

Declaration on the Impropriety and Dangers of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts

We, as national organizations representing millions of licensed medical and mental health care professionals, educators, and advocates, come together to express our professional and scientific consensus on the impropriety, inefficacy, and detriments of practices that seek to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, commonly referred to as "conversion therapy."

We reiterate the prevailing science confirming that variations in sexual orientation and gender identity represent normal expressions of human diversity and cannot be changed at will.

We affirm the contemporary scientific agreement that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) is not a mental illness or disorder and should not be pathologized.

We emphasize the dangers of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, particularly for youth, which include increased risk of anxiety, depression, decreased self-esteem, social withdrawal and isolation, homelessness, substance abuse, and suicidality.

Sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts present additional, preventable risk factors to LGBT youth, a group that is already at heightened risk for suicide.

While we agree that most medical and mental health professional organizations understand that trying to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is harmful, we also acknowledge that, in virtually every state, some therapists continue to engage in these dangerous practices, deceiving parents, and causing LGBT youth to suffer a variety of consequences and adverse outcomes.

We express alarm at the continued prevalence of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts as highlighted by a recent Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law report that estimated 20,000 LGBT minors in states without legal protections will be subjected to these harmful practices by a licensed healthcare professional.

A health care provider's ability to effectively treat patients is not limited by laws and regulations that prevent licensed health care providers from engaging in sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts.

We stand firmly together in support of legislative and policy efforts to curtail the unscientific and dangerous practice of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts.

Signed,

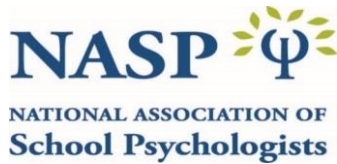


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