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## What is conversion therapy?

Conversion therapy, sometimes referred to as “reparative therapy,” is any of several dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Because the practice has come under increasing scrutiny, providers frequently change their terminology to avoid detection.

While some people may think conversion therapies are merely a thing of the past, they’re still very present in the lives of many. Here’s what the most recent U.S.-centered data tells us:

- Almost 700,000 LGBT adults have undergone conversion therapy at some point in their lives, including about 350,000 LGBTQ adults who received treatment as adolescents.
- 10% of LGBTQ youth in The Trevor Project’s 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health reported having undergone some kind of conversion therapy.
- 13% of Trans people polled in the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey reported “a psychologist, counselor, or religious advisor, tried to stop them from being transgender.”
- Researchers at the Family Acceptance Project found that over half of LGBT non-Latino white and Latino respondents ages 21 to 25 “reported experiencing sexual orientation change efforts during adolescence.”

## What does conversion therapy look like?

The following list contains a wide range of both common and rare methods used in conversion therapy, particularly for sexual identity:

- talk therapy, aiming to find the “cause” of the person’s sexual or gender identity, or convince them their orientation is morally or spiritually wrong
- trying to change thought patterns by teaching the recipient to “redirect” thoughts about their sexual desires
- aversion therapy, such as inducing nausea or causing pain to force a negative association with sexual thoughts
- hypnosis as a means to “reprogram” the person

- verbal abuse, seeking to control the recipient's behavior or thoughts by using shame, guilt, or fear
- prayer, such as telling the recipient they can change their orientation if they pray hard enough
- "corrective rape," which is the horrifying use of sexual assault to try and force someone to feel heterosexual attraction
- "chemical castration" for males via hormone treatments or medications, or even removal of testicles, to artificially decrease sex drive to prevent sexual desire

## The mental health effects of conversion therapy

UCLA's Williams Institute found in its [2019 report](#) that LGB youth who had undergone conversion therapy were nearly **twice as likely to consider and attempt suicide** than those who hadn't experienced conversion methods.

Similarly, the Family Acceptance Project, run through San Francisco State University, found in 2018 that **suicide attempts were more than double (48%)** among LGBT adults whose parents had "tried to change their sexual orientation" compared with LGBT adults who reported no conversion efforts (22%).

### Resources:

The Trevor Project, GLADD, UCLA's Williams Institute, the Family Acceptance Project,