

# What the Experts Say: Position & Policy Statements on LGBTQ Issues from Leading Professional Associations

The overwhelming consensus among the country's leading and most respected child welfare, social service, behavioral and medical health, and legal organizations is that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth and adults deserve respect and support from professional service providers. The following policies and position statements are based upon decades of peer-reviewed and published research and subject matter expertise. The child welfare community, which includes representatives from all of these organizations, should reflect the shared professional opinion that mistreatment of LGBTQ individuals is unacceptable, and should adhere to best practice standards.

## AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

"There is no credible evidence that shows that a parent's sexual orientation or gender identity will adversely affect the development of the child. [LGBT] individuals historically have faced more rigorous scrutiny than heterosexual people regarding their rights to be or become parents. The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity against individuals in regard to their rights as custodial, foster, or adoptive parents."

Am. Acad. Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender Parents Policy Statement* (revised 2009), available at [www.aacap.org/cs/root/policy\\_statements/gay\\_lesbian\\_transgender\\_and\\_bisexual\\_parents\\_policy\\_statement](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/policy_statements/gay_lesbian_transgender_and_bisexual_parents_policy_statement).

## AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

"The AAFP opposes all discrimination in any form, including but not limited to, that on the basis of actual or perceived...sexual orientation [or] gender identity."

Am. Acad. of Family Physicians, *AAFP Policy Statements: Discrimination, Patient* (1996, 2010

COD), available at [www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/d/discrimination.html](http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/d/discrimination.html).

"Family physicians are in an ideal position to be aware that their adolescent patients may be dealing with issues of sexual identity or orientation that impact their psychosocial and physical health. Asking open questions about sexual identity and orientation can open a dialogue on family relationships, safe sexual practices, suicide risks and other issues confronting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning adolescents in a sensitive and accepting atmosphere."

Am. Acad. of Family Physicians, *AAFP Policy Statements: Adolescent Healthcare, Sexuality and Contraception* (1987, 2011 COD), available at [www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/a/adol3.html](http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/a/adol3.html).

## AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

"The AAP reaffirms the physician's responsibility to provide comprehensive health care and guidance in a safe and supportive environment for all adolescents, including nonheterosexual adolescents and young people struggling with issues of sexual orientation."

Barbara M. Frankowski & Committee on Adolescence, Am. Acad. of Pediatrics,

## FOSTERING TRANSITIONS

A CWLA/Lambda Legal  
Joint Initiative



*Sexual Orientation and Adolescents*, 113 Pediatrics 1827 (2004), available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/113/6/1827.full>.

### AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

“Every child deserves a permanent home and all the love and care that good parents can provide. Prospective foster and adoptive parents should be evaluated on the basis of their individual character and ability to parent, not on their sexual orientation, and courts should grant adoptions when they are determined to be in the child’s best interest.”

Am. Bar Ass’n, *Recommendation* (adopted by the House of Delegates Feb. 13, 2006), available at [www.abanet.org/leadership/2006/midyear/daily\\_journal/102.doc](http://www.abanet.org/leadership/2006/midyear/daily_journal/102.doc).

### AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

“The American Counseling Association strongly encourages counselors to actively participate in the elimination of all discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services in their practice, research, education and training.”

Am. Counseling Ass’n, *AGLBIC Resolution* (2005), available at [www.counseling.org/PressRoom/NewsReleases.aspx?AGuid=244405dc-044e-46ae-aeac-60ca1c8bd6dc](http://www.counseling.org/PressRoom/NewsReleases.aspx?AGuid=244405dc-044e-46ae-aeac-60ca1c8bd6dc).

“The belief that same-sex attraction and behavior is abnormal and in need of treatment is in opposition to the position taken by national mental health organizations, including ACA... The Committee members agree that counselors who offer conversion therapy are providing ‘treatment that has no empirical or scientific foundation[.]’”

Joy S. Whitman, et al. *Ethical Issues Related to Conversion or Reparative Therapy* (2006), available at [www.counseling.org/PressRoom/NewsReleases.aspx?AGuid=b68aba97-2f08-40c2-a400-0630765f72f4](http://www.counseling.org/PressRoom/NewsReleases.aspx?AGuid=b68aba97-2f08-40c2-a400-0630765f72f4).

### AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

“The AMA reaffirms its long-standing policy that there is no basis for the denial to any human being of equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities commensurate with his or her individual capabilities and ethical character because of an individual’s sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status[.]”

Am. Medical Ass’n, *AMA Policies on GLBT Issues, General Policy H-65.990, Civil Rights Restoration* (2005), available at [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page).

