

*What happened in Orlando was shocking and horrifying for us all. Kids will eventually find out what happened and it is important that they have the tools to understand and combat the hatred and violence that occurred. This guide is not meant to scare kids. It is meant to introduce the underlying issues so that when they are old enough to process the information, they are able to discuss it confidently. It is also meant to clearly state your feelings & values so that your children know that the people in their household support culturally competent values and they should too.*

*\*These age ranges are approximate. Always use your individual judgment about what is most appropriate for your child\**

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## Talking To Little Ones: Ages 0-7

1. *Introduce The Topic With Books:* Hopefully at this age, your child hasn't heard about the shooting itself, but you can use this as an opportunity to show love for any and all minority groups - including LGBTQ+ persons. Books are a great way to do this. Some options: *Heather Has Two Mommies. And Tango Makes Three. I Am Jazz.*
2. *Use Soundbites:* If they *have* heard about the shooting, explain it in clear, concise, simple terms. One sentence to explain what happened. One sentence to reassure their safety. More than that & many kids can't process the information.

## Talking to School-Aged Kids/Tweens: 8-13

1. *Connect It To Their Lives:* Do they know anyone who is being picked on at school? For what reasons? Are these reasons related to race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc? No need to make a direct connection to violence, but let kids know that seemingly 'innocent' teasing or bullying can have significant consequences down the line.
2. *Highlight the Helpers:* Let them know there are *always* **allies** (adults & kids). Let them know that they can be **allies**. Let them know that **allies** are just as powerful as bullies.

## Talking to Teens/Young Adults: 14+

1. *Listen To What They Think:* Most teens will have heard what happened. Take some time to listen to their thoughts. Do not try to argue or protest at first - just listen. Helping them talk and allowing them to get their feelings out will help them to process everything. Communicate your input, feelings, and values after they are done.
2. *Brainstorm Solutions:* This will empower kids to feel that they have some control; that they can make a difference (because they can!). Violence is not always avoidable; you won't always have a choice. But working against hatred? That is **ALWAYS** a choice.

*\*For all Kids\**

*Be Honest*

*Reassure Them*

*Extra Hugs & Love!*

