

Position Statement on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Change Efforts 2019

Conversion therapy, also known as reparative therapy, or sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, is a range of practices which falsely claim to be able to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. These practices have been discredited by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry, the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Psychological Society and many other professional organizations including the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association and the American College of Physicians.

There is no evidence to support the application of any therapeutic intervention operating under the premise that a specific gender identity or sexual orientation is pathological. Such therapies lack scientific credibility, and indeed there is evidence that they are harmful. A number of Australian states and territories have legislated against these practices, or are considering such legislation.

There is emerging evidence that these practices have gone "underground", and are occurring within faith-based organizations including schools, and are being undertaken by counsellors including chaplains, religious ministers and a small number of registered health professionals.

The Sexual Health Society of Queensland opposes any practice which is based on pathologizing gender identity or sexual orientation, and believes that all individuals have a right to freedom from harassment or discrimination, and protection from potentially damaging therapies or change efforts.

We encourage all practitioners to take an evidence-based approach to the management of Gender Dysphoria, and to avoid misrepresenting change efforts as effective therapy when working with trans and gender diverse individuals.