



NEWSLETTER

April 2022



Greetings, Friends of PFLAG Leonardtown!

Happy Spring!

Spring is officially here and while the weather in Southern Maryland is hit or miss, the warmer days are on the way!

April 2nd was World Autism Awareness Day, so PFLAG Leonardtown would like to highlight the link between Autism Spectrum Disorder and the LGBTQ+ community. Autism is part of a wider range of differing "neurotypes" including ADHD and learning disorders, and emerging research shows how prevalent queer identities are among neurodiverse individuals.

The overlap between autism and non-cisgender identity is large; one 2018 study found that 70% of autistic respondents reported being not heterosexual, not cisgender, or both. Even among those autistic individuals not belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, there are similarities in discrimination and bullying based on the observable differences in autistic people and neurotypicals. Much like people on the autism spectrum, people in our community are frequently invalidated by peers, family, and medical professionals alike, which leads to long-lasting problems with self-esteem and alienation.

Because of this marginalization, both autistic and queer individuals as a group experience much higher rates of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression than the general population. For BIPOC individuals belonging to these communities, the risk of mental health and traumatic reactions are compounded by experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination.

So what can we do to help welcome autistic and other neurodiverse people into the Southern Maryland LGBTQ+ community? One of the biggest tools we have at our disposal is education. Learning about how autism manifests and the strengths and needs of autistic people is key. Chances are you already know someone who is part of both communities; talk to them and learn about their experiences, as well as what you can do to make them more comfortable within queer spaces. Just like with neurotypical people, neurodiverse people have their own individual strengths, needs, and interests, all of which can be harnessed to serve and empower our community.

Remember: Love is love! Show your autistic peers that love extends to them as well, because we're all in this together!

References:

<https://outleadership.com/insights/why-neurodivergence-is-also-an-lgbtq-topic/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-trauma/202107/why-identifying-queer-can-be-harder-those-autism>

Important Dates in April:

All month- Arab Heritage Month

April 10th - Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

April 22nd - Earth Day & Day of Silence

April 26th - Lesbian Visibility Day

We are still looking for more board members and committed volunteers! If you or anyone you know is interested in helping us plan our events and keep this organization running please have them email us with a resume or short bio at pflag.leonardtown@gmail.com. We are very interested in family members, friends, and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community as board members, so don't be shy if you're not directly part of the community.

Yearly membership Dues for PFLAG Leonardtown run from October through September which means that it's time to renew your membership with us so you can stay up to date on what's going on and vote in our annual elections. We appreciate all of our members who continue to support our efforts to Educate, Support, and Advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community in Southern Maryland. Thank you all!! Dues can be easily paid online through our website at: www.pflagleonardtown.org.

Peer to Peer Meeting Info:

Youth: Wednesday, April 20th, 6:15-7:45 pm

Location: HYBRID @ Prince Frederick Library & Zoom:

<https://pflag-org.zoom.us/j/98472032454>

Adult: Wednesday, April 27th, 6:15-7:45 pm

Location: HYBRID @ Charlotte Hall Library & Zoom:

<https://pflag-org.zoom.us/j/92121692208>

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, April 9th, 11-4 pm - Come see us at the Easter Egg Festival at SMC Fairgrounds!

TBD May Date: Adult 21+ Happy Hour @ Brudergarten, Leonardtown

Saturday, June 4th, 9-10 am: PFLAG Event w/ Ulta Beauty in Prince Frederick

Pride Picnic - Late June- date coming soon!

More events are coming soon!!

Wishing you a happy & healthy month!

PFLAG Leonardtown
Family of The Heart



[Check out these resources that can help!](#)

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/>

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

<https://itgetsbetter.org/get-help/>

Trans Lifeline : 1-877-565-8860