

Every parent wishes for their son or daughter to grow up like them e.g.: meet someone of the opposite sex, get engaged, marry and eventually have children. Occasionally a child will begin to show signs of acting oddly around someone of the opposite sex. They also try to hide these signals from friends in school, family or workmates. But sometimes these signals are hard to hide and the more they try the easier it is for others to pick up on.

Our son is gay. We aren't afraid to say it. We are afraid for him though that others will abuse him verbally and or physically. We are a normal couple, with sons and daughters and we never thought about someone else's sexual orientation. Live and let live was how we thought, and still do.

Our son became part of a very large youth group, with people ranging as young as 10 to 25 years of age. They put on shows in various places and we were very proud of the way our son was growing into manhood, learning to work with and helping others.

I began to notice some odd behavioural patterns by him, not that he noticed. At least one very good-looking girl I believe was taking an interest in him. He seemed to be interested in her, but not in a way most guys take interests in girls e.g. flirting with her etc. But then, that was part of him hiding his true feelings from everyone around him. During his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party this girl and our son were chatting when the girl let slip something, which caught my attention and the word 'gay', was used. I noticed our son 'hushing' her up with his finger over his lips. I thought nothing more of it. As time went on I began to notice he was changing his style of clothing. My suspicions became aroused more each day then.

One night I said to my wife that I thought our son was gay. She said I was nuts and thinking too much. As time went on I began pointing out more and more signs to her and she then also began to get vibes that he was gay, but she didn't want to know. One night her nerves got the better of her and she asked him outright was he gay. He denied it, then left the house quickly and texted her admitting it.

I knew he was but my wife went into a fit of tears. I then thought, "Is it not the man that supposed to cry if it's his son?" "Why is she crying?"

A few days went past and our son seemed happier and more relieved. He seemed to be finally himself. We said nothing to him, we carried on life as normal and I think my wife just mentioned in passing something like..."thanks for telling the truth, you should've known you could've", or something like that. Life has carried on as usual, we laugh, we chat, and we go about our daily affairs.

So, to any parent out there reading this...Give him or her a big hug when he or she 'comes out'. It has taken some guts for them to. Remember, they will be the targets of abuse from others; please don't you be their first abuser!

Guess what? He's still our son and we are proud of him!