

## Public Statement from The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

### La Crosse City Council and Conversion Therapy

On Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup> the La Crosse City Council will be discussing Sec. 32-191 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse prohibiting Conversion Therapy. In our work with city officials, we have been assured that the city council will be considering changing some language as advised by the City's General Counsel to ensure that the city clearly defines these harmful practices. The Center has every confidence that the ban will remain in place as La Crosse's active commitment to supporting youth in our community.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, "there is clear evidence that conversion therapy does not work, and some significant evidence that it is harmful to LGBTQ people." Many medical and professional organizations have discredited the effectiveness of conversion therapy, including the American Psychiatric Association, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We recognize that some community members have raised concerns regarding Constitutional protections. The LGBTQ community values the ability to fully express who we are through speech, the right to assemble, and protection of religious practices and affiliation. Along with legal precedence, when practices, cloaked as protected speech or affiliation, harm people within our communities **we must take action to stop these detrimental practices**. Our state and federal constitutions do not protect an individual's right to harm minors. We commit to ending child abuse in all forms.

The Center's mission is to create spaces for connection, community, education and advocacy for LGBTQ+ people, our allies, and our neighbors. Conversion therapy stands in stark contradiction with our mission and values of pride, equity, and social justice. The Center is supportive of any city, county, state, and federal ordinances or statutes banning the practice of conversion therapy for minors. We urge all elected officials in the 7 Rivers Region to enact regulations making the use of conversion therapy for minors illegal similar to regulations passed in Madison, Milwaukee, West Allis, Superior, Sun Prairie, Shorewood, Sheboygan, Racine, Kenosha, Glendale, Eau Claire, Cudahy, and Appleton.