

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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GLOBAL THERAPISTS GATHER TO LEARN STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHRISTIANS WITH UNWANTED SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

OVER 140 psychologists, therapists and counsellors who support Christians with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion are meeting in Poland this weekend (18-20 OCT) for a unique conference.

Organised by London-based International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC), delegates from **28** nations will hear from 29 global speakers how to provide client-centered therapy which does not affirm sexuality, or gender, as a person's core Identity. The conference is titled *Into The Wind - Reconnecting sexuality and Gender: attachment, purpose and community*.

And for the first time in its 10-year history, the IFTCC will shortly offer IFTCC members, both professional and lay, and members of the public, post conference Continued Professional Development (CPD) at 'basic, intermediary and advanced' levels in nine certificate-level programmes.

At a time when the UK Government is to table a law banning 'Conversion Therapy', the IFTCC says it is *"strongly against therapist-imposed therapy goals, aversive and coercive methods, and guarantees of therapy outcomes wherever they may exist"*. It adds: *"IFTCC Therapists do not attempt to change people. No therapist can change another person in regard to anything. We help people who present, stating that they want to bring about change in themselves. Therapy is client centered."*

Conference organiser, Dr Mike Davidson, Charman of the IFTCC said: *"The current debate in the UK Church is how to 'protect the rights' of parents, grandparents, teachers and church youth leaders so that the upcoming Bill won't stop them answering questions from LGBTI or gender-confused family or church members. There's also a deep fear that such a ban will stop pastors preaching on marriage and sexuality. Whilst we share such concerns, we'd argue that the needs of people most effected in the current debate in the church are once again, being left out. Who will counsel and support them professionally?"*

"Every week our counselling and pastoral care members across 35 countries support Christians, those with other or no faith positions at all, with a wide range of sexual issues, including unwanted same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria. Many of them – especially in the UK - have initially sought state health system help, only to be told that unless they 'embrace and affirm' their sexuality they cannot receive help. Many any UK pastors come to us because they feel ill-equipped to counsel and have no-one to refer church members to.

"But Christians with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria are once again, overlooked in the debate. This conference is fundamentally about providing science-based research and good practise tools to aid professional understanding and therapy for people who feel very vulnerable in society, and occasionally in the church. This is one of a few conferences of its kind globally – and because of the controversial subject, information about the venue had had to be limited to attendees."

Speakers include: **Dr Szymon Grzelak** (Poland) researcher and practitioner with 30 years of experience in the prevention of youth sexual risk behaviour and other youth problems; **Dr Mercy Connors** (USA) Licensed Professional Counsellor; Director of Program Development and Professional Relations American Association of Christian Counsellors; **Dr Shannae Anderson** (USA) Director of Psychology, and Co-director of Ethics and Advocacy for the American Association of Christian Counsellors; and **Dr Rosaria Butterfield**, writer, speaker, homemaker, a former professor who has written extensively about her former life as a lesbian activist and queer theorist.

Following the conference videos of the plenary and other sessions will be available on the IFTCC learning platform for other therapists to access. Associated PowerPoints scientific and therapy papers will also be pointed to.

- The International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC) advocates for the rights and freedoms of individuals to seek and to receive professional and pastoral help to live according to their primary values concerning their sexual identity and practises.

For further details of the conference, visit [10th ANNUAL IFTCC CONFERENCE, 2024 | IFTCC.ORG](https://iftcc.org/10th-annual-iftcc-conference-2024)

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