

PPAA EXPRESSION OF REGRET

The President, on behalf of the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australasia (PPAA) and its Member Associations, extends to members, colleagues, trainees and candidates an expression of deep sorrow and remorse for any harm done to those in the community whose sexual orientation or gender identity differs from a heterosexual norm, by the publication and promotion of psychoanalytic theories that misrepresented them and were prejudicial against them.

The PPAA also wishes to acknowledge that over many decades there have been instances of gay and lesbian colleagues being excluded from admission to training programs and membership on the basis of their sexual orientation.

In the past the global mental health professional perspective, represented also in standard diagnostic systems, bowed to prevailing societal prejudices and viewed homosexuality as a symptom of mental illness. By viewing homosexuality as pathology to be "cured", some members turned away from the basic psychoanalytic precept of exploring the meaning of psychic phenomena and behaviour from a stance of non-judgemental curiosity and openness.

In addition to those applicants actively rejected from the training, we cannot know how many potential candidates chose not to apply because of knowledge of these prejudices, and thus were prevented from training in, and belonging to our association.

Whilst most teachers of our Member Associations' Training Programs did not hold the view of non-heteronormative sexuality as being pathological, we know from the personal testimony of those who did enter training, that there were teachers who did not adequately critique, and were not sensitive to, the meaning and nuances of certain psychoanalytic publications which were hurtful and damaging to gay and lesbian trainees/candidates and members, and those peers allied with them.

The PPAA has learnt from the past. The PPAA states publicly that members of LGBTQI community are welcome as colleagues, and candidate/trainees and that their contributions to the PPAA are highly esteemed.

We are deeply sorry for historic psychoanalytic prejudices in relation to sexual orientation, for our past silence in not challenging these prejudices more openly, and for the hurt this caused. We also deeply regret that some colleagues may not have had the opportunity to embark on psychoanalytic psychotherapy training because of any misunderstandings and prejudices regarding their sexual orientation at the time of their application for training or membership. Our association is the poorer for having excluded these potential colleagues and members.

We resonate with the hurt, great distress and confusion that has been experienced by LGBTQI colleagues.

Ros Webb
PPAA President
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