Holiday Self-Care Tips for LGBTQ Folx

For LGBTQ folx, the holidays can be a particularly difficult time. Complicated relationships with family can make the holidays a stressful, overwhelming and upsetting time for many folx. Whether it is spending time with family, coping with loss and rejection, or time leading up to a holiday gathering, there may be anxiety, sadness or other emotions associated with it.

Self-care can be a way to extend love and support oneself when feeling stressed or alone. Self-care can help one feel grounded especially when things feel out of control. Self-care plans can vary—they’re just as diverse and unique as the people who use them!

Below are ways to support self, before, during, and after the holidays:

- **Identify things that may be helpful or comforting** throughout the holidays, such as a music playlist, quotes or writings from LGBTQ+ authors and advocates, or pictures of chosen family. You can also prepare some ways to relax or engage in calming practices before or after gatherings, such as creating art, writing/journaling, taking a bubble bath, watching favorite TV shows, taking a walk, or reconnecting with hobbies like dance or crafts.

- **Connect with a supportive, affirming friend, mentor, and/or chosen family** to talk about how you’re doing. This can give you a clearer understanding of fears and worries, and can help identify support you may need. Social support is powerful in reducing sense of loneliness and increasing feeling cared for. If you know that someone will be at holiday gatherings who might be supportive of your identity, it might be helpful to talk with them beforehand if you are able to do so.

- **Step away** from family at any point to take care of yourself if you feel safe doing so, even if it is just a quick walk outside or a trip to the bathroom. It is important to remember that you can also step away from tense conversations or unwanted questioning by excusing yourself or redirecting the conversation to a different topic.

- **Get creative about the way that you affirm yourself with family.** Folx have found it helpful to wear a piece of jewelry or clothing that feels affirming while around family. This can be something that is visible to others if that feels safe for you, or it can be something you wear under your clothing (like a necklace, a cool pair of socks, an undergarment, or a cute t-shirt) so that only you know that it is there.

- **Repeating an affirmation** to oneself when feeling anxious or upset can help re-center. This can be very specific to your experience with specific comforting words or phrases, or it can be as simple as “I am valid,” or “I deserve to be supported and loved for who I am.”
If you would need additional support, please know that you’re not alone! UChicago Student Wellness is here to support students. We strive to provide inclusive, affirming, and culturally competent services and support. All of our staff are committed to supporting the diverse health and well-being needs of our students in various ways.

Student Wellness
Phone Number: 773.834.9355 Website: https://wellness.uchicago.edu/
Therapist-on-Call (24/7): 773.702.3625. If you need to meet with someone urgently during counseling and psychiatry office hours (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.), call 773.834.9355 and ask to speak with the urgent care counselor.

TimelyCare
https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/timelycare/
TimelyCare offers on-demand and scheduled services to enhance students’ access to mental health support, including Talk Now and scheduled counseling sessions. Through TalkNow, students can connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Trevor Project
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/
If you are an LGBTQ young person in need of support, reach out to a crisis counselor, available 24/7. Text “START” to 678-678 or call 1-866-488-7386 or click on webpage to start a chat message.

Self-care tips adapted from:
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/holiday-self-care-tips-for-lgbtq-youth/