



American Academy of Nursing on Policy

American Academy of Nursing position statement on reparative therapy

Reparative therapies, sometimes called conversion therapies or sexual orientation change interventions, have been widely discredited by most major health care professional organizations for their lack of scientific justification, failure to achieve intended results, questionable clinical practices, disregard and lack of respect for normal human differences, and inherently harmful effects on mental and physical health of individuals being pressured to change (APA, 2009; AMA, 2014). The [American Psychological Association's Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation \(2009\)](#) carried out a systematic review of the literature and "concluded that efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful and involve some risk of harm..." (pg. v).

Aversive techniques used in reparative therapies have included electric shock, physical violence, administration of emetics, and personal degradation and humiliation. Many lesbian and gay people have been coerced or forced into receiving reparative therapies, with minors being especially vulnerable. In violation of individual human rights, physical isolation and deprivation of liberty have also been used to facilitate "treatment" ([Pan American Health Organization, 2012](#)). Although several states have passed laws banning the use of reparative or conversion therapy, the practice continues in many parts of the United States.

The American Academy of Nursing strongly supports the position of the [Pan American Health Organization \(2012\)](#) and those of various other professional bodies such as the [American Psychiatric Association \(2013\)](#), [American Psychoanalytic Association \(2012\)](#), [American Psychological Association \(1975\)](#), [Anton \(2010\)](#), [International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses \(2008\)](#), [National Association of Social Workers \(2000\)](#), [American Medical Association \(2014\)](#) and the [Association of American Medical Colleges \(2014\)](#) that same-sex sexual relationships between consenting adults are a form of healthy human sexual behavior. The Academy concludes that reparative therapies aimed at "curing" or changing same-sex orientation to heterosexual orientation are pseudo-scientific, ineffective, unethical, abusive and harmful practices that pose serious threats to the dignity, autonomy and human rights as well as to the physical

and mental health of individuals exposed to them. Based on sound scientific evidence, its commitment to human rights and dignity, and its mission of promoting positive health outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, the Academy concludes that efforts to "repair" homosexuality, by any means, constitute health hazards to be avoided and are to be condemned as unethical assaults on human rights and individual identity, autonomy, and dignity.

Acknowledgments

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