

*Symposium on Reorientation Therapy to
Be Held at Psychological
Association Meeting*

The American Psychological Association will sponsor a symposium on sexual-reorientation therapy at its annual convention in Washington, D.C. Slated for August 7th, the panel—sponsored by A.P.A.'s Division 36, a group studying psychology and religion—will showcase four prominent speakers.

Mark Yarhouse, Ph.D., of Regent University, is the author of two recent articles which made a strong case for the ethicality of reparative-type therapies.

Dr. Yarhouse wrote "When Clients Seek Treatment for Same-Sex Attraction: Ethical Issues in the 'Right to Choose' Debate," which appeared in the prestigious journal *Psychotherapy* (vol. 35, Summer 1998, no. 2, pp. 234-259).

His second article was published in *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 26:321-330, 1998, and is entitled, "When Families Present with Concerns about an Adolescent's Experience of Same-Sex Attraction." He also co-authored "The Use, Misuse and Abuse of Science in the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debates," a chapter in the new book, *Homosexuality, Science, and the Plain Sense of Scripture*.

Warren Throckmorton, Ph.D. will present the empirical evidence in support of sexual reorientation. Dr. Throckmorton is past president of the American Mental Health Counselors Association and author of "Attempts to Modify Sexual Orientation: A Review of Outcome Literature and Ethical Issues," published in the October 1998 issue (volume 20, pages 283-304) of the *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*.

Taking the other side, psychologist Doug Haldeman, Ph.D., will make the case that reorientation therapy is unethical, along with Drs. Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder, two psychotherapists from New York, who have been conducting a study to document the damage purportedly done by sexual-reorientation therapy.

According to panel participant Warren Throckmorton, the event will not actually be a "debate," but a presentation of papers.

"After the Psychiatric Association cancelled its scheduled debate in Chicago in May," said NARTH President Joseph Nicolosi, "this is a welcome event, which we hope to be the first of many." ■

NARTH Notes

Social Workers Denounce Reparative Therapy

The board of directors of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recently adopted a position statement condemning all attempts to change sexual orientation. Reorientation therapies, the NASW said, "cannot and will not change sexual orientation."

Exodus International, the umbrella organization for Christian ex-gay ministries worldwide, responded to the NASW through its Executive Director, Bob Davies.

"I challenge any social worker who thinks change is impossible to talk to our ex-gay leaders," Mr. Davies said. "Change is a daily reality for thousands of people, some of whom left homosexuality over 25 years ago."

Six Teachers Take a Stand

In the name of safety, the magazine *Teachers in Focus* recently reported, "schools are telling students that gays can't change." But there are six courageous Portland, Oregon teachers who have called on their school to present the facts in a balanced manner.

Those teachers recently asked their school to balance its extensive gay-affirming library collection with a few copies of Dr. Jeffrey Satinover's *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*.

But the memo the teachers sent to school officials resulted in something they had not expected: a blizzard of negative local media attention.

Jose Solano, the group's leader, said his concern about the one-sided presentation of views on homosexuality began three years ago, when he attended a teacher's workshop as part of a district-wide effort to "make schools safe" for gays and lesbians.

The workshop leader introduced four gay and lesbian high school students. It was clear to Mr. Solano that some of those students were deeply troubled. One boy and one girl were clinging to dolls as they spoke, and the girl sucked on the doll as she addressed the teachers.

"These were hurting kids who needed some assistance, but these people were disorienting them even more," Mr. Solano said. Rather than really addressing the problem, he said, the school district was actually reinforcing it.

Although Mr. Solano was in full support of the creation of a safe school environment, he objected to the one-sided

(Continued on next page)

presentation, which encouraged sexually confused teenagers to adopt a gay identity.

Later, when the school created an extensive gay-affirming library collection and refused to stock any book about coming out of homosexuality, Mr. Solano galvanized the group of six concerned teachers to write the district a memo asking them to include *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*. Those teachers had no objection to the district presenting a gay-affirming perspective in the name of diversity, but they wanted that diversity to include a traditionalist perspective as well.

Their internal memo to school administrators not only earned them hostility from many other teachers and staff, but it was leaked to the media—which, to their dismay, landed them on the front page of the local paper. The paper ran a feature story quoting a lesbian student who complained that she felt “unsafe” in the environment created by the six teachers.

“When you take this stand,” said teacher John Ditmore, “you walk in the copy room and people shun you. They won’t look at you. Some call you a homophobe or hater.”

