

THE FRUIT OF LGBTQ CONVERSION THERAPY & EX-GAY THEOLOGY

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

MATTHEW 7:15-18 (NRSV)

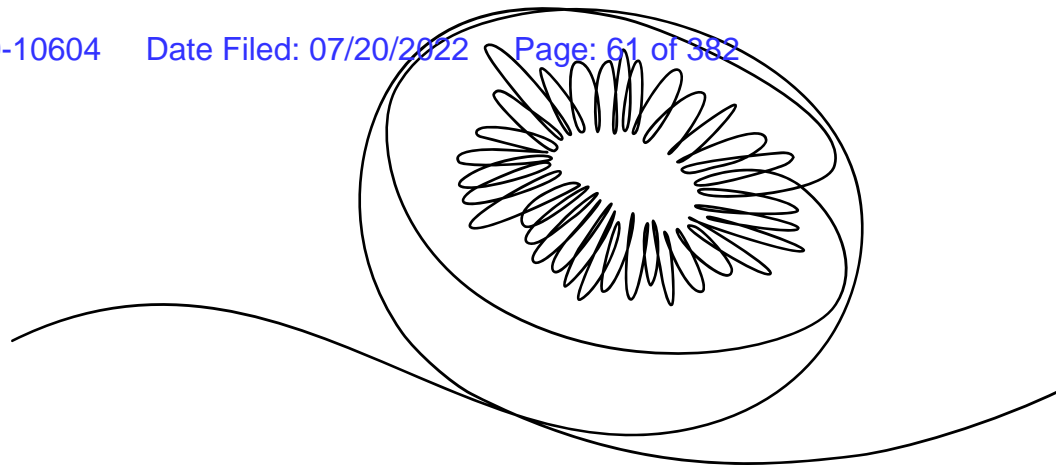
Many LGBTQ people fear or have been told that someday they would be cast into the fires of hell because their sexuality or gender identity makes them “bad trees” bearing “bad fruit.” But Paul says in Galatians 5:22-23; “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (NIV). If something bears blatantly bad fruit on Earth, as seen with conversion therapy, it should be questioned, and if necessary, rejected, repented of, and opposed.

As a suicide prevention organization, The Trevor Project works firsthand with LGBTQ youth in crisis, many of whom are survivors of conversion therapy. Trevor has also supported LGBTQ youth who are afraid to come out to their family because of the fear that their relatives

will force them to go to conversion therapy; a fear that is only reinforced when they regularly hear derogatory remarks about how being LGBTQ “is a choice,” “demonic,” jeopardizes their salvation, or that conversion therapy is otherwise necessary to “fix” them. Other LGBTQ youth contact The Trevor Project because they are in conversion therapy, it is not working, and their feelings of isolation and failure contribute to suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Some youth have told Trevor that, after coming out to their parents as LGBTQ, their family members responded by threatening to cut off contact and support unless they agreed to attend conversion therapy. Others have been estranged from family, with the restoration of relationships conditioned explicitly on their consent to attempt to change. This rejection hurts and leaves too many youth feeling like conversion therapy might be their “only” option.

LGBTQ people are asked in conversion therapy ministries to “pick up their cross and lay their desires and loneliness at the feet of Jesus.” But what happens when Jesus doesn't take those desires and loneliness away? Many of these individuals feel condemned to live their lives alone, never able to fully commit to a relationship with the opposite sex. Others enter into unhealthy heterosexual marriages in an attempt to do what they are told is the right thing and find themselves still struggling years later. Many



LGBTQ people find themselves turning to self-destructive behaviors as they unsuccessfully fight their affections and true identity - all, ironically, while being told that it is the “gay lifestyle” that bears “bad fruit.” In reality, the real danger lies in suppressing who God made us to be.

Practitioners of conversion therapy “tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.” Matthew 23:4 (NRSV). Church leaders and family members should not lay impossible burdens on the shoulders of LGBTQ people.

“LOVE THE SINNER...”

The appeal of sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts, especially for Christian parents, hinges on the belief that helping people to “leave the LGBTQ lifestyle” is the most loving thing you can do for a person. People are genuinely concerned for the souls of their LGBTQ friends and family and look to sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts as a saving grace. In reality, the most common theme in testimonials submitted to QCF’s UNCHANGED ministry shows change efforts to be a path to destruction, with the truly life-giving transformation happening when LGBTQ people come to embrace their identity and subsequently experience the love of God and neighbor more.

1 Corinthians 13:3-7 tells us:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (NIV)

Love is kind. It does not depend on shame, fear, or coercion. Love rejoices with the truth. It need not deny the consensus of medical experts or scientists; it does not depend upon false testimony. It celebrates when we show the world all of who we are rather than fragments based on what others want us to be. Love protects. It shelters us from the storm rather than exposing us to torturous practices that contribute to depression, despair, and suicidality.

Ultimately, Christians believe the fulfillment of the law is love. When baptized in religion, sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts and ex-gay or -trans theology may cloak themselves in words of love, but the toxic fruit they produce ultimately show them to be a false gospel.



DARREN CALHOUN

“After I came out as gay at 17, I remember being eager to meet other gay people because the only ones I knew were from an internet chatroom. I didn’t meet many gay friends at the time, but I did meet Christians who insisted that being gay wasn’t God’s plan for my life. One of the themes of that time was the constant threat of losing my salvation. Like a carrot being dangled in front of a rabbit, the promise of heaven was always just out of my reach. This dynamic kept me following the instructions of my church leaders—often to the detriment of my sense of self and well-being. I gave up attending university, and I gave up my photography business, friends, and even family for the promise of belonging in God’s Kingdom.”

“GO AND SIN NO MORE:” WHAT MUST CHANGE

Ex-gay ministries say that “change is possible.” In one sense, of course, this is true. We can always change how we treat each other for the better, and the Christian walk is about striving to become more Christ-like. This does not mean that we can or should change our fundamental sexual orientation or gender identity, any more than we should try to change what hand we naturally write with. QCF Board member and conversion therapy survivor, Darren Calhoun, expresses this sentiment beautifully, saying:

Our scriptures encourage us to change and grow to be more like Jesus—loving, generous, truthful, and merciful...But there are some things about us that God doesn't want to change, because God made us who we are, in our “innermost being,” as the Psalmist says. And God made us for good, all created in God's image and likeness. It is from this place that we do the difficult and nuanced work of figuring out what in us must change because it's not like God and what is absolutely a reflection of the divine working within us.

From the first pages of Genesis to the last chapters in Revelation, we see human understanding of God and God's relationship to Creation change and shift. Food laws, circumcision, and purity rituals all evolved and eventually faded out of practice for most

Christians despite the historical significance of these religious traditions. From start to finish, the Bible is full of surprising changes and disruptions - not least of which, the moment on a road to Damascus when God actually mandates a name-change for Paul - but the common denominator is a transformation that brings people closer to God. Like Peter in Acts 10, one ought not call unclean anything that God has made clean, but instead, discern what is wholesome based on God's law of love.

Do not be
conformed to
this world but
be transformed
by the renewing
of your minds,
so that you may
discern what is
the will of God—
what is good and
acceptable
and perfect.

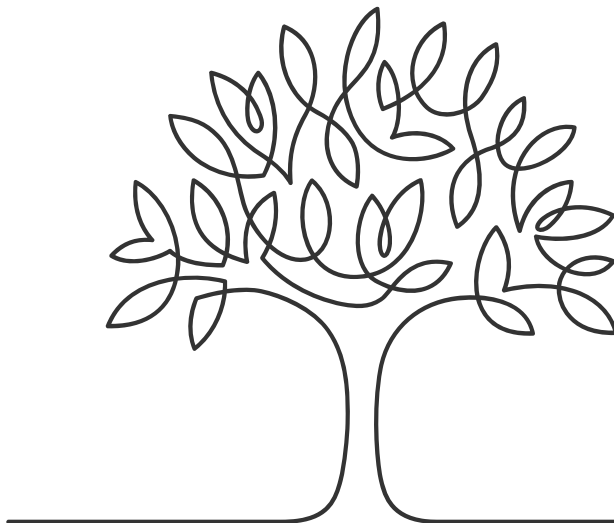
ROMANS 12:2 (NRSV)

THE GOOD NEWS: ACCEPTANCE SAVES LIVES

The Trevor Project has found that being part of a loving and accepting religious community is an important part of many LGBTQ young people's lives, and QCF's members attest every day to the resilience of LGBTQ Christians. Mental health professionals agree: the LGBTQ community's higher rates of mental illness and suicidality should be attributed to social stigma and discrimination, not anything inherently wrong with their sexual orientation or gender identity. When LGBTQ people are embraced for who they are, they are fully capable of flourishing.

Genesis 1 declares that all people bear the image and likeness of God, and that when God looked over all of creation, God called it "good." There are no caveats or fine print or unspoken rules or expectations that you have to abide by to stay in God's good graces. Song of Solomon 4:7 says, "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (NIV)

Whole-hearted acceptance from friends and family is vital to the health and well-being of all people, and especially of our LGBTQ neighbors. Today, people of faith in particular have an important role to play in that acceptance. The Trevor Project recently released [a study](#) on the effect of religious condemnation on LGBTQ youth. Unfortunately, the study found that religiosity was not a trait correlated with lower rates of suicide for LGBTQ youth in the same way that being a member of a faith community appears to help protect their straight and cisgender peers. On the other hand, LGBTQ youth who reported not hearing their parents use religion to say negative things about being LGBTQ were at half the risk for attempting suicide in the past year. Our faith communities can do better, and ending efforts to change people's sexual orientation or gender identity is the first step.



CONCLUSION

Christians of good faith can and often do disagree on matters of deep theological importance. But when statistics and evidence all point to the damage that is being done to LGBTQ people through conversion therapy and ex-gay theology, when we can hear their stories of pointless suffering and shattered faith, the Christian community should repent.

If you glean nothing else from this document, we hope it is the understanding that your faith community's practices around LGBTQ inclusion and affirmation matter. Like Jacob wrestling with the Lord, you may come away from reading this feeling wounded in seeing that Christians have hurt LGBTQ people in ways we didn't intend and for reasons that may have been misguided. In the end, Jacob left the encounter with a limp, but he was blessed for his struggle. Change is hard, but sometimes it is necessary. By recognizing that sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts harm LGBTQ people, you can help put an end to it. By transforming how the Christian church engages with LGBTQ people, we can save lives.

*In the interest of appealing to the diversity of Christian translation preferences, we have opted to cite multiple translations, including the New International Version (NIV) and The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV).

THE GOOD FRUIT STATEMENT ON LGBTQ CONVERSION THERAPY

The Bible teaches Christians to go beyond what is legally required and do what is good. As part of doing good, Romans 13:10 declares, "Love does no wrong to a neighbor..." (NIV). Let taking this pledge be a first step to better loving our LGBTQ neighbors.

