



IPA OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF CONVERSION THERAPY

as of February 2020

The Idaho Psychological Association (IPA) is dedicated to advancing psychology as a profession, practice, and a scientific endeavor. As such, IPA is committed to disseminating scientific information in matters of public interest (IPA Mission Statement, 2016).

The American Psychological Association (APA), of which IPA is an affiliated organization, developed a Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation in 2007. After a thorough review of research available the Task Force concluded that there is very little methodologically sound research on sexual orientation change efforts and it is unlikely that individuals will reduce same-sex attractions or increase other-sex sexual attractions and there is a potential for harm (<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/sexual-orientation>).

In 2015, APA joined with representatives from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a branch of the government's Department of Health and Human Services, to reach a consensus regarding therapy with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, plus other marginalized, (LGBTQIA+) youth. Nearly unanimous consensus was reached that same-gender sexual orientation was part of the normal spectrum of human diversity and did not constitute a mental disorder; that the existing research on conversion therapy in youth do not support its efficacy; and that such interventions are coercive and may be harmful (<https://www.apa.org/advocacy/civil-rights/sexual-diversity/lgbtq-therapy>).

Further, APA issued a report concluding that the reported risks of conversion therapy include: depression, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, shame, social withdrawal, suicidality, substance use, stress, disappointment, self-blame, decreased self-esteem and authenticity to other, increased self-hatred, loss of faith, and many more (<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf>). Research also shows that lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults who reported high levels of family rejection during adolescence were more than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression, and more than 8 times more likely to report having attempted suicide (https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/FAP_Family%20Acceptance_JCAPN.pdf).

There are currently 19 states that have enacted state laws banning conversion therapy for minors: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and most recently Utah in January 2020.

In summation, IPA stands behind research which asserts that conversion therapies for LGBTQIA+ individuals are not medically necessary; are not efficacious; and have the potential for harm.