

## APA Official Actions

# Position Statement on Issues Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Minority Status

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Approved by the Assembly, April 2020

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

### Issue:

Diverse sexual orientations and gender identities exist as part of the human condition. Ongoing, widespread stigma against those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are present in mainstream society and contribute to higher rates of psychiatric illness in those populations. Inclusive and supportive environments for those individuals identifying with diverse gender and sexual orientations are associated with favorable mental health outcomes (1-9).

Efforts to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender expression have been shown to be harmful and potentially deadly (10-27). Furthermore, discrimination against these individuals may adversely affect the mental health of such individuals, necessitating intervention by mental health professionals (27-38).

### APA Position:

1. **APA reaffirms that sexual orientation and gender minority status, whether expressed in action, fantasy, or identity, implies no impairment per se in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities.**
2. **APA supports the use of diverse-affirming mental health treatments**
3. **APA condemns any practice that aims to change one’s sexual orientation or gender expression in the form of conversion therapy, or any other similar type of therapy, as ethically and morally wrong and, additionally, these practices represent a significant risk of harm by subjecting individuals to forms of treatment that have not been scientifically validated**
4. **APA opposes discrimination against those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities whether it be in education, employment, military service, immigration and naturalization status, housing, income, eligibility for government services, retirement benefits, property inheritance, rights of survivorship, spousal rights, family status, access to health services, and legal right to marry, adopt and co-parent.**

**Author:** Council on Minority Mental Health and Health Disparities

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