

HARMFUL SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY CHANGE EFFORTS

National PTA recognizes that LGBTQ youth who experience family rejection based on their sexual orientation or gender identity face serious health risks, including being over eight times more likely to report having attempted suicide, over five times more likely to report high levels of depression and over three times more likely to use illegal drugs compared with their peers. Conversely, the Family Acceptance Project demonstrates that LGBTQ young adults with an increased amount of family acceptance had significantly higher levels of self-esteem, social support, and general health compared to peers with low levels of family acceptance.

Startling statistics from the Center for Disease Control show that suicide, as of 2017, is now the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15-19. An LGBTQ youth that is highly rejected by their family is eight times more likely to take their own lives than those from more accepting families. Furthermore, 14.6% of high school students identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or are unsure of their sexual orientation. Additionally, nearly 2% of high school students identify as transgender. According to the American Psychiatric Association, being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) is not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency or shortcoming.

National PTA knows that sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, commonly referred to as “conversion therapy,” are proven to be ineffective and pose critical health risks to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, provoking mental health conditions that lead to anxiety, depression and suicide. In fact, rates of attempted suicide by LGBTQ youth whose parents tried to change their sexual orientation are more than double the rate of LGBTQ youth who reported experiencing no sexual orientation change efforts.

The American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Trevor Project have found that sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts are ineffective and dangerous. Furthermore, The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as 59 counties and cities recognize sexual orientation change therapies as harmful to youth, and therefore have implemented either laws or regulations protecting against so-called “conversion therapy” practices.

National PTA shall promote and support educational programs that inform families and youth about the harmful impact of sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts and will provide a list of available resources to assist states, districts, councils and local units in planning such programs that affirm all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

*Position Statement: **HARMFUL SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTIFY CHANGE EFFORTS***

Adopted: 2020

National PTA encourages members to advocate for and support legislation and policies that protect our youth from harmful, discredited programs that claim to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.

National PTA promotes the protection of our LGBTQ youth and their families. PTA must be empowered to advocate for and support legislation and policies that would protect our youth and families from this unproven practice. Furthermore, PTA must educate our communities about research-based findings of the harm caused from trying to use these efforts to change a child's sexual orientation.