Christians are called to love and care for our neighbors, including those who are LGBTQ. Recognizing that conversion therapy and other change efforts bear bad fruit, I will commit to respecting the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of LGBTQ siblings by refraining from trying to change their sexual orientation or gender identity through my words, deeds, ministries, and policies and I will actively encourage my faith community to do the same.

RESOURCES

LGBTQ Identity and Christian Theology

- [Q Christian Fellowship](#)
- *Scripture, Ethics, and the Possibility of Same-Sex Relationships* by Karen Keen
- *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships* by James Brownson
- *God and The Gay Christian* by Matthew Vines
- *Changing Our Mind* by David Gushee
- *Radical Love* by Patrick Cheng

Making My Church Safer for LGBTQ People

- QCF [Relational Guide for Clergy](#)
- [ChurchClarity.org](#)
- [EstuarySpace.org](#)
- [Religiosity and Suicidality among LGBTQ Youth](#)
- [Oriented to Love](#) by Christians for Social Action

Finding Community

- [TrevorSpace](#) — An online international peer-to-peer community for LGBTQ young people and their friends.
- QCF [Community Groups](#)
- [PFLAG](#)
- [Beloved Arise](#)

History, Facts, and Figures

- [CURED Documentary](#)
- [Williams Institute Study](#)
- Peer-reviewed article, American Journal of Public Health (AJPH): [Self-Reported Conversion Efforts and Suicidality Among US LGBTQ Youths and Young Adults](#)

Self-Acceptance as an LGBTQ Christian

- [Q Christian Fellowship](#)
- *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* by Jeff Chu
- *Outside the Lines: How Embracing Queerness Will Transform Your Faith* by Mihee Kim-Kort
- *Blue Babies Pink: A Southern Coming Out Story in 44 Episodes* by B.T. Harman (available [as a blog](#) or as a podcast on iTunes)

LGBTQ Identity and Mental Health

- [The Trevor Project Lifeline, Text, and Chat](#) (suicide prevention and crisis intervention services)
- [Suicide Prevention and Warning Signs](#)
- The Trevor Project [2021 LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Survey](#)
- [TransLifeline](#)
- [American Psychological Association LGBT Resources](#)

Becoming an Ally

- [Coming Out: A Handbook for LGBTQ Young People](#)
- QCF [Relational Guide for Allies](#)
- QCF [Relational Guide for Parents of Newly Out LGBTQ+ People](#)
- [Supporting Black LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#)
- [How To Support Bisexual Youth: Ways to Care for Young People Who Are Attracted to More Than One Gender](#)

Gender Identity

- *Transforming: The Bible and The Lives of Transgender Christians* by Austen Hartke
- QCF [Affirmation Guide for Trans and Gender-Expansive Identities](#)
- Trevor Project [A Guide to Being an Ally to Transgender and Nonbinary Youth](#)

Stories of Survivors

- [UNCHANGED Movement](#)
- [Pray Away Documentary](#) (available on Netflix)
- *Torn* by Justin Lee
- [Boy Erased \(film\)](#)
- [Trapped: The Alex Cooper Story](#)
- *Outlove* by [Julie Rodgers](#)

Other Trevor Project and QCF Resources

- [The Trevor Project Resources](#)
- [Trevor Support Center](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Theology 101](#)
- [Family Resources](#)
- [More Resources](#)

LGBTQ TERMINOLOGY

Bisexual: Describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree.

Change Efforts: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts refers to any of several dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity. May also be referred to as conversion therapy, gender critical therapy, reparative therapy, or ex-gay ministries.

Cisgender Person: A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with the social and cultural expectations typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. The abbreviation cis may also be used.

Gay: Describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender OR a man/male-aligned person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other men.

Gender Dysphoria: The distress caused when a person’s assigned sex at birth and assumed gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender Identity: One’s innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be aligned with or different from their so-called ‘sex’ assigned at birth.

Heterosexual: Describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to a person of the opposite gender. Also known as “straight.”

Lesbian: Describes a woman or woman-aligned person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: An umbrella term that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or questioning.

Medical Transition: “Transitioning” is the process a transgender person goes through to discover and/or affirm their gender identity. This can include social, medical, and/or physical components. Gender affirming medical care can include affirming therapies, treatments to postpone physical changes, known as “puberty blockers,” as well as treatments that lead to physical changes that would affirm one’s gender identity, including hormones and surgical procedures. It is important to know that not all transgender people can or want to undergo medical transition, and a person’s gender identity is not dependent on medical care.

Nonbinary: A term refers to individuals who identify as neither man nor woman, both man and woman, or a combination of man or woman. It is an identity term that some use exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer, gender creative, gender nonconforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive. Individuals who identify as nonbinary may understand the identity as falling under the transgender umbrella, and may thus identify as transgender. Sometimes abbreviated as NB or Enby.

Queer: Describes a person who is not straight and/or cisgender. The term began as a slur, but has been partially reclaimed and is used as a catch-all identifier by some in the LGBTQ community. Others continue to find it offensive. Note: Should only ever be used as an adjective, and may be offensive to use as a noun.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" to describe people's identity, because gendered characteristics in humans occur along a spectrum and because of its role in transphobia (sex doesn't always equal gender).

Sexual Orientation: The presence or absence of an inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

Transgender Person: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the 'sex' they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. (Note: Transgender identity does not depend on medically transitioning through either hormone therapy or surgical interventions.) Also known as "trans."

- [Topics](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Experts](#)
- [Quick Facts](#)
- [Donate](#)



- Issues
 - [COVID-19](#)
 - [Criminalization](#)
 - [Data Collection](#)
 - [Demographics](#)
 - [Discrimination & Violence](#)
 - [Economics & Poverty](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [Health & HIV/AIDS](#)
 - [International](#)
 - [Relationships & Parenting](#)
 - [Social Services & Child Welfare](#)
- Subpopulations
 - [Older Adults](#)
 - [People of Color](#)
 - [Same-Sex Couples](#)
 - [Transgender People](#)
 - [Youth](#)
- Projects
 - [Access to Higher Education](#)
 - [Generations](#)
 - [Global Acceptance Index](#)
 - [Pathways to Justice](#)
 - [Sex Offenders Registry Study](#)
 - [Sexuality, Health & Opportunity](#)
 - [TransPop](#)
- [LGBT FAQs](#) Find answers to our most frequently asked questions
- [Data Interactives](#) Customizable visualizations of our data
- [Survey Measures](#) How to ask sexual orientation and gender identity questions
- [Infographics](#) Visualizations of our research
- [Programs](#)
 - [Judicial Education](#)
 - [International Programs](#)
 - [Moot Court Competition](#)
 - [Dukeminier Awards Journal](#)
 - [Reading Room](#)
 - [UCLA Courses](#)
 - [Small Grants Program](#)
- [About](#)
 - [Who we are](#)
 - [Staff](#)
 - [Ambassadors](#)
 - [Careers](#)
 - [Impact](#)
 - [Contact](#)
- [Events](#)
 - [Upcoming Events](#)
 - [Webinar Library](#)
 - [Annual Update](#)
- [Press](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)
 - [Join Press List](#)
- [20th Anniversary](#) Celebrate with us

[Topics](#) >

[Publications](#)

[Experts](#)

[Quick Facts](#) >[Donate](#)[Programs](#) >[About](#) >[Events](#) >[Press](#) >[20th Anniversary](#)

>

[Topics](#) >[Issues](#) >[COVID-19](#)[Criminalization](#)[Data Collection](#)[Demographics](#)[Discrimination & Violence](#)[Economics & Poverty](#)[Education](#)[Health & HIV/AIDS](#)[International](#)[Relationships & Parenting](#)[Social Services & Child Welfare](#)[Subpopulations](#) >[Older Adults](#)[People of Color](#)[Same-Sex Couples](#)[Transgender People](#)[Youth](#)[Projects](#) >[Access to Higher Education](#)[Generations](#)[Global Acceptance Index](#)[Pathways to Justice](#)[Sex Offenders Registry Study](#)[Sexuality, Health & Opportunity](#)[TransPop](#)[Quick Facts](#) >[LGBT FAQs](#) Find answers to our most frequently asked questions[Data Interactives](#) Customizable visualizations of our data[Survey Measures](#) How to ask sexual orientation and gender identity questions[Infographics](#) Visualizations of our research[Programs](#) >[Judicial Education](#)[International Programs](#)[Moot Court Competition](#)[Dukeminier Awards Journal](#)[Reading Room](#)[UCLA Courses](#)[Small Grants Program](#)[About](#) >[Who we are](#)[Staff](#)[Ambassadors](#)[Careers](#)[Impact](#)[Contact](#)[Events](#) >[Upcoming Events](#)[Webinar Library](#)[Annual Update](#)[Press](#) >[Press Releases](#)[Join Press List](#)[Publications](#) > [Health & HIV/AIDS](#)[Brief](#)

Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth

- Contents
- Download
- Share
- [Full Report](#)
- [2018 Version](#)



Efforts to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with poor mental health for LGBT people. This study looks at the prevalence of conversion therapy among LGBT adults and estimates the number of LGBT youth who are likely to undergo the practice before they become adults.

AUTHORS

- [Christy Mallory](#)
[Legal Director](#)
- Taylor N.T. Brown
Program Manager, Former
- [Kerith J. Conron](#)
[Research Director](#)

[CONTACT US ABOUT THIS STUDY](#)

Highlights

Conversion therapy, also known as sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts, is a practice grounded in the belief that being LGBT is abnormal.

As of June 2019, 18 states and the District of Columbia had passed statutes limiting the use of conversion therapy on LGBT youth. Only 8% of respondents to a 2014 national poll said they thought conversion therapy could change a person's sexual orientation.

Data Points

698,000

LGBT adults in the US have received conversion therapy

350,000

received it as adolescents

69,000

LGBT youth will receive conversion therapy before they reach the age of 18 in the 32 states that currently do not ban the practice
Executive Summary

Conversion therapy, also known as sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts, is a practice grounded in the belief that being LGBT is abnormal. It is intended to change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of LGBT people.¹ Conversion therapy is practiced by some licensed professionals in the context of providing health care and by some clergy or other spiritual advisors in the context of religious practice.² Efforts to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with poor mental health³, including suicidality.⁴ As of June 2019, 18 states, the District of Columbia, and a number of localities have banned health care professionals from using conversion therapy on youth.

The Williams Institute estimates that:

- 698,000 LGBT adults (ages 18-59)⁵ in the U.S. have received conversion therapy, including about 350,000 LGBT adults who were subjected to the practice as adolescents.⁶
- 16,000 LGBT youth (ages 13-17) will receive conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before they reach the age of 18 in the 32 states that currently do not ban the practice.⁷
- 10,000 LGBT youth (ages 13-17) live in states that ban conversion therapy and have been protected from receiving conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before age 18.⁸
- An estimated 57,000 youth (ages 13-17) across all states will receive conversion therapy from religious or spiritual advisors before they reach the age of 18.⁹
- 10,000 LGBT youth live in states that ban conversion therapy and have been protected from receiving conversion therapy before age 18.

