

Main Line Health LGBTQ Holiday Resource Guide

LGBTQ Holiday Preparation Tools

The holidays can be intimidating, especially for LGBTQ people who may not feel safe in the places or with people they are visiting during this time. This guide has helpful tips on how you can make the most out of this holiday season and feel safe. It also includes resources to help you make this holiday season what you want it to be.

CARE FOR YOURSELF

With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it can be easy to lose track of what you need. Remember to take some time out and take care of yourself. Self-care is different for everyone — it may be taking a bath, having a nice walk or drinking a cup of your favorite coffee. When traveling or going home for the holidays, make sure you are taking the time to ask yourself what you need.

TALK ABOUT BOUNDARIES WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

If you feel comfortable, bring up your limitations/boundaries with the people you will be visiting. Addressing potential stressors with family members and setting boundaries can help prevent stress. As an example, if you have a relative known for making homophobic and racist comments, preemptively set boundaries by letting your family know what conversations will make you uncomfortable and what you will do about them (e.g. excuse yourself).

DECOMPRESS

The holidays can be mentally and emotionally overwhelming, especially when navigating unsure or unsafe spaces. It is important to decompress and process emotions and interactions that occurred during the holiday season. Consider setting up a phone call, lunch or other dedicated time to talk with a supportive person in your life about the holidays. These conversations may be about how everything went over the holidays, how you view the holidays or what people said or did. It can feel affirming to decompress stressful emotions with people who will listen. Consider scheduling a time with those you love for everyone to express their feelings.

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KEEP A JOURNAL

Journaling can help you express your thoughts and ideas without the burden of trying to explain these thoughts to others. This can be helpful if you are still in the closet or do not have supportive people in your life. It can also help you reflect on your emotions and feelings through the holiday season.

Some writing prompts:

- Being queer is _____.
- If I could do anything over the holidays, I would _____.
- _____ are supportive and affirming of me.
- Write down five things that make you incredibly happy and describe why they make you feel this way.
- In detail, describe a perfect day.
- Write a letter to a person who has positively impacted you.
- Write down all the compliments you ever received or can think of.
- Write down compliments about people in your life.
- What astrological element do you consider to be YOU? Earth, Air, Fire, Water. Write about why you feel it is you.
- Write a love letter to yourself.
- Write about something random you've seen that made you smile.
- What makes you laugh?
- Describe an outfit that makes you feel completely comfortable in your own skin.
- Describe your dream house.

CREATE AN EXIT STRATEGY

If you are worried about feeling stuck when going to a place where you do not have a support system, plan an exit strategy. Consider arranging in advance an opportunity to leave early or at a certain time, to sleep on a supportive person's couch or to stay in a hotel. Be prepared to leave unexpectedly if someone becomes discriminatory or the environment becomes uncomfortable for you.

PLANNING WITH PARTNERS

If you are partnered and spending time together with family, discuss in advance what will make each of you comfortable with sleeping arrangements, expressing affection and navigating conversations. Confirm sleeping arrangements with your family before you arrive.

COMING OUT AT THE HOLIDAYS

If you plan to come out to family during the holidays, it is important to make plans regarding your personal boundaries, self-care needs, availability of affirming social support and a back-up strategy. Additional suggestions:

- The holidays may cause family members to react differently than they would under less stressful conditions; their reaction may not be entirely because of what you have shared about your identity.
- Remind yourself that family members may need time to acknowledge, accept and affirm your identity; coming out is a continuous process.
- Let your family members attend to and work on their own thoughts, feelings and judgments as long as they are kind to you and you do not feel unsafe.

OPT OUT IF NECESSARY

If you feel it will be emotionally exhausting, invalidating or painful to go home for the holidays, it's okay to allow yourself to opt out. The friends, supporters and loved ones we make can be our *family* during the holiday season. Surround yourself with those who respect and affirm your identity and give you strength. Take care of yourself.

Sponsored by the Main Line Health Comprehensive Gender Care Program and Inclusive Care Program



Emergency Resources

HOUSING

Covenant House Youth Shelter

31 East Armat Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

PHONE: 888.829.1244 • 215.951.5411

covenanthousepa.org

SERVICES: individualized support, CHOP Connections Clinic, career and educational planning, street outreach

John C. Anderson Apartments

(62+ LGBTQ senior living community)
251 South 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

PHONE: 267.915.0063

pennrose.com/apartments/pennsylvania/john-c-andersonapartments/#Overview

Your Way Home Montgomery County

HOTLINE PHONE NUMBER: 211

yourwayhome.org/211

SERVICES: emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, diversion and prevention

CRISIS SERVICES

Anti-Violence Hotline

SERVICES: support for LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence

HOTLINE: 212.714.1124

Text TALK to 741741

Talk with a trained counselor from crisis text line for free 24/7

SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline

SERVICES: advocacy and services for LGBT adults 50+

HOTLINE: 888.234.7243

The LGBT National Hotline

SERVICES: peer support and local resources for all ages

PHONE: 888.843.4564

The Trevor Project – LGBTQ suicide prevention

HOTLINE: 866.488.7386

HOURS: 24/7 – 7 days per week

Trans Lifeline

SERVICES: support for transgender people by transgender people

HOTLINE: 877.565.8860

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SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT

Gays and Lesbians in Alcoholics Anonymous

Gal-aa.org

Gay and Sober

SERVICES: recovery meeting finder

gayandsobor.org/meeting-finder-pennsylvania

LGBT NA meeting (Promise of Hope)

6001 Colgate Street

Philadelphia, PA 19111

MEETING TIME: Sundays from 5:30 to 6:30 PM

Bucks Support Services

17 Barclay Street

Newtown, PA 18940

PHONE: 267.980.9346

bucks-lgbtq.com

SERVICES: county agency providing a range of support groups

LGBTQ+ Addiction Recovery Group (S/Q)

MEETING DAYS AND TIMES: now forming – call for dates

CONTACT: Mr. Mark Ludwig, MS, ICAADC

FEE: \$35.00/group

Morris Home (Resources for Human Development)

4700 Wissahickon Avenue, Suite 126

Philadelphia, PA 19144-4248

PHONE: 215.951.0300 | 800.894.9925

FAX: 215.849.7360

EMAIL: HR@rhd.org

rhd.org/morrihome

SERVICES: residential recovery program for trans and gender non-conforming individuals

Philadelphia Freedom Roundup

philadelphiaroundup.wordpress.com

SERVICES: comprehensive list of GLBT recovery meetings including:

- SAGA (LGBT AA Meeting)

562 Clubhouse

562 West Lancaster Avenue

Haverford, PA 19041

MEETING TIMES: Mondays from 8:00 to 9:00 PM

Source content:

SFLGBT Center:

[An LGBTQ Guide to Surviving the Holidays](#)

Advocate:

[6 Home for the Holidays Survival Tips for LGBTQ Couples](#)

IntraSpectrum Counseling:

[LGBTQ Holiday Survival Guide Part 1](#)

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