



March 2022

QNS Statement on Recent Anti-LGBTQ+ State Action

The Queer Neuropsychological Society (QNS) is an organization of clinical and research neuropsychologists, students, and allied health professionals dedicated to advancing equity for the LGBTQ+ community in the field of neuropsychology. Our organization endeavors to deconstruct barriers to equitable treatment and increase competency in neuropsychological assessment by promoting research, advocacy, education, mentorship, and consultation. We also recognize that the field of neuropsychology does not exist in isolation, and broader sociopolitical factors impact our members and patients in a multitude of ways. As such, our organization's mission compels us to bring awareness to and speak out against policies that directly undermine the LGBTQ+ community's access to safe and evidence-based care.

We are deeply saddened by certain state-level developments across the US that aim to discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals, youth, and their families. Recently, there actions by state governments that go against psychological best practices and would negatively impact gender-affirming care. Specifically, the Governor of Texas issued an order directing the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to describe gender affirming medical care as child abuse and that mandated reporters should report their colleagues who provide such care. In Florida, legislation was introduced that would limit the discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in classrooms. These are not the only recent attempts to marginalize members of the LGBTQ+ community and prevent them from accessing affirming services, but they reflect an uptick in a pattern of systemic discrimination that has demonstrated associations with diminished quality of life, added stress, and poorer health outcomes (Legal, 2010; Park et al., 2021; van Leerdam et al., 2021). These bills would not only harm the patients we treat, removing vital medical and psychological care, but also place their families at risk in their own communities.

We call for public leaders to abandon and/or publicly oppose these specific goals to enact discriminatory legislation against the LGBTQ+ community. Research has repeatedly demonstrated the positive impact of affirmative care for queer individuals throughout the lifespan, with strong correlations to positive health outcomes and robust support across disciplines (Almazan & Keuroghlian, 2021; Karalexi et al., 2020; Poquiz et al., 2021). As such, the actions described above will disenfranchise queer Americans and put them at risk of harm by criminalizing patient-centered, affirming healthcare. Queer youth must be given equal access to medically necessary care within their own communities, without fear of punishment.

The recent action in Texas additionally places our community of mental health providers at specific risk. As psychologists we have a duty to uphold our ethical code of conduct. Psychologists are required to maintain patient confidentiality to ensure that patient's feel safe



accessing care, and limits to that confidentiality exist to protect our patients or other vulnerable populations from imminent harm. The Texas Governor's order is at direct odds with our professional obligations, particularly given the preponderance of evidence demonstrating the medical necessity of gender affirming care. For those psychologists in Texas treating any individual that may be seeking gender-affirming care, know that legal consultation is available.

The resources below are only a few of the many ways to elevate LGBTQ+ communities and to seek support as a queer community member, ally, or provider.

Resources:

- The Trevor Project Lifeline, chat, text, or call 866-4-U TREVOR or 866-488-7386); or Trevor Chat, the online messaging service
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Trans Lifeline US (877) 565-8860; Canada (877) 330-6366
- [Age related](#) reactions to a traumatic event
- [SAMHSA](#) Disaster distress helpline
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) (NCTE)
- [Sylvia Rivera law Project](#) (SRLP) legal services
- [Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) (TLDEG) legal services
- [Texas ACLU](#)
- [Lambda Legal](#)
- [Texas Legal Services Center](#)
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#)
- [Texas Psychological Association](#)
- [Austin Neuropsychological Society](#)

In solidarity,

The Executive Board of the Queer Neuropsychological Society



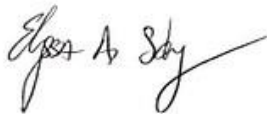
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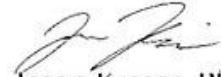
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