

January 15, 2021

Dear Ms Yelland,

Thank you for reaching out to me in regards to the proposed Bylaw on conversion therapy. I have endeavoured to explain my concerns below. I hope you will take them into account.

The definition of Conversion Therapy can be found at <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/conversiontherapy>. The definition cited in your proposed bylaw, is a far cry from this medical definition. Your bylaw definition is vague, and reads as deceptive word juggling in order to include practices that were never intended to be covered by the term, Conversion Therapy. Therefore, I think the definition proposed, will cause far more harm than good.

There are three reasons why I say this. One, is that it interferes with the freedom to seek counselling of one's own preference, two, it could make criminals of helpful and well-intentioned people, who care for children or who teach that God is the author of life, and Natural law. Three, it can lead to irreversible harm thrust upon children. Four, it uses the authority of City Council to enter into an area that is not of their purview.

The following excerpts, taken from the book, When Harry Became Sally, by Ryan T Anderson, can help to understand how the City of Saskatoon may well be used to produce similar harmful results as happened in Toronto. Please read carefully.

These quotes are taken from pages 23-24 (in part), of the aforementioned book.

He is perhaps the most frequently cited name in research on gender identity and the editor of the journal *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*. Zucker has been at the forefront of developing treatments for people with gender dysphoria and he headed the group that wrote the entry on gender dysphoria for the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders, the official handbook of the American Psychiatric Association. Yet he was abruptly fired from the Toronto clinic one morning in December 2015, becoming a casualty of a campaign by activists who viewed him as insufficiently pro-trans. Never mind that he had recommended transition therapies for scores of patients over the years and had never tried to "detransition" a patient. He was targeted for his belief that children represent a special kind of gender dysphoria, and that their long-term well-being may not be served by automatically encouraging them to transition. For that sin, he was subjected to a show trial by the hospital (CAMPH) (top of page 22, Anderson)

The activists had won what seemed like a satisfying end to a simple, sad story. "infamous Reparative Therapy Clinic for Transgender Youth Set to Close," trumpeted TThinkProgress. "Hooray! A Big, Bad Conversion Therapy Clinic For Trans Youth In Canada

Is Shutting Down,” went the MTV headline. Good prevailed over evil, in other words. Those innocent children would never suffer again....

[But] if you look closely at what really happened—if you read the review(which CAMPH has now pulled off of its website), speak with the activists who effectively wrote large swaths of it, examine the scientific evidence, and talk to former GIC clinicians and the parents of patients they worked with, it’s hard not to come to an uncomfortable, politically incorrect conclusion: Zucker’s defenders are right. This was a show trial. (bottom of page 22, top of page 23, Anderson)

In reality, Zucker was not doing “reparative therapy” or “conversion therapy,” but his clinic took a cautious approach to treating children. The clinicians “viewed it as preferable for a child to become comfortable with his or her natal gender” instead of *beginning* a process of social transition, a process that tends to become self-reinforcing because children naturally respond to the messages they get from parents and peers and society,” Singal explains. A large majority of those children would eventually desist from their gender dysphoria, so ,”why nudge them prematurely toward accepting a cross-gender identity?” AT the same time, the clinic often helped patients, especially the older ones, transition to their felt gender, “providing a wide range of services that included hormone referrals.”

But activists demanded total capitulation. (page 23, Anderson)

Is this what is happening to the City of Saskatoon, when it is being asked to ban Conversion Therapy, when indeed it is asked to create its own definition of what Conversion Therapy is and put it into a bylaw? A bylaw that would in effect harm children by removing the opportunity for counselling such as that used in the above example? In Toronto, it was a show trial, in Saskatoon, is it a coercive measure to use a city bylaw, to stifle all questions on how to best treat gender dysphoria in children? These are questions best answered by qualified clinicians, not City Officials. Please read on.

Judging from the evidence, it’s pretty clear that the review was initiated to achieve a preordained result: firing Zucker and shuttering his clinic. This is all because the question of how best to treat gender dysphoria in children has become a focus of political warfare--- between those who understand it as similar to other dysphorias, and those who insist that it should be accepted at face value as evidence of a fixed transgender identity, as who the child really is. One strange result of this politicization, as Dingal comments, is that the professional psychiatrists who conducted the external review were “concerned that it’s harmful or improper to help patients in a mental-health clinic understand why they are the way they are. If this concern were to be generalized across the field, it would render any mental health work harmful or improper. (bottom, page 23)

In light of what happened here, I think it is safe to say that there was a preordained determination by those wanting to ban Conversion therapy in Saskatoon, to oppose counselling towards children which would help them accept their natal gender. This is harmful to children, full stop.

Item b of the proposed bylaw refers to drugs. I assume that they might mean drugs formerly used to try and change the orientation of a homosexual? Yet, think now of current drugs used to change the gender of a person. Hormone therapy, if given to youth, can prevent them from going through puberty, locking them into a prepubescent stage of life. It can also cause sterility. Imagine an adult coming back to Saskatoon City Council, accusing them of not protecting them from this as a child. Will Hormone therapy for children, be banned under this bylaw?

You cannot even give a child a Tylenol at school without parental consent. Under this bylaw, a teacher or counsellor could be talking to a student about transitioning (which will lead to hormone therapies) and the parent wouldn't even know about it, nor could even dispute it for a more balanced approach to address the questioning of youth. Then, with a City Bylaw in place, the parent would find no recourse for giving their child an alternative to transitioning. Young people have so much to deal with. How you feel at 16 may not be how you feel at 21. Yet, another author, Abigail Shrier, who experienced a digital book burning, was targeted by activists for questioning the rise of transitioning in girls and highlighting the often irreversible damage done through transition. Will we, Saskatonians experience the same culture cancelling, the same censorship, or worse, once this bylaw comes into play? These are issues best left in the hands of clinicians, not City Counsellors. In this bylaw, you are overstepping your mandates and shutting down open discussion.

I could go on, but I hope you get the point that this bylaw seems created not to help but to stop the discussion around the harms of transitioning, especially for youth. It also ignores so much of what we know, scientifically, to be true. WE are born either male or female. The doctor proclaims it at birth, she doesn't assign it, she announces it, based on the genitals formed by the combination of either XX chromosomes or XY chromosomes during fetal development. Life and circumstance will alter how we see ourselves in our bodies, but we deserve to explore that with whatever counselling we choose for ourselves, and for our children.

Throw out the bylaw. It is based upon a false, and vague definition and not in the best interest of Saskatoon citizens.

Sincerely,

Florence Paquette

Works Cited

Ryan T Anderson
When Harry Became Sally
2018
Encounter Books
New York, USA
Book
Page numbers, 22-23