



free webinar,  
Thurs 4 Nov 2021,  
1.30-2.30pm

# More Than a Law Change

**a conversation about gender  
identity conversion practices  
with Counting Ourselves and Te  
Ngākau Kahukura**

[www.tengakaukahukura.nz](http://www.tengakaukahukura.nz)

[www.countingourselves.nz](http://www.countingourselves.nz)



# COUNTING OURSELVES



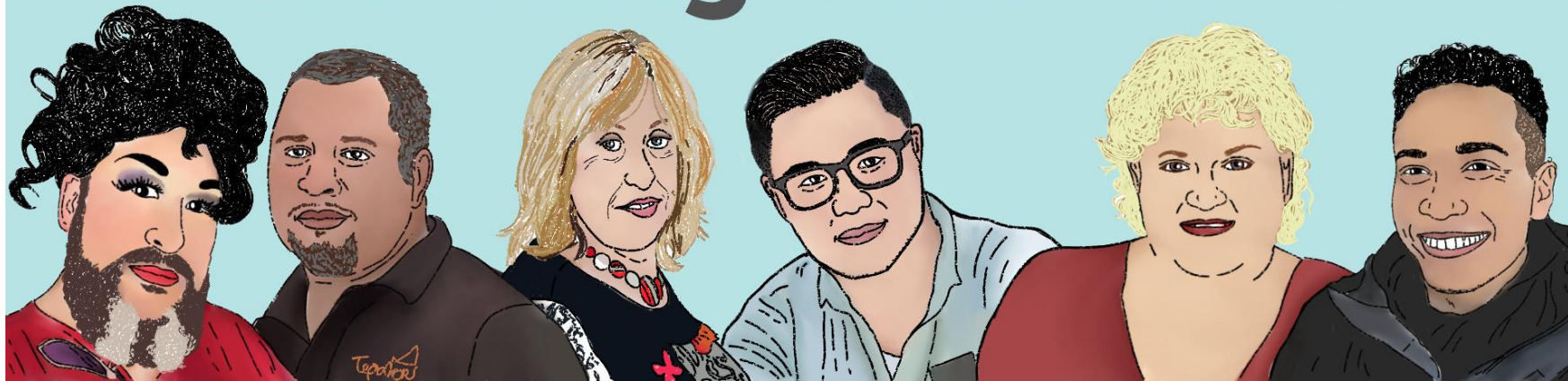
**What Counting  
Ourselves tells  
us about conversion  
practices**

**4 November 2021**

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Jack Byrne**

**Transgender  
Health Research  
Lab**

# Counting Ourselves



Team led by trans  
people  
+  
a Community  
advisory group  
+  
Kaupapa Māori  
informed

- ▶ Survey questions reviewed by SNZ and MoH
- ▶ Includes NZ population survey questions
- ▶ Took place 21 June - 30 September 2018
  
- ▶ First community report in September 2019
- ▶ Articles in international academic journals
- ▶ Used in community advocacy
- ▶ Cited in Government reports and briefing papers

**1,178 responses from  
trans and non-binary people  
living in Aotearoa  
aged 14 and older**

# Terms have evolved to name the harm caused

- ▶ Conversion practices attempt to **change** or **suppress** someone's takatāpui or rainbow identity.
- ▶ These practices are harmful, unethical and do not work, particularly over time. They are not therapeutic.
- ▶ Many people are coerced into seeking conversion practices by people they love, trust or rely on for support.