Yet other teachers have come forward to the “Portland Six,” in private, to tell them they support what they’re doing, although they fear doing so publicly.

To subscribe to *Teachers in Focus* (a publication of Focus on the Family), call Focus at 719-531-5181. The May/June issue features the above story.



Sensitivity Training in the Workplace

Family Research Council now offers material to help employees dispute their company’s required sensitivity-training sessions in the workplace. Call FRC in Washington, D.C. at 202-393-2100 to receive an information packet.



“What If Your Son Was Gay?”

In a soon-to-be-released film interview with the Reichenberg Fellowship, a ministry in Germany, psychiatrist Dr. Robert Spitzer made several interesting statements.

Dr. Spitzer is currently in the midst of a study of individuals who have changed their sexual orientation.

When asked what advice he would give if he had an adolescent son who thought he was homosexual:

“The honest answer would be...I would hope that he would be interested in changing. And if he would be, that he would get some help. If he were really not

interested in changing, I would hope that I would not pressure him.”

When asked about the American Psychological Association’s position statements that lean toward labeling reorientation therapy unethical:

“I think that is just absurd...because you know in speaking to those few people...they clearly have benefited from that therapy, and to say that is unethical, I think that’s just ridiculous.”



“Thought Police” in California

A new bill has passed the California State Assembly which would equip teachers to monitor children’s beliefs—detecting “at-risk” children who are developing discriminatory attitudes.

According to *Capitol Update*, a fax newsletter of Capitol Resource Institute, this bill will train teachers to discover children who are showing early evidence of “potentially prejudicial and discriminatory behavior” toward legally protected groups. If those bills pass, said *Capitol Update*, children who are raised to believe that same-sex relationships are wrong will be “labelled as hate-mongers.” Those children “can then be hustled off to counseling centers to correct their errant attitudes.”

Capitol Update is on-line at www.capitolresource.org.



The Definition-of-Marriage Debate

In an *Insight* magazine editorial (6-19, p. 41), columnist Don Feder recently wrote that the debate over gay marriage has far broader significance than many people realize.

When the definition of marriage changes, he said, not only will the institution lose its meaning and significance, but the courts will have no philosophical rationale to deny other groups the same recognition.

Groups that are currently denied the right to marry—close blood relatives, bisexuals, and polygamists, for example—will soon follow after gays, he warns, to demand full inclusion under the law.

Mr. Feder offered some interesting corroborating evidence. An article in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* tells of a cohabiting brother and sister couple with three children, who were taken away from by the state. In the pair’s defense, their lawyer essentially argued against the law’s prohibition of incestuous unions, with the explanation that the two “love each other.”

In Utah, Mr. Feder noted, the ACLU is currently engaged

in a legal fight to expand marital rights to polygamists. The ACLU's legal director compared the ban on gay marriage to the ban on polygamous marriage; both bans, the ACLU director claimed, should be overturned.

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On The Problem of Loneliness

In a recent article in *Regeneration News*, the newsletter of Regeneration Ministries, Alan Medinger has written a particularly insightful article called "The Pitfall of Loneliness."

He explains that loneliness is one of the primary factors that causes ex-gay strugglers, against their convictions, to fall back into a homosexual lifestyle.

Mr. Medinger identifies ways this problem can be overcome: find an outlet for your love; consider taking up a cause that will help give your life meaning and purpose; become attached to a family; ask yourself if there is something about your personality that causes you to be isolated; and don't blame your loneliness on the wrong things. He explains each idea in detail.

Alan Medinger's newsletter can be obtained by calling Regeneration at 410-661-0284. His organization also lists a comprehensive offering of the most useful books on overcoming homosexuality. To obtain a catalogue, call 410-661-4337.

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More Trouble for Dr. Laura

Canada's official broadcast watchdog agency (CBSC) has condemned radio talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger for taking a strong stand against homosexual behavior. The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council said the cumulative effect of Dr. Laura's comments may "fertilize the ground" for anti-gay violence. The CBSC said her views were "abusively discriminatory" and "unsustainable." The CBSC called gays' sexual practices "as much a part of their being as the color of one's skin."

As a result of that ruling, radio stations in that country will now have to censor out Dr. Laura's comments about homosexuality.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) applauded the ruling, saying Dr. Laura cites questionable science from NARTH and Family Research Council, while in fact both groups are simply advocating a political agenda.

In further problematic developments for the embattled Dr. Laura, several left-wing groups including People for the American Way placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times*

denouncing her, and calling for advertisers to withdraw their sponsorship from her television show.

