

Hi, my name is Lee Harding. I've lived in Regina most of the past 20 years. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Regina, and a Master's of Public Policy from the University of Calgary.

I spent a couple of winters in Victoria shortly after the pro-transgender SOGI 1-2-3 curriculum was introduced to B.C. schools. Many parents were concerned and as a result I began to look more deeply into where the LGBTQ movement, politics, and policy intersected.

My examination of conversion therapy yielded a few surprises. The decision of the American Psychiatric Association to take homosexuality off of its list of mental disorders happened only a few years after activists stormed the annual meetings of the organization in 1970 with intimidating tactics demanding change. The APA became increasingly politicized thereafter.

When the American Psychiatric Association called for an end to conversion therapy in 1998 they didn't have a single large-scale study to show its harmfulness. In 2002, such a study was produced, but its subjects were cherry-picked by homosexual activist organizations who recruited those who claimed harm from the therapy.

Numerous examinations of the subject found that a sizeable number of people who identified as exclusively homosexual prior to therapies did report themselves as heterosexual thereafter. Occasionally this was a small majority. Often it was a sizeable minority. Even where this did not take place, an overwhelming majority found their psychotherapy helped in other respects, such as higher self-esteem, less depression, and less self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Two studies provide a deeper insight on the matter.

- [What Research Shows NARTH's Response to the APA Claims on Homosexuality](#)
- [Professional care for unwanted same-sex attraction: What does the research say?](#)

Psychiatrist Robert Spitzer was instrumental in the American Psychiatric Association to take homosexuality off the list of mental disorders. However, in 2001, he presented a paper that suggested that some homosexuals could change their sexual orientation based on 200 interviews he did with those who received what is now being called conversion therapy.

Similarly former American Psychological Association president Nicholas Cummings was instrumental for that APA taking homosexuality off of its list of disorders. Cummings was also Chief of Mental Health with the Kaiser Permanente. Cummings estimated that between 1960 and 1980 he saw more than 2,000 patients, and that his staff saw another 16,000, who presented concerns regarding homosexuality. Most did not express a goal of reorienting, but rather entered treatment to resolve a number of issues and dissatisfactions concerning their lifestyle, including transient relationships, disgust or guilt over promiscuity, fear of disease, or desires to have a traditional family.

Cummings and his staff did not try to reorient those with same-sex attraction to heterosexuality unless they expressed a strong desire to reorient. At best, only 10 percent of the 18,000 clients initially said they wanted to change sexual orientation. However, after working on other lifestyle issues and dissatisfactions, however, additional clients developed a desire to attempt orientation change. Cummings estimated that two-thirds had satisfactory outcomes. The majority of these attained a happier and saner homosexual lifestyle with more stable relationships; another approximately 2,400

clients successfully reoriented their sexuality to heterosexuality. The remaining third of the 18,000 had unsuccessful outcomes that included continued promiscuity, unhappiness, and addictive behaviors.

In my role as a journalist I [talked to some Calgarians](#) on their proposed conversion therapy ban, which passed. Marty Moore of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms told me the definition of what was banned was too broad. Graeme Lauber told me he had same sex attraction but his desire to have a family brought him to heterosexual marriage and fatherhood.

He said, “That means that I don’t engage in homosexual behaviour. I’m married to a woman. I stayed faithful to that relationship. But I need help for that. So we’re worried that the bylaw would make that help very difficult to find if not actually illegal.”

A pastor there, Brian Lavender of GracePoint Fellowship, told me he and other pastors were themselves opposed to “very abusive, coercive, very shaming” therapies. However, he was worried he would not be able to disciple people towards biblical sexual expression in a heterosexual marriage. He said in 25 years of ministry, at most ten people had approached him for counsel with homosexual attractions.

A ban on conversion therapy makes those pastors vulnerable. Conversion therapy may also include helping a child or adult with transgender feelings towards reconciling with the body they were born in. I don’t believe it is in the public interest for city councillors to weigh into Christian discipleship or parental guidance.

Bill C-6 calls for a ban on conversion therapy. I don’t agree it is helpful, but at least it is proper federal jurisdiction. For city councillors to do this seems little more than well-intentioned, but ill-informed virtue signalling.