



# Proposed changes to Canada's *Criminal Code* relating to: **CONVERSION THERAPY**

Diversity and inclusion are among Canada's greatest strengths. Canadians must feel safe to be who they are. Contrary to what some might say, there is no right and wrong when it comes to who you are or who you love.

That's why on March 9, 2020, the Government of Canada moved forward with proposed legislation to act on its commitment to end conversion therapy in Canada. The proposed changes would protect the dignity and equality rights of all Canadians, in particular lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit (LGBTQ2) Canadians.

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## WHAT IS CONVERSION THERAPY?

Conversion therapy aims to change the sexual orientation of individuals to heterosexual, to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviours, or to change an individual's gender identity to cisgender. Conversion therapy stigmatizes LGBTQ2 persons, harms their dignity and well-being, and negatively impacts their equality rights.

Unfortunately, conversion therapy is still very much a reality in Canada, particularly for young people, who are at greater risk of depression and suicide following efforts to change a fundamental part of who they are – their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity.

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## DID YOU KNOW: CURRENT LAWS

Although no existing *Criminal Code* offence directly addresses conversion therapy, some existing offences, such as kidnapping, forcible confinement, assault offences or fraud may apply, depending on the case.

Criminal law reform is an important step that will further protect the dignity of LGBTQ2 persons, and promote their equality rights. This alone won't end the harmful practice of conversion therapy. The Government of Canada is committed to working with provinces, territories, municipalities and stakeholders to ensure that Canada is a country where everyone – regardless of their gender expression, gender identity or sexual orientation – can live free from discrimination.

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## FIVE NEW PROPOSED *CRIMINAL CODE* OFFENCES

The proposed legislation would create **five new offences** that would prohibit:

- Causing a minor to undergo conversion therapy;
- Removing a minor from Canada to undergo conversion therapy abroad;
- Causing a person to undergo conversion therapy against their will;
- Profiting from providing conversion therapy; and,
- Advertising an offer to provide conversion therapy.

The Bill would also authorize courts to order the removal of advertisements for conversion therapy services from computer systems or the Internet.

For more detailed information, visit

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