History

Conversion therapy has been practiced in the U.S. for over a century. Academic literature has documented instances of conversion therapy being used as early as the 1890s and continuing through the present day.¹¹ Throughout the history of conversion therapy, a range of techniques have been used by both health care professionals and religious figures seeking to change people’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Currently, talk therapy is the most commonly used therapy technique.¹² Some practitioners have also used “aversion treatments, such as inducing nausea, vomiting, paralysis; providing electric shocks; or having the individual snap an elastic band around the wrist when the individual became aroused to sexual erotic images or thoughts.”¹³ Other practitioners have used non-aversive techniques such as attempting to “change thought patterns by reframing desires, redirecting thoughts, or using hypnosis.”¹⁴



An estimated 698,000 LGBT adults in the U.S have received conversion therapy either from a licensed professional or a religious advisor or from both at some point in their lives,¹⁵ including about 350,000 LGBT adults who received conversion therapy as adolescents.¹⁶

An estimated 698,000 LGBT adults in the U.S. have received conversion therapy at some point in their lives.

Current Perspectives

Professional Health Associations

A number of prominent national professional health associations—including the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, among others—have issued public statements opposing the use of conversion therapy because it is harmful and ineffective.¹⁷ Several of these associations have called on Congress and state legislatures to pass laws that ban conversion therapy. For example, the CEO of the American Counseling Association (ACA) submitted testimony to the Illinois House and Senate in support of the state’s conversion therapy ban bill in 2015.¹⁸ In addition, ACA members sent 79 letters to the Governor and 84 letters to state legislators in support of the bill.¹⁹ Also, several professional health associations endorsed the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act, a federal bill that would have prohibited the practice of conversion therapy, including the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Counseling Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.²⁰

Public Opinion

Public opinion polls at the national level and in several states have found majority support for ending the use of conversion therapy on youth. A 2019 national poll conducted by Ipsos/Reuters found that 56% of US adults support making conversion therapy on youth by mental health practitioners illegal as compared to a minority (18%) who think that it should be legal.²¹ Majority support for making conversion therapy on youth illegal was observed across all age groups, regions of the US, and rural/urban residence.²²

Table 1. Public support for laws banning conversion therapy on minors in U.S.

Question: Conversion therapy is when mental health practitioners try to change an LGBTQ person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Do you think conversion therapy should be illegal or legal to use on LGBTQ children under age 18?

	All	Age			Region				Residence		
		18-34	35-54	55+	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Conversion therapy on LGBTQ children should be illegal	56%	56%	56%	55%	58%	51%	53%	62%	53%	59%	52%
Conversion therapy on LGBTQ children should be legal	18%	22%	18%	16%	13%	19%	20%	19%	21%	16%	18%
Don't know	26%	21%	26%	30%	29%	30%	27%	19%	25%	25%	30%

Recent polls in six states have also found strong support for laws that ban licensed health care professionals from using conversion therapy on youth.

***Table 2. Public support for laws banning conversion therapy on minors in six states**



Jurisdiction	Support for law banning conversion therapy	Year
Arizona ²³	59%	2017
Florida ²⁴	71%	2017
New Mexico ²⁵	60%	2016
North Carolina ²⁶	80%	2019
Pennsylvania ²⁷	54%	2017
Pennsylvania's 18 th Congressional District ²⁸	63%	2018
Virginia ²⁹	64%	2016

Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth (June 2019)
THE WILLIAMS INSTITUTE

*23 24 25 26 27 28 29

Polling also indicates that many people do not think conversion therapy is effective; only 8% of respondents to a 2014 national poll said they thought conversion therapy could change a person's sexual orientation from gay to straight.³⁰

Current Laws

Conversion Therapy by Licensed Health Care Professionals

As of June 2019, 18 states and the District of Columbia had passed statutes limiting the use of conversion therapy: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.³¹ The laws protect youth under age 18 from receiving conversion therapy from licensed mental health care providers.³² California was the first state to pass a conversion therapy ban in 2012.³³ Four states—Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, and New York—passed bans in 2019.³⁴ In addition, a number of cities and counties in states without statewide bans have passed bans at the local level.³⁵

All of the state statutory bans allow licensing entities to discipline health care providers who use conversion therapy on youth under age 18.³⁶ Under Connecticut, Illinois, and New Hampshire laws, the use of conversion therapy on youth is also considered an unfair business practice, and the laws allow for enforcement and penalties consistent with other state laws against such practices.³⁷ In addition, in 2015, a New Jersey court held that providing conversion therapy in exchange for payment constitutes a fraudulent business practice, regardless of whether it is used on youth or adults.³⁸

16,000 LGBT youth (ages 13-17) will receive conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before they reach the age of 18 in the 32 states that currently do not ban the practice, unless additional states pass conversion therapy bans.³⁹ Approximately 10,000 LGBT youth (ages 13-17) who live in states with bans have been protected from receiving conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before age 18 because their states have banned the practice.⁴⁰

In addition to state bans, members of Congress have introduced federal legislation aimed at limiting conversion therapy. The Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act, introduced in both the House and Senate in 2017⁴¹ and 2015⁴², would have classified conversion therapy provided in exchange for payment as a form of consumer fraud.⁴³ The law would have allowed state attorneys general and the Federal Trade Commission to bring enforcement actions against individuals who are providing conversion therapy for payment or advertising such services.⁴⁴ Additionally, the Prohibition of Medicaid Funding for Conversion Therapy Act and the Every Child Deserves a Family Act would limit the practice of conversion

therapy by prohibiting payments under the Medicaid and Social Security programs for conversion therapy. Both of these bills have been introduced in Congress in 2019.⁴⁶

Conversion Therapy by Religious and Spiritual Advisors

The state statutory conversion therapy bans apply to licensed mental health care professionals and sometimes more broadly to others who seek to provide conversion therapy in exchange for payment.⁴⁷ The laws generally do not apply to religious or spiritual advisors who engage in sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts within their pastoral or religious capacities.



These exclusions for therapy provided by religious or spiritual advisors leave many youth vulnerable to conversion therapy even in states with bans. An estimated 57,000 youth (ages 13-17) across all states will receive conversion therapy from religious or spiritual advisors before they reach the age of 18.⁴⁸ This includes approximately 38,000 youth (ages 13-17) who will receive conversion therapy from religious or spiritual advisors, but not a licensed health care professional before they reach the age of 18.⁴⁹ Some youth will receive conversion therapy from both a licensed health care provider and a religious or spiritual advisor before they reach age 18.

Conclusion

Conversion therapy continues to be used in the U.S. despite support for ending the practice among prominent medical and mental health associations and the public. An estimated 698,000 LGBT adults in the U.S. have received treatment to change their sexual orientation or gender identity at some point in their lives, including about 350,000 who received treatment as adolescents. As of June 2019, 18 states, the District of Columbia, and a number of localities had enacted laws banning licensed professionals from using conversion therapy on youth. An estimated 16,000 LGBT youth will receive conversion therapy from a licensed professional before they reach the age of 18 in the 32 states that currently do not ban the practice. In addition, an estimated 57,000 LGBT youth across all states will receive conversion therapy from religious or spiritual advisors. Because of the large number of youth who may be vulnerable to conversion therapy, individuals who have contact with minors should be aware that the American Psychological Association has issued a resolution “advising parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth[.]”⁵⁰

[Download the brief](#)

Related Publications

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Coming Out Milestones in the US](#)

[October 2018](#)

Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth

- Contents
- Download
- Share
- Overview
- Highlights
- Data Points
- Brief
- [Full Report](#)
- [2018 Version](#)
- Copy link
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Judith M. Glassgold et al., Am. Psych. Assoc., Report of the Am. Psych. Assoc. Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation 22 (2009).

Susan L. Morrow and A. Lee Beckstead, Conversion Therapies for Same-Sex Attracted Clients in Religious Conflict: Context, Predisposing Factors, Experiences, and Implications for Therapy, 32 *Counseling Psychologist* 641, 642 (2004).

E.g., Annesa Flentje, Nicholas C. Heck and Bryan N. Cochran, *Sexual Reorientation Therapy Interventions: Perspectives of Ex-Ex-Gay Individuals*, 17 *J. Gay and Lesbian Mental Health* 256 (2013); Elizabeth M. Weiss et al., *A Qualitative Study of Ex-Gay and Ex-Ex-Gay Experiences*, 14 *J. Gay and Lesbian Mental Health* 291 (2010); Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder, *Changing Sexual Orientation: A Consumer's Report*, 33 *Prof. Psych.: Research and Practice* 249 (2002).

Sandy E. James et al., Nat'l Ctr. for Transgender Equality, *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey* (2016); Caitlin Ryan et al., *Parent-Initiated Sexual Orientation Change Efforts with LGBT Adolescents: Implications for Young Adult Mental Health and Adjustment*, *J. Homosexuality* (Nov. 7, 2018) (online).

698,000 US LGBT adults ages 18 to 59 are estimated to have received treatment to change their sexual orientation or gender identity [range 572,000 to 857,000]. This figure was calculated by adding estimates for LGB and transgender adults and rounding them to the nearest 1,000. In order to determine an estimate for the number of LGB adults who have received conversion therapy, we started with the proportion of LGB at ages 18 to 59 who report having received treatment to change their sexual orientation (6.7%) from the Generations Study*, a national probability study of LGB individuals supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number R01HD078526 (Ilan H. Meyer, PI). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. The proportion who received conversion therapy across three age cohorts (18-25, 34-41, and 52-59) did not statistically significantly differ across cohorts and is assumed to be consistent for those ages 18 through 59 years (Williams Institute unpublished analyses). That proportion was then multiplied by the proportion of adults ages 18 to 59 who identify as LGBT (5.3%) in the 2015-2017 Gallup Daily Tracking Survey (Williams Institute unpublished analyses) and the proportion of LGBT individuals ages 18 to 59 who are cisgender (87.7%) among LGBT-identified respondents to the 2014-2015 BRFSS (Williams Institute unpublished analyses), and then applied to the number of adults ages 18 to 59 in the U.S. (180,757,997), according to 2016 population estimates from the 2010 U.S. Census. For total 18-59 population estimates: search American FactFinder, (last visited Dec. 15, 2017) (select advanced search, enter "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016" under topic or table name, and select "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016" 2016 Population Estimates). The same steps were followed with 95% confidence intervals to calculate a range for each estimate.

In order to determine an estimate for the number of transgender adults who have received conversion therapy, we started with the proportion of transgender adults who report that one or more professionals tried to make them identify only with their sex assigned at birth or try to stop them from being transgender (13.0%), as observed in the U.S. Transgender Survey—the largest purposive sample study of transgender adults to date and reported in James et al., *supra* note 4. The proportion who received conversion therapy was multiplied by the proportion of adults ages 18 and older who are estimated to be transgender (0.6%) and then applied to the number of adults ages 18 to 59 in the U.S. (180,757,997). This estimate is likely to be somewhat conservative given that slightly larger proportions of the population identify as transgender among younger age cohorts. For transgender population estimates see Andrew R. Flores et al., *The Williams Institute, How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States?* (2016).