The gay magazine *The Advocate* reported that Procter and Gamble, Xerox, and United Airlines all withdrew their sponsorship or declined to renew their support. Corporations reportedly also issuing orders to their media buyers to avoid the Dr. Laura Show were American Express, AT & T, Toys "R" Us, Kraft and Geico.

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Gay Apologist Says the Scientific Debate Is Decided by Values, Not Science

Writing in *The Journal of Homosexuality*, gay apologist D.A. Begelman explained why the mental-health profession changed its view of homosexuality. The profession did not do so because of new discoveries in science; rather, the change was due to a shift in its values and philosophy.

In other words, he said, the A.P.A.'s new philosophy about homosexuality essentially represented a change in worldview:

"Coming to regard homosexuality as simply another lifestyle, *in contrast to a disorder*, is merely to expand the criteria for the concept of acceptable behavior. This is not equivalent to learning something new about homosexuality—it is more equivalent to judging it differently, while in possession of the same old facts."

(From D.A. Begelman, "Homosexuality and the Ethics of Behavioral Interventions," *J. of Homosexuality*, vol. 2 [3], Spring 1977.)

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A Helpful Information Source: Culture Facts

The Family Research Council publishes an information-packed weekly e-mail or fax newsletter which keeps the reader up-to-date on cultural events related to many issues, including homosexuality and gay activism. Approaching its subject in a lively, although sometimes graphic manner from a traditionalist Judeo-Christian perspective, *Culture Facts* is available for a suggested annual donation of \$25. To subscribe, call 1-800-225-4008.

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Can Prenatal Hormone Exposure Influence Gender-Identity Development?

A NARTH member recently sent us an intriguing comment by physician John R. Lee, M.D. Writing in his book *What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause*, Dr. Lee described the possible role of prenatal hormones in influencing the later gender identity of a developing fetus. Speaking of xenobiotics—environmental pollutants which

have a hormone-like effect on the body—Dr. Lee said that when a pregnant woman is exposed to such chemicals, they may blur sex differences in her unborn child. The resulting gender distortions, he theorized, could account for some instances of homosexuality when the child grows to adulthood.

Dr. Lee noted an earlier, similar finding: mothers who took the synthetic hormone DES during pregnancy were more likely to have daughters who developed vaginal and cervical cancer, and a higher-than-normal proportion also became bisexuals or lesbians.

Theorizing that environmental contaminants could have the same effect, he concluded, “If xenobiotics can blur the distinctions between the sexes in seagulls and alligators at nanogram levels, how far-fetched is it to speculate that the same pollutants may be affecting humans in the same fashion?”



The Boy Scouts: Will They Endure?

Recently the Boy Scouts were ordered by a New Jersey court to accept an openly gay man as their leader—defying the Scouts’ longtime definition of what it means to be “morally straight.”

Meanwhile, University of Utah law professor Michael McConnell predicted that the Boy Scouts would win their case in the U.S. Supreme Court (which they did, in a decision announced in June). But that victory could be a hollow one, McConnell warned, because activist groups will pressure corporate sponsors and charitable groups to withdraw support from the Scouts on the grounds that the group is unfairly discriminatory. Thus activists will still achieve their objective by marginalizing the organization.

One day after the Boy Scouts won their case in the Supreme Court, as McConnell had predicted, the gay group GLSEN began to pressure schools that host troop meetings, challenging the “privileged access” the Scouts now enjoy in the schools. A GLSEN press release said it will “continue educating public-school administrators about the exclusionary practices of the Boy Scouts and the harmful effects these policies have on gay youth.”

The gay group P-FLAG also issued a statement condemning the Scout policy and calling on United Way to de-fund the Boy Scouts.



New HIV Infections Rise Sharply

Officials in San Francisco recently reported a sharp rise in new HIV infections, which they traced to an increase in

high-risk sexual behavior.

“We’re very concerned and we’re very worried,” said Dr. Willi McFarland, director of the city’s Department of Public Health. Gay men who report unprotected sex with more than one partner grew from 23% in 1994 to 43% in 1999.

San Francisco also reported a sharp rise in incidences of rectal gonorrhea, which have more than doubled in the most recent five-year period.

Similar findings in the nation overall were reported in an article in *Clinical Psychology and Scientific Practice* (“HIV Transmission Risk Behaviors of Men and Women Living with HIV-AIDS, by S.C. Kalichman, 2000, 7:32-47), which summarized 22 studies involving 4,000 men and women with HIV, and also discussed 25 related studies. Overall, the author found, 1 in 3 people currently infected with HIV are putting at least some of their partners at risk through unprotected intercourse.

