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HETEROSEXUAL-AFFIRMING THERAPY FACT SHEET

Are all homosexuals gay?

Being gay is a self-chosen identity. Not everyone with same-sex attractions (SSA) identifies as gay. These individuals who do not identify as gay believe they are inherently heterosexual and seek help to identify the specific reasons why they experience unwanted SSA. In therapy, counselors and psychologists ethically help clients identify causes of SSA and sensitively assist them as they resolve the underlying factors that lead to homosexual feelings. These individuals are your constituents, and seek protection for their religious rights to receive help and support to leave homosexuality, change sexual orientation, and/or remain celibate. Many individuals are conservative Christians and Jews and seek the fundamental human right to pursue help for their unwanted SSA through gender affirming programs, including counseling and heterosexual-affirming therapy, also known as sexual orientation change effort (SOCE) therapy.

Why are gay activists attempting to ban heterosexual-affirming therapy?

Gay activist organizations instruct their members to reject ex-gays and individuals with unwanted SSA who refuse to self-identify as gay primarily because these individuals do not conform to the myth that people are born gay. In 2008, the American Psychological Association stated: "Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors." Homosexuality has multiple causes and individuals experience it differently in their lives. Some individuals choose to seek counseling to help them resolve unwanted SSA, and this threatens the political agenda of gay activists.

Is heterosexual-affirming therapy different from any other psychotherapy?

No. Counselors who practice SOCE therapy are licensed and provide psychological services for a wide variety of issues, including unwanted SSA. Critics have falsely described SOCE therapy as an invalid or even dangerous form of therapeutic treatment, while others refer to it as an attempt to "pray away the gay" that relies on purely behavioral methods of aversion, distraction, and/or suppression. Such descriptions are false and do not reflect the work of licensed mental health practitioners who practice SOCE therapy. To understand what it is like to undergo counseling for unwanted SSA, read the *Diary of an Ex-Gay Man* at http://pfox.org/diary_exgay_man.html which chronicles the counseling sessions of a young man undergoing therapy for his unwanted SSA.

[Are children denied access to full mental health care if heterosexual-affirming therapy is banned?](#)

Yes. Children who have been molested by a same-sex adult and are confused about their sexual orientation as a result of the sexual abuse will be denied access to therapy simply because it is not gay-affirming. In effect, a child will be raped twice – first by the perpetrator and then again by the political environment, which refuses to treat the child unless he sees a gay-affirming therapist.

[Is heterosexual-affirming therapy harmful?](#)

Some gay activists suggest that SOCE therapy is inherently harmful and may cause a teenage client to become anxious, depressed, and/or commit suicide. However, there is not one single peer-reviewed scientific study that has researched the outcomes of minors that have undergone SOCE therapy, so all claims that SOCE therapy is harmful and ineffective are unfounded.

Legislation to ban SOCE therapy relies exclusively on policy statements from so-called mainstream mental and medical health organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA), who formed a Task Force in 2009 made up exclusively of gay-identified and gay-affirming psychologists. Not only did the Task Force refuse to include psychologists and licensed psychotherapists that actually worked with clients undergoing SOCE therapy and/or were former homosexuals, but all of the members of this Task Force had previously gone on the record as opposing SOCE therapy for philosophical and political reasons.

The APA Task Force report advised parents to avoid SOCE therapy for their children, and legislation to ban SOCE therapy chooses only to include the APA and other so-called mainstream mental and medical health organizations' opinions, while ignoring the recommendations from the American Association of Christian Counselors, National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), Catholic Medical Association, the American College of Pediatricians, and the International Network of Orthodox (Jewish) Mental Health Professionals all who support a client's right to resolve unwanted SSA and for parents to decide what medical and mental health treatment is best for their family and children. Collectively, these organizations comprise over 50,000 licensed mental and medical health practitioners.

[Is there any evidence to prove that heterosexual-affirming therapy is effective?](#)

Yes, 100 years of research, in fact. In 2009, the NARTH performed a comprehensive review of SOCE literature and concluded that it is possible for some men and women to change from homosexuality to heterosexuality, and that efforts to change do not invariably result in harm. Additionally, a groundbreaking new book by Dr. James Phelan, entitled: "*Successful Outcomes of Sexual Orientation Change Effort Therapy: An Annotated Bibliography*" was released in 2014. This book cites 100 years of scientific research, revealing a comprehensive bibliographic review of the literature documenting success that shows that therapy has helped some clients resolve their unwanted SSA and experience heterosexual attractions.

[Do parents force their children to undergo heterosexual-affirming therapy?](#)

Some anti-ex-gay activists have made accusations that parents have forced their homosexual children to undergo SOCE interventions, which include camps that rely on aversive (i.e., electroshock) methods for conversion. Such claims are absolute myths and have been investigated and disproven, yet nonetheless are used as scare tactics to encourage legislators to pass bans on heterosexual-affirming therapy while allowing gay-affirming therapy to be practiced. Legislation to ban SOCE therapy threatens constituents' constitutional rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and their first amendment rights to see a counselor who helps them resolve unwanted SSA while remaining faithful to their deeply held spiritual beliefs. All parents, children, and families deserve the right to pursue their own self-determination and should not be forced to choose between their counselor and their faith values.

