

I am writing in support of banning conversion therapy in Canada. I am writing as a white, cisgendered, heterosexual educator who works in close proximity with trans and cis students and as a person who has both trans and cis people who are valued members of their friend and family groups.

I would like to briefly explain the need to ban conversion therapy based on well established facts. My focus is that the primary cause of distress for trans people is rampant transphobia in our society, not being trans. According to Statistics Canada, trans youth (and trans people in general) are more likely to experience abuse, harassment, discrimination, violence, and family rejection than cisgendered people. In fact, there are no statistics to suggest that any cisgendered Canadian youth have ever been rejected by their family because of their gender identity. These factors are the cause of the heightened rates of depression, anxiety, self harm, and suicide among trans youth. The problem for trans people and their mental health and physical safety is not their being trans - it is our incredibly transphobic society. A society which constantly rejects, attacks, and denies them their human rights.

Conversion therapy is an incredibly damaging part of this rampant transphobia. What says "you are not valid" or "I reject your existence" more than creating something euphemistically called "therapy" in order to try to convince a person that their experience of their own existence is not real? Trans people are at risk in our society because our society promotes and allows them to be at risk FROM our society. The banning of conversion therapy will stop one type of harmful actions from being taken against trans people and could, if properly supported, be a step toward encouraging cisgendered people to support, accept, and love trans people for who they are. I see and hear this frequently from trans youth, especially as an adult who has served as a staff advisor to a Gay Straight Alliance Club in a high school setting. Trans people, like all people, desire love and support and basic human rights. It is incumbent upon this government to support those rights and ban violations of them - including conversion therapy.