The new statistics in San Francisco—known as the most gay-tolerant city in U.S.—are particularly relevant in the debate about homosexuality. Activists often claim that gay men risk unsafe sex because of pressures generated by society’s homophobia. However, the alarmingly high rate of infection in San Francisco suggests that unsafe sex practices do not diminish in a notably gay-tolerant environment.



Mainline Churches Under Pressure: Gay Activists Arrested

About 200 gay activists associated with Rev. Mel White’s group “Soulforce” were arrested at the annual convention of the United Methodist Church this spring. The group—wearing tee shirts that said “Stop the Spiritual Violence”—was objecting to the Church’s reaffirmation of its opposition to homosexual behavior. Some of the marchers were Methodist bishops.

One minister defended the demonstrators on the grounds that the church was rejecting them as persons. He said that by objecting to homosexual behavior, the church was telling gays that “*you* are not compatible with Christian teaching.”

In the mainline churches’ battle over the acceptability of homosexual acts, many people of good will are still “in the middle” and seek more information, according to the Louisville Institute, an organization that studies religion. The majority of religionists want to affirm the civil rights of individuals who are homosexually attracted, and to offer them acceptance *as people*, but they are unsure about the wisdom of theologically affirming homosexual *behavior*.

However, the Human Rights Campaign, a gay group,

reported that all of the mainline churches are steadily moving toward theological acceptance of homosexual behavior.

The Rev. Mel White vowed to bring Soulforce to other mainline Protestant conventions slated for later this year, and followed-up at the Presbyterian General Assembly in Long Beach, California in June, with another demonstration at which 80 protesters were arrested.



Who is the Reverend Mel White?

The Rev. Mel White is often featured on television talk shows defending the objectives of the gay movement. Once a speechwriter for Jerry Falwell, he was married and a father when he decided that he could not live authentically unless he began his life anew as a gay man. He is now divorced, is a minister to a large gay church, and leads the group Soulforce.

A recent article in *Pastoral Care Ministries Newsletter* (Spring 2000) offers revelations into a side of Rev. White which is not seen on television.

Addressing a gathering of about 1,500 students in a college chapel, the Reverend was asked by a member of the audience if he struggled with pornography.

According to the ministry newsletter, the Rev. White told the gathering of students, "I don't struggle with pornography. I use it."



Creating New Kinds of Families— But Not the "Live-in" Variety

In a *Newsweek* editorial, "Helping to Create a New Kind of Family," a New York gay man recently described his newfound longing to be a father. After ten years of cruising the streets, David Levinson explained, he realized he felt lonely and adrift and wanted something else in his life to ground him.

"Could this anchor be a child?" he wondered.

Levinson discussed the matter with a lesbian acquaintance who also wanted to be a mother. As it turned out, the kind of family he had in mind suited both him and her; she wanted him to renounce all his legal rights as a father, as well as his financial and parental responsibilities, and—"Truth told," he admitted, "I want a child, but not a live-in baby."

He explained why he would not want to be a full-time father to the child. Besides being unsure what effect this child would have on his own lifestyle, he admitted that he didn't know what kind of a father he would be. "Deep

down," he confessed, "I fear affecting this child the way my father affected me." In the meanwhile, Levinson is attending a support group of other single men—gay and straight—who are also creating alternative families.

"I think of this baby as a way out of a life that no longer suits me," Mr. Levinson explained.



What College Textbooks Say About Homosexuality

College psychology and sociology textbooks used to offer a psychodynamic explanation for homosexuality. Today, that situation has changed. For example, in *Sexuality Today: The Human Perspective* (1998, a college textbook), we read the following:

"One of the traditional psychodynamic perspectives, popularized in the 1960's, was that family interactions caused same-gender orientation in males—the most typical background consisting of a close-binding, overprotective mother and a detached, absent or openly hostile father. **It is now known that this theory has no basis in fact.**...Same-gender sexual orientation is now accepted as a normal, mature developmental state."

However, the evidence contradicts the textbook. In the 1996 book *Freud Scientifically Reappraised: Testing the Theories and Therapy*, by Fisher and Greenberg, the authors conducted an exhaustive review of the literature and in fact found that the negatively-experienced father was indeed highly correlated with male homosexuality.

Continuing its discussion, the college textbook said, "The research that is available confirms that lesbian and gay families can indeed provide as healthy an environment as any family structure."

