

# PROUD PARENTS SUPPORTING YOUR WELLBEING



## Find your Community

Whether it's your own family and friends, or finding groups and communities like those at Free2B - find your community and people who understand and support you. **You are not alone!**

**Mermaids** also offer an LGBTQ+ Parent community network:

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/parents>

## Know when to take a "step back"

When you are supporting your child, it can sometimes feel like relentless advocating. Remind yourself that you don't always need to get into big conversations, always answer questions, or be the advocate - sometimes it is ok to choose not to be "out" in a moment if it feels unsafe or tiring.

As one of our Proud Parents' said:

**"Sometimes the best advocates we can be, is a normal family"**

## Find your own support

You may have spent a lot of time finding support for your child or family, but it is also important that you feel you have a space to explore your experiences and feelings. Groups like Proud Parents, or your own 1:1 support can be helpful for your own journey.

Some LGBTQ+ counselling services offer 1:1 support for parents and families of LGBTQ+ young people. These are either offered at a low cost, or free service. Services and directories we've found which may be helpful to explore are:

**The Albany Trust** - <https://www.albanytrust.org>

**Pink Therapy** - <https://pinktherapy.com/find-a-therapist>

It may also be helpful to search counselling directories for LGBTQ+ aware therapists. Many therapists also offer a low-cost or sliding scale service. Here are a few helpful directories to explore:

**BACP** - <https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists>

**The Counselling Directory** - <https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/adv-search.html>

## Find time for your own self-care

Where possible, find time for the things that bring you joy. We know it can be sometimes difficult to find this time when we're already balancing work and family life.

Is there a place where yours and your family's joy-bringing activities align?

Such as a family movie night on the sofa...

# PROUD PARENTS SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD



## Remember the power of simply listening and being alongside them

Often we want to try and fix everything for our child and make everything better for them. Most of the time this isn't possible, and also isn't what young people find most supportive. Often, just sitting with them and acknowledging how they are feeling, can be the key to helping that feeling subside.

## Help them to identify their Support Systems

When your child is finding things challenging, it can be really difficult for them to remember their support systems and who / what helps them in these moments. It can be helpful to support them to identify their community & support systems and their nurturing & joy-bringing activities.

It is often much easier to think about these things when we are in a good place. If you are able to, when your child is feeling in a more calm and grounded place, take some time with them to explore their support systems and activities.

Encourage them to write these down, draw them – whatever way works for them – and keep this somewhere visible. You can then use this to support them and remind them who or what may make things feel a bit easier or better when things are feeling challenging.

## Find an easy communication signal/shared language

Sometimes your child may want to speak with you (and know this would help them), but they may find it difficult to communicate this need to you.

Can you find a creative way for them to express to you that they need some time to talk or be with you? Such as agreeing an emoji or code with them (that feels right for them) that they can text you to indicate they need a check-in?

## Prioritise your Wellbeing

It can be very difficult when we are supporting others, especially our children, through difficult circumstances. Just **It's important that we keep ourselves well – particularly as this enables us to be able to continue to be there for others.** Remember the cup and saucer analogy and keep your saucer full! *The teacup represents the amount of energy people need to take care of themselves. Only when it overflows onto the saucer do they have enough energy to give to others.*

## Remember Support Services are there if you need – you are not alone.

Remember there are many services out there to support you, whether that's through Schools and Colleges, or organisations like Free2B. You are not alone.

# PROUD PARENTS QUEER JOY & REPRESENTATION



As suggested by our wonderful Proud Parents Group – throughout your child’s and family’s journey, it is important to find ways to connect with Queer Joy and Positive Representation.

Here are a few suggestions below on where to start:

## Find positive queer representation in TV and Films.

Thankfully positive queer representation in tv and film is increasing. Find shows that you, your child, and your family can enjoy that show the wonderfully spectrum of queer lives all around us!

### Explore Queer Books and Literature

If you live in London (or visit) a wonderful place to visit is “Gay’s the Word”, the oldest LGBTQ+ bookshop in London. Find books that represent all ages, identities and stories:

<https://www.gaystheword.co.uk/>

## Find LGBTQ+ Exhibitions

Visit places such as “Queer Britain”, the UK’s First LGBTQ+ Museum ([HOME | Queer Britain](#)) explore, learn about and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and its history

## Learn about LGBTQ+ Histories

Learning about the LGBTQ+ communities history can be a wonderful way to remind ourselves that queer people have always existed. This can be particularly helpful when thinking about Gender Identity and learning about the many ways people have identified and lived beyond the gender binary throughout history and across the globe.

The [Intercom Trust](#) deliver a training session entitled Gender Variance in History and Culture (though it does also cover current negative rhetoric) Search for them on Eventbrite to access their course.

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# PROUD PARENTS SUPPORT SERVICES



If you feel there is a crisis situation and you are extremely worried about yours or your child's mental health and wellbeing, please call 999 or go to your nearest A&E, asking to see the Mental Health Team.

If it is not an emergency, but you still require urgent support and / or advice, please contact NHS 111.

## Support Lines

### **NHS Urgent Mental Health Support Lines:**

For Wandsworth, Sutton, Merton and Richmond, please contact:

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust - **0800 028 8000**

For Lambeth, please contact:

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust - **0800 731 2864**

If you are in a different area, please use this link to search for your Local NHS Mental Health Helpline:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>.

### **Samaritans Support Line:**

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans. Free and open 24/7 for support and advice.

### **Mermaids LGBTQ+ Support Line:**

Phoneline (9am-9pm Monday to Friday) – 080 801 0400.

### **Switchboard LGBTQ+ Support Line:**

Phoneline (10am – 10pm Every day) – 0800 0119 100

**If it's not an emergency and you would like to explore additional support for you or your child, please contact:**

**Georgina Wilkinson**  
**Georgina@free2b.lgbt | 07529 221 239**