## Gender identity conversion practices (or change efforts)

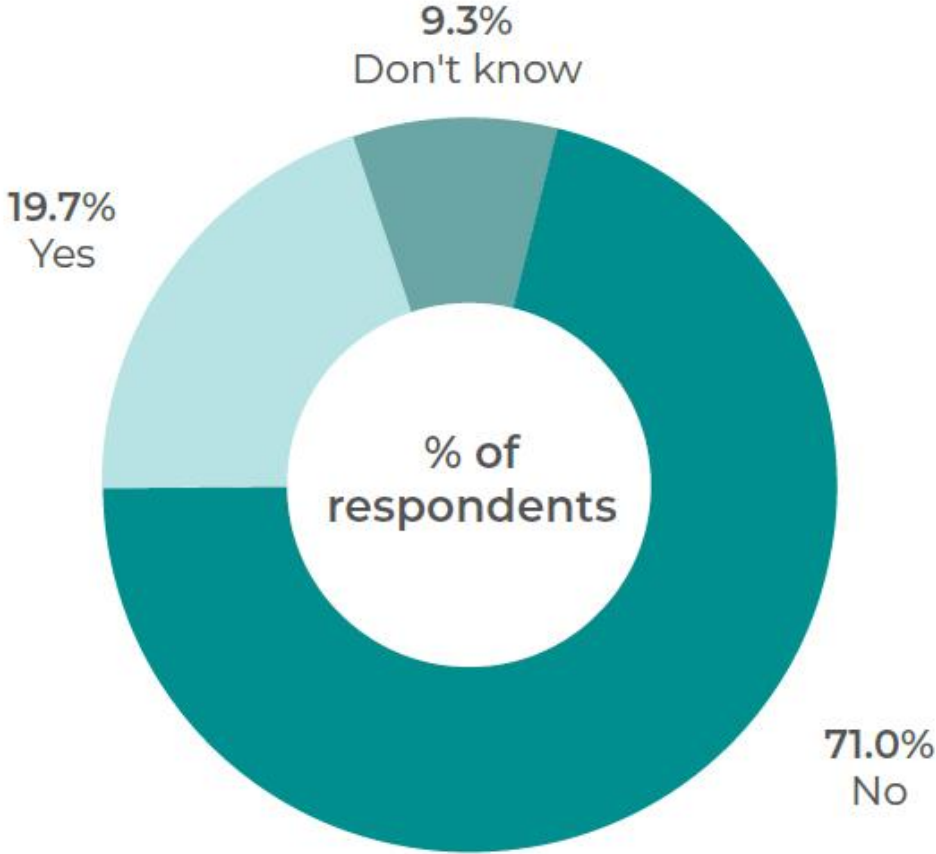
- ▶ when someone tries to change or suppress a trans or non-binary person's self-defined gender identity
- ▶ falsely assume that being trans or non-binary is an illness (pathological), wrong or undesirable
- ▶ can occur in many settings, and be performed by different individuals or groups

# Counting Ourselves data

- **Almost 1 in 5** participants said a health professional had tried to stop them being trans or non-binary
- Trans and non-binary youth were more likely to report conversion practices than older adults

Age groups	Yes (%)	Don't know (%)	No (%)
Youth (14-24)	22.0	13.3	64.7
Adults (25-54)	18.8	6.6	74.6
Older adults (55+)	15.2	7.6	77.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>71.5</b>

Has any professional (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or counsellor) ever tried to make you identify only with your sex assigned at birth (in other words, tried to stop you being trans or non-binary)?



*Out of 610 participants who had ever spoken to a health professional about their gender*

# Conversion practices linked to worse mental health

Trans and non-binary people who had experienced GI conversion practices had:

- ▶ higher reported psychological distress, which includes depression and anxiety
- ▶ more than two times the odds of non-suicidal self-injury and of suicidal ideation and
- ▶ almost four times the odds of suicide attempts.

