The Holiday Checklist for LGBTQ+ People

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Holidays can be challenging times for LGBTQ+ folk. It is a time when families traditionally get together and engage in family and religious rituals. For LGBTQ+ folk whose families are not affirming, this may mean making a choice between being with your family of origin, being with a family of choice, or celebrating alone. Here are some tips to navigate the holidays from some of our LGBTQ+ experts:

Before you go to family events, think about what you are anticipating will occur, what you are willing to ignore, and what you will not stand for. If your family belongs to a religious community that is not accepting of your identity, let them know that you may want to skip or limit that part of the family holiday ritual. If you typically visit with an extended family member who is not accepting of you and you prefer not to visit with that person, let your family know you don’t want to join activities with that family member.

Develop a plan for how non-supportive behavior will be addressed. For example, if someone misgenders you, do you want your mom to jump in with a correction? It might be helpful for her to role-play that correction so she knows how to address it if it comes up. How will you address behavior if it is not supportive?

Plan a good escape, load your favorite music or shows on your phone or computer and bring headphones so you can immerse yourself in some escapism. Remember to take deep glorious breaths and ...

Believe that you are loveable, worthy, and enough
Practice asking for what you need because you are worth it
Know that you deserve to embrace your true self, even if it makes others feel uncomfortable
Remind yourself that there are so many communities of people who support you and want you to thrive

• Accurate use of pronouns and names… check!
• Welcoming your new partner and deciding if you will be sharing a room or a bed… double check!

Plan stress reduction activities

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What helps you de-stress and how will you incorporate those things into your trip? If you have a friend tasked with sending cute gifs or funny memes to brighten up a heavy mood, that is a plan. Be sure you have plans to have some fun while you are home with people and in places that affirm and celebrate you! This could be planning a fun or relaxing activity after your family event that will give you something extra to look forward to.

If not being around your family during the holidays is the plan, that is okay too! How would you like to spend the holidays? Perhaps you can create new alternative traditions with those who love and affirm you. Or perhaps you would rather spend time doing activities that you enjoy and engaging in your own self-care as part of a “me-giving” holiday?

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