



Press release – 03.04.2019

Psychological Society of Ireland advises on Conversion Therapy

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), the learned and professional body for psychology in the Republic of Ireland, wishes to provide advice in regard to the recent public commentary with regard to the practice known as 'Conversion Therapy'.

Conversion therapy refers to any form of psychological intervention which aims to change a person's sexual orientation.

First and foremost, a person's sexual orientation is not, and should not, be viewed as a mental health disorder that requires psychological intervention. There is clear and unequivocal empirical evidence that conversion therapy does not work, and significant evidence that it is also inherently harmful. This is a position that is agreed by professional organisations worldwide. The practice, or even endorsement, of conversion therapy gives legitimacy to the notion that one's sexual orientation is wrong and needs to be changed. It endorses societal prejudice and legitimises family rejection reactions to disclosure of sexual identity, which typically occurs during a vulnerable period of youth development.

In addition, there is significant evidence that societal prejudice causes psychological harm to the LGBT community. Our focus as a society should be on reducing prejudices and not on practices that have no evidence of benefit and have evidence of harm.

The PSI President Ian O'Grady states: "Conversion therapy is pseudoscientific and has no place in any modern society that values and respects the sexual orientation of all in our society. To even call it "therapy" is an affront to the work we do as Psychologists and adds a layer of validity to it that's not deserved. It's disappointing that there are still questions being raised in public forums as to what the evidence for conversion therapy is when it is absolutely clear that there is no credible evidence and it should be confined to the annals of history as bad practice."

ENDS.

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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To note:

- The use of conversion therapy has been condemned by various institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) Committee Against Torture as well as the European Parliament;
- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the learned and professional body for psychology in the Republic of Ireland. Established in 1970, the Society currently has almost 3,000 members;
- The PSI is committed to maintaining high standards of practice in psychology and also to exploring new and innovative ways of furthering psychology as a real and applied science.