Yet the textbook ignored the vast body of literature that confirms the vital importance of both a mother and father in healthy child development, and also failed to mention that many of the studies of lesbian parents compared them to single-parent mother-headed families—which are intrinsically disadvantaged—rather than to intact families of a mother and father.



Three Gender-Identity Switches -- and You're Out

In Boulder, Colorado, a law has been passed extending legal protection to transsexuals (known as "gender-variants") so that they will not be discriminated against in housing, public accommodations or employment. Transsexuals may have full access to public bathrooms which serve the sex of their choice.

At work, employees can change gender identity and dress as the opposite sex without fear of being fired—but only three times within every year-and-a-half. After that, their employer is permitted to fire them on the grounds of “gender inconsistency.”

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***California’s Assembly Says
Cross-Dressing is a Legal Right***

California’s Assembly recently passed a similar measure, AB 2142, which—if it subsequently passes the Senate—will include “gender” as a new protected class, thus preventing companies from insisting that their employees wear clothing consistent with the person’s biological sex. The Legislature maintained that the bill protects Californians from “invidious gender stereotypes.”

Capitol Update had a different view of the measure. “If this bill passes,” the newsletter reported, “employers won’t even be able to tell the bearded, male employee who comes to work dressed in his wig, dress and high heels that he has to shave. The ridiculous part is that AB 2142 has already passed the Assembly.” California schools would also be affected by the measure.

Traditional Values Coalition noted that “businesses would be guilty of employment discrimination should they refuse to employ cross-dressers, transvestites, drag queens, and she-males.”

Groups which support this measure include the following: the ACLU, the California Teachers Association, the California AFL-CIO, the California Division of Planned Parenthood, and the California Child, Youth and Family Coalition.

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Web Usage Grows Exponentially

In March of 2,000, the NARTH website (www.narth.com) registered its all-time highest usage, with 23,630 visits for an average of ten minutes, 55 seconds per visitor. That figure was more than double the figure for the same month, one year ago. About 10% of the visitors are from outside the U.S. In April of 2000, web usage was 23,520. In May, it was 23,189.

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***Gay Teens Found to be at High Risk for
Emotional, Physical and Social Problems***

A study reported in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* (38:3, March 1999, by James Lock and Hans Steiner) has found that gay, lesbian and bisexual youth are at greater risk than their heterosexual counterparts for mental-health problems and sexual risk-taking.

What was significant about this study was that it surveyed teenagers in a community-based setting, rather than homeless youth or clients at a mental-health clinic, where rates of mental-health problems would be expected to be high. Information was gathered through an anonymous, self-report survey in what was described as an affluent, educated, “generally tolerant” community.

“A variety of explanations has been proposed to explain the apparent increased risk for emotional and health problems among homosexual youth,” according to the report. “These include psychoanalytic, biological, and psycho-social theories...Others explain the emotional difficulties...as resulting from external sources.”

The authors of the study said they concluded that the mental-health problems and sexual risk-taking “may be due in part” to internalized homophobia.

However, they avoided further speculation on what those other influences might be. Discussion of intrapsychic factors in particular was avoided, with the authors calling for others to conduct “further research.”

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P-FLAG Promotes “Apple Pie” Image

A new fundraising booklet produced by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) asks the question, “What does P-FLAG really stand for?” and answers it by saying, “Hint: Think Mom, Dad and apple pies.”

“What could be a more potent image of family love than apple pie?” the booklet asks. To underscore this message, the group says it plans to bake apple pies and deliver them to congressmen.

“What legislator,” they ask, “is going to slam the door in the face of someone offering up a freshly baked pie?”

Ironically, P-FLAG is the group about which NARTH reported in a *Bulletin* article a couple of years ago. We tracked down some of the books on a “Recommended Reading List for Teenagers,” and what we found was a message that was very far from the image P-FLAG is now cultivating.

The approach to child guidance we saw was consistently radical. Teenagers were encouraged to reject the advice of adults and use their feelings as a guide to sexual behavior. First-person stories aimed specifically at teens were told in sometimes pornographic detail, traditional religious practice was mocked, and pagan goddess rituals and witchcraft were portrayed sympathetically.

Had similar books been recommended by parenting groups for “straight” teenagers, they would have been considered

violations of community social standards.

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***The Role of Language
in Political Persuasion***

Taking a tactically useful direction in the political debate, gay activists are increasingly referring to homosexually oriented men and women as “sexual minority” individuals. Technically, that term would encompass many other orientations than homosexuality, but of course, the intent is to use it only to include the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) people.

