

Conversion Therapy

So-called conversion therapy has the predetermined aim of suppressing LGBTQ+ feelings and identities. This is in contrast to affirmative therapies, which seek to achieve self-acceptance and help individuals to understand and feel comfortable with their sexual orientation and / or gender identity, whether LGBTQ+ or not.

LGBTQ+ people do not need to be 'cured'. It is never in anyone's best interest to attempt to change or suppress their sexual orientation and / or gender identity. All such conversion practices are harmful and can damage people's mental health. So-called conversion therapy is abuse and some practices can be described as torture.

There is an ongoing movement advocating for a complete ban on conversion therapy in the UK, as has been done in Brazil, Canada, France, New Zealand, and many other countries.

The LGBTQ+ anti-abuse charity, Galop, has a dedicated helpline and email address for anyone needing support: 0800 130 3335 / CThelp@galop.org.uk

What is conversion therapy?

- Medical, psychiatric, psychological, religious, cultural (etc) interventions which aim to change 'cure' or suppress sexual orientation and / or gender identity.
- Rejected by every mainstream medical and mental health organisation.
- Recognised as unethical and harmful by the NHS, the British Psychological Association, the Royal College of GPs, UN agencies, and many others.
- All forms of conversion therapy can result in poor mental health outcomes such as: depression; anxiety; self-harm; feelings of guilt, shame and self-hatred; drug use; homelessness; and suicide.
- Can occur in both religious and non-religious settings and be practised by 'therapists', religious or community leaders, or family members.
- Conversion practices include formal 'therapy' sessions but can be more subtle, such as encouraging people to avoid acting on LGBTQ+ feelings, or more extreme, such as physical or sexual violence and exorcism.

What are the signs?

- Signs of abuse – please consider so-called conversion therapy among other potential causes if a young person is showing signs of abuse.
- Young people subjected to conversion practices may be unusually secretive, for example about a therapist they are seeing or a religious group they are attending.

Sources

<https://galop.org.uk/conversion-therapy-ban/>

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/what-is-ct/>

<https://www.banconversiontherapy.com/>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/ban-conversion-therapy>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/conversion-therapy-ban/>

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

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2020/07/conversion-therapy-can-amount-torture-and-should-be-banned-says-un-expert>

