

Keeping your PRIDE alive when you are back home

We know leaving a supportive community and having to return home to people in your life that do not know about or are unsupportive of your sexual and/or gender identities can be very difficult.

Here are some tips to help you try to keep your pride and truth shining:

#1. Stay Connected

We all want to feel like we belong and are supported by others, so it is important to have a community you can rely on that accepts you and allows you to be your authentic self. Although away from campus, try to set up times when you can text/call or video chat with your support system. If you have access to the internet, you could also consider searching for others to connect with in the LGBTQ+ community. The Trevor Project has a free app called Trevor Space (trevorspace.org) that is exclusive for LGBTQ+ folks to be able to interact, be open and authentic to connect with and find support from others. Other helpful resources can be found at the link below: <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/websites>

#2. Self-Love and Self-Care

It can be exhausting and hurtful to feel like you have to hide your true self from others in order to feel safe or accepted. It is important to remind yourself about why YOU love you. Consider writing down or thinking of 5 qualities you like about yourself, or even writing self-affirmations. Remember that you are worthy and loved for being YOU even if you are in an environment that might suggest otherwise. Try to engage in self-care activities to take care of yourself. Engaging in activities that you like could distract you or remove you from harmful people. By engaging in self-care and self-love, you are reminding yourself that you deserve love and care. If you need ideas, click on the relaxation and meditation videos, stress management and other self-care handouts on the Cook Counseling website.

#3. Set Boundaries

If possible, consider asking others to not discuss their beliefs, certain offensive topics, or make transphobic/homophobic jokes. If not possible, consider setting boundaries for yourself to go to another room during those times or by planning to engage in self-care/love after having boundaries crossed by others. Unfortunately, with certain people you may not be safe in expressing your truth or avoiding boundary crossing. If you are not with others, know you do not have to come out. It is your choice and a boundary you can hopefully set for yourself in who you want/do not want to share your identities with. If you are considering coming out while back home and need help/tips, check [HRC.org](https://www.hrc.org) or [thetrevorspaceproject.org](https://www.thetrevorspaceproject.org) for guides and other supportive resources.