The term “sexual minority” implies that individuals who are homosexually inclined are a “people” in a manner comparable to race, and that any negatively critical discussion of the condition is tantamount to bigotry.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council’s statement that gays’ sexuality is “as much a part of their being as the color of one’s skin” is a reflection of this new way of viewing homosexuality. The Council recently ruled that even certain health-related criticisms of homosexual behavior were prohibited because they were equivalent to bigotry.

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Some Trends in the Clinical Literature

One recent and growing trend in the literature is toward the advocacy of open relationships (called “polyamory”) for gay and lesbian clients.

In gay and lesbian culture, such multiple relationships may “work,” therapists say, even though they may not work for heterosexual clients.

The counseling magazine *Family Therapy Networker* recently published a case history entitled, “Monogamy and Gay Men: When are Open Relationships a Therapeutic Option?” (Mar-April, p. 63-71) in which the counselor sought to help a monogamous but sexually bored gay couple stay together through engaging in group sex and bringing a third person into the relationship.

The author of the column, an instructor at Hunter College School of Social Work, said “I have grown to respect the fluidity and customized relationship forms that can work well for gay men.” (The instructor did not fully define what he meant by “work.”)

Another trend in the literature—quite a useful one for both gay-affirming and sexual-reorientation therapists—is to make a clear distinction between three distinctive aspects of sexuality:

1. sexual orientation (identified by the direction of one’s fantasies and attractions);
2. sexual identity (the self-concept an individual organizes around his feelings);
3. sexual behavior.

Research studying ex-gay individuals is now focusing on which of those three categories can be changed. Some say only behavior can be changed; others say behavior and sexual identity can be changed. To what extent one can change all three—behavior, identity and orientation—is more controversial.

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Researcher Says Lesbian Sexuality Can be “Fluid”

Another interesting focus in the literature is the growing acknowledgment of the “fluidity” of sexual identity, attractions and behavior for bisexual and lesbian women. In a recent article in *Developmental Psychology* (2000, vol. 36, no. 2, 241-250), author Lisa Diamond of the University of Utah says, “For sexual-minority women, non-exclusivity in attraction is the norm, rather than the exception.”

She concludes that there is a broad diversity of sexual identities and behaviors among non-heterosexual women throughout the course of their lives, with half of the 80 lesbian, bisexual and “unlabeled women in the study reporting at two-year follow-up that they had changed sexual identities more than once. Bisexual women were more likely to have made a significant shift in both identity and attractions. Some women claimed to have had heterosexual identities in adolescence, but later adopted bisexual or lesbian identities.

“Western culture expects sexuality to come in one neat package,” Dr. Diamond reported, “when often that is not the case.”

Dr. Diamond’s study, of course, contradicts the American Psychiatric Association’s recent statement that there is no evidence suggesting that sexual orientation can change.

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***Psychiatric News Reports Heavy Use of
Mental-Health Services by Gays and Lesbians***

In a national survey of gay and lesbian individuals, 43% of 1,466 respondents said they had sought mental-health care in the past year. In contrast, only about 10-12% of the heterosexual population seeks mental-health care in a given year.

A psychiatrist quoted by *Psychiatric News* said that they heavy use of mental-health care could likely be attributed to homophobia.

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**Lesbian Activist Says
She Now Loves a Man**

The fluidity of sexual orientation was demonstrated in a segment of the television show *20/20*, when activist Joann Loulan, who spent 22 years in a lesbian lifestyle, reported that she was involved in a two-year relationship with a man.

Ms. Loulan, according to an April 17th, 1998 segment of *20/20*, had been an "in-your-face" advocate for lesbian rights. Considered the "Dr. Ruth" of lesbian sex, she broke with her activist friends when at age 50, she began an affair with a 35-year-old man.

"For the first two months," she admitted, "I didn't even tell

my close friends...I thought, if I tell people this, they're going to flip out." She reported receiving hate mail because of the relationship. One letter said, "You wrecked it for thousands of lesbians." Many of her lesbian friends abandoned her.

A psychotherapist, Dr. Paula Rust, told *20/20* viewers why she was the object of so much hostility. "It blurs the boundaries between being lesbian and being heterosexual. It calls into question the aspect of choice. It might imply that being a lesbian is a choice, and so that might subject other lesbians to pressure to choose heterosexuality."

Concluded the show's moderator: "As we got further into this story, we found that JoAnn's situation is not so unusual." ■

