

# IT'S NOT A PHASE

## Support for Family Members of LGBTQ Muslims



# WHO ARE LGBTQ PEOPLE?

Your child or loved one recently came out to you. You might be experiencing a mix of emotions right now: shock, concern, disbelief, or even fear for their safety. The first step is to understand the language your family member used to describe themselves. Here's a brief introduction:

- LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer.
- Sexual orientation refers to physical or emotional attraction.
- Gender identity refers to how a person experiences masculinity, femininity, both, or neither.
- Transgender describes a person who understands themselves differently from the gender they were assigned at birth by doctors.
- Queer is an alternative term used to describe LGBTQ people.

It is important to keep in mind that these words or labels only apply to people who choose to use them.

# COMMON MYTHS

Below are some common myths that families may have about LGBTQ people, followed by affirming responses that you can consider while supporting your loved one.

## MYTH

“Being this way is caused by Western social influences.”

## RESPONSE

LGBTQ Muslims have existed for centuries and in many Muslim-majority societies.

## MYTH

“My family is being punished for not being pious enough.”

## RESPONSE

Having a family member who identifies as LGBTQ is not a reflection of your piety. Saying this makes them feel like they’ve let you down. LGBTQ Muslims exist in every family – from the most devout to the most secular. Consider that it is possible to be an LGBTQ practicing Muslim.

# COMMON MYTHS, CONTINUED

## MYTH

“Being gay goes against nature and Islam.”

## RESPONSE

There’s nothing unnatural about same-sex attraction. In fact, all sexual orientations and gender identities are natural and have been documented in Muslim cultures for centuries.

## MYTH

“Being this way can be cured through prayer.”

## RESPONSE

LGBTQ identity is not a phase nor an illness. Efforts to change your loved one’s sexual orientation and gender identity is harmful and has been proven to be emotionally damaging. It does not work. You can pray for the safety and wellbeing of your loved one, but hoping to change who they are is not helpful.

# COMMON MYTHS, CONTINUED

## MYTH

“Getting or staying married will help confront this test from Allah.”

## RESPONSE

Encouraging your loved one to enter or remain in an unfulfilling marriage is not helpful. Getting or staying married to a person you are not romantically or sexually attracted to can be a traumatic experience for everyone involved.

# WHAT CAN I DO?

This is likely a difficult situation for you to navigate so it is especially important you consider the impact that your words and actions can have on your LGBTQ family member.

Whether your family member is a child, parent, grandparent, or spouse, here are some helpful things you can do to show support:

- Ask your loved one how you can be supportive. Let them know what would be helpful throughout your learning process (e.g. resources, groups, information).
- Join an LGBTQ-affirming Muslim community, Masjid, or online space.
- If your loved one has come out to you as trans or gender non-binary, ask about and use their preferred gender pronouns. If you make a mistake, don't worry - correct yourself and move on.

## WHAT CAN I DO? CONTINUED

- Accept and appreciate that LGBTQ Muslims exist, even if you were not aware of this before.
- Be compassionate to yourself and your loved one as you ask questions and have discussions.
- Take the consequences of not accepting your loved one seriously. Think about the impact of alienation and rejection on your family member.
- Check out our support resources on Salaam Canada's website.

## FURTHER READING

**Our Daughters and Sons: Questions and Answers for Parents of LGBTQ Youth Adults**  
by PFLAG

**Faith in Our Families: Talking About Faith, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression**  
by PFLAG

**Homosexuality is Not a 'Test' From Allah**  
by Junaid Jahangir

**Homosexuality and Islam**  
by Siraj al-Haqq Kugle

# CONNECT



@salaamcanada



salaamcanada.ca



salaamqueercanada@gmail.com