*About the Generations Study. Generations participants were recruited by Gallup, Inc., a survey research consulting company (<http://www.gallup.com/>) using the Gallup Daily Tracking Survey as initial contact. Generations baseline participants were screened and enrolled in the study between March 28, 2016 – March 30, 2017. The Daily Tracking Survey is a telephone interview of a national probability sample of 1,000 adults ages 18 and older that is conducted daily (350 days a year) to inquire about topics including the respondents' politics, economics and general well-being. Respondents include English and Spanish-speaking individuals from all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Gallup uses a dual-frame sampling procedure, which includes random-digit dialing (RDD) to reach both landline and cellphone users, as well as an additional random selection method for choosing respondents with landlines. Gallup stratifies the RDD list to ensure that the unweighted samples are proportionate by U.S. Census region and time zone. Gallup weights the data daily to compensate for disproportionalities in non-response and selection probabilities.

The Generations study used a 2-step recruitment procedure. In the first step, utilizing a question asked of all Gallup respondents, all LGBT individuals were identified. The Gallup question to assess sexual orientation and gender identity asked by the phone interviewer is "I have one final question we are asking only for statistical purposes. Do you, personally, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?" In the second step, Gallup respondents who were identified as LGBT were assessed for eligibility for participation in the Generations study and those eligible were invited to participate in Generations. Respondents were eligible if they identified as LGB (and not transgender) in response to a Generations question that asked if they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or same-gender loving, if they were in the age and race/ethnicity groups targeted for the 3 cohorts under investigation in Generations: ages 18-25, 34-41, or 52-59; Black, Latino, or White; completed 6th grade at least, and if they spoke English well enough to conduct the phone interview in English. Transgender respondents were recruited into a contemporary TransPop study.

Respondents who were eligible for participation in Generations were invited to participate in the study. If they agreed, they were emailed or mailed a survey questionnaire to complete by self-administration (via a web link or printed questionnaire, respectively). Respondents were sent \$25 gift certificate with their invitation to participate in the study, which they could redeem at any time. Prior to completing the survey, respondents reviewed an information sheet about the study and their rights and responsibilities as research participants. Respondents who agreed to participate then submitted the web survey online or returned the printed questionnaires for data entry using a provided addressed envelope.

In total, 366,644 participants were screened by Gallup for inclusion in the Generations study. Of them, 3.5% were identified as LGBT and 27.5% of them were eligible for Generations based on the eligibility criteria. Of these, 80% agreed to participate in the survey and of those, 48% completed the survey. The final Generations baseline sample size was 1,345. Generations is funded by a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD grant 1R01HD078526) and through supplemental grants from the National Institutes of Health, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research and the Office of Research on Women's Health.

Generations Survey Items about Conversion Therapy

133 Did you ever receive treatment from someone who tried to change your sexual orientation (such as try to make you straight/heterosexual)?
If yes, please mark all that apply.

- No-Skip to the text before Question 135
- Yes, from a healthcare professional (such as a psychologist or counselor who was not religious-focused)
- Yes, from a religious leader (such as a pastor, religious counselor, priest)

134 About how old were you the last time you received treatment to change your sexual orientation? Your best estimate is years.

Continue

Among adults who have received conversion therapy, approximately 49.9% of LGB adults in the Generations Study and 51.0% of transgender adults in the U.S. Trans Survey are estimated to have received treatment at or before the age of 18. These proportions are applied to the number of LGB and transgender adults ages 18 to 59 who are estimated to have received conversion therapy, as described above. Thus, we estimate that 350,000 LGB adults [range 287,000 to 429,000] received treatment as adolescents. We believe that our estimate of conversion therapy among cisgender LGB adolescents is, if anything, an underestimate because the Generations Study survey asked about age at which last conversion therapy was received versus the age at which conversion therapy first began. It is possible that some youth received conversion therapy that did not end until age 18 or later and that these individuals are missing in our estimates of the percentage of LGB youth who received conversion therapy. This would lead to an underestimate of the number of current LGB youth currently at risk of conversion therapy.

16,000 LGB youth ages 13 to 17 [range 10,000 to 26,000] are estimated to live in states without state-wide conversion therapy bans and will receive conversion therapy from a professional before the age of 18. This figure was calculated by adding estimates for LGB and transgender youth. In order to determine an estimate for the number of LGB youth who will receive conversion therapy before age 18, we multiplied the proportion of LGB adults ages 18 to 59 who report having received treatment from a health care professional to change their sexual orientation that began and ended before the age of 18 (1.2%) from the Generations Study (Williams Institute unpublished analyses) by the proportion of youth in grades 9 through 12 who identify as LGB (8.0%) in the 2015 YRBS and by the proportion of LGB young adults ages 18 to 24 who are cisgender (95.7%) among LGB-identified respondents to the 2014-2015 BRFSS (Williams Institute unpublished analyses), and then applied this proportion to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650), according to 2016 population estimates from the 2010 U.S. Census. For total 13-17 population estimates: search American FactFinder, (last visited Dec. 15, 2017) (select advanced search, enter “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” under topic or table name, and select “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” 2016 Population Estimates). For estimates of the proportion of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual see Laura Kann et al., *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors among Students in Grades 9-12 – United States and Selected Sites, 2015* (2016). Note: The proportion who received conversion therapy from a health care professional to change their sexual orientation that began and ended before the age of 18, was not significantly different across the three age cohorts (18-25, 34-41, and 52-59) where receipt of conversion therapy is assumed to be consistent for those ages 26 to 33 and 42 to 51 (Williams Institute unpublished analyses).

In order to determine an estimate for the number of transgender youth who have received conversion therapy we multiplied the proportion of transgender adults who report that a professional (nonreligious or spiritual) tried to make them identify only with their sex assigned at birth or stop them from being transgender (9.0%) by the proportion for whom this had happened at or before age 18 (51%), as observed in the U.S. Transgender Survey and reported in James et al., *supra* note 4. This proportion (4.6%), those who received conversion therapy at or before age 18, was multiplied by the proportion of youth ages 13 to 17 who are estimated to be transgender (0.73%) and then applied to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650). For transgender population proportion estimates see Jody L. Herman et al., *The Williams Institute, Age of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender in the United States* (2017).

For a list of the states that have banned conversion therapy state-wide see note 33, *infra*. Although some cities and counties have enacted local bans on conversion therapy, the population of these localities is not large and would not have an appreciable impact on state estimates.

Following the same approach described above, we estimate that approximately 10,000 LGB youth [range 6,000 to 16,000] live in states that have banned conversion therapy state-wide by licensed professionals.

57,000 LGB youth ages 13-17 [range 37,000 to 94,000] are estimated to be at risk of receiving treatment to change their sexual orientation or gender identity from a religious leader, advisor or counselor at or before age 18. This figure was calculated by adding estimates for LGB and transgender youth. In order to determine an estimate for the number of LGB youth who will receive conversion therapy, we multiplied the proportion of LGB adults ages 18 to 25 who report having received treatment from a religious leader (pastor, religious counselor, priest) to change their sexual orientation that began and ended before the age of 18 (3.4%) from the Generations Study (Williams Institute unpublished analyses) by the proportion of youth in grades 9 through 12 who identify as LGB (8.0%) in the 2015 YRBS and by the proportion of LGB young adults ages 18 to 24 who are cisgender (95.7%) in the 2014-2015 BRFSS (Williams Institute unpublished analyses), and then applied this proportion to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650), according to 2016 population estimates from the 2010 U.S. Census. For total 13-17 population estimates: search American FactFinder, (last visited Dec. 15, 2017) (select advanced search, enter “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” under topic or table name, and select “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” 2016 Population Estimates). For estimates of the proportion of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual see Kann et al., *supra* note 7.

In order to determine an estimate for the number of transgender youth who received conversion therapy from a religious or spiritual counselor/advisor, we multiplied the proportion of transgender adults who report that such a person tried to make them identify only with their sex assigned at birth or stop them from being transgender (4.0%) by the proportion for whom this had happened at or before age 18 (51%), as observed in the U.S. Transgender Survey and reported James et al., *supra* note 4. This proportion (2.0%), those who received conversion therapy at or before age 18, was then multiplied by the proportion of youth ages 13 to 17 who are estimated to be transgender (0.73%) and then applied to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650). For transgender population proportion estimates see Herman et al., *supra* note 7.

In our prior report, the Williams Institute estimated that approximately 20,000 LGB youth (ages 13-17) would receive conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before they reached the age of 18 in the 41 states that had not banned the practice as of January 2018. The report further estimated that approximately 6,000 LGB youth (ages 13-17) who lived in states that had bans in place in January 2018 would have received conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before they reached the age of 18 had their states not banned the practice. This report considers the impact on those numbers of the nine state-level conversion therapy bans that were enacted between January 2018 and June 2019.

See, e.g., Prince Morton, *Sexual Perversion or Vice? A Pathological and Therapeutic Inquiry*, 25 *J. Nervous and Mental Diseases* 237 (1898); William Stekel, *Is Homosexuality Curable?* 7 *Psychoanalytic Review* 443 (1930); Frank S. Caprio, *Female Homosexuality: A Psychodynamics Study of Lesbianism* 299 (1954); Irving Bieber et al., *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1962); Jolande Jacobi, *Case of Homosexuality*, 154 *J. Analytical Psychology* 48 (1969); Lee Birk, *The Myth of Classic Homosexuality: Views of a Behavioral Psychotherapist in Homosexual Behavior* 376 (J. Marmor, ed., 1980); Robert L. Spitzer, *Can Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting a Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation*, 32 *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 403 (2003).

Nat'l Ctr. for Lesbian Rights, #BornPerfect: The Facts About Conversion Therapy, <http://www.nclrights.org/bornperfect-the-facts-about-conversion-therapy/> (last visited Jan. 2, 2018).



Glassgold et al., *supra* note 1 at 22.

Id. at 33.

For methodology, see note 5, *supra*.

For methodology, see note 6, *supra*.

