

## WHEN SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU COMES OUT: FOR PARENTS

Some of you may be feeling homophobic now or may have to deal with people that are homophobic. To help your parents or a friend's parents, the following list, by Dr. Charles Silverstein, donates dos and don'ts to help them come to grips with the reality of their children's homosexuality. This list may also be helpful to you as well.

- Don't rush the process of trying to understand your child's homosexuality. Do take the time to seek information about the lives of LGBT people from other parents of LGBTs, friends of your LGBT child, literature and, most of all, from your own son or daughter.
- Don't criticize your son or daughter for being different. Do listen to what your son's or daughter's life is like and what kind of experiences he or she has had in the world.
- Don't blame your own feelings on your child. Do accept that you are responsible for your negative reactions.
- Don't expect your children to make up for your own failures in life. Do help your child to set his or her individual goals, even though these may differ drastically from your own.
- Don't try to force your child to conform to your ideas of proper sexual behavior. Do try to develop trust and openness by allowing your child to make his or her own decisions.
- Don't blame yourself that your son or daughter is gay, lesbian or bisexual. Do be proud of your child's capacity to having loving relationships.
- Don't respond to anger with anger. Do look for the injured feelings underneath the anger and respond to them.
- Don't discriminate against your own child. Do defend him or her against discrimination.
- Don't demand that your son or daughter live up to your idea of what a man or woman should be. Do allow your child to develop his or her own personality.
- Don't try to break up love relationships. Do respect your child's right to find out how to choose the right person to love and how to make relationships last. Don't insist that your morality is the only right one. Do say "love you."
- Don't assume that your child should see a professional psychotherapist. Do get professional help for anyone in the family, including yourself, who becomes severely depressed over your child's homosexuality.

Source: Dr. Charles Silverstein

PrideWorks Conference for  
LGBT Youth and their Allies  
November 16<sup>th</sup> 2010



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