

# Festive Season

## 2SLGBTQ+ Self-Care Tips and Resources

Making plans and navigating our time on winter break can be difficult. As queer and trans people we often experience a great deal of joy as well as increased stress during the winter break.

Being around unsupportive people such as one's birth/origin family and relatives may put pressure on us to conform to straight cisgender norms, scrutinize our bodies, ask invasive and inappropriate questions, misgender and deadname us, and more.

Some of us have cut ties and may face isolation this season, combined with financial challenges, and may find the season particularly difficult.

Whether you are experiencing the overwhelming stress of being around family, and/or distanced from queer friends and chosen family, and/or facing isolation, please know that I and the folx at Yellow House care and are here to support you. The information that follows provides some self-care tips for this season. A caring 2SLGBTQ+ community exists all over, however at the bottom of this document you will find supports and groups at Queen's and in the wider Kingston community, as well as some supports accessible anywhere, any time. This document contains two parts,

1. care tips for the winter break, and 2. resources in the community.



# Festive Season

## Self-Care Tips for the Winter Break

Below are some tips for self care this season that have helped me over the years whenever I had to be in spaces with family over long periods of time as a queer and trans person. These are tips that have helped me, they may not work for you, please take from this what is valuable and meaningful to you, and above all keep your own wellbeing and safety in mind when planning for the break.

### 1. Remind yourself this is temporary

Whether you are surrounded by family, or isolated, or feeling both, this is all temporary. Being away from our supports, therapists, friends, chosen family, homes, loved ones, and pets can be really difficult. Do your best to stay connected online with these supports, but if they are unavailable over the break remind yourself they will be there when you get back. If you are in need of urgent support, or someone to just talk to during the break there are resources below you can contact. Above all, remind yourself things can and will change, if you are alone you will reconnect/connect with your community in the new year.

### 2. Listen to your body

Try your best to listen to your body and not what others are saying. With sudden changes to routine it can be hard to get moving, but moving in ways that make your body happy will help, try your best to keep active in whatever ways make you happy. Being around people who may be scrutinizing your body, pressuring you to dress and act a certain way can be very difficult. It may mean increased stress and responses such as decreased/increased eating, try to push away and ignore negative messages and take time to reflect on what your body needs and what you need for your own wellbeing. If you bind you may be feeling the need to bind for longer than is safe.

Remember to give yourself breaks from uncomfortable clothing, un-affirming clothing, and binding. Above all, let me remind you that your queer body is beautiful, and your health is more important than what others say or think.



# Festive Season

## Self-Care Tips for the Winter Break

### 3. Stand your ground when safe

If it is safe to do so and you have the energy to do so, be yourself. Although there may be pressure to conform to straight cisgender norms, if it is safe to do so, and you have a backup plan (a friend to crash with) you may find being yourself, dressing how you want to, using the name and pronouns that feel right may greatly benefit your own mental health. Sharing this new you with others may be difficult, and it may take people a while to adjust, however it can also have beautiful outcomes for everyone. Remind yourself (and possibly others) that they are lucky to have this opportunity to know the real you. However, know when to get out, and try to plan a backup plan (staying with friends) if you need to leave a situation.

It can also be really hard to say no, especially if you haven't seen loved ones in a long time, however try to remind yourself that you can say no! We are also living in a pandemic and things are scary, it's ok to 'disappoint' people for your own and others wellbeing.

No matter how you deal with interactions with others this season, you are doing what you can at this moment and doing what works for you and the dynamics of your relationships. If you are calling out grandpa for his racist comments and waving Pride flags and your wonderful queerness all over the house that's awesome. But also, if you are blending in, stealth, closeted, quietly keeping to the corners, and avoiding conflict, you are not wrong, and it's nothing to be ashamed of, you are doing what is best for you and your relationships at this time. Not everyone wants, or has the ability to be out, proud, and loud this season, and that's ok. What matters is you take care of yourself, your safety and wellbeing is vital, above all else treat yourself with compassion this season.



