

Statement of the Psychological Association of the Philippines on ‘Being Gay’ article: Reaffirms its position against LGBT discrimination

In response to concerns from the public about a Philippine Star article dated March 11, 2013 entitled “Being Gay” by Tintin Bersola Babao and featuring Dr. Camille Garcia, the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) wishes to reaffirm its position borne from scientific knowledge that being gay is not a disease or disorder. Like other national organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the British Psychological Society, and the Hong Kong Psychological Society, among many others, the PAP recognizes that there is no inherent illness or pathology behind same-gender sexual orientations. In fact, it has been 40 years since homosexuality was taken out in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders.

The PAP enjoins Filipino psychologists to stand by their professional and ethical commitments to affirm the rights and wellbeing of all individuals. Its position paper on Non-Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression reads, *“The PAP Code of Ethics (2010) is clear in its stance against discrimination. Filipino psychologists are called upon to recognize the unique worth and inherent dignity of all human beings; and to respect the diversity among persons and peoples. This means that Filipino psychologists should not discriminate against or demean persons based on actual or perceived differences in characteristics including gender identity and sexual orientation.”*

It continues, *“Lesbians, Gay and Bisexuals and Transgendered individuals confront social pressures to hide, suppress or even attempt to change their identities and expressions as conditions for their social acceptance and enjoyment of rights.... This anti-LGBT prejudice and discrimination tend to be based on a rhetoric of moral condemnation and are fueled by ignorance or unfounded beliefs associating these gender expressions and sexual orientations with psychopathology or maladjustment.”*

Says PAP President Dr. Gina Hechanova, “The article presents a view of homosexuality that is clearly misinformed. We wish to invite the public to read more appropriate responses to the same questions posed in the article of Ms. Bersola-Babao. We also encourage media practitioners who wish to get professional psychological advice to see the list of certified psychologists in the PAP website (www.pap.org.ph).”