

Mental Health Protections Act Fact Sheet

Understanding the Need for Mental Health Protections

CONVERSION THERAPY IS DANGEROUS

“Conversion therapy,” often referred to as “reparative therapy,” “ex-gay therapy,” or “sexual orientation change efforts,” includes a range of dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing a person’s sexual orientation, or efforts to change a person’s gender identity or expression. These harmful practices are based on the false claim that being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ+) is a mental illness that should be cured. Unfortunately, LGBTQ+ people may be coerced and subjected to these harmful practices, which put Minnesotans at risk for serious harms such as depression, substance abuse, and suicide.

CONVERSION THERAPY IS NOT AN ACCEPTED MEDICAL PRACTICE

Conversion therapy has been denounced by every mainstream medical and mental health association, including the American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

“[The APA] advises parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder...”

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

“Our AMA...opposes, the use of ‘reparative’ or ‘conversion’ therapy that is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that the patient should change his/her homosexual orientation.”

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

“Confusion about sexual orientation is not unusual during adolescence. Counseling may be helpful for young people who are uncertain about their sexual orientation or for those who are uncertain about how to express their sexuality and might profit from an attempt at clarification through a counseling or psychotherapeutic initiative. Therapy directed specifically at changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation.”

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PROTECTING LGBTQ+ MINNESOTANS FROM HARMFUL CONVERSION THERAPY

The Mental Health Protections Act will protect LGBTQ+ people from a dangerous and discredited practice aimed at changing one's sexual orientation, including efforts to change gender identity or expression. This bill will prevent mental health care providers in Minnesota from practicing conversion therapy.

This Legislation Will:

- Protect Minnesotans from being coerced into treatments which are ineffective and which lead to depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, self-harm and suicide.
- Prevent parents from being taken advantage of by deceptive agents of the conversion therapy industry.
- Help ensure that LGBTQ+ people receive mental health care that is ethical, affirming, and culturally competent.
- Does NOT affect religious or individual prayer practices.
- Restrictions only apply for paid services rendered.

While we cannot know the precise number of those who have been subjected to these practices in Minnesota, we know of multiple cases of LGBTQ+ people experiencing attempts to change their identity within our state. As of Dec 2021, 20 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and more than 75 cities nationwide have restricted this harmful practice. On July 15th, 2021, Governor Walz signed an Executive Order that banned state funding from going to conversion therapy, although this did not ban the practice of conversion therapy altogether. Minnesotans have the chance to continue leading on LGBTQ+ rights by passing the Mental Health Protections Act.

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OutFront Minnesota's mission is to create a state where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are free to be who they are, love who they love, and live without fear of violence, harassment, or discrimination. **For 35 years we have led the way toward LGBTQ+ equity!**



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