**Input on Conversion Therapy in North Macedonia**

In the Republic of North Macedonia, we do not have data on practicing Conversion Therapy officially by centers, institutions, religious institutions, etc. This does not mean that LGBT people in N. Macedonia are fully accepted, but the attempts of change on sexual orientation that mental health professionals are trying to make to the young LGBT people is taking place in a different way.

In N. Macedonia, young LGBT people are often referred to psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists by their parents. We note individual cases where, without the use of psychotherapeutic techniques, professionals give specific brief advice that they think it would change a person's sexual orientation, such as spending more time with a male person in the family when it comes to gay boys, wearing clothing from an older male member, etc.

Cases of discrimination by mental health professionals are also noted when an LGBT person seeks professional help for other reasons. So, LGBT people are accused of having their problems and difficulties in various life situations caused by having a different sexual orientation, and that is their life punishment.

With the adoption of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in May 2019, sexual orientation and gender identity were listed as grounds for discrimination, thus the courts are no longer capable of interpreting the cases by themselves, thus making it easier to recognize discrimination.

However, as a system, we still do not have adequate responses to such cases of discrimination, and the responsibility is passing to the responsible ministries whose institution employs the person who has committed discrimination by abusing his or her position, and the chambers / professional associations that gave the licenses to those who work in the area of mental health services.

In N. Macedonia, we still have contentious schoolbooks at faculties that pathologize homosexuality. We do not have adequate training for working with LGBT people, for young professionals after leaving college. Despite the high percentage of self-harm and suicidal thoughts in the homosexual population, and the peer violence they experience during the educational process, free counseling and psychotherapy where a trained and sensitized team of professionals would work, is not provided neither by the state nor by the NGOs.

David Tasevski

Programme coordinator – psychologist

Sexual and Gender Minorities Association SUBVERSIVE FRONT Skopje