Proud and Supported: Definitions and Beyond

Part 13: Finding community
Words to Know in Part 13
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A law in the United States. The ADA says that places have to be accessible to people with disabilities.

LGBTQ+

An acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and more.
Finding community

It can sometimes feel really lonely to be LGBTQ+.

You might feel like nobody around you understands you.

Or, you might feel like there are no other LGBTQ+ people around you.

Remember that there are always other LGBTQ+ people.
In the US, about 1 in every 20 adults is LGBTQ+.

We don’t know exactly how many people with disabilities are also LGBTQ+.

But we know that there are a lot of LGBTQ+ people with disabilities.
Meeting people

Here are some ways you can meet more LGBTQ+ people with disabilities:

• Go to community events.

• Go to other places where there are a lot of LGBTQ+ people, like a LGBTQ+ center.

• If you are part of a self-advocacy group, you can ask about starting a group specifically for LGBTQ+ self-advocates.
There might be other LGBTQ+ people in your group.

But they might be scared to come out.

You can help make a safer space for them.
Making things accessible

In the US, there is a law called the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA says that places need to be accessible to people with disabilities.

Most places have to follow the law.

All public spaces, like government buildings or parks, have to follow the ADA.
Most businesses have to follow the ADA.

Private homes don’t have to follow the ADA.

If you went to someone’s house, they wouldn’t have to follow the ADA.

You can read more about the ADA in our toolkit, “A Self-Advocate’s Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act”. 
Here are tips for making community events more accessible:

- Make sure to hold events in an accessible space.
- Build lots of breaks into the schedule.
- Let people know they can leave and come back if they need to.
• Make sure the lights are not too bright or too dark. Bright lights hurt some people’s eyes. But other people can’t see if the lights are too low.

• If there is music at the event, make sure to keep the volume low.

• Give people a quiet, dark space to go if they get overwhelmed.

• Speak up if someone says or does something ableist.
• Make sure that the materials for the event are in plain language or Easy-Read. Materials are things like handouts or advertising flyers.
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