“AMA...opposes the use of ‘reparative’ or ‘conversion’ therapy that is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that the patient should change his/her homosexual orientation.”

Am. Med. Ass’n, *AMA Policies on GLBT Issues, Patient-Centered Policy H-160.991, Health Care Needs of the Homosexual Population* (2005), available at [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page).

“AMA support[s] public and private health insurance coverage for treatment of gender identity disorder as recommended by the patient’s physician.”

Am. Medical Ass’n, *AMA Policies on GLBT Issues, Patient-Centered Policy H-185.950, Removing Financial Barriers to Care for Transgender Patients* (2008), available at [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glb-t-advisory-committee/ama-policy-regarding-sexual-orientation.page).

### AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

“APA affirms its 1973 position that homosexuality per se is not a diagnosable mental disorder. Recent publicized efforts to repathologize homosexuality by claiming that it can be cured are often guided not by rigorous scientific or psychiatric research, but sometimes by religious and political forces opposed to full civil rights for gay men and lesbians... In the last four decades, ‘reparative’ therapists have not produced any rigorous scientific research to substantiate their claims of cure. Until there is such research available, APA recommends that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals’ sexual orientation, keeping in mind the medical dictum to First, do no harm.”

Am. Psychiatric Ass’n, *Position Statement on Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies): SUPPLEMENT* (2000), available at [www.psych.org/advocacy--newsroom/position-statements](http://www.psych.org/advocacy--newsroom/position-statements).

“[T]he American Psychiatric Association...[s]upports laws that protect the civil rights of transgender and gender variant individuals...[u]rges the repeal of laws and policies that discriminate against transgender and gender variant individuals...[o]pposes all public and private discrimination against transgender and gender variant individuals in such areas as health care, employment, housing, public accommodation, education, and licensing...[and] [d]eclares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon these individuals greater than that imposed on any other persons.”

Jack Drescher & Ellen Haller, APA Caucus of Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Psychiatrists, Am. Psychiatric Ass’n, *Position Statement on Discrimination Against Transgender*

and *Gender Variant Individuals* (2012), available at [www.psychiatry.org/advocacy--newsroom/position-statements/apa-position-statements](http://www.psychiatry.org/advocacy--newsroom/position-statements/apa-position-statements).

### AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ASSOCIATION

“The American Psychoanalytic Association affirms the right of all people to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression without interference or coercive interventions attempting to change sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression... Psychoanalytic technique does not encompass purposeful attempts to ‘convert,’ ‘repair,’ change or shift an individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such directed efforts are against fundamental principles of psychoanalytic treatment and often result in substantial psychological pain by reinforcing damaging internalized attitudes.”

Am. Psychoanalytic Ass’n, *Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression* (2012), available at [www.apsa.org/About\\_APsaA/Position\\_Statements/Attempts\\_to\\_Change\\_Sexual\\_Orientation.aspx](http://www.apsa.org/About_APsaA/Position_Statements/Attempts_to_Change_Sexual_Orientation.aspx).

### AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

“APA has a long-established policy to deplore ‘all public and private discrimination against gay men and lesbians’ and urges ‘the repeal of all discriminatory legislation against lesbians and gay men’... [T]here is no scientific evidence that parenting effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation: lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children... [T]he APA opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services.”

Am. Psychological Ass’n, *Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children* (2004), available at <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/parenting.aspx> (internal citations omitted).

“[T]he American Psychological Association advises parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth[.]”

APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, *Report of the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation* at 121 (2009), available at [www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf](http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf).

### CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

“Based on more than three decades of social science research and our 85 years of service to millions of families, CWLA believes that families with LGBTQ members deserve the same levels of support afforded other families. Any attempt to preclude or prevent gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals or couples from parenting, based solely on their sexual orientation, is not in the best interest of children.”

Child Welfare League of Am., *Position Statement on Parenting of Children by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults* (2007), available at [www.cwla.org/programs/culture/glbtposition.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/culture/glbtposition.htm).

“All applicants [for adoption] should be assessed on the basis of their abilities to successfully parent a child needing family membership and not on their...sexual orientation.”

“The family foster care agency should not reject foster parent applicants solely due to their...sexual orientation.”

Child Welfare League of Am., *Standards of Excellence in Adoption Issues* (2000), available at [www.cwla.org/programs/culture/glbtpstandards.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/culture/glbtpstandards.htm).

