if you need advice specific to your situation.

1. How can I take care of my mental health right now?

It's okay to feel upset, worried, or scared about what may come post-election. These feelings are valid, and you're not alone. Many LGBTQ+ young people are experiencing similar emotions, and it's important to reach out for support when you need it. There are people who care about you and want to help.

If you're struggling with your mental health, including feeling like you may hurt yourself or someone else, please reach out to one of these crisis resources for help.

- **988 Lifeline:** Call or text 988 anytime for free, confidential help.
- **The Trevor Project:** Call 1-866-488-7386 or text 678-678 for 24/7 crisis support from people who understand what LGBTQ+ youth are going through.

Remember, asking for help is a sign of strength. Even if you're not in immediate crisis, finding ways to feel supported, connected, and joyful can make a big difference in how you navigate challenging times. Here are a few ideas:

Talk to Someone Who Gets It

Sometimes, sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone can help. LGBTQ+ affirming therapists are trained to understand and support you. If you think therapy might help, consider asking a parent or caregiver about finding a counselor. If that's not an option, hotlines like 988 and The Trevor Project offer free support anytime and do not require parental permission.

You can also explore:

- **Folx Health:** Specialized LGBTQ+ clinical care and community.
- **TalkSpace:** Virtual therapy with LGBTQ+ affirming counselors.
- **ZocDoc:** Helps you find LGBTQ+ friendly therapists in your area.

Find Your Community

Having a supportive group of friends or peers can boost your confidence and remind you that you're not alone. Look for:

- **School GSAs** or local LGBTQ+ youth groups.
- **TrevorSpace:** An online space for LGBTQ+ youth (ages 13-24).
- **Q Chat Space:** Live chats for LGBTQ+ teens (ages 13-19).
- **CenterLink:** A directory of local LGBTQ+ centers and programs.

Connect with Trusted Adults

Supportive adults can be great allies. Look for teachers, school staff, faith leaders, or neighbors who make you feel safe and seen. Symbols like pride flags or safe space stickers can signal affirming environments.

For tips on finding supportive adults, check out:

- **[One Trusted Adult's Video: "Why You Need a Trusted Adult & How to Find One."](#)**

Find Joy

Sometimes, joy can be a powerful way to take care of yourself. Dive into uplifting works of fiction or LGBTQ+ stories found in books, movies, and shows. You might enjoy:

- **[HRC's Welcoming Schools Book Lists](#)** for inspiring reads.
- **[It Gets Better Project](#)**: Videos celebrating LGBTQ+ experiences.
- Streaming platforms' LGBTQ+ sections for feel-good content.

Taking care of your mental health can involve big steps, like therapy, or small but meaningful actions, like enjoying a story that reflects your life. Whatever you choose, know that you deserve support, joy, and connection.

2. I'm worried about bullying and harassment. How can I stay safe and still be myself?

Deciding how "out" to be is a personal choice, especially in today's polarized climate. For LGBTQ+ youth, it's important to weigh your safety, comfort, and environment before deciding how and when to share your identity.

Throughout history, LGBTQ+ people have faced challenges and responded with strength, resilience, and solidarity. Every person who is out helps change hearts, minds, and, ultimately, the world—but being out isn't the only way to make an impact. You have the power to choose what's right for you.

Here's how you can navigate this decision:

- **Evaluate Your Environment:** Think about your school, family, and community. Are there trusted adults or friends who support you? Are there risks, like bullying or forced outing? It's okay to take your time deciding who to trust with your identity.
- **Be Strategic About Visibility:** If being fully out feels unsafe, there are quieter ways to express yourself. LGBTQ+ people have always used symbols, like the color lavender or small rainbow items, to connect with others. Find what feels meaningful and empowering to you, whether it's wearing a pin or keeping a personal token in your pocket.

