



Fordham's Dr. Celia B. Fisher on SAMHSA Expert Panel Behind the White House Groundbreaking Conversion Therapy Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bronx, NY | October 15, 2015 [A report released today](#) is a major step in President Obama's commitment to expand the number of states enacting "Leelah's Law" which would ban the use of conversion therapy to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of lesbian, gay and transgender children and youth.



[Dr. Celia B. Fisher](#), Director of the Fordham University Center for Ethics Education and the Marie Ward Doty Endowed Chair and Professor of Psychology served on the expert consensus panel whose recommendations form the basis of this report. The panel was convened by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the American Psychological Association (APA).

"This groundbreaking report dispels widespread misconceptions about sexual and gender development and definitively concludes that treatments designed to change a child's sexual orientation or gender identity do not work, are devastatingly harmful to 'victims' of this type of therapy, and should not be considered appropriate mental health services," Fisher stated.

"After reviewing all past and current scientific and clinical data, the panel concluded that not only was there no scientific support for conversion therapy," Fisher explained, "but that such approaches and the pseudoscience upon which they were based did not meet the professional or ethical standards of the mental health professions." The report also concluded that same-gender sexual orientation and gender identity variation are a part of the normal spectrum of child and adolescent development and do not constitute a mental disorder.

According to Fisher, "The issues included in this report are intended to enhance the lives and well-being of sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth by helping to ensure they receive informed, evidence-based, and biased free services. The systematic elimination of conversion type therapies is critical to the goal of reducing the health disparities facing this vulnerable population."

Fisher is an internationally recognized expert in bioethics, who chaired the APA's Ethics Code Task Force and was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Human Research Protection in 2010, and named a 2012 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She is also co-Principal Investigator of [a federal grant on ethics in HIV prevention involving LGBT youth](#). It is the first grant on LGBT issues funded by the National Institute on Minority Health Disparities (NIMHD).

For more background on the report and additional quotes from Dr. Fisher, please see this blog post on [Ethics & Society](#). Contact Gina Vergel at gvergel@fordham.edu or 212-636-6534 with any questions or for additional information.



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