### EVAN B. DONALDSON ADOPTION INSTITUTE

“Research shows that children fare as well with gay and lesbian parents as those raised by heterosexuals. [S]tudies on children dating back 25 years conclude that children raised by gay and lesbian non-adoptive parents fare as well as those reared by heterosexual parents.”

“All adults should be evaluated and licensed as foster parents based on their capacity to provide nurturing support for children in foster care, rather than on their sexual orientation. Foster families should be chosen based on their ability to meet individual children’s needs. State child welfare policy should explicitly prohibit the exclusion of foster parent applicants solely on the basis of sexual orientation.”

Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Inst., *Expanding Resources for Waiting Children II: Eliminating Legal and Practice Barriers to Gay and Lesbian Adoption from Foster Care* at 5, 6 (2008), available at [www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2008\\_09\\_Expanding\\_Resources\\_Legal.pdf](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2008_09_Expanding_Resources_Legal.pdf).

### NATIONAL ADOPTION CENTER

“We believe that every child has the right to a loving, nurturing and permanent family. Therefore, it is the policy of the National Adoption Center that no person should be denied consideration in the adoption process solely based on...sexual orientation[.]”

Nat’l Adoption Ctr., *Our Policies for Providing a Free Adoption Service: Adoptive Parent Assessments* (2008), available at [www.adopt.org/sembled/policies.html](http://www.adopt.org/sembled/policies.html).

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

“[NASP] supports that all youth have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from educational and mental health services within schools regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Harassment, lack of equal support, and other discriminatory practices toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth violate their rights to receive equal educational opportunities... education and advocacy must be used to reduce discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ youth[.]”

Nat'l Ass'n School Psychologists, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth (Position Statement)* (2011), available at [www.nasponline.org/about\\_nasp/positionpapers/LGBTQ\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/LGBTQ_Youth.pdf).

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

“It is the position of the NASW that same-gender sexual orientation should be afforded the same respect and rights as other-gender orientation... NASW is committed to advancing policies and practices that will improve the status and well-being of all lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.”

Nat'l Ass'n Soc. Workers, *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements* at 221 (9th ed. 2012).

“NASW recognizes the considerable diversity in gender expression and identity among our population. NASW believes that people of diverse gender—including those who are included under the transgender umbrella—should be afforded the same respect and rights as that any other people. NASW asserts that discrimination and prejudice directed against any individuals on the basis of gender identity or gender expression, whether real or perceived, are damaging to the social, emotional, psychological, physical and economic well-being of the affected individuals, as well as society as a whole, and NASW seeks the elimination of the same both inside and outside the profession, in public and private sectors.”

Nat'l Ass'n Soc. Workers, *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements* at 340 (9th ed. 2012).

## NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

“[T]he National Foster Parent Association acknowledges gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth are present in the foster care system and encourages and supports establishment of standards, policies and training programs for foster care providers and professionals based

on non-discrimination principles and sensitivity to the sexual orientation of all foster children and youth.”

Nat'l Foster Parent Assoc., *NFPA Position Statements: 118.05 - Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Questioning Youth* (2012), available at [www.nfpaonline.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1020551](http://www.nfpaonline.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1020551).

## NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL ON ADOPTABLE CHILDREN

“Children should not be denied a permanent family because of the sexual orientation of potential parents... NACAC believes children and youth in the foster care system who are... LGBTQ deserve loving and permanent families and should be afforded the same rights, services and protections as those who are heterosexual... Unfortunately, many LGBTQ youth are in care solely because of their family's reaction to their sexual orientation or gender identity... The prejudice, family rejection, and mistreatment experienced by LGBTQ youth—or those who are perceived to be LGBTQ—have a tremendous negative impact... NACAC strongly opposes the use of conversion or so-called reparation services that are designed to involuntarily change the sexual orientation of youth.”

North Am. Council on Adoptable Children, *LGBTQ Issues*, available at [www.nacac.org/policy/lgbtq.html](http://www.nacac.org/policy/lgbtq.html).

## THE WORLD PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSGENDER HEALTH

“The overall goal of the [*Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People*] is to provide clinical guidance for health professionals to assist transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming people with safe and effective pathways to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves, in order to maximize their overall health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment... Health is promoted through public policies and legal reforms that promote tolerance and equity for gender and sexual diversity and that eliminate prejudice, discrimination, and stigma. WPATH is committed to advocacy for these changes in public policies and legal reforms.”

World Prof'l Ass'n for Transgender Health, *Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, 7th Version* (2011), available at [www.wpath.org/publications\\_standards.cfm](http://www.wpath.org/publications_standards.cfm).

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