American professional organizations that have issued statements opposing the use of conversion therapy on youth include: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American College of Physicians, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, American School Health Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American School Counselor Association, and National Association of Social Workers Stewart L. Adelson, *Practice Parameter on Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Sexual Orientation, Gender Nonconformity, and Gender Discordance in Children and Adolescents*, 51 *J. Am. Acad. Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 957 (2012); *Am. Acad. of Pediatrics, Homosexuality and Adolescence*, 92 *Pediatrics* 631 (1993); *Am. Assoc. for Marriage and Family Therapy, Positions on Couples and Families: Reparative/Conversion Therapy* (Mar. 25, 2009), http://www.aamft.org/iMIS15/AAMFT/Content/about_aamft/position_on_couples.aspx; Hilary Daniel & Renee Butkis, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Disparities: Executive Summary of a Policy Position Paper from the American College of Physicians*, 163 *Annals of Internal Medicine* 135 (2015); *Am. Counseling Assoc., Ethical Issues Related to Conversion or Reparative Therapy* (Jan. 16, 2013), <https://www.counseling.org/news/updates/2013/01/16/ethical-issues-related-to-conversion-or-reparative-therapy>; *Am. Med. Assoc., Policies on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer (LGBTQ) Issues, H-160.991 Health Care Needs of the Homosexual Population*, <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/policies-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer-lgbtq-issues> (last visited Dec. 1, 2017); *Am. Psychoanalytic Assoc., Position Statement on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression* (June 2012), *available at* <http://www.apsa.org/content/2012-position-statement-attempts-change-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-or-gender>; *Am. Psychiatric Assoc.; Position Statement on Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies)* (2000); Barry S. Anton, *Proceedings of the Am. Psychological Assoc. for the Legislative Year 2009: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives and Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Directors*, 65 *Am. Psychologist* 385 (2010); *Am. Psychological Assoc., Resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts* (2009); *Am. School Counselor Assoc., The Professional School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth* (revised 2016), *available at* https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_LGBTQ.pdf; *Nat'l Assoc. of Social Workers, Nat'l Comm. on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues, Position Statement: Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) and Conversion Therapy with Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals, and Transgender Persons* (2015), [https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yH3UsGQQmYI%3d&portalid=0](https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yH3UsGQQmYI%3d&portalid=0;);

Press Release, *Am. Counseling Assoc., ACA Advocacy Efforts Assist in Prohibiting 'Conversion Therapy' for Minors in Illinois* (Aug. 21, 2015), *available at* <https://www.counseling.org/news/news-release-archives/by-year/2015/2015/08/21/aca-advocacy-efforts-assist-in-prohibiting-conversion-therapy-for-minors-in-illinois>.

Id.

Press Release, U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu, Rep. Lieu Introduces the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act of 2017, <https://lieu.house.gov/mediacenter/press-releases/rep-lieu-introduces-therapeutic-fraud-prevention-act-2017>.

Reuters/Ipsos Poll Data, Ipsos Poll Conducted for Reuters: Stonewall Anniversary Poll 06.06.2019, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-06/2019_reuters_tracking_-_stonewall_anniversary_poll_06_07_2019.pdf (last visited June 11, 2019).

Williams Institute analysis of Reuters/Ipsos poll data collected May 29-30, 2019 and June 5-6, 2019. Reuters/Ipsos Poll Data, Ipsos Poll Conducted for Reuters: Stonewall Anniversary Poll 06.06.2019, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-06/2019_reuters_tracking_-_stonewall_anniversary_poll_06_07_2019.pdf (last visited June 11, 2019).

Respondents were asked if they supported a range of protections for LGBTQ people in the state, including a ban on conversion therapy on youth; non-discrimination protections in employment, housing, and public accommodations; and non-discrimination protections for prospective parents and kids in the child welfare system. Fifty-four percent of respondents supported all protections. It is not possible to determine the level of support for each individual type of protection from available data. Hart Research Assoc., *Key Findings from the Arizona Survey on LGBT Equality* (Dec. 8, 2017), https://assets2.hrc.org/files/documents/Hart-Polling-Memo_-_Arizona.pdf?ga=2.2178288.1323628615.1559927537-706045989.1558542516.

Doug Kaplan, *Political Climate Forecast for Florida in 2018 Looks Positive for John Morgan, Negative for Gay Conversion Therapy, and Uncertain on the Future of American Involvement in Syria*, Orlando Political Observer, Apr. 3, 2017, <http://orlando-politics.com/2017/04/13/political-climate-forecast-for-florida-in-2018-looks-positive-for-john-morgan-negative-for-gay-conversion-therapy-and-uncertain-on-the-future-of-american-involvement-in-syria/>

Ctr. for Civil Policy, 2017 Landscape Poll (Jan. 15, 2017), <https://civicpolicy.com/2017-landscape-poll/>.

In response to the poll, 80% of respondents immediately said that they think conversion therapy should be legal on children under 18. Half of the remaining 20% of respondents (those who initially agreed or had no opinion) agreed that the practice should be banned when they had a better understanding of what the practice entails. Born Perfect N.C., *Protecting LGBT Youth in North Carolina from Conversion Therapy*, <https://southernequality.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/BornPerfectNCPolling.pdf> (last visited June 8, 2019).

Respondents were asked if they supported a range of protections for LGBTQ people in the state, including a ban on conversion therapy on youth; non-discrimination protections in employment, housing, and public accommodations; and non-discrimination protections for prospective parents and kids in the child welfare system. Fifty-four percent of respondents supported all protections. It is not possible to determine the level of support for each individual type of protection from available data. Hart Research Assoc., *Key Findings from Pennsylvania Survey on LGBTQ Equality* (Dec. 14, 2017), https://assets2.hrc.org/files/documents/Hart-Polling-Memo-Pennsylvania.pdf?_ga=2.204736336.1323628615.1559927537-706045989.1558542516.



Gravis Marketing, *Pennsylvania Polling* (Jan. 6, 2018), https://www.realclearpolitics.com/docs/Gravis_PA_18_Special_Election_January_6_2018.pdf.

Gravis Marketing, *Virginia Election Poll* (May 26, 2017), <http://www.gravismarketing.com/polling-and-market-research/virginiaelection-poll052016/>.

Peter Moore, *Only 8% of Americans Think Gay Conversion Therapy Works*, YouGov.com, June 12, 2014, <https://today.yougov.com/news/2014/06/12/gay-conversion-therapy/>.

Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 865 (2017); 2017 Conn. Pub. Acts 5 (Reg. Sess.); H.B. 19-1129, 72nd Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Colo. 2019) (enacted); S.B. 65, 149th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Del. 2018) (enacted); D.C. Code § 7-1231.14 (2017); S.B. 270, 29th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Haw. 2018) (enacted); 405 Ill. Comp. Stat. 48/1 (2017); H.P. 755, 129th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Me. 2019); H.B. 140, 191st Gen. Court, Reg. Sess. (Mass. 2019) (enacted); S.B. 1028, 2018 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2018) (enacted); S.B. 201, 79th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Nev. 2017); H.B. 587, 2018 Gen. Ct., Reg. Sess. (N.H. 2018) (enacted); N.J. Rev. Stat. § 45:1-54 (2016); S.B. 121, 2017 Leg., Reg. Sess. (N.M. 2017); S.B. S1026, 2019-2020 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (N.Y. 2019) (enacted); Or. Rev. Stat. §§ 675.070; 675.300; 675.336; 675.540; 675.745 (2016); H. 5277, 2017 Gen. Assem., Reg. Sess. (R.I. 2017); Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 18, § 8351; Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 26, §§ 1354(a), 1842(b), 3016, 3210(a), 3271(a), 4042(a), 4062(a), 4132(a); S.B. 5722, 65th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 2018) (enacted).

Some laws apply to other types of health professionals as well. For example, New Mexico's conversion therapy ban applies to nurses and doctors of osteopathic medicine. S.B. 121, 2017 Leg., Reg. Sess. (N.M. 2017)

Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 865.

S.B. 65, 149th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Del. 2018) (enacted); S.B. 270, 29th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Haw. 2018) (enacted); S.B. 1028, 2018 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2018) (enacted); H.B. 587, 2018 Gen. Ct., Reg. Sess. (N.H. 2018) (enacted); S.B. 5722, 65th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 2018) (enacted).

Trevor Project, *Progress Map*, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/progressmap/?location=fl-br> (last visited June 8, 2019).

See note, *supra*.

2017 Conn. Pub. Acts 5 (Reg. Sess.); 405 Ill. Comp. Stat. 48/1 (2017); H.B. 587, 2018 Gen. Ct., Reg. Sess. (N.H. 2018) (enacted).

Ferguson v. JONAH, No. L-5473-12 (N.J. Sup. Ct. Dec. 18, 2015).

For methodology, see note 7, *supra*.

For methodology, see note 8, *supra*.

H.R. 2119, 115th Cong. (2017); S. 928, 115th Cong. (2017).

H.R. 2450, 114th Cong. (2015); S. 2880, 114th Cong. (2015).

Id.

Id.

H.R. 1981, 116th Cong. (2019); H.R. ___, 116th Cong. (2019).

Id.

See note 33, *supra*.

For methodology, see note 9, *supra*.

38,000 LGBT youth ages 13-17 [range 24,000 to 61,000] are estimated to be at risk of receiving treatment to change their sexual orientation or gender identity from a religious leader, advisor or counselor only at or before age 18. This figure was calculated by adding estimates for LGB and transgender youth and rounding them to the nearest 1,000. In order to determine an estimate for the number of LGB youth who will receive conversion therapy, we multiplied the proportion of LGB adults ages 18 to 59 who report having received treatment from a religious leader (pastor, religious counselor, priest) to change their sexual orientation that began and ended before the

age of 18 (2.2%), and who did not also receive conversion therapy from a health care professional, from the Generations Study (Williams Institute unpublished analyses) by the proportion of youth in grades 9 through 12 who identify as LGB (8.0%) in the 2015 YRBS and by the proportion of LGB young adults ages 18 to 24 who are cisgender (95.7%) in the 2014-2015 BRFSS (Williams Institute unpublished analyses), and then applied this proportion to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650), according to 2016 population estimates from the 2010 U.S. Census. For total 13-17 population estimates: search American FactFinder, (last visited Dec. 15, 2017) (select advanced search, enter “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” under topic or table name, and select “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016” 2016 Population Estimates). For estimates of the proportion of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual see Kann et al., *supra* note 7. The proportion who received conversion therapy from a religious leader only did not statistically significantly differ across age cohorts (18-25, 34-41, and 52-59) (Williams Institute unpublished analyses).

In order to determine an estimate for the number of transgender youth who received conversion therapy from a religious or spiritual counselor/advisor, we multiplied the proportion of transgender adults who report that such a person tried to make them identify only with their sex assigned at birth or stop them from being transgender (4.0%) by the proportion for whom this had happened at or before age 18 (51.0%), as observed in the U.S. Transgender Survey and reported James et al., *supra* note 4. This proportion (2.0%), those who received conversion therapy at or before age 18, was then multiplied by the proportion of youth ages 13 to 17 who are estimated to be transgender (0.73%) and then applied to the number of youth ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. (20,870,650). For transgender population proportion estimates see Herman et al., *supra* note 7.

Am. Psych. Assoc., Resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts, <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/sexual-orientation.aspx> (last visited Dec. 18, 2017).

