

When I first read the article on the woman suing based on religious discrimination, I did not expect to agree with her in any way. In my view, Christians are rarely as persecuted as they seem to portray themselves in the media. However, by the end of the article, I began to see how the way that the school reacted could be seen as overly harsh. The article did not make it clear whether or not she was informed of the consequences that her actions could have. I think that expelling someone without warning may have been a bit of an overreaction in this case. Still, I disagree with her viewpoint on same-sex relationships and counseling.

Our discussion in class strayed from the general question of was the school right or wrong in this instance, but to whether or not it is ever acceptable to discriminate on religious grounds. The woman in the article refused to place herself in a position where she would have to "affirm" someone's homosexuality. How did she plan to become a good counselor with this mind set? Oftentimes there are large breakthroughs in counseling where long buried secrets and information come to light. How would she have dealt with an unexpected coming out during a session? I agreed with a majority of the students in that she should be able to separate herself from her work and do what is best for her clients. Devout Christian doctors are not allowed to turn away gay patients in their hospitals, why should this woman be allowed to turn away gay patients at her school? A certain level of professionalism is to be expected from everyone. Some students brought up the fact that psychologists often refer patients to others with certain specialties or because of discussions about end-of-life options. However, gay

people are not a "specialty." Certainly a therapist may be able to concentrate on coming out issues or something, but as a general rule any counselor should be able to deal with those issues should they arise with their patients. That is just part of being a well-trained master of your field.

The most flawed argument that was made involved comparing therapists to judges. Someone intimated that her referral of a gay patient was akin to a judge recusing himself from a case. This comparison does not even make sense. Judges are required to remain impartial, regardless of their personal feelings. It is the highest aspiration of the law and one that judges strive for every time they take the bench. If a judge could recuse himself from any case he found morally objectionable then there would be no murder trials. Judges cannot use their personal beliefs as reasons to pass on a case. They have to do their best regardless of what they believe.

While I can agree that the punishment might seem harsh for this woman, it is also an indication of how wrong she was for the counseling profession. If she had expected all of her clients to fit into her box of things that are right and acceptable then a profession as unexpected and sensitive as counseling was not for her. All people should be able to perform their jobs without passing judgment on others. She would not have been able to do that and no argument can convince me otherwise. Religious beliefs cannot excuse you from common decency and they cannot be an excuse that you use to justify not doing your job.

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