



Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities' Position Statement on Pro-Conversion Therapy Legislation

The recent and alarming rise of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and the preceding shifting of the Overton window have caused a resurgence of support for conversion therapy, especially for transgender and gender diverse individuals. Conversion therapy is the practice of attempting to change an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression to align with heterosexual and cisgender norms. It is based on the belief that being a member of the LGBTQ+ community is an aberration, which is irrefutably false. In the face of these bills and laws, the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE) upholds the values of our profession and our organization in opposing conversion therapy in all forms.

Conversion therapy for members of the LGBTQ+ community is dangerous and actively leads to harm¹. The practice is demonstrably pseudoscientific, and the suffering it causes has been acknowledged by many who formerly created and promoted it. Certain governmental jurisdictions are attempting to either force conversion therapy to be used in clinical therapeutic practice or forbid state mental healthcare boards from banning these overtly harmful modalities.² There are also legislators in some states working to protect parents who seek to send their LGBTQ+ children to conversion therapy. Additionally, abroad, at least one regulatory organization is undermining national efforts to ban conversion therapy due to the inclusion of children in said ban.

Those seeking to permit the practice of conversion therapy are seeking to persecute the LGBTQ+ community through the promotion of a practice that multiple medical and mental healthcare organizations have denounced. Conversion therapy worsens mental health outcomes, resulting in

¹ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>

² <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/conversion-therapy-report/>

severe issues ranging from depression to substance abuse to suicide.³ People who want these practices permitted are essentially advocating for pain and death.

We at SAIGE seek to remind our membership, our legislators, and our communities of conversion therapy's legacy and strongly urge all entities with such authority to enact bans on conversion therapy to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from this harm. These conversion therapy bans are grounded in science and the endorsement of evidence-based practices, which every iteration of conversion therapy is not.⁴

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³ <https://www.splcenter.org/conversion-therapy-fact-over-fiction>

⁴ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-sex-and-relationships/202111/why-conversion-therapy-should-be-illegal>