

Prioritizing Mental Health:

A Viewer's Guide for Watching PRAY AWAY



Be aware of some of the difficult themes that are explored throughout the film including but not limited to homophobia, transphobia, religious trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide ideation.

Consider watching the film with someone else who can support you throughout and after viewing the film. Talking with someone about an issue as it appears in the film can help to ease anxiety or discomfort.

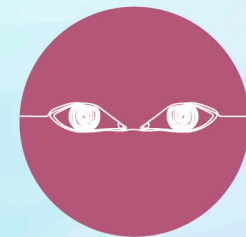
If there are scenes that feel too difficult to watch, **it's ok to skip them, to hit pause when you need to**, or to break up your viewing into different sessions.

For some people, watching this film may produce physiological reactions. These can include rapid heart rate, shallow breathing, dry mouth, sweating, tightened muscles, or jaw locking. If you experience any of these responses and need help relaxing your body, try some grounding techniques.

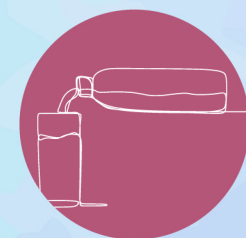
Grounding techniques are movements that help you stay in the present moment and reestablish safety. You can find more information about grounding [here](#).



Diaphragmatic breathing is a method to decrease or manage physiological reactions. Various resources like Breathe2Relax or MindShift CBT, (free through all mobile app stores) and YouTube videos like Dr. Andrew Weil's 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise offer helpful tutorials.



Observe your environment, either by counting the objects in the room or noticing sounds and colors around you. The goal is to bring yourself back into the room and out of your head. Other grounding approaches are holding a hot cup of tea close to your chest, holding an ice cube, or rubbing your legs for a few moments.



Drinking water will help with any of the dehydration your body might start to experience as a result of a rising heart rate, muscle strain, and shallow breathing. Dehydration can lead to nausea, fatigue, or headache and is best to treat immediately upon recognition.



Move your body by taking a walk outside or doing some stretches. This helps to get your blood flowing and helps you interrupt racing thoughts.



Listen to your favorite music or draw with colored pencils or markers. Creative expression helps to engage both sides of your brain and regulate yourself when you are feeling distressed.

If these grounding exercises do not seem to work for you, reach out to a friend and/or contact one of the resources listed below.

Additional Resources:



For LGBTQ affirming professional counseling:

[The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](#) (NQTTCN) is a healing justice organization committed to transforming mental health for queer and trans people of color (QTPOC). If you are a queer or trans identified person of color, NQTTCN also provides financial support for therapeutic services.

[PRIDE Counseling](#) is a professional, affirming, affordable online counseling for the LGBTQ community. PRIDE helps LGBTQ people find counseling resources regardless of financial limitations or geographic location.

[The Christian Closet](#) is a fully LGBTQ team of counselors and coaches, providing 100% online mental and spiritual health services.

For LGBTQ people leaving conversion therapy or non-affirming religious communities:

[The Reformation Project](#) is a Bible-based, Christian organization that works to promote the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the church. For people looking to reconcile their faith and sexuality or their faith and gender identity, TRP's website provides affirming educational materials that integrate the authority of the Bible, Christian tradition, reason, and the lived experiences of LGBTQ people.

[Conversion Therapy Survivors](#) is an online group of people who have experienced reparative therapy, 'ex-gay' ministries, sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE), aversion therapy, and other methods to mitigate or change their sexual orientation or gender identity. CTS exists to affirm lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer identities as psychologically, spiritually, and relationally whole.

For online LGBTQ Faith community:

[Q Christian Fellowship](#) is a Christian ministry focused on serving LGBTQ+ and straight ally Christians. QCF seeks to cultivate radical belonging through a commitment to growth, community, and relational justice. In keeping with its mission, QCF has launched the UNCHANGED campaign as an affirmative counter to the damage wrought in the name of God through ex-gay theologies and conversion therapy. You can read the stories and join the community [here](#).

[Transmission Ministry Collective](#) is an online community dedicated to the spiritual care, faith formation, and leadership potential of transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, and gender-expansive Christians. If you are looking for support or are in need of a virtual community you will be able to find that through TMC's text-based chat servers, video-based support groups, as well as their online Bible studies.

[Transgender Faith and Action Network](#) (TFAAN) is a multi-faith collective of trans people who recognize the value of being connected to one another and providing mutual support. TFAAN exists not only to change policies and raise awareness about issues that affect the trans community, but also to provide spaces for trans folks to network and heal through webinars, support groups, Zoom calls, and other virtual and in-person events.

While PRAY AWAY documents conversion therapy in the U.S. within Christian communities, they are far from the only religious groups who endorse sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts. For more LGBTQ affirming multifaith and interfaith resources, we recommend checking out [the LGBTQ Task Force's Institute for Welcoming Resources](#) website.