

“... many parents bring their children to me because they would prefer that they not grow up to be gay”

Kenneth Zucker, speaking to *Brain, Child* magazine in 2001



We are a group of trans people and allies who would like to welcome delegates to this conference. We support the use of hormone blockers for adolescent trans people, to spare them the distress of puberty intensifying their gender dysphoria and potentially subjecting them to painful surgery as adults, should they make the decision to transition.

However, one of the doctors you are about to hear from, Dr Kenneth Zucker, is notorious amongst the trans community for his use of treatments which many believe are “ex-gay/ex-trans” reparative and aversion therapy in children **as young as three** who show so-called “gender variant” behaviour. These “treatments” can involve punishing the child for wanting to play with the “wrong” toys and having the “wrong” friends.

We feel that within the ranks of the mental health community, certain individuals have historically regarded diversity in human sexuality and gender-identification as pathological, and have abused their position of power over vulnerable LGBT people to attempt to “cure” them, often with disastrous results. Such “treatment” continues to be performed, without consent, on people who have been labelled “mentally ill” simply because of their sexuality or gender-identification.

We feel that it is not to the RSM’s credit to invite those still engaged in “treatment” many consider barbaric, to speak at prestigious international conferences. By lending international respectability to those prominently involved in the American extreme right-wing “ex-gay/ex-trans” movement, even when they are not speaking to that agenda, the RSM risks giving legitimacy to the homophobic and transphobic reparative therapy movement.

We are disappointed by the lack of consultation with the UK trans-community when setting up this conference. There are groups which work closely with the people directly affected by the issues discussed today, such as the *Mermaids* group, which have campaigned on the issue of hormone blockers for adolescent trans people for a long time. Denying trans people input into our own treatment is symptomatic of paternalistic “gatekeeping” practices which would not be tolerated when applied to other patient groups.

We are asking the medical profession to put its house in order over these issues. We want it to stop turning a blind-eye to the abuse of LGBT people which continues to be perpetrated under the guise of “respectable” mental healthcare. We urge delegates to send a message that the “ex-gay” movement has no place in British medicine.

Thank you for your time and support. For more information on Dr Zucker’s controversial treatment of children, see <http://tinyurl.com/drzucker>

Please also consider watching this video, where Dr Jack Drescher, a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, talks about so-called reparative therapy: <http://tinyurl.com/repthera>