

Ending Conversion Therapy Statement

February 13, 2016

Written by: OPA LGBT Committee and Board of Directors

Because Contemporary science recognizes that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender or identifying as other than heterosexual is part of the natural spectrum of human identity and is not a disease, disorder, or illness (Task Force of the American Psychological Association on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, 2009).

Because an October 2015 report of the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration entitled *Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youths* states that “interventions aimed at a fixed outcome, such as gender conformity of heterosexual orientation, including those aimed at changing gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are coercive, can be harmful, and should not be part of behavioral health treatment.”

Because the following professional organizations affirm that non-heterosexual identities are normal and that efforts to change sexual orientation are harmful and dangerous to youth:

- The American Psychological Association
- The American Psychiatric Association
- The American Academy of Pediatrics
- The American Medical Association
- The National Association of Social Workers
- The American Counseling Association
- The American School Counselor Association
- The American Psychoanalytic Association
- The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- The Pan American Health Organization
- The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists

The Ohio Psychological Association therefore affirms that same-sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality regardless of sexual orientation identity.

The Ohio Psychological Association affirms a position that youth who identify as homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or are otherwise not hetero-normative are not, per se, suffering from a mental disorder and opposes portrayals of sexual minority youths and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation.

The Ohio Psychological Association concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Ohio Psychological Association encourages mental health professionals to avoid misrepresenting the efficacy of sexual orientation change efforts by promoting or promising change in sexual orientation when providing assistance to individuals distressed by their own or others' sexual orientation.

The Ohio Psychological Association concludes that the benefits reported by participants in sexual orientation change efforts can be gained through approaches that do not attempt to change sexual orientation.

The Ohio Psychological Association advises parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray non-heteronormative identities as expressions of a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth.

The Ohio Psychological Association encourages practitioners to consider the ethical concerns outlined in the 1997 APA Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Response to sexual Orientation (American Psychological Association, 1998), in particular the following standards and principles: scientific bases for professional judgments, benefit and harm, justice, and respect for people's rights and dignity."

The Ohio Psychological Association strongly opposes the use of techniques such as sexual orientation "conversion" or "reparative" therapies, especially with minors because of the harm such techniques cause to youths as a result of the stigmatization, coercion, and negativity inherent in such techniques.

The Ohio Psychological Association affirms a policy of encouraging the legislature of the State of Ohio and other elected officials in Ohio to ban through legislation, regulation, and

policy, the use of so-called “reparative” or “conversion” therapies by licensed professionals for the purpose of sexual-orientation change in minors.