Affirming Psychotherapy for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Others

University Counseling Services provides affirming assistance to students who find themselves wanting to examine their sexual orientation. This service is provided to students who identify as Gay, Lesbian, Queer, Homosexual, Bisexual, Heterosexual, Questioning or in some other way. Whether the student has recently begun to feel attracted to people of the same sex or the student identifies as gay and has come out to friends and family, University Counseling Services is available for supportive psychotherapy. One aspect of the supportive nature of this work is that it is voluntary. The psychotherapy is voluntary but also is the focus on the student’s sexual orientation. This means that the student’s sexual orientation becomes the focus of the work only to the degree that the student and psychotherapist BOTH determine it to be relevant.

Another vitally important aspect of providing affirming psychotherapy to students of all sexual orientations is the perspective that one’s sexual orientation is not, in and of itself, a sign that the individual is in either good or poor mental health. Although one’s sexual orientation can be closely related to difficulties the individual confronts, it is not reasonable or affirming for the psychotherapist to assume, with no other knowledge that the individual’s sexual orientation is to “blame” for one’s difficulties. Psychotherapists at University Counseling Services are committed to not making this mistake. Gay-affirming psychotherapy provides the student with a safe place where the student can gain a deeper acceptance of and appreciation of that student’s own, personal sexual orientation.

Services available include individual psychotherapy, couples counseling, and group work. A student can be seen with a partner even if the partner is not a student. Groups that are provided at University Counseling Services take different forms, depending upon the desires and needs of the group members and the professional judgment of the UCS psychotherapist(s) facilitating the group.

Gender Identification

University Counseling Services also assists students in examining whether the gender identification the student has always adopted feels as though it fits with how the student sees himself or herself. Unfortunately, due to the short-term nature of the work psychotherapists at UCS provide, it is not possible to provide the evaluation of mental fitness that is required before an individual can choose to have a surgical correction involving gender identity.