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Although parents may feel responsible for their children's sexual orientation, an individual's sexual orientation isn't anyone's "fault." Parents blame themselves for a variety of reasons, including failing to provide the "proper" family environment or raising children with the wrong methods. Some single parents even blame themselves for having a different family structure.

Ultimately, parents' actions have no influence on a child's sexual orientation. A person's attraction to another develops naturally and does not change due to one's family environment. At the end of the day, self-blame originates from parents' love for and worries about their children. If you can listen to what your child has to say and understand his or her perspective and situation through open dialogue, you can come closer to your child and understand that the feeling of self-blame is not warranted.

My child just came out to me! This is a total shock – what am I supposed to do?

Most parents find out that their child is gay without being prepared for it. Often, parents experience several emotions, including worry, insecurity, self-blame, and anger. At this time, finding opportunities to express your emotions and gain proper knowledge is very important. Expressing your emotions can help you calm them and gaining proper knowledge will eliminate unnecessary worries. Some appropriate actions include getting help from other parents of gay children, social workers, or psychologist (for the parents).

What do I tell other family members and relatives? How do I deal with the pressure?

Before trying to manage these pressures, please take care of yourself first. Since every family has different dynamics, there is no one single rule. We

suggest that you talk with your child about your stress and identify ways to reduce the stress together. As long as the channels of communications are being kept open, families often return to normal. Pressure from relatives often takes the form of asking about your child. You can say respond with, "My child is a grown up, parents need to respect him/her" or "Nowadays society is much more open; Being gay is no longer frowned upon."

Gay people do not pass down the family lineage. Isn't this very selfish?

Passing down the family lineage is important in some cultures. However, forcing your gay child into a heterosexual marriage not only sacrifices your child's happiness, but also harms another innocent party. If there is no emotional connection between parents, their children will not grow up in a nurturing environment. Is this really the better option? Nobody wants to cause a life time of misery for the sake of conforming to traditional expectations.

Can gay people make good parents?

Yes. We have to recognize that parents' sexual orientation does not influence or determine their children's sexual orientation. Studies show that children growing up in households with same-sex parents develop just as well as children in household with different-sex parents.

Gay people have no one to take care of them when they get old – what will they do?

Raising children to take care of you is no longer the way to prepare for old age in the modern world. Regardless of people's sexual orientation, everyone will need to plan for their own retirement.



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