

Active Listening 101: A Guide for Parents of LGBTQ+ Youth

What to Do...

Presence Over Planning

Put away any other distractions and focus entirely on your child.

Listen to Understand, Not to Respond

Suspend judgment and don't formulate your rebuttal.

Non-Verbal Cues

Maintain open body language (no crossed arms), eye contact, and head nodding.

What to Say...

Use Validating Phrases

Acknowledge their feelings, even if you don't understand them.
For example: *"That sounds really hard,"* or *"Thank you for trusting me with this."*

Use Neutral, Affirming Language

Respect their identity and name/pronouns without question.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Encourage them to share more.
For example: *"What does this mean for you?"* or *"How can I best support you right now?"*

What to Avoid...

Minimizing

Do not dismiss their feelings or compare their experience to others.

Interrogating/Fixing

Don't grill them with questions or immediately jump to solutions or therapy.

Making It About You

Do not respond with *"I feel"* statements or focus on your disappointment or fear.