



Joint Statement of ASERVIC & ACES Opposing Conversion Therapy

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) stand united in our strong and unwavering opposition to conversion therapy, also referred to as reparative therapy, sexual orientation, or gender identity change efforts. We affirm that such practices are unethical, harmful, unsupported by credible research, and fundamentally incompatible with the values and responsibilities of the counseling profession.

Grounded in research and the American Counseling Association *Code of Ethics*, we affirm the profession's commitment to beneficence, nonmaleficence, respect for client dignity and autonomy, cultural humility, and the prohibition against imposing counselor values on clients. Conversion therapy violates these ethical principles by pathologizing diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and by exposing individuals, particularly vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth and adults, to significant psychological, emotional, spiritual, and relational harm.

Consistent with the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE) competencies and affirming counseling frameworks, ASERVIC and ACES recognize that sexual orientation and gender identity are not disorders to be treated or corrected. Efforts to "change," "repair," or "convert" these identities disregard decades of professional consensus, undermine extant research and client self-determination, and perpetuate stigma, shame, and minority stress. Such practices have been linked to increased risks of depression, anxiety, trauma, suicidality, and spiritual injury.

As a division committed to spiritual, ethical, and religious values in counseling, ASERVIC affirms that spirituality, religion, and politics must never be weaponized to justify harm. Ethical, spiritually integrated counseling honors and affirms clients' lived experiences, supports meaning-making without coercion, and upholds dignity, worth, and relational integrity. Spirituality, when ethically engaged, can be a source of affirmation, healing, and resilience, not a mechanism for identity suppression or moral injury.

Aligned with its mission to advance excellence in counselor education and supervision through scholarship, leadership, and the preparation of ethically grounded counseling professionals, ACES affirms that counselor educators and supervisors have a responsibility to prepare



Association for Spiritual, Ethical,
and Religious Values in Counseling



counselors who practice in ways that promote human dignity, social justice, and the well-being of diverse communities. The values of ACES emphasize inclusive, culturally responsive training environments in which emerging counselors develop the knowledge, skills, and ethical commitments necessary to support clients across diverse identities and lived experiences. Within this framework, practices such as conversion therapy directly contradict the professional competencies, ethical standards, and developmental training principles that guide counselor preparation. Counselor educators and supervisors, therefore, have an obligation, as gatekeepers, to actively educate trainees about the harms associated with conversion therapy, to cultivate affirming and evidence-based counseling practices, and to model professional leadership that safeguards the welfare and dignity of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities.

Together, ASERVIC and ACES call on counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and students to reject conversion therapy in all forms; engage in ongoing education aligned with affirming, liberatory, evidence-based, socially just, and culturally responsive practices; advocate for policies and institutional standards that protect LGBTQ+ individuals; and support clients' identity development, well-being, and self-determination through ethical counseling relationships.

Conversion therapy has no place in the Counseling Profession. ASERVIC and ACES remain resolute in advancing counseling practices that heal rather than harm, affirm rather than erase, and uphold the highest ethical standards of our profession.

Signed,

<p>John J. S. Harrichand, Ph.D. President, Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) 2025–2026 on behalf of the ASERVIC Board</p>	<p>Spencer G. Niles, Ed.D. President, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) 2025–2026 on behalf of the ACES Governing Council</p>



Helpful Resources

The following resources are provided to support counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, students, and community members seeking affirming, ethical, and evidence-based information related to LGBTQ+ mental health and the harms of conversion therapy:

- **ACA Code of Ethics (2014):** <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>
Ethical standards guiding professional counseling practice, including client autonomy, nonmaleficence, and value imposition.
- **American Counseling Association (ACA): LGBTQ+ Resources and Special Considerations:** <https://www.counseling.org/resources/topics/special-considerations/marginalized-communities/lgbtq>
Guidance for counselors working ethically and affirmatively with LGBTQ+ clients, including advocacy and practice considerations.
- **American School Counselor Association (ASCA): Supporting LGBTQ+ Students:** <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Publications-Research/Publications/ASCA-Resources/Support-LGBTQ-Students>
Resources and guidance for creating safe, inclusive, and affirming school environments for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Human Rights Campaign (HRC): The Lies and Dangers of Reparative Therapy:** <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>
Research-based information outlining the documented harms of conversion therapy and its impact on mental health and well-being.
- **Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE): Professional Competencies:** <https://saigecounseling.org/>
Competencies for counseling with LGBTQ+ individuals and transgender clients that emphasize wellness, resilience, social justice, and affirming practice.

ASERVIC and ACES encourage counselors, supervisors, and educators to utilize these and other reputable professional resources to promote ethical practice, human dignity, and the well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities.