

Queering the Holidays: A queer survival guide for the Holiday season

The holidays can be intimidating, especially for queer folks who may or may not feel safe in the places or with people they are going to visit. This quick guide is filled with a few tips on how you can make the most out of this holiday season and keep your sanity. This guide will also include additional resources at the end to give you more knowledge on how to make this holiday season the very best it can be.

Self-care:

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 can look like taking a bath, having a nice walk or drinking a cup of your favorite coffee. When traveling or going home for the holidays it is important to make sure, you are taking the time to ask yourself what you need.

Talk about boundaries with family and friends:

If you feel comfortable you can always bring up a list of your limitations/boundaries to the people you are going to visit. Addressing potential stressors with family members and setting boundaries can help prevent stress. An example of a situation where a boundary could be put in place is your grandparents expecting you to go to church every time you are in town. This time you already know that the question is going to come up so preemptively set boundaries by letting your family members know ahead of time that you will not be participating in religious services while in town.

Remind yourself that your identity and experiences are valid, even when no one does:

Other people can be extremely degrading and invalidating toward your identities. It is important whether you are traveling to a queer friendly place or not, to reaffirm your own identities and experiences. Whether that is reading queer validating material, listening to podcast or calling a close friend. It is important if you are going into a non-validating environment that you are reassuring yourself of your own identity and experiences.

Take your time:

The holidays can feel like a rush. Take your time and do not stress if you cannot make it to everything or if you cannot visit everyone. If you have to show up late to something or

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miss something completely because you need a moment than that is ok. Go at your own speed and do not feel pressured to do or be everything for everyone.

Journal

Journaling can help you express your thoughts and ideas without the burden of trying to make it palatable for other people. 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 can consist of:

- Being queer is _____
- If I could do anything over the holidays I would _____
- _____ are supportive and affirming of me
- Write down 5 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 every received or can think of. Write down compliments about people in your life.
- What element do you consider to be YOU? Write about why. (Earth, Air, Fire, Water).
- 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.

Spend time with your chosen family

During the holiday season, it can feel like you have an obligation to visit and spend time with your blood relatives. Remember that you do not have to spend time with anyone you do not want to. In addition, just because someone is biologically related to you it does not have to make them your chosen family. A chosen family are the people you CHOOSE to navigate your life with on a daily basis and can be biological relatives or anyone else. Spending time with people who care about you and enjoy experiencing life with you can make the season that much better. You could get together with your

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chosen family and throw a holiday party or just grab coffee and talk. The holidays can be just as special with your chosen family as it is with relatives.

Create an exit strategy

It can be easy to feel trapped if you are going to a place where you do not have any support systems. Some things you could do to prevent this is to develop a strategy for leaving an event at a certain time or staying in a hotel instead of with relatives. You could have your friend call and make an excuse to get you out of that event. You could make plans to sleep on a supportive person's couch if you can't afford a hotel room or don't want to stay with your relatives. If your traveling longer distances, you can plan ways to leave early in case someone becomes discriminatory or if the environment becomes too uncomfortable.

Decompressing

The holidays can be a lot on us mentally and emotionally, especially when navigating unsure or unsafe spaces. It is important to decompress and process emotions and interactions that occurred over the holidays, but this can also feel very overwhelming. You could setup a phone call, a lunch date or just some dedicated time to talk with a supportive person in your life about the holidays. These conversations could be about how everything went over the holidays, how you view the holidays and/or what things people said or did. It can feel affirming to decompress stressful emotions with people that have the energy to listen. Maybe talk with your chosen family about having a sit down for everyone to vent and express their feelings.

Additional Resources:

SAGE LGBT+ Senior Hotline: This hotline is for anyone over the age of 50 that is queer who wants to talk to a professional about gender/sexuality. You can call between 4PM-Midnight on Monday-Friday and Noon-4:00PM on Saturdays.

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Phone: 888-234-SAGE

Website: www.LGBThotline.org/SAGE

The Trevor project: [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386) The Trevor project has access to great counselors 24/7

Travel Guide: This article talks about tips for queer travels: [Click here](#)

Them: The Lone Queer's Survival Guide to Awkward Family Time: [Click Here](#)

YouTube: LGBTQ+ Christmas/Holidays Self Care Survival Guide: [Click Here](#)

Trans Lifeline: US: 877-565-8860 Canada: 877-330-6366 [Website click here](#)

Therapist Referrals: [Click here](#) to visit a page of referrals, compiled by local gender therapist Dara Hoffman-Fox, LPC: "They have each provided me with detailed information about their practice and approach, as well as how much experience they have working with transgender and gender nonconforming clients. I also trust these therapists with the LGBTQ population as well." Need help from a professional? This might be a great place to start.

One Colorado: One Colorado, resources: <https://one-colorado.org/lgbtq-resources/>

Local Queer event: Pride Elephant exchange: A local event hosted by queer clubs and students at UCCS. [Click here for RSVP](#)

PFLAG: PFLAG's Tips for the holidays. Click Here:

<https://pflag.org/blog/pflagstipsholidays> You can also call the local chapter number if you would like to talk with someone: (719) 425-9567

Inside Out: Has great resources for LGBT+ youth and young adults!

<https://www.insideoutys.org/youth/resources/>

LGBT+ Resource center: Our office is open during the holiday break and is a Safe place for people to come and relax. If you need additional resources, someone to talk with or just somewhere to do homework in private you can swing by our office, give us a call or shoot us an email. Have a happy holiday season! Email: lgbtrc@uccs.edu
Phone: 719-255-3319

Physical location: UCCS, University Center room 110 (The MOSAIC office)

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