Search for:



Sign up to receive our updates

Your Email

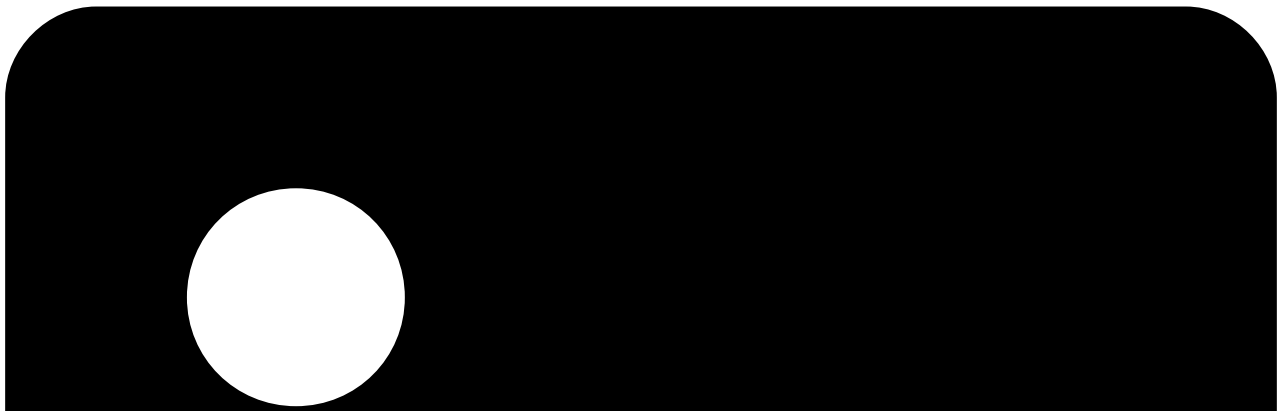
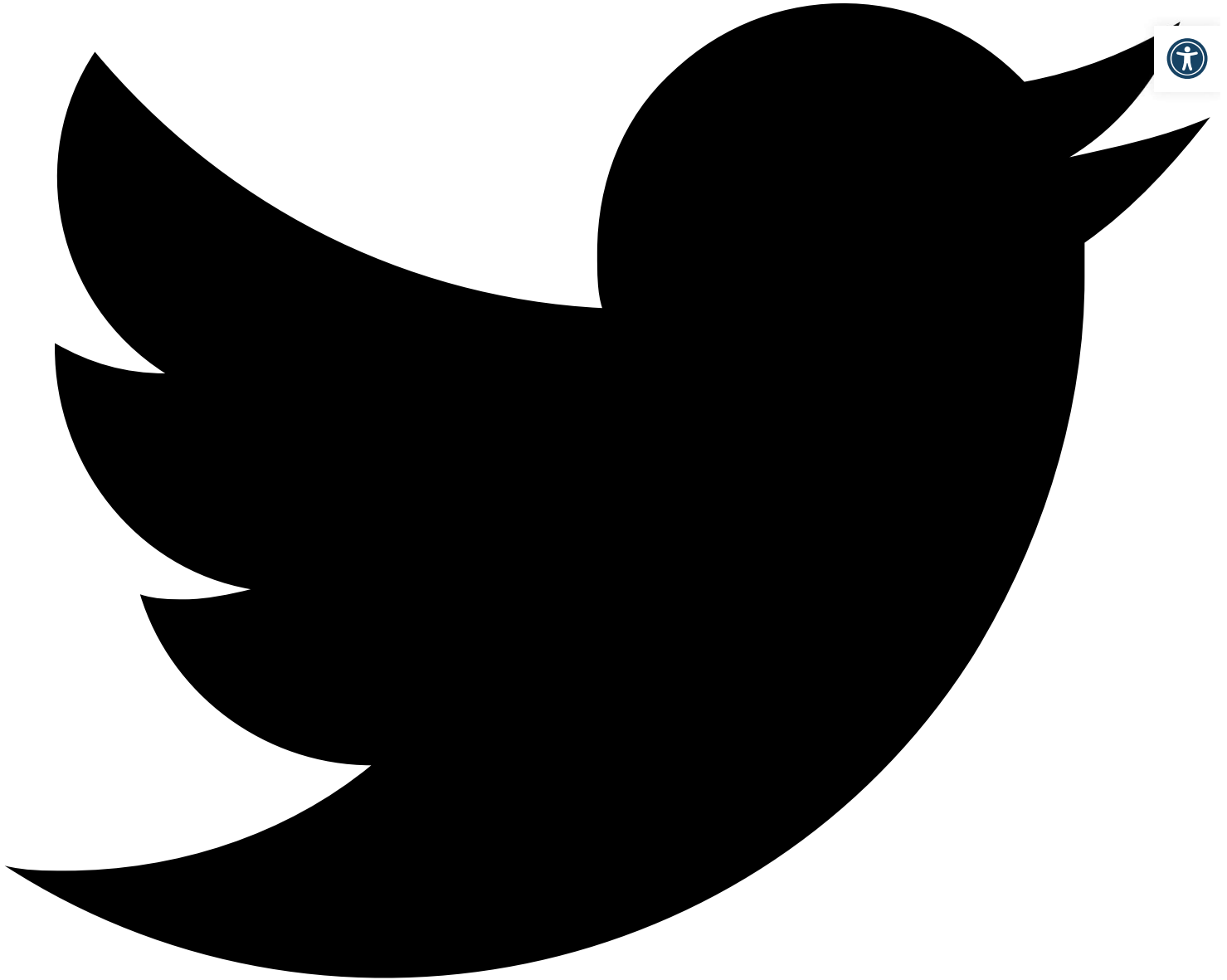
- [Programs](#)
- [About](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Contact](#)



All content copyright © The Williams Institute Site by [Loyal Design](#)

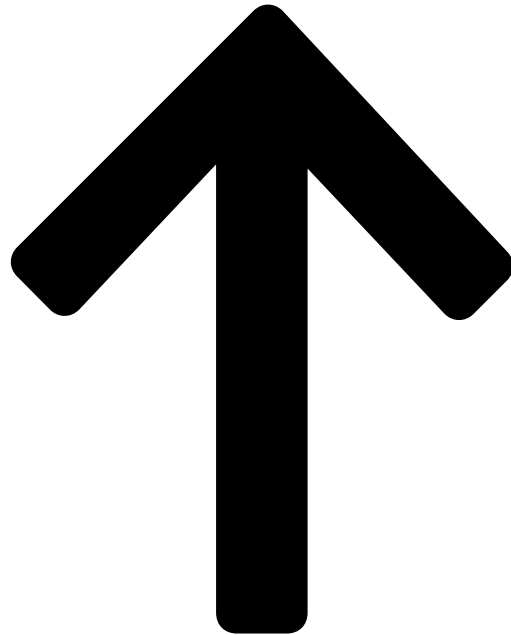


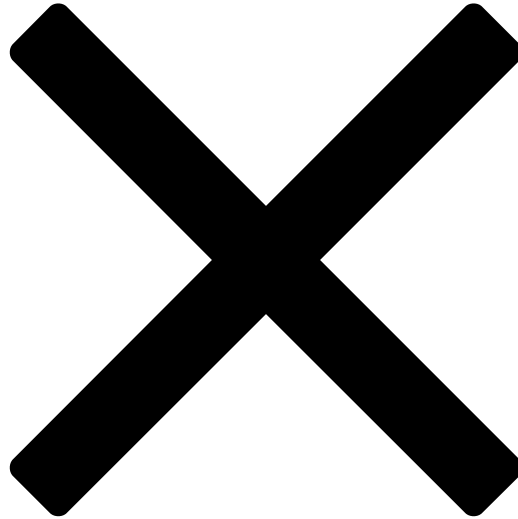






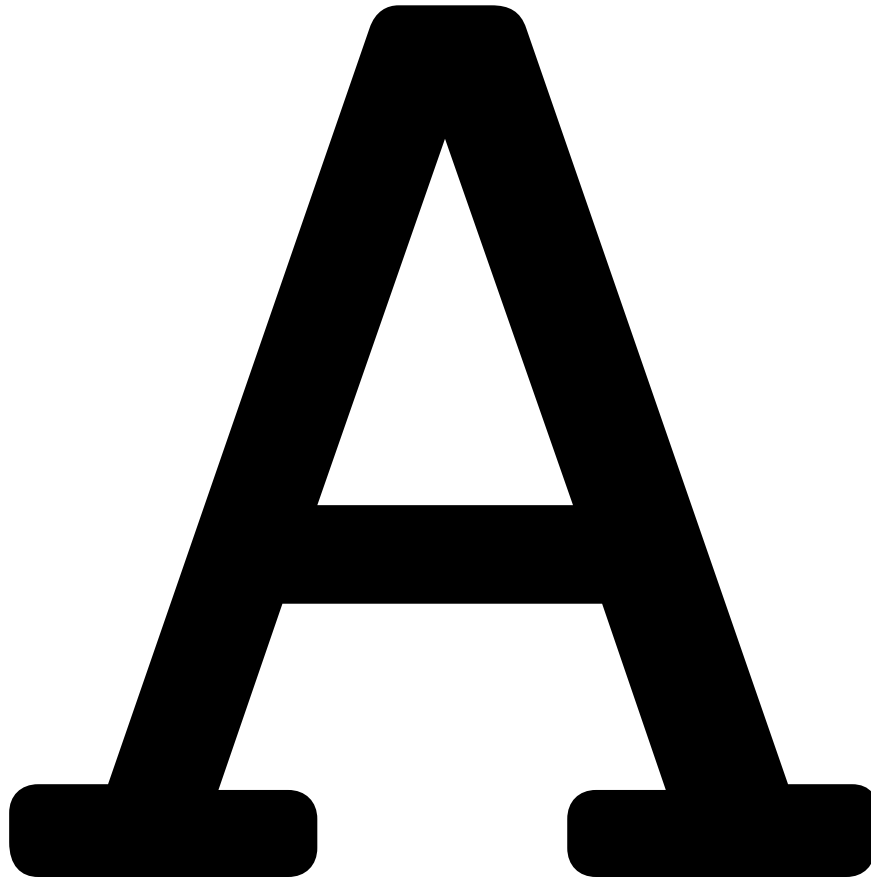








A





A

- [Topics](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Experts](#)
- [Quick Facts](#)
- [Donate](#)



- Issues
 - [COVID-19](#)
 - [Criminalization](#)
 - [Data Collection](#)
 - [Demographics](#)
 - [Discrimination & Violence](#)
 - [Economics & Poverty](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [Health & HIV/AIDS](#)
 - [International](#)
 - [Relationships & Parenting](#)
 - [Social Services & Child Welfare](#)
- Subpopulations
 - [Older Adults](#)
 - [People of Color](#)
 - [Same-Sex Couples](#)
 - [Transgender People](#)
 - [Youth](#)
- Projects
 - [Access to Higher Education](#)
 - [Generations](#)
 - [Global Acceptance Index](#)
 - [Pathways to Justice](#)
 - [Sex Offenders Registry Study](#)
 - [Sexuality, Health & Opportunity](#)
 - [TransPop](#)
- [LGBT FAQs](#) Find answers to our most frequently asked questions
- [Data Interactives](#) Customizable visualizations of our data
- [Survey Measures](#) How to ask sexual orientation and gender identity questions
- [Infographics](#) Visualizations of our research
- [Programs](#)
 - [Judicial Education](#)
 - [International Programs](#)
 - [Moot Court Competition](#)
 - [Dukeminier Awards Journal](#)
 - [Reading Room](#)
 - [UCLA Courses](#)
 - [Small Grants Program](#)
- [About](#)
 - [Who we are](#)
 - [Staff](#)
 - [Ambassadors](#)
 - [Careers](#)
 - [Impact](#)
 - [Contact](#)
- [Events](#)
 - [Upcoming Events](#)
 - [Webinar Library](#)
 - [Annual Update](#)
- [Press](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)

