



Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists

(Registered as per Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, Reg. No. 3694)

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No. IACP/Office/Position Statement/02

Date: 21st May, 2020

Subject: Official Standing of IACP regarding 'conversion therapy' and approach towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (LGBTQIA+).

Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists aligns with the objective of equal treatment to one and all and does not discriminate any individual based on orientation for providing mental health care this includes LGBTQIA+ community as well.

'Conversion Therapy' which being dangerously harmful and discredited but still widely practiced among mental health professionals aimed at allegedly changing sexual orientation and gender identity. Thousands of individuals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community are inflicted with painful and traumatizing unprofessional practices. They use operant conditioning methods, a variety of shaming, emotionally traumatic or physically painful stimuli to make their victims associate those stimuli with their queer identities, often at the insistence of misinformed parents or caretakers.

Many a times, these methods are advocated as choice of the individual, but this 'choice' is in context of systemic oppression and rejection. The therapist's alignment with the societal prejudices against gay, lesbian, bi and trans identities may lead to reinforcing internalized homonegativity leading to queer distress, depression and suicidal ideation.

There is ample evidence that societal prejudice causes psychological and emotional harms apart from medical harms to queer individuals. In lieu of post decriminalization of consensual sex between same sex adults, that is, reading down of the draconian Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (Supreme Court Order dated 6th Sept 2018), conversion practices by therapists are still rampant in our country. The world over, conversion practices are banned. It would make much difference to the queer community, in morale, dignity and self-esteem. Mental health professionals must resist all forms of conversion practices and must use queer affirmative language and be aware of the concerns and challenges faced by them.

IACP being the premier professional body of clinical psychologists does not approve any form of conversion therapy and advises and advocates to the members of the IACP not to follow such therapies which anyway negatively impact the wellbeing of the individuals who identify themselves of LGBTQIA+ community. Mental Health Care Act 2017, Chapter V and clause 18 (2) also refrains from discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. IACP is also working on guidelines to address the psychological needs of all communities.

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