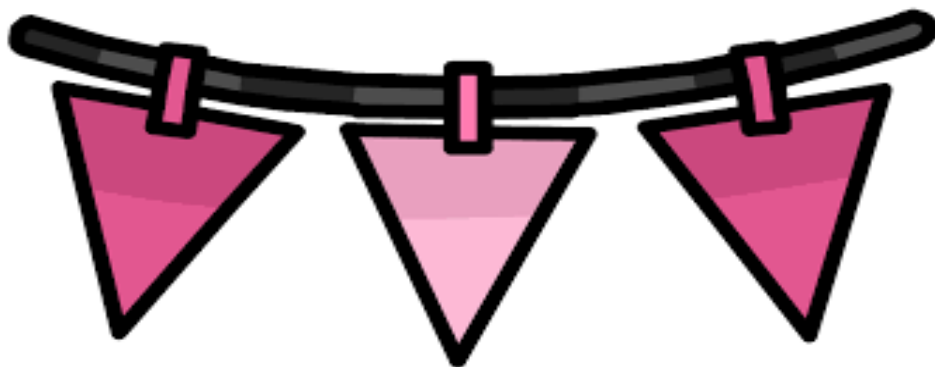


# Home for the Holidays

UCSC Cantú Queer Center

Fall 2015



Queer, trans, gender non-conforming folks, and queer people of color—as well as others who may have challenging relationships with their families—can feel a challenging ambivalence about going home during the breaks daunting task. Here are a few tips for taking care of yourself!

**Thanksgiving and Winter Break may bring up a variety of feelings and questions. Be kind to yourself.**

- ✓ If you are going home for Thanksgiving or Winter break, identify friends you can call or text.
- ✓ Set boundaries with folks at home: Let them know how long you will stay, what questions you will not answer, and what topics you are willing to discuss.
- ✓ Make time to spend some moments or hours alone, if possible.
- ✓ Gather the strength of your chosen family—those who always have your back, whether or not they are blood relatives.
- ✓ Set aside time during the day to reach out via social media.
- ✓ Prepare an exit strategy.
- ✓ Take time for self care.

## Looking for more support?

**Let's Talk:** Drop-in counseling with a CAPS therapist, Tuesdays at the Cantú from 2-4pm and Wednesdays at the Grad Student Commons from 12:30-2:30

**CAPS:** (831) 459-2628 **After hours:** (831) 459-2628

**GLBT National Hotline:** (888) 843-4564

**Trans Lifeline:** (877) 565-8860

## UCSC Students say:

- ✓ Remember that blood doesn't always make a family.
- ✓ Don't go see your family if you don't want to.
- ✓ Be patient, but defend yourself against any aggressions they may aim your way.
- ✓ Make plans early to hang out with friends back home.
- ✓ Hide in your room if you need to.
- ✓ Make a plan to leave if things get bad.
- ✓ Don't lose hope of a brighter future.

Created by the Cantú Queer Center at UCSC and adapted from Autostraddle.com, QueerTheology.com, Maria Caplan's *When Holidays are Hell...! A Guide to Family Gatherings*, and the brilliance of UCSC students

## Coming home... coming out?

You may be planning on coming out to your family or community at home while you are there. If so, consider:

- “Coming out” may be a continuous process. You may have to “come out” many times in your life, even with the same people. Remember, this reflects far more about others than it does about you. You may need to state boundaries to avoid having the same conversation. For example:  
*“I already told you that I identify as queer, and I don’t want to explain myself again. Here are some resources/websites/groups in the area to find more information. It would mean a lot to me if you checked them out.”*

### Before the visit...

1. Make a decision about being “out” to each family member before you visit.
2. If you are bringing a partner home, discuss in advance how you will talk about your relationship, show affection for each other, etc. Make a plan for sleeping arrangement in advance.
3. Make an exit plan. How will you leave if you need to get out quickly?
4. Have support available. Know how to contact a local Parents, Friends, and Friend of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org))

### During the visit...

1. You can tell your family members that you are the same person, and that you are sharing something about who you are so that you can have an honest relationship with them. Let them know it is act of trust for you to let them know you this closely!
2. If your partner will be with you, be sensitive to your partners’ needs as well as your own. Make sure they have space to be alone if they need it.
3. If it doesn’t feel like a good time to come out, you do not need to!

**Need to take a break? Can’t get away?** Check out some of these queer titles to tune out (some) of the holiday drama and tune in to queer imagination!

For Today I am a Boy, by Kim Fu. A Chinese-American trans girl grows up strong amidst expectations from her family.

Fairytales for Lost Children, by Diriye Osman. Lively short stories about immigrant queer Somalians.

Valencia, by Michelle Tea. A classic riot grrrl tale of working-class gay girl life in 1990’s San Francisco.

Fun Home and Are You My Mother? by Alison Bechdel. Poignant, exciting, and uplifting graphic novels detailing Bechdel’s relationship to her gender, sexuality, and family.

Freakboy, by Kristen Clark. Told in free and blank verse, a high schooler and his friends come to terms with his queer gender identity and expression.