



SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN SEXOLOGISTS

SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN SEXOLOGISTS LTD | ABN: 78 892 782 241
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The Society of Australian Sexologists Ltd (SAS) strongly opposes any practices based on the inaccurate belief that sexual orientation is a disorder to be treated. The Society also rejects any mental health approaches that only further harm a vulnerable population and go against the large body of evidence showing the very real and damaging impacts of stigma and exclusion on the LGBTIQ+ community.

As stated in the report, Responding to LGBT Conversion Therapy in Australia (Jones et al, 2018)

All major health authorities in the West now comprehensively reject conversion therapy as an appropriate response to people's gender and sexuality. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual sexualities, and transgender identities or expressions are not considered pathological. Conversion therapies are not regarded as scientifically credible or clinically useful; instead, evidence suggests that they are harmful.

This stance by SAS aligns with all major counselling and psychology registration bodies including the opinions of the Australian Psychology Society (APS), the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Christian Counsellors Association of Australia's (CCAA) as stated below.

SAS supports and reiterates the APS's position statement that no professional health organisation supports conversion practices as:

- 1) There is no clinical evidence demonstrating that approaches that claim to change a person's sexual orientation are effective.
- 2) There is, however, a considerable body of evidence documenting the negative effects of stigma associated with homosexuality, including higher rates of depression.
- 3) There is also clinical evidence that reparative, conversion and ex-gay approaches can compound the challenges already faced by some lesbians and gay men. For example, the 'failure' of such approaches can further contribute to negative mental health outcomes.



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REFERENCES

- Australian Psychological Society. (2015). *APS Position Statement on Psychological Practices that attempt to change Sexual Orientation*
<https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/ebd486a2-761c-403c-bdef406fda87dc4b/Position-Statement-Sexual-Orientation.pdf>
- Christian Counsellors Association Australia. (2019). *Code of Ethics* [CCAA-CODE-OF-ETHICS-May-2019.pdf](#)
- Jones, T, Brown, A, Carnie, L, Fletcher, G, & Leonard, W. (2018) *Preventing Harm, Promoting Justice: Responding to LGBT Conversion Therapy in Australia*. Melbourne: GLHV@ARCSHS and the Human Rights Law Centre.
- Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia. (2014). *Position Statement on Therapeutic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Transgender and Intersex Individuals and their Families*. <http://www.pacfa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PACFA-Position-Statement-on-therapeutic-support-for-LGBTI-individuals-and-their-families-OCT-2014.pdf>