

## Position Statement on Issues Related to Homosexuality

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2013

Approved by the Assembly, November 2013

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees...These are...position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." – *APA Operations Manual*.

**W**hile recognizing that the scientific understanding is incomplete and often distorted because of societal stigma, the American Psychiatric Association holds the following positions regarding same-sex attraction and associated issues. It is the American Psychiatric Association's position that same-sex attraction, whether expressed in action, fantasy, or identity, implies no impairment per se in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities. The American Psychiatric Association believes that the causes of sexual orientation (whether homosexual or heterosexual) are not known at this time and likely are multifactorial including biological and behavioral roots which may vary between different individuals and may even vary over time. The American Psychiatric Association does not believe that same-sex orientation should or needs to be changed, and efforts to do so represent a significant risk of harm by subjecting individuals to forms of treatment which have not been scientifically validated and by undermining self-esteem when sexual orientation fails to

change. No credible evidence exists that any mental health intervention can reliably and safely change sexual orientation; nor, from a mental health perspective does sexual orientation need to be changed.

The American Psychiatric Association opposes discrimination against individuals with same-sex attraction whether it be in education, employment, military service, immigration and naturalization status, housing, income, government services, retirement benefits, ability to inherit property, rights of survivorship, spousal rights, family status, and access to health services. The American Psychiatric Association recognizes that such discriminations, as well as societal, religious, and family stigma, may adversely affect the mental health of individuals with same-sex attraction necessitating intervention by mental health professionals, for which, the American Psychiatric Association supports the provision of adequate mental health resources to provide that intervention. The American Psychiatric Association supports same-sex marriage as being advantageous to the mental health of same-sex couples and supports legal recognition of the right for same-sex couples to marry, adopt and co-parent.

Authors:

David Scasta, M.D., and Philip Bialer, M.D.

NOTE: This statement combines into one document APA policies previously expressed in twelve separate position statements adopted between 1973 and 2011.