

Several successful reparative therapy “graduates” and others who have experienced profound change from a homosexual past have created a new website, www.peoplecanchange.com.

“There is so much ‘noise’ in the media about the impossibility of change,” says Richard Wyler, who helped initiate the site. “There is even the idea that *talking* about change is tantamount to hate speech. So we’ve created the site to give hope to those who want to find their way out of homosexuality.”

Mr. Wyler said the web page is respectful toward those with other viewpoints, “while sharing the healing and joy that change has brought us – change that, to many of us, didn’t seem possible before we found reparative therapy.”

The group is looking for more men to be willing to step forward and share their experiences on the site – using a pseudonym, if they prefer.

“The more men who share what worked for them,” said Mr. Wyler, “the clearer the path out of homosexuality becomes for others who still struggle.”

The website attempts to take a holistic approach--recognizing the varied roles of therapy, spiritual conversion, Twelve-Step recovery programs and individual resources including family and friends, “all of which have played a vital role in the change process for different men.”

“Most of what is on the web now testifies only of the spiritual aspects of healing homosexuality,” Mr. Wyler notes. “While that is totally valid, most of us have found there was much more work to do. This work involves our emotional lives, our personal sense of identity, and all our relationships. We want to provide a holistic path to healing. We hope that some people will be receptive to it, who might not be receptive to spiritual conversion alone.”

Individuals who want to contribute their stories are invited to e-mail ben@peoplecanchange.com.

An excerpt from the website:

“Gender-Affirmative Therapy” Can Help

Gay-affirmative therapy is supposed to be the “cure” for unwanted homosexual desires, according to gay activists and the major therapeutic associations (whose professional motto seems to be, “If we can’t figure out how to fix it, it must not be broken”). The problem, they say, is not with the desires, but with the fact that they are unwanted.

But we didn’t want to be affirmed as GAY. We wanted to be affirmed as MEN. Call it “gender-affirmative” therapy: learning to experience at last, in non-sexual ways, the masculine love and affirmation we had secretly longed for all our lives.

Gay activists have lambasted and politicized reparative or sexual reorientation therapy and persuaded the major therapeutic professional associations, out of political correctness, to vilify and condemn it. Deliberate mis-characterizations of reparative therapy abound.

But those of us who went through reparative therapy found it to be a deeply healing experience. It helped bring us out of shame. It helped us release anger. It helped us heal lifelong hurts and emotional wounds. It taught us how to “repair” childhood yearnings for male affirmation and acceptance by fulfilling them, often with new heterosexual male friends and mentor-father figures, instead of repressing them. Instead of focusing on our sexual orientation, reparative therapy focused on healing with other men (especially our fathers and peers) and with ourselves as men.

As the clients, we directed the therapy. We were never coerced. We were never shamed. (And we certainly never received electric shocks, as some myths claim!) And because good reparative therapists act more as a compassionate mentor than an aloof, disinterested professional, we began to learn to trust men and overcome our defensive detachment from them, sometimes for the first time in our lives.

We are not talking about politics. We are talking about our very lives, and our freedom to heal. “Going straight” is not a hate crime. For us, it is an affirmation of our true identity as men. ■

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“Victory on the Bow of a Ship”