



HOW TO AVOID ANTI-TRANS CONVERSION THERAPISTS

*A survivor-developed guide to keep
you or your loved ones safe.*

By: Health Liberation Now!
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This resource is designed to offer a starting point to trans people, people currently or exploring de/retransition, and supportive guardians on identifying if a chosen therapist may have anti-trans views. Some suggestions are specific to known anti-trans conversion practices or gender identity change efforts (GICE), whereas others are more general based on the bridge growing between gender critical (GC) anti-trans therapy approaches and established conversion therapy actors.






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BACKGROUND

Health Liberation Now! has received requests from individuals trying to assess therapists that they are looking into to determine whether or not they will have anti-trans motivations instead of being affirming. Given the increase in promotion for "exploratory psychotherapy" as a first-line for trans or questioning youth and young adults, it is a growing area of concern. In response to such requests we have begun putting together our general "red flags" to watch for or key questions to ask. We received permission from said individuals to construct a more general version of these responses for a resource to provide people.



RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

-  **Key question: will they respect [your/your kid's] pronouns?** Pronouns are one of the most basic parts of affirmation approaches and yet one that a lot of people will push back on. Even just a “Well...” is a red flag.
-  **Gatekeeping access to other forms of care behind x number of months/years of appointments.** This applies to puberty blockers, hormones, and gender affirming surgeries. Be especially on the lookout for reluctance to even *consider* supporting you accessing other care until after their timeline is met.
-  **Be wary of talk of “exploratory” therapy or exploration more generally.** We’ve encountered several people or groups using terms like “exploratory psychotherapy” or “exploratory talk therapy.” While exploration is a part of many forms of therapy, *the key is whether or not they’re “exploring” for roots of trans identity.* If the therapist in question references taking an exploratory approach, you might be able to ferret out if they’re trustworthy by inquiring about what they’re looking to explore and at one point that stops. If they respond with talk of trauma or autism, red flag.
-  **Similar deal with “watchful waiting.”** This one is an older term popularized by Kenneth Zucker and Susan Bradley that is still used periodically. More established therapists may be more inclined to use this one than a newer term like gender exploratory therapy. Also watch for an emphasized focus on neutrality.
-  **The kinds of professionals most likely to be critical of trans identity come from a psychoanalytic or Jungian background.** This has been a long-standing problem for some decades, and we’ve noticed a number of therapists from these particular specialties be recommended in GC groups. *Note: not all Jungian or psychoanalysts are anti-trans;* this is a possible indicator but needs to be used in combination with other red flags to assess their position.

AUTOMATIC NO-GOS

X **Avoid anyone who uses the SAFE-T approach.** SAFE-T is a rebrand of the reparative therapy approach developed by Joseph Nicolosi. It uses the same notion of “exploration” but for sexuality, and there is a bridge growing between conversion therapy worlds for gender identity and ones for sexual orientation. Sometimes you’re more likely to find references to this on their individual websites.

X **Avoid anyone endorsing or claiming to use a "Gender Exploratory Therapy" approach.** This is a specific rebrand from a core network of anti-trans therapists who have been active in gender critical organizing. Like SAFE-T, it is used to advertise their own services or services of people who are willing to align themselves with it.

X **Avoid religious institutions *unless it's clear they're safe.*** The exception is if you have good references from supportive trans people. When in doubt, Google them and their positions. Look for red flags above or connections to sketchy groups.

X **Avoid anyone who identifies themselves as or whose socials have a connection to known conversion therapy groups.** Some of these include, but are not limited to:

- International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC)
- American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds)
- Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity (ATCSI), previously NARTH
- Gender Exploratory Therapy Association (GETA)
- Society for Evidence-based Gender Medicine (SEGM)
- Gender Dysphoria Alliance (GDA)
- Thoughtful Therapists
- Genspect

See our [Anti-Trans Conversion Therapy Map of Influence](#) for more information.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ **Before meeting with them, Google their name with the following terms: ROGD, gender critical, trans, social contagion, detransition, desistance, and gender ideology.** These are common buzz words used in anti-trans circles, especially in conjunction with anti-trans conversion practices.
- ✓ **Ask for information on what professional associations they're affiliated with or have certification/licensing from.** Then Google them and their positions on conversion therapy, trans issues, and LGBTQ+ issues more broadly. A professional association without a known stance on conversion therapy or trans issues is a red flag; one that has an antagonistic approach to either or both means run!
- ✓ **Ask trans friends for experiences.** You can also try asking local support groups (if they're available), look for reviews online, or Google them and their affiliated groups.
- ✓ **Trust your gut.** If you feel like something is off, chances are you're picking up on a red flag somewhere. Listen to that instinct and look for someone else!



MORE RESOURCES

Supports

[Born Perfect](#) - (800) 528-6257 (US)

Legal support line for survivors of conversion therapy.

[The Trevor Project](#) - (866) 488-7386 (US)

For isolated or suicidal LGBTQ+ youth. Has chat and text.

[Trans LifeLine](#) - (877) 565-8860 (US), (877) 330-6366 (CA)

Peer-to-peer crisis support line by and for trans and nonbinary people. No non-consensual active rescue. Available in English and español.

Find more on our [Additional Resources](#) page.

Articles and Statements

[A Trans History of Conversion Therapy](#) by Jules Gill-Peterson

[The Troubling Resurgence of Trans Conversion Practices](#) by Florence Ashley

[APA Resolution on Gender Identity Change Efforts](#) by American Psychological Association.

Books and Reports

[Report on conversion therapy](#) by UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

[Banning Transgender Conversion Practices: A Legal and Policy Analysis](#) by Florence Ashley

[When Ex-Trans Worlds Collide](#) by Health Liberation Now

[Conversion Therapy Online: The Players](#) by Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

Misc

VIDEO: [9 tips to resist conversion therapy for trans/nonbinary people](#) by Kayley Whalen & Eric Tannehill. Geared towards youth but with useful ideas for all ages.

ABOUT HEALTH LIBERATION NOW!



Health Liberation Now! (HLN) is a free resistance resource. Led by trans survivors of conversion practices, HLN offers critical insight into the gaps in transgender health and connected politics for transgender, detransitioned, nonbinary, and gender diverse people. Everyone has the right to safe, effective, and compassionate health care that reflects the full spectrum of their needs, experiences, and right to self-determination.

Remember: no one's free until we're all free.

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