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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in St. Cloud.

I work primarily with the LGBTQ population in Minnesota, and more specifically with LGBTQ people with trauma. Every day I work with folks who struggle with mental health concerns. The rates of mental health concerns in the LGBTQ community are high: seventy-three percent of LGBTQ youth report anxiety symptoms and fifty-eight percent report depression symptoms. Eighty-two percent of LGBTQ youth wanted mental health care. Forty-five percent of LGBTQ youth have considered suicide and fourteen percent have attempted suicide in the last year.

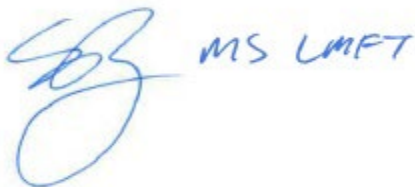
Those numbers more than double in the population exposed to conversion therapy. Twenty-eight percent of LGBTQ youth exposed to conversion therapy attempted suicide in the past year. That is nearly one third of all LGBTQ exposed to conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is also commonly used as a threat with LGBTQ youth, with similar results: twenty-seven percent of LGBTQ youth have attempted suicide when threatened with conversion therapy.

The number one thing that people can do to lower the suicide rates amongst LGBTQ people is be accepting. Affirming homes and schools cuts the suicide rate in half.

Conversion therapy is touted as a mental health treatment, but any treatment that results in nearly one third of the participants attempting suicide should not be utilized under any circumstances.

If you have any questions, you can reach me at the above contact information.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Seal Dwyer, MS LMFT