Health Risks

HIV/AIDS

Reporting in 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated over 56,000 people in the U.S. became infected with HIV in 2006. By the end of that year, over 1.1 million in the U.S. lived with HIV/AIDS, including undiagnosed cases. With 37 states reporting to the CDC, 13- to 24-year-old Men Having Sex with Men (MSM) had the greatest percentage of increase in diagnoses of HIV infection from 2005 to 2008 and exceeded the number of diagnoses among those aged 45-54 by 2005.

"Gay, bisexual, and other [MSM] represent approximately 2 [percent] of the US population, yet are the population most severely affected by HIV and are the only risk group in which new HIV infections have been increasing steadily since the early 1990s," according to the CDC. "In 2007, MSM were 44 to 86 times as likely to be diagnosed with HIV compared with other men, and 40 to 77 times as likely as women." "Among those who were infected [in 2008,] nearly half (44 percent) were unaware of their HIV status," the CDC said.

OTHER HEALTH RISKS*

Infectious hepatitis (A&B), multiple bowel and other infectious diseases, Syphilis and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Genital warts, Herpes, Gonorrhea, & other viral and non-viral STDs.

CONDOM INFORMATION

In 2003, the CDC said, "No barrier methods for use during oral sex have been evaluated as effective by the FDA." In 2007, the Surgeon General said, "Condoms provide some protection, but anal intercourse is simply too dangerous to practice."

The condom industry claims a 98 percent effective rate for proper vaginal condom use. This rate does not, apply to anal or oral sex.

The New York County District Branch Task Force on Homosexuality concurred without question that societal rejection damages those who are rejected. However, if all criminal discrimination were to stop today and the punitive laws against homosexuals were repealed immediately...the homosexual's inner anxieties would still not be eliminated.

"The Annals of Homosexuality," <http://www.narth.com/docs/annals.html>
(July 27, 2009)

A 2001 Netherlands study in the Archives of General Psychiatry reports that "psychiatric disorders (including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse disorders) were more prevalent among homosexually active people compared with heterosexually active people" even though, as the authors admit, "Compared to other Western countries, the Dutch social climate toward homosexuality has long been, and remains, considerably more tolerant." (Sandfort et al. "Same-sex Sexual Behavior and Psychiatric Disorders: Findings from the Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study NEMESIS," Archives of General Psychiatry 58:85-91, 2001.)

* Health Implications Associated with Homosexuality"

Medical Institute of Sexual Health (1999).

J. Santinover, M.D., Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), p.51

T.E. Schmidt, "Straight & Narrow? Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate", p. 121.

"U.S. Syphilis Rate Rises, Worrying Health Officials".

Washington Post, (November 1, 2002)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Ex-Gays
prove that
homosexuals
can and do
change to a
heterosexual
orientation!



Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays (PFOX)

A nonprofit organization supporting families and the ex-gay community.

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Homosexuality

Some American Psychiatric
and Psychological Association
Members Support Change

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

is a combination of sexual attractions/feelings and behavior associated with those feelings. It is a developmental process not genetically determined. There is no medical test for a "gay gene."

SEXUAL REORIENTATION

is changing one's attractions/feelings from gay or bisexual to heterosexual.

CHANGING ORIENTATION

supports an individual's objective to change his or her orientation from gay or bisexual to heterosexual.

TRANSGENDER OR GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER (GID)

is a broad term that refers to someone whose gender expression differs from their actual sex, such as transvestites, drag queens, cross-dressers, and transsexuals. Transgenderism is a mental disorder according to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (2000), and is treatable with therapy to affirm one's biological gender.

LESS THAN 3% OF THE POPULATION IS HOMOSEXUAL

"2.8 percent of the male, and 1.4% of the female, population identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual." (2003 Amicus Curiae brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas*, 123 S. Ct. 2472, by a coalition of 31 gay activist groups.)

GAY GENE AND DNA STUDIES

According to the American Psychiatric Association, there are "no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology [cause] for homosexuality." (2000) And according to the American Psychological Association, "Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors." (2008)

in the identical-twin study in 2000 by Dr. Michael Bailey et. al., with at least 5,000 participants, 20 percent of homosexual men had a twin brother who was also gay, while 24 percent of lesbian women had a twin who was also gay. Thus 80 percent of gay men and 76 percent of lesbian women had an identical twin that was heterosexual, suggesting an environmental component in the development of sexual feelings and identity. These identical twins were reared together. (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 524-536) In the famous 1991 "gay gene" study reported in *Science* magazine, researcher Dr. Simon LeVay, a homosexual, said, "it's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain..." In a July 1993 gay-gene study reported in *Science* magazine, researcher Dr. Dean Hammer, a homosexual, formerly of the National Institute of Health (NIH), said, "These genes do not cause people to become homosexuals..."

