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Psychologist group rejects so-called 'gay therapy'

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By Carole Mikita

SALT LAKE CITY -- Members of the American Psychological Association have passed a resolution which says therapists should not tell their gay clients they can change their sexual attractions.

For years, members of the APA has said there is no evidence to prove reparative therapy works, but this new resolution includes information about how therapists can help gay clients who want to remain loyal to their faiths. It's the organization's strongest statement yet against reparative therapies.

Psychotherapist Jim Struve believes many Utahns who need therapy stay away because they fear professionals here will try to change their sexual attractions.

"We see a lot of clients who have been through a reparative therapy program, and so, quite frankly, some of the therapy work is cleanup. Because, from my experience with clients, it creates a lot more disturbance for people than it resolves," Struve said.

Equality Utah's public policy manager, Will Carlson, adds the resolution also recognizes that some clients cannot leave a faith which does not recognize homosexual relationships.

"Now, if you have a religious faith that says you need to be celibate, then you can pursue that. But it's a different message to say, 'You can be celebrate' from 'You can be straight if you try hard enough,'" Carlson said.

Evergreen International is a nonprofit that refers people to therapists who believe same sex-attraction can be diminished. The group's executive director says his organization's goal is to help Latter-day Saints live Church standards.

"We, first of all, believe we can live those standards in morality with all the burdens and responsibilities that those entail. But we also know that we have the ability to grow and change over time," said executive director David Pruden.

For more information on these organizations and their message, click on the links below:

[The American Psychological Association](#)
[The LGBTQ-Affirmative Therapist Guild of Utah](#)
[Equality Utah](#)
[Evergreen International](#)