

EAP statement on 'conversion' or 'reparative' therapy for normal variants of sexual orientation

EAP does not consider homosexuality or bisexuality, or transsexual and transgendered states to be pathologies, mental disorders or indicative of developmental arrest. These are not symptoms to be treated by psychotherapists, in the sense of attempting to change or remove them.

There is no scientific evidence that sexual orientation can be modified. To date, the 'causes' of both heterosexuality and homosexuality remain unknown. It follows that no responsible psychotherapist will attempt to 'convert' a client from homosexuality to heterosexuality ('conversion' or 'reparative' therapy). Practitioners should be careful when faced with clients/patients who ask for conversion therapy as such requests often mask other pressing issues. EAP notes with concern research indicating that as many as one in six therapists surveyed had agreed to contract to reduce 'same sex attraction' (Bartlett, Smith, King, 2009). These therapists were not working on a religious basis but apparently thought they acted in their clients/patients' interest.

EAP honours and respects sexual diversity as part of our approach to diversity, equalities and social responsibility. In this regard, the EAP position is the same as that of many other professional organisations such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the American Psychiatric Association (2000), the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association (2009) or the British Psychological Society. EAP endorses the British "*Conversion Therapy Consensus Statement*".

European Association for Psychotherapy

REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association (2000). Commission on Psychotherapy by Psychiatrists (COPP): Position statement on therapies focused on attempts to change sexual orientation (Reparative or conversion therapies). *American J. Psychiatry*, 157:1719-1721.

American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Appropriate Therapeutic Response to Sexual Orientation. (2009). Report of the Task Force on the Appropriate Therapeutic Response to Sexual Orientation. Washington, DC.

Bartlett, A., Smith, G., King, M. (2009) 'The response of mental health professionals to clients seeking help to change or redirect same-sex sexual orientation'. Division of Mental Health, St George's Hospital, University of London; Department of Mental Health Sciences, University College Hospital, University of London