- **Empower Yourself with Knowledge:** Learning how to handle difficult situations can help you feel more in control. For example, knowing your school’s policies on LGBTQ+ inclusion or practicing how to respond calmly to negativity can build your confidence.
- **Celebrate Your Identity:** Whether you’re out to everyone or just a trusted few, being LGBTQ+ is something to be proud of. You are a valuable part of a strong, loving, and resilient community.

Being visible can inspire understanding and acceptance, but it's also okay to prioritize your safety and mental health. Every choice you make is valid, and you are deserving of respect and support just as you are.

For resources on coming out and staying safe, check out:

- [HRC’s Coming Out Guides](#) for tips tailored to youth.
- [LGBTQ+ Cultural Heritage](#) for historical symbols and stories of resilience.

You deserve to feel safe and celebrated in every step you take.

3. What should I do if I’m being harassed or bullied?

No one deserves to be bullied or harassed. If this is happening to you, it’s important to remember that you are not at fault, and there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

If You’re Being Bullied in Person:

- **Tell a Trusted Adult:** Talk to a parent, teacher, counselor, or another adult who can intervene.
- **Document What’s Happening:** Write down details of the incidents, including dates and times. This can help when reporting the behavior.
- **Stand Strong with Allies:** Having a friend or ally with you can make it easier to stand up to bullying and feel supported.

If You’re Experiencing Cyberbullying:

- **Set Privacy Boundaries:** Set your social media accounts to private and connect only with trusted people—remember, not everyone online is who they claim to be.
- **Remove Personal Info:** Avoid sharing identifying details, like your school, birthday, or location, on your profiles.
- **Report Harassment:** Use the reporting tools on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to flag harmful behavior.

Get Help If It's Escalating:

If the bullying or harassment doesn't stop, consider contacting:

- **School Authority** such as a teacher, principal, guidance counselor or security should be made aware of what you're experiencing.
- **The U.S. Department of Education's LGBTQ+ Resources** for help with school-based harassment.
- **The Trevor Project** for guidance on staying safe online.
- **NetSmartz Program** for tips on navigating digital spaces.

You have the right to feel safe in your school, community, and online. Reach out for support and know that you're never alone in facing this.

4. The incoming President-elect has said he wants to do away with the Department of Education. What does that mean for me and my experiences at school?

Hearing something like this can feel overwhelming, but it's important to know that there are still laws and protections in place to safeguard your rights at school, and those won't disappear overnight. Neither will the Department of Education, which the President does not have the power to disband by himself.

Title IX, a federal law, protects students from discrimination based on sex, which includes sexual orientation and gender identity. These protections, strengthened under the Biden administration's inclusive policies, apply in schools that receive federal funding. This means your school is required to ensure you are treated fairly and not allow discrimination or harassment against you for being LGBTQ+.

Even if the Department of Education's future feels uncertain, laws like Title IX and constitutional protections remain in place, as do state laws. Changing these protections would be a major undertaking and would take time, and organizations like HRC are ready to fight back against any attempts to roll back your rights.

What can you do?

- If you experience discrimination or harassment at school, know that you can report it. Many schools have Title IX coordinators who are responsible for ensuring your rights are upheld.

- Stay informed about the policies in your school and state. HRC provides resources to help you understand how your rights are protected where you live.
- Remember, you're not alone. HRC and other advocacy groups are here to protect and support you every step of the way.
- The LGBTQ+ community has faced challenges before, and we've always come out stronger by standing together. Your rights at school matter, and there are people and organizations dedicated to making sure they stay protected.

