

Developmental Psychology of Sexuality



M. Nithya Poornima, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor,
Department of Clinical Psychology,
NIMHANS, Bengaluru, India

Outline

- ❑ Gender, Sex and Sexuality
- ❑ Development of Sexuality
- ❑ Sexuality across the life span
- ❑ Challenges

Sex, Gender and Sexuality

- ❑ **Sex** - Physical or physiological differences between males and females, including primary sex characteristics and secondary characteristics
- ❑ **Gender** - social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female
- ❑ **Gender identity** - Extent to which one identifies being feminine or masculine (Diamond, 2002)

Sex, Gender and Sexuality

- ❑ **Sexuality/ sexual orientation** - emotional and sexual attraction to a particular sex
 - Heterosexuality
 - Homosexuality
 - Bisexuality
 - Asexuality

- ❑ What contributes to our development of gender identity and sexuality?
- ❑ Prenatal hormones?
- ❑ Intrapersonal development?
- ❑ Socialization?
- ❑ Interpersonal experiences?
- ❑ Is this process of development linear and universal?

Development of Sexuality

- ❑ Freud's theory of psychosexual development
 - Oral - 0 to 1
 - Anal- 2nd year of life
 - Phallic - 3 to 6 years
 - Latency- 6 to puberty
 - Genital- Puberty and upwards
- ❑ Interplay between Id, Ego and Superego
 - Acknowledging object relations and relational contexts (Fonagy, 2008)



Development of Sexuality

- ❑ Learning theories
- ❑ **Classical conditioning** - Smells, textures, images (Pavlov)
- ❑ **Operant conditioning** - Experiences that are rewarding and punitive (Skinner)
- ❑ **Social learning** - Observation, identification and imitation (Bandura)



Development of Sexuality



- ❑ Social Exchange Theory
- ❑ Behaviour patterns learned based on rewards and costs experienced during a relationship between two people through negotiation
- ❑ Stability and change based on choices between alternative options. (Cook and Rice, 2004)

Development of sexuality

Cognitive Theories

- Gender schema theory- all of us possess a cognitive structure comprising the set of attributes (behaviors, personality, appearance) that we associate with males and females. (Bem, 1981) (feminine, masculine, androgynous, undifferentiated)



Across the life-span

- ❑ One month old Isha has received many gifts already. The dresses, soft toys, blankets, rattles etc. that have been brought for her have often been pink.
- ❑ Four year old Jaden used to like playing pretend with the kitchen utensils till a few months ago now he prefers to play with trucks, cars and building sets

Across the life span

- ❑ Five year old Raj wants to have long hair and not go for a haircut. His family convinces him that boys don't have long hair and that he must cut his hair. Raj consents but silently wonders that his playmate Gurdeep is called a boy but has long hair.

Across the life span

- ❑ Five year old Harry had preferred dolls and kitchen sets to other toys for a while now. In the last year he had started drawing himself as a girl wearing a dress and high-heeled shoes. He argued with classmates that he was a girl. Though his parents initially thought he might grow out of his preferences, they are currently concerned.

Across the life span

- ❑ Eight year olds Ronnie and Rebecca had enjoyed playing hide-and-seek together for a few years. In the last year however their frequency of playing together has reduced, Ronnie usually plays football with a group of boys and Rebecca usually plays board games or 'party' with a few girls.

Across the life span

- ❑ Teachers of a primary school are concerned that 9 and 10 year old children are talking secretly about private parts and trying to show each other their private parts.
- ❑ Their counterparts in middle school are concerned that their students are already talking about girlfriends and boyfriends.

Across the life span

- ❑ Haleema is 14 years old and has been having difficulty with her parents over the last couple of years. Want to meet boys, have a boy friend like many of her friends do with the consent and knowledge of her parents

Across the life span

- ❑ Roshan is 16 years old, of Indian origin, moved to an African country two years back, had a girlfriend whom he trusted very much, felt very betrayed when she spoke ill of him with other friends and finally broke up with him

Sexuality in Adolescence

- ❑ Puberty and Pushing away from parents, pairing with peers
- ❑ “ Attracted to others...intense, wonderful and frightening all at once”
- ❑ Puberty and brain changes of adolescence do not always happen simultaneously
- ❑ Time between onset of adolescence and taking on of adult responsibilities has been changing

(Siegel, 2013)

Sexuality in adulthood

- ❑ Sexual explorations
- ❑ Committed relationships
- ❑ Sexuality over various life-stages
- ❑ Sexuality in seniors



Jung's archetypes



- ❑ Masculine energies in the female - Animus
- ❑ Feminine energies in the male - Anima
- ❑ Everyone has a blend of feminine and masculine energies in them

Dilemmas over time



Sexual Violence

Any sexual behavior that happens without a person's consent

Rape

Marital Rape

Statutory Rape

Child Sexual Abuse

Incest

Unwanted Touching

Sexual Harassment
and/or threats

Forced Oral Sex



Sexuality in the digital era

- ❑ Earlier exposure
- ❑ Easier and unsupervised access
- ❑ Online bullying and online sexual predators
- ❑ Online pornography
- ❑ Emotional distancing and infidelity



We don't need to share the same opinions as others, but we need to be respectful.

Taylor Swift

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