

# **LEAD with Love – Quick Guide for Parents**

**L**et your affection show

**E**xpress your pain away from your child

**A**void rejecting behaviors

**D**o good before you feel good

## **Ways to let your affection show**

### **Things to say**

I love you

I care about you

I'm proud of you...

- for being so smart.
- for being so kind.
- for being so creative.
- for being so athletic.
- for being such a good brother, or sister, or son, or daughter.
- for bravely sharing this news with us.

### **Things to do**

Hugs

Pats on the back

Backrubs

Spend fun time together...

- cooking
- going to a movie or sporting event
- shopping
- playing board games
- biking, throwing a ball, hiking, camping, or exercising together

## **Expressing pain away from your child**

1. Recognize when you're feeling negative things, and give yourself permission to feel them.
2. Don't bring these feelings to your child.
3. Express your negative feelings somewhere else. Try talking to your spouse, your best friend, or a therapist. Keep a journal, exercise, listen to music, take a long walk alone.
4. Talk to your child when you're feeling positive and under control again.

## **Avoid these rejecting behaviors**

- Verbal or physical abuse
- Invalidating the news (e.g., suggesting that this is a phase; refusing to believe what they've told you)
- Encouraging your child to keep their sexual orientation a secret.
- Suggesting that your child should "tone down" their looks or actions so that they seem less gay.
- Blaming your child for negative reactions they might be experiencing (e.g., saying to your child, "if you didn't act so gay, kids at school might leave you alone").
- Limiting access to lesbian, gay, or bisexual resources (e.g., not allowing your child to go to a youth support group, or to participate in the school's gay-straight alliance).
- Attempting to change your child's sexual orientation by taking them to a therapist or religious leader.