

**NARTH's Response to the American Psychological Association (APA)
Public Interest Directorate Public Comment Solicitation Program *Second Round*
Concerning APA's Proposed *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay,
and Bisexual Clients***

(April 30, 2010)

The American Psychological Association (APA) should be praised for its attempts to answer questions about sexual orientation change efforts, for its work in developing nonbinding treatment guidelines, and for welcoming feedback on those guidelines. Of particular concern, however, is Guideline 3, which seems to go beyond the research findings.

Although discounted by APA's six-member Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation (2009), varying degrees of sexual orientation change have been repeatedly documented in the literature throughout the past century. While the task force deemed many of the studies insufficient to prove the possibility of change, their dismissal of these studies does not prove the impossibility of change. Simply stated, according to the standards used by the task force, if there is insufficient evidence to determine whether this type of treatment works, then there also is insufficient evidence to show—or justifiably claim—that this type of treatment does *not* work. This is also true for a variety of other psychological treatments in common use by APA members, none of which has yet to be validated using the gold standard design of outcome researchers: prospective and randomized control trials.

Therefore, stating in Guideline 3 that “efforts to change sexual orientation are neither effective nor safe for many clients” is inaccurate, as the research has been deemed by the APA 2009 task force insufficient to make this statement. It should also be noted that while gay-affirmative therapy is advocated by the 2009 task force, no studies that meet the task force's own criteria confirm the effectiveness of gay-affirmative therapy.