

LGBTQ change efforts (“conversion therapy”)

- Almost 700,000 LGBTQ adults in the U.S. have been subjected to “conversion therapy” and an estimated 57,000 youths will undergo change efforts before they turn 18 years old.
- “Conversion therapy” refers to any form of interventions which attempt to change an individual’s sexual orientation, sexual behaviors or gender identity.
- Underlying these techniques are the assumptions that homosexuality and gender identity are mental disorders and that sexual orientation and gender identity can be changed. These assumptions are not based on medical and scientific evidence.
- Professional consensus rejects pathologizing homosexuality and gender nonconformity and evidence does not support the purported “efficacy” of changing sexual orientation.
- These interventions often include unethical techniques including electric shock, deprivation of food and liquids, chemically induced nausea and masturbation reconditioning.
- These practices may cause significant psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, internalized homophobia, self-blame, intrusive imagery and sexual dysfunction.
- “Conversion therapy” may also increase suicidal behaviors in a population where suicide is prevalent.
- The AMA opposes the use of “conversion therapy” for sexual orientation or gender identity.