

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to inquire on behalf of the Men's Development Network Counselling Service, one branch of which specialises in working with LGBTQI+ clients around gender and sexual orientation, as to the Minister's intentions with regard to establishing competencies and guidelines for counsellors and psychotherapists working with gender and sexual orientation. Currently counselling and psychotherapeutic associations in Ireland are one of the few bodies who do not have established ethical and training guidelines for their members who work in this area.

Among the areas of grave concern to us are the use of Reparative or Conversion therapies (therapy used to attempt to change sexual orientation) which have been declared unethical and psychologically damaging by every major psychotherapeutic, psychological and psychiatric organisation in the developed world and also by the World Health Organisation.

Under current ethical guidelines of counselling and psychotherapeutic associations in Ireland, there are no guidelines given on use of these therapies as there is e.g. in the UK where a Memorandum of Understanding was issued by all major associations that the use of these therapies by their members would result in their membership being revoked.

I would like to submit the proposal that in the regulation of the counselling and psychotherapy profession that it would be explicitly stated that use of any therapy aimed at changing sexual orientation or gender would be deemed unethical and damaging and use of same would result in therapists being struck off the register.

I would be happy to discuss this further and supply further information at your request and I look forward to hearing from you with regard to the above.

Kind regards

Anita

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