



Kentucky can...

## Protect the Mental Health and Wellbeing of LGBTQ Youth

All children deserve to be healthy, safe, and hopeful for their future. Currently, that reality is threatened for LGBTQ youth while the Commonwealth still allows the use of harmful practices that seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Conversion therapy uses a variety of shaming, emotionally traumatic, or physically painful stimuli to make the individual associate those negative stimuli with their LGBTQ identities.

### Kentucky can promote the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children by banning conversion therapy.

Children and parents should have access to high-quality, evidence-informed services. Yet, state-licensed practitioners can offer conversion therapy to well-intentioned parents and caregivers who may not understand the risk of long-lasting negative effects on their children.

Conversion therapy is not condoned by the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, The American School Counselor Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, or the American Medical Association. Local communities, including Covington, Lexington, and Louisville, have adopted ordinances to ban conversion therapy in an effort to protect LGTBQ youth. Youth across the Commonwealth deserve to grow up in a safe and supportive environment.

In a national study, **2 in 3 LGBTQ youth** reported that someone tried to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. Youth who have undergone conversion therapy are **more than twice as likely to attempt suicide** as those who did not.

### What does the data tell us?

In a national study of LGTBQ teens:

- ➔ **39%** seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months, with more than half of transgender and non-binary youth having seriously considered
- ➔ **71%** reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the past year
- ➔ **71%** reported discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity

### Risks of conversion therapy practices:

- Depression and suicidality
- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness, shame, and anger
- Social withdrawal and loss of friends
- Substance use
- Decreased self-esteem and authenticity to others
- A loss of faith
- Hostility and blame toward parents
- High-risk sexual behaviors

### Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:

Prohibit mental health professionals from engaging in sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts with a minor by banning conversion therapy.