

Press Statement

12th July 2024

Joint Statement

College of Psychiatrists of Ireland
Psychological Society of Ireland
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Conversion therapy in Ireland renounced by healthcare bodies

- **Memorandum of understanding to be signed by the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland; Psychological Society of Ireland; and Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy**
- **‘There is no place in a modern, progressive society for conversion therapy’**

Friday July 12, 2024. Three Irish healthcare representative bodies will today (Friday) sign a memorandum of understanding renouncing the practice of conversion therapy on the island of Ireland, stating that the practice is unethical, potentially harmful and is not supported by evidence.

Conversion therapy is a term for therapy that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to other and seeks to change or suppress them on that basis. This is sometimes referred to by terms including, but not limited to, ‘gay cure therapy’, ‘reparative therapy’, or ‘sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts’.

In renouncing conversion therapy on the island of Ireland, the memorandum of understanding signed by the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland; Psychological Society of Ireland; and Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy also seeks to advocate for and support the LGBTI+ community.

It also does not seek to deny, discourage or exclude those with uncertain feelings around sexuality or gender identity from seeking qualified and appropriate help.

Speaking today, **Dr Lorcan Martin, President of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and a consultant in general adult psychiatry**, said: “There is no place in a modern, progressive society for conversion therapy, which seeks to target and undermine certain people with potentially very serious results. The absence of societal inclusivity or acceptance can have a major negative impact on a person’s mental health, and we hope that today’s announcement helps inform the public of the risks of conversion therapy, ensures healthcare professionals are aware of issues related to this practice and, ultimately, that conversion therapy is fully eradicated on the island of Ireland.”

Dr Ger McNamara, representative of the Psychological Society of Ireland and senior clinical

psychologist in adult mental health, said: “The aim of our work is to help reduce human suffering. We do this by using evidence-based assessments and therapies. The evidence base for conversion therapy shows at best it doesn’t work and at its worst is harmful, creating more suffering in those who undergo it. We come together today to unequivocally state, conversion therapy is not acceptable on the island of Ireland.”

Jade Lawless, Vice-Chair with the Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, said: “The IACP stands with our colleagues, the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and the Psychological Society of Ireland, in renouncing the practice of conversion therapy, which seeks to change or deny a person’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The IACP supports our member counsellors and psychotherapists to provide therapy using highly ethical practice standards that are appropriately informed and which seek to prize individuality and autonomy in the spirit of our caring and empathic profession. We believe that conversion therapy creates lasting psychological damage and must not be practised in Ireland or in any country.”

[The full memorandum of understanding is available to view here.](#)

ENDS

Issued on behalf of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, Psychological Society of Ireland, and Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy by Gordon MRM

Editors’ notes:

*The **College of Psychiatrists of Ireland** is the professional and training body for psychiatrists in Ireland and represents 1,300 professional psychiatrists (both specialists and trainees) across the country. To become a specialist doctor in psychiatry (specialist consultant psychiatrist) a doctor must complete between six to seven years of the College training programme.*

*The **Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)**, with over 4,500 members, is the learned and professional body for the profession in the Republic of Ireland, with the primary object of advancing psychology as an applied science in Ireland and elsewhere. See more at <http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie>*

*For more information on the **Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy**, see iacp.ie*