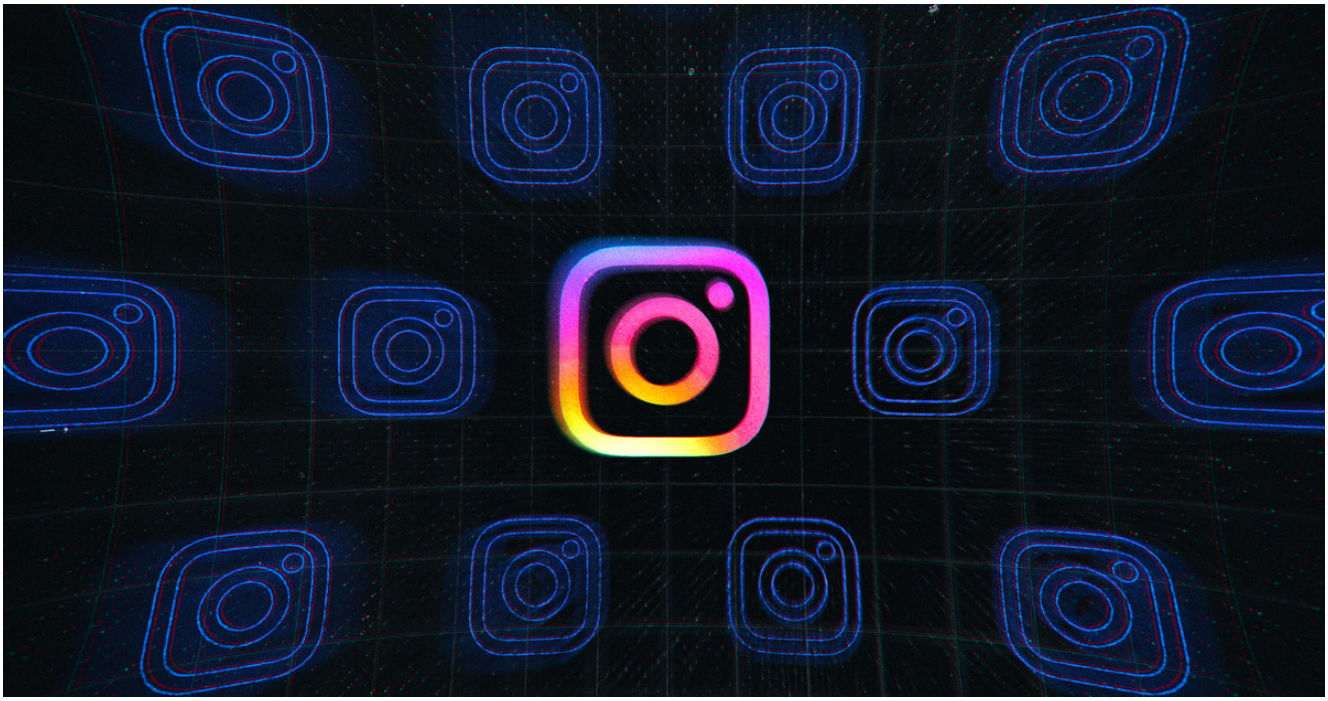
Facebook and Instagram ban all posts promoting conversion therapy



Instagram on Thursday announced a new ban on all forms of content, including posts and videos, promoting the widely discredited practice known as conversion therapy, which attempts to forcefully change an individual's sexual orientation. The news was first reported earlier today by CNN.

A spokesperson for parent company Facebook tells *The V*erge this recent change in policy is an expansion of an earlier rule specifically banning ads promoting the practice put in place earlier this year, and that the policy now includes a ban on any content that directly promotes the practice, too. The spokesperson confirmed the ban applies both to Instagram and the company's main social network, which share hate speech policies.

Facebook and Instagram are banning conversion therapy content under hate speech guidelines
"We don't allow attacks against people based on sexual

orientation or gender identity and are updating our policies to ban the promotion of conversion therapy services," Tara Hopkins, Instagram's public policy director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said in a statement given to CNN in response to conversion therapy content promoted by a UK religious group called Core Issues Trust. "We have removed violating content from @coreissuestrusttv. We are always reviewing our policies and will continue to consult with experts and people with personal experiences to inform our approach."

Conversion therapy is banned in one form or another in at least 19 US states, in most cases protecting minors, but it remains legal at the federal level in the US and allowed in large swaths of Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is often peddled by religious organizations as a pseudo-science with no basis in fact and studies show it has direct links to higher rates of depression, drug use, homelessness, and suicide among young adults, many of whom are subjected to it without their consent.

Instagram says the ban applies worldwide as part of an expansion of its global hate speech policies. Only Germany has a law on the books banning the practice for minors, meaning Facebook and Instagram's shared content ban on conversion therapy should help shut down organizations in Africa, Europe, the US, and other regions trying to advertise or promote the practice online.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/10/21320341/facebook-instagram-ban-conversion-therapy-ads-posts-content-hate-speech-policy