# Festive Season

## Self-Care Tips for the Winter Break

### 4. Immerse yourself in media

Enjoy queer media and find a comfort show, song, album, movie, podcast, book, etc. Watching queer-affirming media is wonderful, and it can often be done discreetly and quietly if you are in an unsupportive environment. Make sure to bring headphones, your charger, and whatever device you access media on! Being able to listen to a playlist that helps you feel better is a great escape. There are a few recommendations from our Yellow House team on what we are listening to, watching, and reading that you might want to check out: <https://www.queensu.ca/yellow-house/resources/brain-breaks>. In addition, Queen's Library has put together a small virtual collection for Pride Month highlighting some of the 2SLGBTQ+ resources available through the library <https://library.queensu.ca/about-us/news-events/resources-pride-month>, and Reelout Queer Film Festival has an abundance of wonderful queer films <http://www.reelout.com/>

### 5. Channel your emotions through creativity

Find an arts outlet for your emotions- yes even if you don't think you're an artist! Your local craft store likely sells craft sets that contain all you need to create. Consider colouring books that have affirmations or a topic you enjoy (yes- there are queer colouring books!), paint by number, and 'kids' craft sets such as painting window decorations and more. These activities are often meditative and calming and may help you de-stress. In addition beyond being an individual activity if you bring extra this may create space and opportunity for you to interact with others. In my experience decorating ornaments with the kids was a great escape from the stress of adulting. Express yourself and relax, anyone can do it!



# Festive Season

## Self-Care Tips for the Winter Break

### 6. Chosen family

Your birth/origin family doesn't have to be your only family, and you don't owe it to anyone to put yourself in unsafe situations. You deserve to be affirmed and happy, and sometimes that means spending less (or no) time with your birth family. If you don't feel safe around your birth family do your best to surround yourself with your friends and chosen family who support you, and love you. If you are facing isolation this winter some of the resources below provide 24/7 support discreetly via calling, texting, or online messaging, where you can talk to people. Once the winter break is over, you can also look into connecting with the various other supports listed below in the Kingston community and at Queen's.

### 7. Prepare and Plan!

Take some time to plan for the break, being prepared for the worst, or even those difficult conversations is important and will help you navigate things if these issues to arise.

Check in ahead of time with friends and loved ones you can call or text for support

Prepare affirmations (write out some words that give you strength and refer to them when needed)

Identify and check in with people you can physically visit and stay with in an emergency (important to talk about pandemic safety and check ahead of time with your supports)

Have some helplines on hand for yourself (and to share with others), there are some excellent helplines provided at the end of this document



# Festive Season

## Self-Care Tips for the Winter Break

Brief your family supports, if you have a few supportive family members talk to them in advance of gatherings and explain how they can support you (correcting others when they say the wrong name/pronouns for example)

If relevant talk to your family about attending a service at an affirming place of worship (pandemic allowing of course)

Write out a few brief sentences that shut down conversations you are not ready to have, and write some notes for the difficult conversations you might encounter (bullet points are your friend)

“that’s an inappropriate question, you wouldn’t ask anyone else that question, I’m not comfortable continuing this conversation”

“I am not prepared to talk about this right now”

“please see this resource (there is some media and learning links provided in the next section), and we can talk after”

Plan for after the winter break- what can you plan for in the new year to look forward to?

Follow some of the resources social media below and plan to attend events (most likely virtual) when you return. Also, plan some safe, socially distanced, online, or individual activities to recover. Look into planning conversations with friends, movies/shows you enjoy, watching, listening to, or reading queer-affirming media.

Additionally, if you have access to one make an appointment for after the winter break with your therapist, counselor, or other trusted people you can talk to so that you can look forward to these conversations.



# Festive Season

## Community Resources

The information below includes resources you can find in Kingston, at Queen's, and urgent assistance such as help lines you can access from anywhere. Some of these groups and services may not be open over the winter break but may have valuable information on their websites. You can follow some of these resources and groups on social media or check their websites to plan for the new year, as well as to see what is open this winter break. There are also some help lines which provide texting and online messaging options 24/7 if you need to chat with someone urgently.

### Queen's Groups, Initiatives, Programs, Centre's and more

Yellow House: excellent resources, and sign up on website for mailing list/newsletter and also following on social media  
<https://www.queensu.ca/yellow-house/>

EQuIP: On Facebook the Education on Queer Issues Project has a very active page with lots of events. This is student run group  
<https://www.facebook.com/equipqueens/>

Levana Gender Advocacy Centre: A student run group  
<https://levanacentre.wordpress.com/>

Ban Righ Centre: A centre for mature women (trans inclusive), that provides bursaries, advising, work space, financial assistance, and events. Previously held lunch speaker series.  
<https://www.queensu.ca/ban-righ-centre/services/ban-righ>

Student Wellness Services: <https://www.queensu.ca/yellow-house/resources/counselling-services> request Shannon Gendron (2SLGBTQ+ Counsellor)



