



The Facts About “Conversion Therapy” – What Science Tells Us



“Conversion therapy” is not therapy

- Homo-, bi-, and pansexuality and gender identification that does not match the sex assigned at birth are not diseases^{1,2,3,4,5,6} and therefore do not require therapy.
- Many providers of so-called “conversion therapies” are not trained psychotherapists and therefore have no professional training.

“Conversion therapy” describes any attempt to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, or any component of these. The scientific evidence on “conversion therapies” and their harms is clear: attraction to the same gender or multiple genders, gender nonconformity, and identification as a sexual and/or gender minority (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, asexual; LGBTQA+) are not illnesses and do not need treatment. “Conversion therapy” practices are not “therapy” and can do serious long-term damage. Many psychological and medical societies have therefore clearly distanced themselves from “conversion therapies” and are in favor of a ban.^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

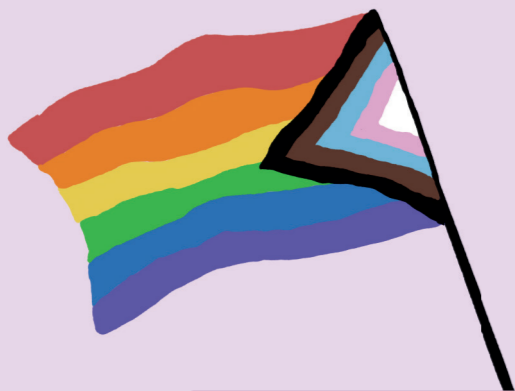


Mental health associations warn against “conversion therapy”

- Numerous professional associations make it clear that identifying as LGBTQ+ is not a disorder, does not require treatment, and “conversion therapies” does not effect changes in sexual orientation/gender identity. Furthermore, it can be permanently harmful.^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

“Conversion therapy” does not work and has harmful effects

- Individuals’ sexual orientation and/or gender identity cannot be changed: “conversion therapies” are not effective in changing sexual orientation and/or gender identity.^{7,8,9,10,11,12}
- However, “conversion therapies” can push people to hide their sexual orientation and/or gender identity,¹³ which can lead to other problems such as depression, sexual problems, and low self-esteem.^{11,12}
- Efforts to change sexual orientation and/or gender identity during adolescence are particularly harmful and can increase suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and depression in young adulthood.¹⁴ Involvement of religious providers in “conversion therapies” is even more strongly associated with depression and suicidality.^{12,15}



Based on scientific evidence, Switzerland should end these harmful and discriminatory practices and ban “conversion therapy”.

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¹ Schweizer Berufsverband für Angewandte Psychologie (2020). Stellungnahme Konversionstherapie. Available at https://sbap.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/20200224_SBAP_Konversionstherapie.pdf ² Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie (2019). Stellungnahme der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie (DGPs) zum Referentenentwurf des Sexuelle-Orientierung-und-geschlechtliche-Identität-Schutz-Gesetz – SOGISchutzG. Available at https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/3_Downloads/Gesetze_und_Verordnungen/Stellungnahmen_WPI9/Konversionsbehandlungen/Stn_DGPs_20.11.19.pdf ³ American Psychological Association: Division 44 Public Policy Committee (2022). Facts About “Conversion Therapy”. Available at <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/conversion-fact-sheet.pdf> ⁴ Australian Psychological Association (2019). Use of psychological practices that attempt to change or suppress a person’s sexual orientation or gender: Position statement. Available at https://psychology.org.au/getmedia/7bb91307-14ba-4a24-b10b-750f85b0b729/updated_aps_position_statement_conversion_practices.pdf ⁵ American Medical Association (2018). Advocating for the LGBTQ community. Available at <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2019-12/conversion-therapy-issue-brief.pdf> ⁶ APA Division 44 Public Policy Committee (2022). Facts About “Conversion Therapy”. Available at <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/conversion-fact-sheet.pdf> ⁷ Flentje, A., Heck, N.C., & Cochran, B.N. (2013). Sexual reorientation therapy interventions: Perspectives of ex-ex-gay individuals. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 17(3), 256-277. ⁸ Weiss, E.M., Morehouse, J., Yeager, T., & Berry, T. (2010). A qualitative study of ex-gay and ex-ex-gay experiences. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 14(4), 291-319. ⁹ Dehlin, J.P., Galliher, R.V., Bradshaw, W.S., Hyde, D.C., & Crowell, K.A. (2015). Sexual orientation change efforts among current or former LDS church members. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(2), 95-105. ¹⁰ Maccio, E. (2011). Self-reported sexual orientation and identity before and after sexual reorientation therapy. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 15(3), 242-259. ¹¹ Haldeman, D.C. (2001). Therapeutic antidotes: Helping gay and bisexual men recover from conversion therapy. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 5(3/4), 117-130. ¹² Beckstead, A.L., & Morrow, S.L. (2004). Mormon clients’ experiences of conversion therapy: The need for a new treatment approach. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 32(5), 651-690. ¹³ Fjelstrom, J. (2013). Sexual orientation change efforts and the search for authenticity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60(6), 801-827. ¹⁴ Ryan, C., Toomey, R.B., Diaz, R.M., & Russell, S.T. (2018). Parent-initiated sexual orientation change efforts with LBT Adolescents: Implications for young adult mental health and adjustment. *Journal of Homosexuality* 67(2), 159-173. ¹⁵ Borowich, A. (2008). Failed reparative therapy of orthodox Jewish homosexuals. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 12(3), 167-177.