EX-GAYS PROVE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

I lived as a lesbian and as a transgender for over 30 years; then I found a way out. I've been living a heterosexual life for over 20 years, proving change is possible. -- Marjorie

As a questioning teen, I was told that I was born gay. I later found out that no one is born gay and change is possible, so I chose to pursue change. Today as an adult I help questioning youth overcome unwanted same-sex attractions. -- Charlie

According to the American Psychological Association, "mental health organizations call on their members to respect a person's right to self-determination." (*Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality*, APA, 2008)

Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, According to the American Psychological Association, "mental health organizations call on their members to respect a person's right to self-determination." (*Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality*, APA, 2008). He added, "it is often said that those who try to change their sexual orientation become very depressed as a result. That was not the case for subjects of this study. There was in fact a marked decline in depression after their effort to change." (*Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 38, No. 5, October 2003, p 403. 200 subjects, 143 men and 57 women, were personally interviewed by Dr. Spitzer.)

Dr. E. Mark Stern, Ed. D., APA Fellow and Professor Emeritus of the Graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Iona College N.Y. -- "Significantly, the American Psychological Association did admit [at its August 2001 conference] that there was no body of evidence to prove that reorientation therapies are harmful." (NARTH)

Dr. Douglas Haldeman, a homosexual, at the 2000 American Psychological Association meeting, said, "There appear to be many dissatisfied homosexually-oriented individuals who seek psychological or spiritual intervention to achieve a goal they identify as a change in sexual orientation... [S]ome... particularly those who have experienced less invasive styles of conversion therapy, seem not have been affected adversely."

In 2002 he said, "The reason that the (APA 1998) Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation does not ban conversion therapy outright is that the same arguments for diversity and autonomy can be used to support those who seek to change their sexual orientation..." (*Gays, Patient Rights: The Implications of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy*, Professional Psychology: Research & Practice, Vol. 33, No. 3, 260-264, 2002.)



No one is born "gay." There is no scientific or DNA test to determine if an individual is homosexual. Sexual orientation is a matter of self-affirmation and public declaration.

EX-GAYS

EQUAL RIGHTS

TOLERANCE

WHAT IS PFOX?

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays (PFOX) is a non-profit organization providing outreach, education, and public awareness in support of families of homosexuals. PFOX also promotes an inclusive environment for the ex-gay community, and works to eliminate negative perceptions and discrimination against former homosexuals.

WHO ARE EX-GAYS?

Each year, thousands of people with unwanted same-sex attractions make the personal decision to leave a gay identity through gender affirming programs, including counseling, support groups, faith based ministries, and other non-judgmental environments. Their decision is one only they can make. But there are others in society who refuse to respect individual self-determination. Consequently, formerly gay men and women are often victims of hate simply because they dare to exist.

Ex-gays and their supporters should not have to be closeted for fear of other's disapproval. Former homosexuals do not think something is wrong with them because they decided to fulfill their heterosexual potential. Nor do they believe others should condemn them for the personal decision they have made for their lives. Full diversity must include the ex-gay community.

WHAT DO EX-GAYS WANT?

The ex-gay movement seeks to ensure the inclusion of former homosexuals in all realms of society. Ex-gays believe that their right to self-determination should not be grounds for intolerance in any form.

Because of the abuse heaped upon them by society, former homosexuals experience discrimination at every level. This irrational phobia of those who have overcome unwanted same-sex attractions perpetuates misunderstanding and harm against the ex-gay community. It also demonstrates a disregard for diversity and a refusal to respect a basic human right to dignity and self-determination.

While transgenders and cross-dressers are affirmed for changing their gender identity, former homosexuals are ridiculed for making the decision to change their feelings and sexual orientation. While gays can come out of the "closet," ex-gays are forced to stay in theirs because they are bullied into silence by gay activists. While gays gain sympathy as victims, ex-gays are criticized and face life-long intolerance for simply existing as living proof that homosexuality is not innate.

Those with unwanted same-sex attractions deserve the right to self-determination and happiness based on their own needs, and not the demands of others.

Do gay activists oppose efforts to protect the equal rights of former homosexuals?

They shouldn't, but they do. Although gay groups advocate for the rights of homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, the intersexed, and transgenders, they oppose ex-gay equality. Therefore, if it were not for organizations like PFOX, former gay men and women would have no support in an increasingly hostile environment. The addition of ex-gays ensures tolerance for all segments of our society. PFOX is not an anti-gay organization – rather, we are a pro-ex-gay organization. All people should be treated with dignity. We respect the opinions of others, even if they disagree with us. Indeed, we do not ask for their approval – only their tolerance.

Do I have to dislike ex-gays if I have gay friends or family?

No! You can have friends who are gay and other friends who are ex-gay. Befriending the ex-gay community does not mean that you are being disloyal to the gay people you know and love. Some in society reject ex-gays and homosexuals who do not embrace same-sex behavior. This rejection is a form of heterophobia that can be overcome with education and outreach. Individuals who pursue alternatives to homosexuality should not be objects of discrimination or ridicule.

