

Contemporary PPAA Perspectives Towards Members of the LGBTQI Community

This document accompanies the PPAA Expression of Regret and demonstrates how the PPAA has learnt from the past. The items noted below demonstrate the contemporary philosophy, policies, and actions taken by the PPAA that highlight the commitment of PPAA to welcome, support and stand up for our LGBTQI colleagues in the professional and public arenas.

In the contemporary environment of the PPAA, the historical actions and attitudes documented in the PPAA Expression of Regret are deemed to be totally unacceptable and inappropriate to the philosophy and processes of psychoanalytic psychotherapy currently espoused by PPAA members

Whilst there is much evidence of historical prejudice towards gay and lesbian colleagues, it is important to recognise that there is also much historical evidence that gay and lesbian colleagues have been as they currently are, highly valued and much respected in the PPAA. Gay and lesbian colleagues have and do hold leadership roles in the PPAA and Member Associations and are accepted into training programs. There are historical instances, as there are current ones, when homophobic behaviour was absolutely not tolerated and openly censured.

Action in the public arena

In 2017 the PPAA published a media release supporting marriage equality.

In 2020 the PPAA disseminated a document “A Psychoanalytic Perspective from the PPAA on Conversion therapies” in which it was stated that the PPAA unequivocally does not support any gay conversion “therapies” or other related coercive attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation under any circumstances and has grave concerns about their potentially harmful nature and believes the practice to be unethical. This document highlighted the difference between these practices and psychoanalytic psychotherapy which enables open exploration and understanding of each person’s unique psyche towards developing their own life choices. It does not comprise a set program nor foreclosure of choices

Governance documents

The PPAA and our Member Associations and their members and trainees are bound by their Constitutions, intended to provide for good governance.

The PPAA Codes of Ethics is designed to ensure high professional standards. The Code includes several clauses which directly bear upon appropriate recognition of people from the LGBTQI community.

Relevant Items in current Code of Ethics

*The PPAA Guidelines for Code of Ethics for Member Associations, **Clause 1.2** states that Psychotherapists shall not discriminate against nor exploit their patients on grounds of age, gender, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, social class, political affiliation and religion, nor impose their own values (for example social, spiritual, political and ideological).*

*The PPAA Code of Ethics, in **Clause 5.1** states that, “Members/trainees shall respect the essential humanity and dignity of patients and promote their well-being.”*

*The PPAA Code of Ethics, in **Clause 1.8.1**, states that “the PPAA and Member Associations faced with situations which exceed the level of their competence, experience or the internal resources available, shall seek professional advice or assistance from appropriate collegial bodies such as the PPAA and/or other qualified sources.”*

Given that PPAA members are bound by this Code of Ethics, any behaviour to the contrary, in any professional context, would be considered incompatible with the ethical values of our profession and be viewed as a significant breach of practice and professional ethics in whatever role a member may have within the PPAA.

*The PPAA Code of Ethics, in **Clause 5.7** states that “Members/trainees have an obligation to continue to develop and maintain their professional knowledge, competence and personal well-being.”*

The PPAA recommends that those with a responsibility for training will work to ensure that training programs prepare psychotherapists to sufficient levels of competence in the areas of sexuality and gender orientation so they can work sensitively and effectively with LGBTQI patients

As psychoanalytic psychotherapists we of the PPAA publicly commit to a stance of curiosity, openness to being challenged and a readiness to question our assumptions about the nature of what it means to be a person, which is the bedrock of psychoanalysis. Our psychoanalytic responsibility is to meet each person where they are, without prejudice and without judgement.

Ros Webb

PPAA President