5. Should I be concerned about updating my name or gender marker on my ID documents?

If you're a transgender or nonbinary young person, having documents that reflect who you are can help affirm your identity. Updating your ID, like your driver's license, passport, or Social Security records, can also help in situations where you need to prove your identity, like applying for jobs or traveling.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Passports:** Youth under 16 need to renew their passports every 5 years. Currently, you can self-attest your gender (you don't need medical proof), and an "X" gender marker is available.
- **State Documents:** Some states allow updates to birth certificates, driver's licenses, and other documents. Research what's possible in your state and talk with your parent or caregiver about taking this step.
- **Social Security Records:** Updating your name and gender marker with the Social Security Administration is crucial, as these records are among the most frequently checked for jobs, student loans, and other official matters.
- ***If you're under 18, you'll likely need permission from your legal guardians to make these changes. Be proactive and keep copies of updated documents in a safe place.***

For guidance, check out:

- **[Advocates for Trans Equality's ID Center](#)** for state-specific info.
- **[CenterLink's Directory](#)** to find local LGBTQ+ centers offering document clinics.
- **[HRC's State Scorecards](#)** for more on state-by-state policies.

Updating your documents is a personal decision. Take your time, and remember—you are valid no matter what's on your ID.

6. What should I know about gender-affirming care and how can I talk to my parent or guardian about it?

In these uncertain times, especially with recent comments from political leaders about restricting gender-affirming care, it's understandable to have questions or concerns. Gender-affirming care includes healthcare and support that helps people live as their authentic selves. This might include counseling, hormone therapy, puberty blockers, or other options. For many transgender and nonbinary youth, gender-affirming care can be a valuable way to support their mental and physical well-being.

If you're considering gender-affirming care, or just learning more about it, it's important to talk to your parent or guardian about what feels right for you. Even if you're not currently pursuing care, knowing how to keep medical information private and plans can be helpful.

Things to keep in mind when talking to your parent or guardian:

- **Privacy Matters:** Encourage your parent or guardian to keep any conversations about your healthcare private. It's a good idea to limit sharing details about your care, like the names of doctors or clinics, unless necessary. Protecting this information can ensure your privacy and peace of mind.
- **Work with Your Healthcare Provider:** If you're receiving any kind of specialized care, ask about creating a plan for how to manage interruptions, should anything unexpected happen. This isn't limited to gender-affirming care—it's also helpful for general health needs like therapy, reproductive health, or medications like PrEP. For example, you might consider requesting a 90-day supply of medications.
- **Understand Your Rights:** Talk with your parent or guardian about when and with whom medical information might need to be shared, and when it can remain private. Knowing your options can help you feel more in control.
- **Emotional Support:** Whether or not you're pursuing gender-affirming care, emotional support is key. Consider working with a therapist or counselor who is LGBTQ+ affirming and can provide guidance and understanding.

Every young person deserves to feel supported and affirmed in who they are. Gender-affirming care is just one piece of the puzzle for those who choose it and making sure you and your family have the information you need can help you feel confident and prepared.

7. How can I help and make a difference?

Even during tough times, you have the power to make a difference for yourself and others in the LGBTQ+ community. Advocacy can look different for everyone, and every action matters.

Support Your Peers:

- Share crisis hotlines, like [988](#) or [The Trevor Project](#), on social media.
- Check in on friends who might be struggling and remind them they're not alone.
- Celebrate LGBTQ+ voices by amplifying their stories and achievements online.
- Urge victims of crime and harassment to report their experience.

Learn About Your Rights:

Knowing the laws and policies that affect you is a great first step. Talk to your family or GSA about researching:

- [HRC's Municipal Equality Index](#) shows how LGBTQ+ inclusive your city is.
- [HRC's State Equality Index](#) covers details about state laws.

Get Involved in Advocacy:

Where you feel safe and supported, use your voice to push for change in your school or community. For example:

- Speak up for LGBTQ+ inclusive policies at school board meetings.
- Join your GSA or local LGBTQ+ youth group to get organized.
- Check out [Welcoming Schools' Checklists](#) to ensure your school is affirming for all students.

Stay Connected with the LGBTQ+ Movement:

Follow organizations like HRC to stay updated on national and state-level advocacy. Social media platforms like [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [Threads](#) are great ways to stay informed and inspired.

You don't have to take every step at once. Even small actions, like checking in with a friend or sharing helpful resources, can create big ripples of support and change. Together, we are strong.



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