- [Join Press List](#)
- [20th Anniversary Celebrate with us](#)

[Topics](#) >

[Publications](#)

[Experts](#)

[Quick Facts](#) >

[Donate](#)

[Programs](#) >

[About](#) >

[Events](#) >

[Press](#) >

[20th Anniversary](#)

>

[Topics](#) >

[Issues](#) >

[COVID-19](#)

[Criminalization](#)

[Data Collection](#)

[Demographics](#)

[Discrimination & Violence](#)

[Economics & Poverty](#)

[Education](#)

[Health & HIV/AIDS](#)

[International](#)

[Relationships & Parenting](#)

[Social Services & Child Welfare](#)

[Subpopulations](#) >

[Older Adults](#)

[People of Color](#)

[Same-Sex Couples](#)

[Transgender People](#)

[Youth](#)

[Projects](#) >

[Access to Higher Education](#)

[Generations](#)

[Global Acceptance Index](#)

[Pathways to Justice](#)

[Sex Offenders Registry Study](#)

[Sexuality, Health & Opportunity](#)

[TransPop](#)

[Quick Facts](#) >

[LGBT FAQs](#) Find answers to our most frequently asked questions

[Data Interactives](#) Customizable visualizations of our data

[Survey Measures](#) How to ask sexual orientation and gender identity questions

[Infographics](#) Visualizations of our research

[Programs](#) >

[Judicial Education](#)

[International Programs](#)

[Moot Court Competition](#)

[Dukeminier Awards Journal](#)

[Reading Room](#)

[UCLA Courses](#)

[Small Grants Program](#)

[About](#) >

[Who we are](#)

[Staff](#)

[Ambassadors](#)

[Careers](#)

[Impact](#)

[Contact](#)



- [Events](#) >
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Webinar Library](#)
- [Annual Update](#)
- [Press](#) >
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Join Press List](#)
- [Publications](#) > [Demographics](#)
- Fact Sheet



LGBT Youth Population in the United States

September 2020

- [Download](#)
- [Share](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Copy link](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

Using data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, this study estimates the number of LGBT youth in the U.S. and by state. Separate estimates for cisgender LGB and transgender teens are also provided.

AUTHORS

- [Kerith J. Conron](#)
[Research Director](#)

[CONTACT US ABOUT THIS STUDY](#)

Fact Sheet

Table 1. Estimated number of LGBT youth ages 13 to 17 in the US and by state

	U.S. and States				States only		
	LGBT (Total)	LGB (Total)	LGB (Cisgender)	LGB (Trans)	TRANSGENDER (Total)	TRANSGENDER (Straight/Other)	TRANSGENDER (LGB)
US	1,994,000*	1,924,000	1,844,000	80,000	149,750	69,000	80,000
Alabama	30,000	29,000	28,000	1,300	2,500	1,200	1,300
Alaska	5,000	4,000	4,000	200	350	200	200
Arizona	44,000	43,000	41,000	2,000	3,650	1,700	2,000
Arkansas	19,000	18,000	17,000	800	1,450	700	800
California	244,000	234,000	222,000	11,900	22,200	10,300	11,900
Colorado	34,000	33,000	32,000	1,000	1,800	800	1,000
Connecticut	22,000	21,000	21,000	500	950	400	500
Delaware	6,000	5,000	5,000	200	400	200	200
D.C.	3,000	2,000	2,000	200	300	100	200
Florida	114,000	110,000	105,000	4,900	9,050	4,200	4,900
Georgia	69,000	67,000	64,000	2,700	4,950	2,300	2,700
Hawaii	8,000	7,000	7,000	500	850	400	500

USCA11 Case: 19-10604 Date Filed: 07/20/2022 Page: 92 of 382

State	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hawaii	12,000	12,000	11,000	400	700	300	400
Idaho	80,000	77,000	74,000	3,100	5,700	2,600	3,100
Illinois	43,000	42,000	40,000	1,800	3,350	1,600	1,800
Indiana	19,000	19,000	18,000	400	800	400	400
Iowa	19,000	18,000	18,000	700	1,300	600	700
Kansas	27,000	26,000	25,000	1,000	1,850	900	1,000
Kentucky	29,000	28,000	27,000	1,300	2,350	1,100	1,300
Louisiana	7,000	7,000	7,000	200	450	200	200
Maine	36,000	35,000	34,000	1,200	2,300	1,100	1,200
Maryland	39,000	38,000	36,000	1,200	2,150	1,000	1,200
Massachusetts	61,000	59,000	57,000	2,100	3,950	1,800	2,100
Michigan	35,000	33,000	32,000	1,600	3,000	1,400	1,600
Minnesota	19,000	19,000	18,000	900	1,600	700	900
Mississippi	37,000	36,000	35,000	1,300	2,500	1,200	1,300
Missouri	6,000	6,000	6,000	200	300	100	200
Montana	12,000	12,000	12,000	400	750	300	400
Nebraska	18,000	18,000	17,000	700	1,300	600	700
Nevada	8,000	7,000	7,000	200	450	200	200
New Hampshire	55,000	53,000	51,000	2,100	3,850	1,800	2,100
New Jersey	13,000	13,000	12,000	600	1,200	600	600
New Mexico	113,000	108,000	103,000	5,200	9,750	4,500	5,200
New York	63,000	61,000	58,000	2,500	4,650	2,200	2,500
North Carolina	4,000	4,000	4,000	100	200	100	100
North Dakota	72,000	70,000	66,000	3,200	5,900	2,700	3,200
Ohio	25,000	24,000	23,000	1,100	2,100	1,000	1,100
Oklahoma	23,000	23,000	22,000	900	1,700	800	900
Oregon	74,000	71,000	69,000	2,800	5,250	2,400	2,800
Pennsylvania	6,000	6,000	5,000	200	400	200	200
Rhode Island	30,000	29,000	28,000	1,200	2,150	1,000	1,200
South Carolina	5,000	5,000	5,000	200	300	100	200
South Dakota	41,000	39,000	38,000	1,700	3,150	1,500	1,700
Tennessee	195,000	188,000	181,000	7,400	13,800	6,400	7,400
Texas	24,000	23,000	23,000	800	1,400	600	800
Utah	3,000	3,000	3,000	100	250	100	100
Vermont	50,000	49,000	46,000	2,200	4,150	1,900	2,200
Virginia	43,000	41,000	40,000	1,700	3,100	1,400	1,700
Washington	10,000	10,000	9,000	600	1,150	500	600
West Virginia	35,000	34,000	33,000	1,000	1,850	900	1,000
Wisconsin	3,000	3,000	3,000	100	200	100	100
Wyoming							



*This estimate represents 9.5% of the population of youth ages 13-17 in the United States. [USCA11 Case: 19-10604 Date Filed: 07/20/2022 Page: 93 of 382](#)

Note: Due to rounding, estimates for subgroups (i.e., LGB cisgender, LGB transgender) will not always add up to the total (i.e., all LGB youth). Similarly, due to rounding, the sum of state estimates do not equal the total estimated number of LGBT youth in the US.

[Download the fact sheet](#)

Related Publications



[Fact Sheet](#)

[Adult LGBT Population in the United States](#)

[July 2020 Report](#)

[Age of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender in the United States](#)

[January 2017 Brief](#)

[LGBT People in the US Not Protected by State Non-Discrimination Statutes](#)

[April 2020](#)

LGBT Youth Population in the United States

- Download
- Share
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- Copy link
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Search for:



Sign up to receive our updates

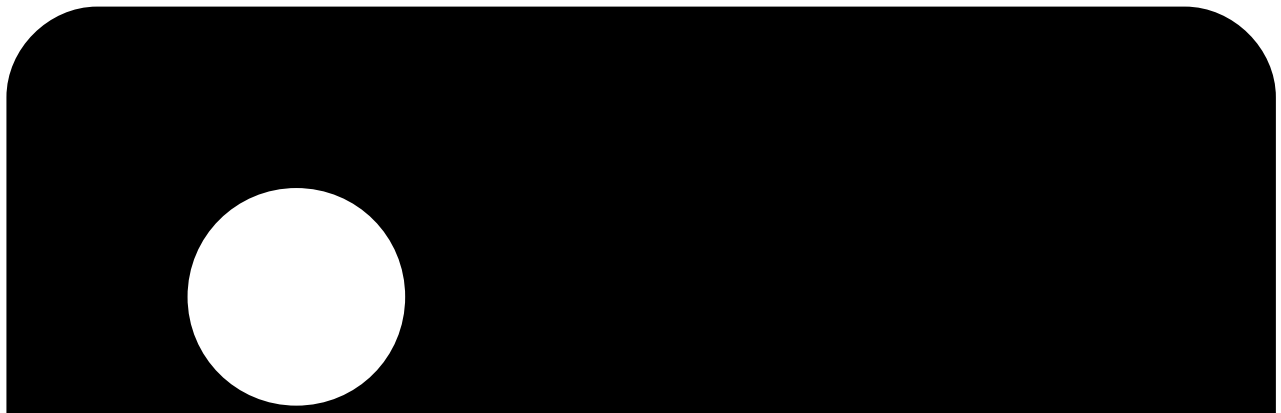
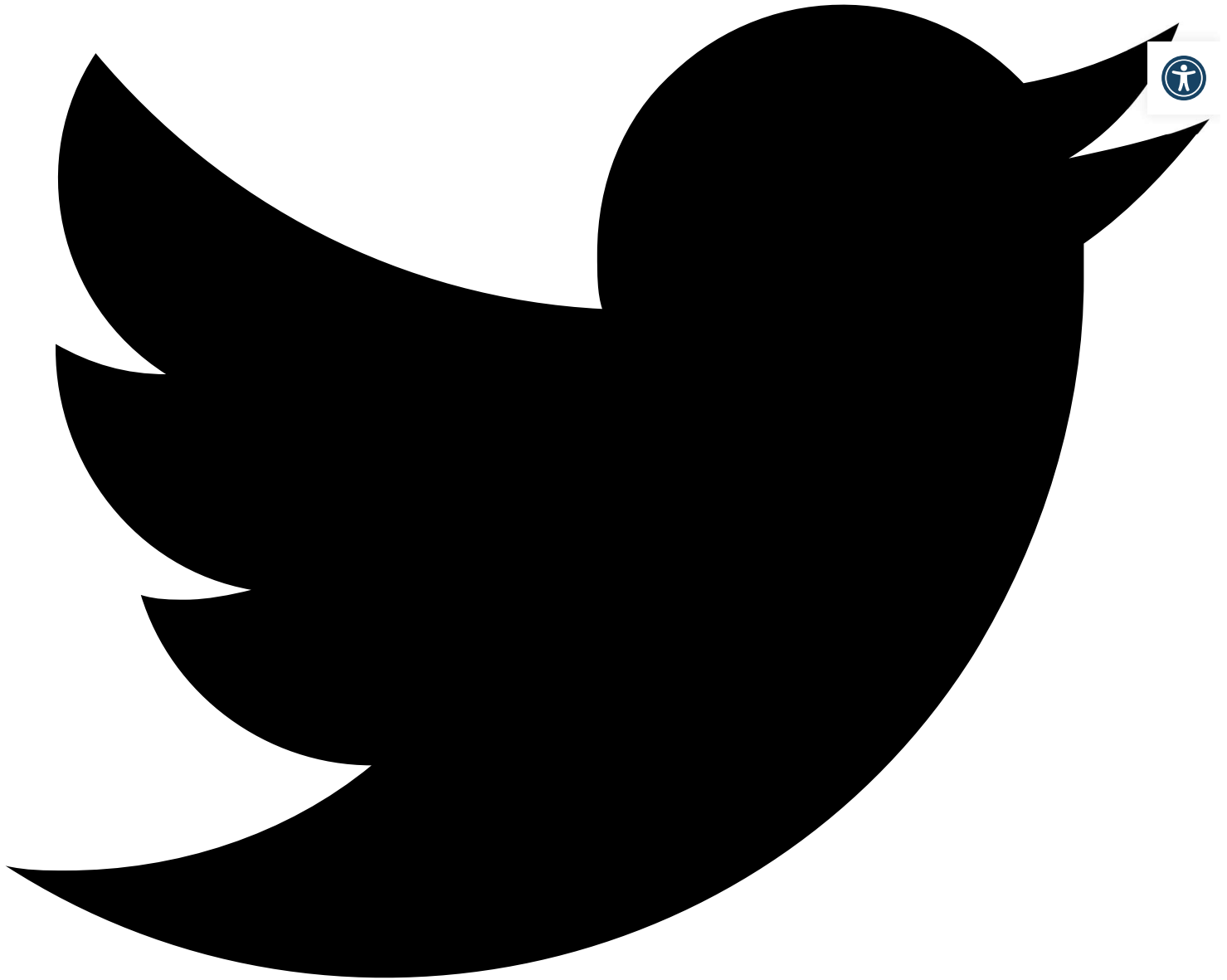
Your Email

