



Australian Counselling Association Inc - ABN 12 242 711 378

ACA Position Statement LGBTIQ+

The following is the ACA Position Statement on the use of sexual orientation change efforts and therapeutic support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) individuals and their families.

ACA recognises that “all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (United Nations, 2012) and as such embraces the sexual diversity of all human adults whose sexual practice is consensual.

ACA recognises that (LGBTIQ+) people and their families are subject to significant pressures and discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender expression and that, in the past sexual orientation change efforts have been practised with the intention of reducing or eliminating same-sex attractions, sexual behaviour and diversity in gender expression and identity.

ACA in line with many other similar professional associations that oppose sexual orientation change efforts, conversion or reparative therapies, such as the Australian Psychological Society (2000). Consequently, concerning therapy for LGBTIQ+ people, ACA affirms the following principles:

- ✓ That homosexuality is not a mental disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1973);
- ✓ That counsellors do not unfairly discriminate against individuals, couples or families, based on their sexual orientation and identity, gender identity or gender expression;
- ✓ That counsellors respect the right of clients to hold different values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions from their own;
- ✓ That counsellors respect the rights of LGBTIQ+ people to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy;
- ✓ That counsellors aim to reduce any bias based on cultural, religious, behavioural or other factors that may influence or otherwise impact on their work with LGBTIQ+ individuals, couples and families;
- ✓ That counsellors take responsibility for their education, training, consultation and supervision to ensure their competence to practice with LGBTIQ+ people;
- ✓ That counsellors recognise there is contention regarding the harmful effects of sexual orientation change efforts and therapeutic interventions, such as conversion and reparative therapies that aim to reduce or eliminate same-sex attraction or non-conforming gender identities or expressions;
- ✓ That counsellors commit to reducing the stigma and discrimination that has been associated presently and in the past with gay or lesbian orientations and diversity in sex and gender formation; and

- ✓ That counsellors support the dissemination of accurate information to clients about sexual orientations and gender expressions and identities and apply appropriate therapeutic interventions.

ACA does not condone or support therapeutic interventions, such as conversion and reparative therapies that proactively aim to change a person's sexual or gender identity. Careful attention should be paid to avoid subtle influence, manipulation or coercion in this regard.

Philip Armstrong, FACA
ACA CEO

References:

Australian Psychological Society. (2000). APS position statement on the use of therapies that attempt to change sexual orientation. Retrieved from

<http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/statements/reparative/>

United Nations (2012). Born free and equal: Sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law. Booklet published by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/BornFreeAndEqualLowRes.pdf>