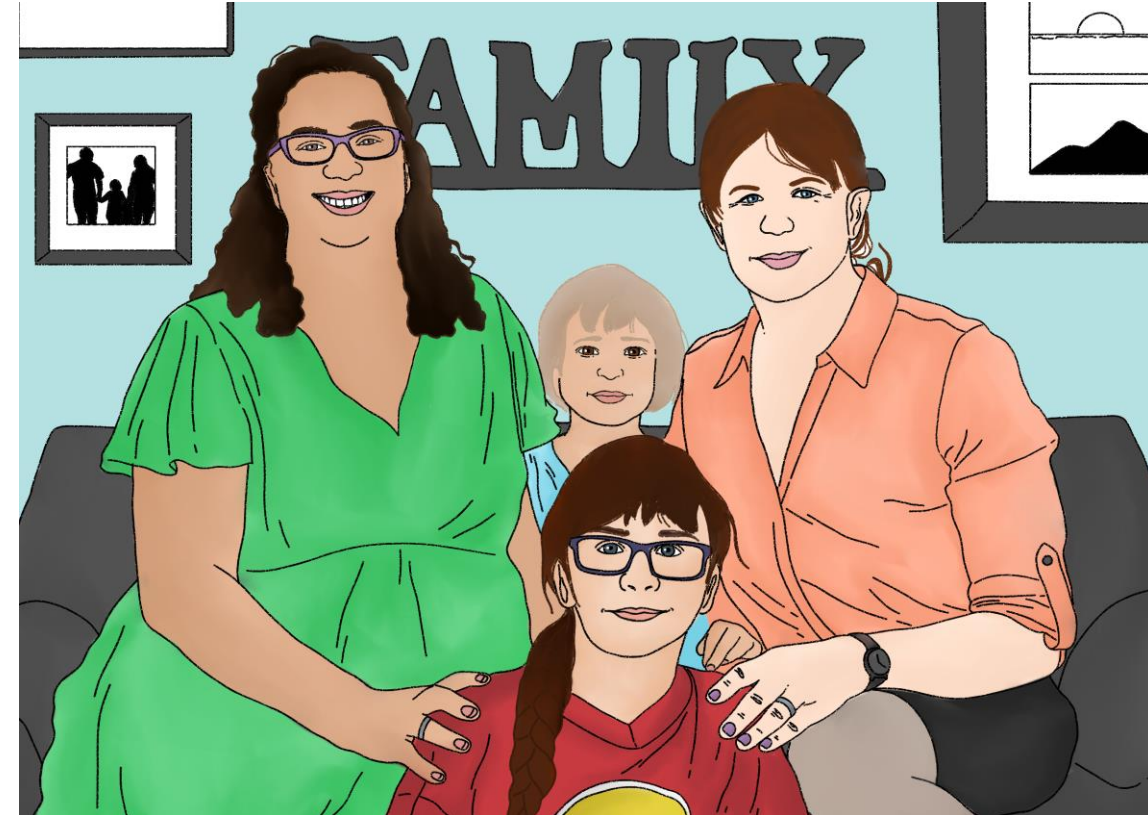


**Reference:** Veale, J.F., Tan, K.K.H. & Byrne, J.L (2021) Gender identity change efforts faced by trans and non-binary people in New Zealand: Associations with demographics, family rejection, internalized transphobia, and mental health, *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. Advanced online publication. DOI: 10.1037/sgd0000537  
<https://countingourselves.nz/index.php/journal-articles/>

# The difference family support makes

Most Counting Ourselves participants (81%) said at least one of their family members knew that they were trans or non-binary. Among this group,

- ▶ more than half (57%) reported that most or all of their family were supportive of their gender.
- ▶ youth (those aged 14-24) were most likely to report positive support from family.
- ▶ participants who had family support were much less likely to have attempted suicide in the previous 12 months
  - ▶ 9% of those who had support from at least half of their family compared to
  - ▶ 17% of those who said most of their family were unsupportive or very unsupportive.



*To prevent the demand for conversion practices:*

- *families and whānau require support and education about gender diversity*
- *so that they are equipped and confident to support trans and non-binary family members.*

# A Call to Action

*Counting Ourselves* findings show:

- ▶ conversion practices could harm trans and non-binary people's mental health
- ▶ those who had experienced family rejection were more likely to have been exposed to GI conversion practices
- ▶ those whose religion was not Christian had greater exposure to GI conversion practices than Christians or those with no religion
- ▶ participants also reported rejection from spiritual / religious communities in response to other *Counting Ourselves* questions



Action is needed to support those harmed by GI conversion practices and stop such practices wherever they occur, including within health, religious, family and community settings.



# CREDITS / THANK YOU

## Project team

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## Social / media team

- ▶ Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho
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## Promoting organisations

- ▶ Human Rights Commission
- ▶ Mental Health Foundation

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**Website:** <https://countingourselves.nz/>

+ *all the peer reviewers*



[www.countingourselves.nz/index.php/fact-sheets](http://www.countingourselves.nz/index.php/fact-sheets)

[www.tengakaukahukura.nz/banning-conversion-practices](http://www.tengakaukahukura.nz/banning-conversion-practices)