# Festive Season

## Community Resources

**QUAQE:** A Queen's ERG (employee resource group) for 2SLGBTQ+ staff and faculty, if you are a student who is also staff, teaching assistant, or research assistant you are eligible to join. This is a Microsoft Teams group that hosts social events, and shares resources. Read more here:

<https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/growing-queer-community-queen-s>, if interested in joining email [sarah.bunting@queensu.ca](mailto:sarah.bunting@queensu.ca)

**SHRC (Sexual Health Resource Centre):** SHRC is a trans-affirming/supportive service, on campus, at cost sexual health items and services

<https://www.facebook.com/shrckingston>

**GAAP (Gender Affirming Assistance Project):** Provides gender affirming apparel, support and referrals

<https://m.facebook.com/GenderAffirmingAssistance/?fref=tag>

**Linktree:** <https://linktr.ee/queeratqueens>

**Queen's Events calendar:** has various events, some of them may be 2SLGBTQ+ relevant <https://www.queensu.ca/eventscalendar/>

### Kingston Community Groups, Initiatives, Programs, Centre's and more

**TransFamily Kingston:** TFAM is a grassroots support group for trans folx and their loved ones (invited family, friends, allies, partners), they host monthly meetings, events, and other initiatives <https://transfamilykingston.com/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TFamYGK>





# Festive Season

## Community Resources

**HARS (HIV AIDS Regional Services):** HARS has lots of queer/trans programs and events such as an art show, medical supplies, workshops, and queer/trans groups such as FUSE (19 and under), and Beyond the Binary (details below) Phone: 613-545-3698 and <https://www.facebook.com/harskingston/>

**Beyond the Binary (BTB):** BTB is a nonbinary group through HARS  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2708613622711681> or email  
[amandala@kchc.ca](mailto:amandala@kchc.ca)

**FUSE Youth Group:** Is a 2SLGBTQ+ group run through HARS for those 19 and under  
<https://www.facebook.com/FUSE-Youth-Group-195460157149842/>

**OPIRG:** is a centre for education, action and research for social and environmental justice <https://www.facebook.com/OpirgKingston/> and <https://opirgkingston.org/>

**Kingston Queer Women and Gender Diverse Group:** Is A social group for women who are bi/pan/queer, as well as for trans/nonbinary folx, primarily on Facebook this group hosts social events such as queer summer camp, snow sculpture contests, coffee meet n greets and more  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/973351622872611/>

**AKA:** non-hierarchical and community run, this group is very trans inclusive and do things like potlucks and free produce, they also have a free lending library and it's a nice space to go to meet people and hang out  
<https://www.facebook.com/akaautonomoussocialcentre/>

**KCHC Transgender Health Care** is a clinic at 263 Weller Ave. Unit 4  
<https://kchc.ca/weller-avenue/transgender-health-care/> and 613-542-2949 (press 4 for clinic)



# Festive Season

## Community Resources

### Media & Learning at Queen's and in Kingston

Queen's Library has put together a small virtual collection for Pride Month highlighting some of the 2SLGBTQ+ resources available through the library  
<https://library.queensu.ca/about-us/news-events/resources-pride-month>

Reelout Queer Film Festival: <http://www.reelout.com/>

Microsoft has released 2021 Pride themes which you can apply to your Queen's email and other Microsoft apps. In Outlook, you can find the Pride themes in Settings > Appearance, read more here <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/pride>

### Media & Learning Accessible from Anywhere

GEGI: Website for gender advocacy in schools (K-12 focus, but relevant learning and resources) <https://www.gegi.ca/>

Rainbow Health Ontario –Trans Health Knowledge Base:  
<https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/lgbt2sq-health/trans-health-knowledge-base/>

PFLAG Canada: <https://pflagcanada.ca/>  
Education and self advocacy:

The 519: <https://www.the519.org/>

CAMH Adult Gender Identity Clinic: <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/gender-identity-clinic-adult>



# Festive Season

## Community Resources

### Urgent Assistance & Helplines Accessible from Anywhere

Trans Lifeline Canada: [www.translifeline.org](http://www.translifeline.org) and 1-877-330-6366

The Trevor Project Call: 1-866-488-7386 text options, and online messaging options available <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7, national support service. It offers professional counseling, information and referrals, and volunteer-led, text-based support to young people in both English and French. This service is completely confidential. Call: 1-800-668-6868 or Text: 686868

LGBT Youth Line is a Queer, Trans, Two-Spirit\* youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario. It does this by providing anonymous peer support and referrals; training youth to provide support to other youth; and providing resources so youth can make informed decisions. Call: 1-800-268-9688 or Text: 647-694-4275