- [Programs](#)
- [About](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Contact](#)

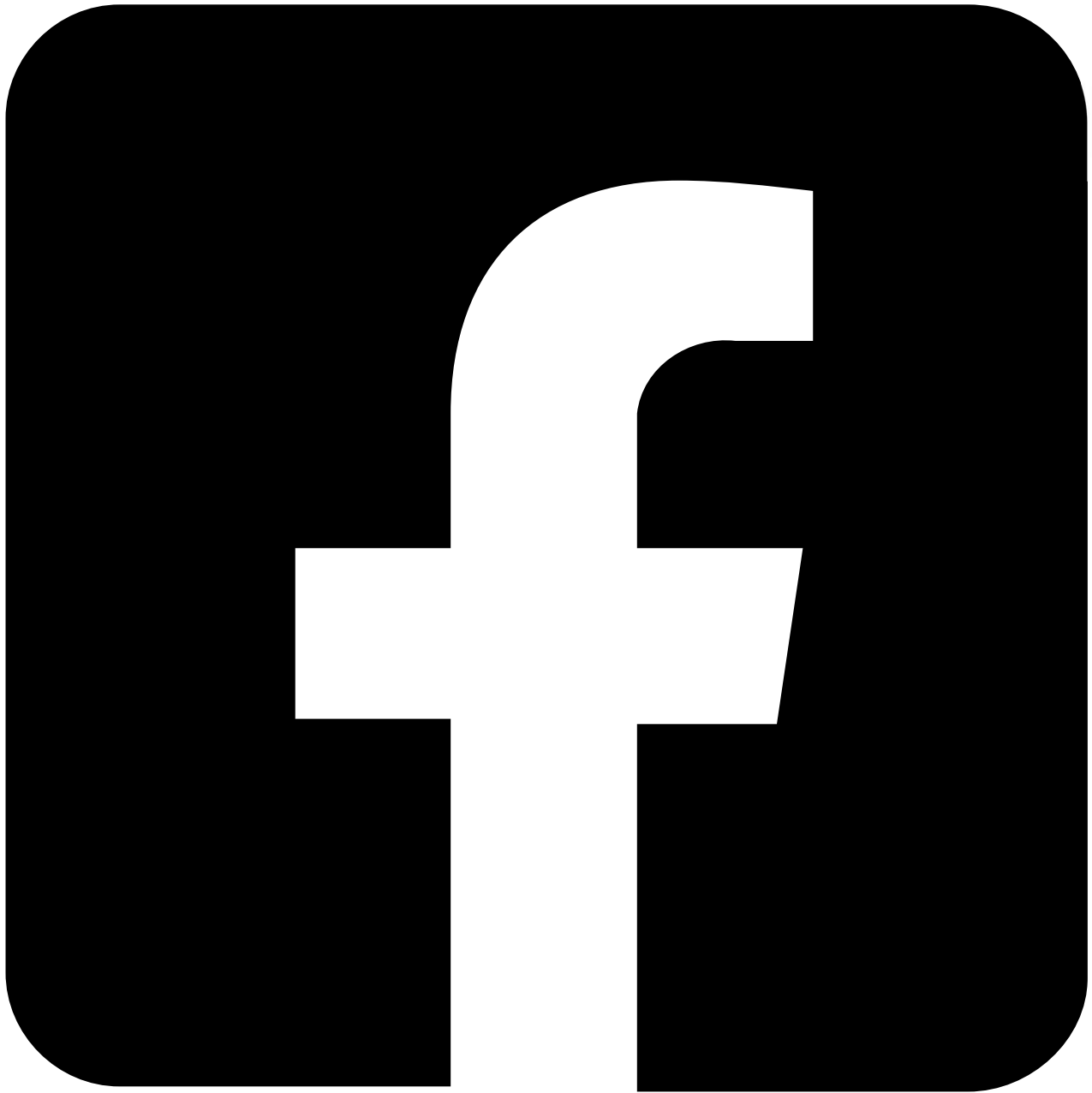


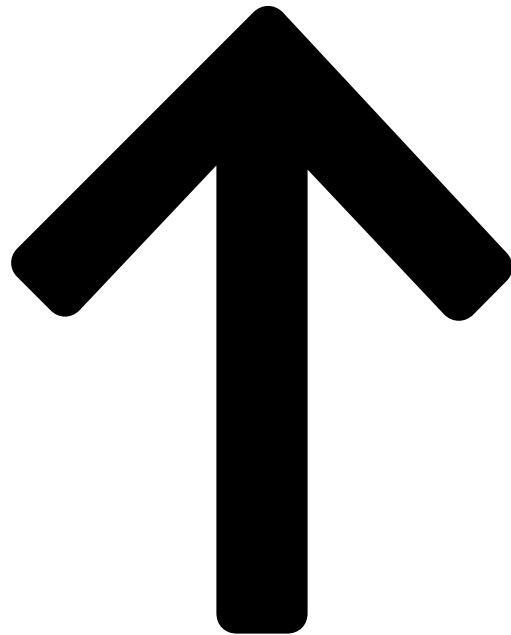
All content copyright © The Williams Institute Site by [Loyal Design](#)

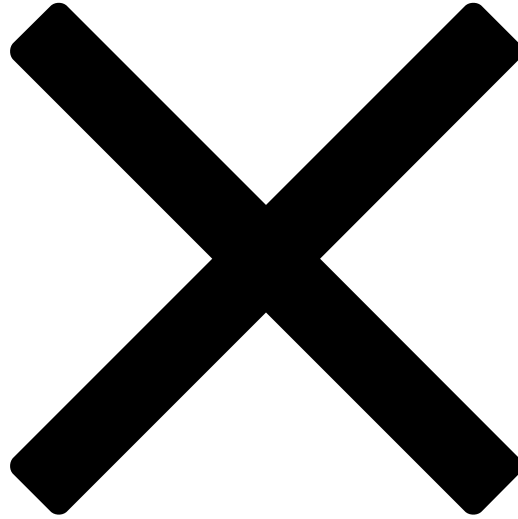






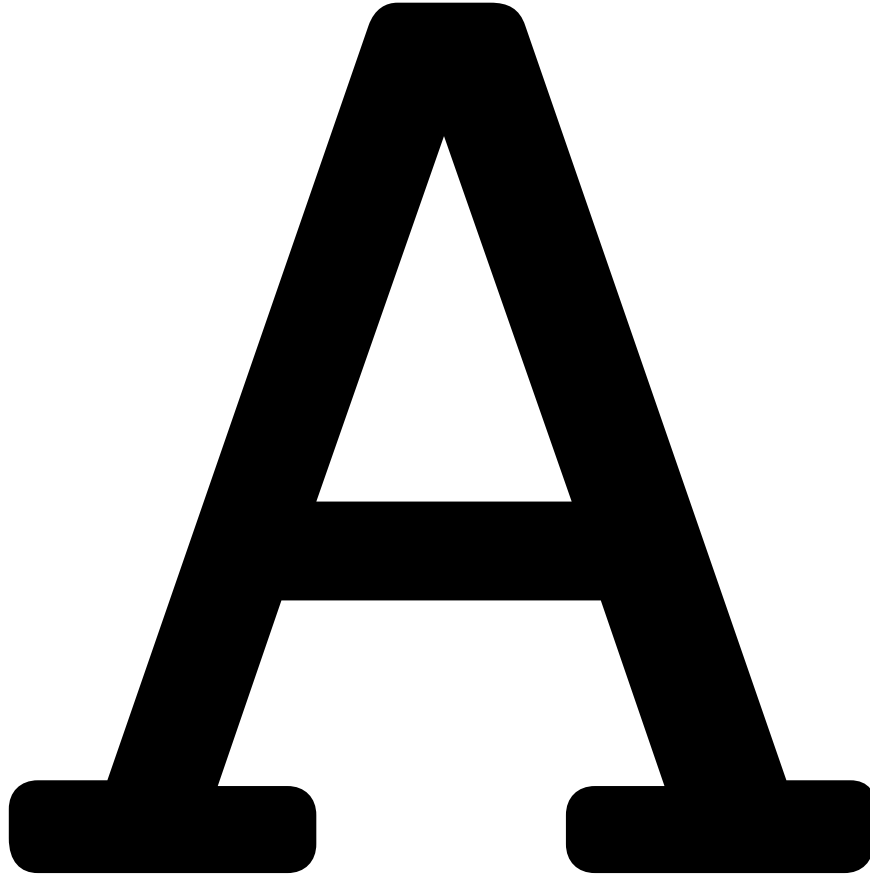








A





A