



ARBOR
YOUTH SERVICES

540 West Third Street, Lexington, KY 40508
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www.arborky.org

January 27, 2021

Re: Conversion Therapy in Lexington, KY

To whom it may concern,

Arbor Youth Services has served the needs of at-risk youth since in Lexington since 1976. Arbor Youth Services is the ONLY emergency shelter for unaccompanied children in Central Kentucky. We provide shelter for children as young as birth and as old as 17. We also work with homeless 18-24 year olds to move them out of homelessness and into housing. Arbor Youth provides a safe and supportive environment to children who have suffered abuse, abandonment, or are at risk of victimization. Approximately 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ+. To protect these youth, Arbor Youth's staff and Board of Directors stand against conversion therapy in our community.

Conversion therapy, sometimes referred to as "reparative therapy," is any of several dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. Conversion therapists use a variety of shaming, emotionally traumatic or physically painful stimuli to make their victims associate those stimuli with their LGBTQ identities—all based on the scientifically discredited premise that being LGBT is a defect or disorder.

According to studies by the UCLA Williams Institute, more than 700,000 LGBTQ people have been subjected to the horrors of conversion therapy, and an estimated 80,000 LGBTQ youth will experience this unprofessional conduct in coming years, often at the insistence of well-intentioned but misinformed parents or caretakers. Fourteen states now ban this harmful "therapy." According to the Courier-Journal, a 2019 national survey conducted by the Trevor Project, found that 42% of LGBTQ youth who underwent "conversion therapy" reported a suicide attempt in the past year, more than twice the rate of their LGBTQ peers who did not go through the practice."

Arbor Youth Services believes that every child deserves a safe, stable, and supportive home. For this reason, we support local efforts to ban conversion therapy in Lexington, Kentucky.

Sincerely,

Lori Clemons

Lori Clemons
Executive Director