

## Definitions/Organizations

Love in Action (LIA): “a nondenominational fundamentalist Christian organization...[who promises] to cure LGBT congregants of their ‘sexual addictions’” through ex-gay therapy (Conley 2016).

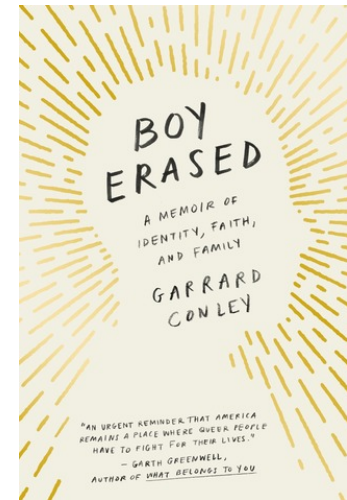
Ex-Gay Therapy: the belief that through prayer, retraining the brain, and identifying False Images that one can be turned straight

False Images: “any belongings, appearances, clothing, actions, or humor that might connect you to an inappropriate past are excluded from of the program...behavior may include hyper-masculinity, seductive clothing, mannish/boyish attire (on women), excessive jewelry (on men), and “campy” or gay/lesbian behavior and talk” (Conard, p. 15, 2016).

## Citation



Conley, G. (2016). *Boy Erased*  
*A Memoir*. NY, NY:  
Riverhead Books.



Boy Erased  
Garrard Conley

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## **Summary**

The memoir tells the heartbreaking, powerful story of Garrard Conley during his time at Love in Action (LIA). He shares his journey as a participant in “ex-gay” therapy and recalls stories and incidents that he remembers with the help of his mother and LIA counselors. Conley shares how his experience has affected his life currently and reflects on his relationships past and present.



## **Themes that Emerge in**

### **Finding Self-Acceptance**

Throughout the memoir Conley displays his discomfort between the shifting of two completely different lives. He consistently writes “in my secret life” (Conley, p. 242, 2016) designating that his life as a gay man and his time at LIA was not to be shared with anyone outside of the walls of LIA. However, over time Conley was able to recognize that he could not be converted into a straight man. Additionally, he eventually had the ability to accept his sexual orientation and bring his worlds together to share his story.

## **Cultural Humility:**

### **Recognizing and Challenging**

#### **Power**

#### **Imbalances/Institutional**

#### **Accountability**

As a family in rural Arkansas, the Conleys valued religion and males being in charge of the family. When Conley was outed in 2004, his father insisted he be sent to Love in Action to be cured. The power imbalance lies in the fact that he and his mother did not have a say in what occurred in his life. However, there was no way of standing up for Conley due to the idea that his father ran the house. In addition, Love in Action is showing a lack of institutional accountability.

This can be seen by the fact that the organization still continues their ‘therapy’ even though most professional organizations, like the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have stated that they are against ex-gay therapy as it is unsafe and does not work.