Sexual Orientation & Development Across The Life Span

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• **Birth Assigned Gender/Sex:** The label male or female assigned to a person at birth given by the birthing doctor after visual inspection.

• **Bisexual (bi):** A person who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and/or relationally attracted to people of more than one gender, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. A bisexual person is not necessarily attracted equally to both genders, and many tend to prefer one or the other.

• **Closeted:** Being “in the closet” means keeping your sexual orientation a secret. Many GLBT people remain in the closet because of fear of rejection, harassment, and anti-gay violence.

• **Coming Out:** The developmental process in which a person acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex identity. Coming out is a lifelong process, starting with coming out to oneself and then to others.

• **Gay/Lesbian:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. “Gay” is usually used to describe males but may be used to describe females as well. “Lesbian” refers to females.

• **Gender:** A socially constructed collect of traits, behaviors, and meanings that have been traditionally attributed to biological differences.

• **Gender Expression:** Outward behaviors and appearances (e.g. hair, clothing, voice, body language) by which people manifest their gender identity or gender choices.
Definitions-part 2

- **Gender Identity**: The gender that a person sees themselves as. This can include identifying as a combination of genders or refusing to label oneself with a gender.

- **Gender-neutral/ Inclusive Language**: Nondiscriminatory language usage that can apply equal to people of any gender identity. “Spouse” and “partner” are gender-neutral alternatives to the gender-specific words “husband,” “wife,” “boyfriend” and “girlfriend.” The use of the gender-neutral pronouns “ze” (instead of she/he) and “hir” (instead of his/her) are preferred by some as a way to inclusive of all genders in language use.

- **Gender Queer, Gender Benders, Gender Variant, Gender Outlaws, Gender Non-Conformist**, etc.: A person who redefines or plays with gender, or who refuses gender altogether. A label for people who bend/break the rules of gender and blur the boundaries.

- **Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS)/Gender Confirmation Surgery/Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**: Surgery to make a person’s outward physical appearance conform more closely with their gender identity. Not all transsexuals feel the need to have surgery; however, the surgery is required in all states in order to change the sex on one’s birth certificate, driver’s license or passport, etc.

- **Hormone Replacement Therapy**: Taking hormones to enable one’s outward appearance to conform more closely to one’s inner gender identity.

- **Intersex**: A naturally occurring condition that affects the reproductive and sexual system. Intersex people are born with sex chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female.
• **Queer**: Originally a pejorative term for gay people, many LGBTQ people have reclaimed this term as an inclusive and positive way to identify all non-heterosexual and/or non-gender-conforming people both a political statement and a reflection of their approach to sexuality and gender.

• **Sex**: Refers to a person based on their anatomy (external genitalia, chromosomes, and internal reproductive system). Sex terms are male, female, transsexual, and intersex.

• **Sexual Behavior**: What a person does in terms of erotic or sexual acts, such as: masturbate, kiss, make out, be sexually inexperienced or same-sex experienced or multiple-sex experienced or other-sex experienced, be monogamous or non-monogamous, be abstinent or sexually active with men, women, etc.

• **Sexuality**: The complex range of components which make us sexual beings; includes emotional, physical, and sexual aspects, as well as self-identification (including sexual orientation and gender), behavioral preferences and practices, fantasies, and feelings of affection and emotional affinity.

• **Sexual Orientation**: An enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, affectional, and relational attraction to another person. Can involve fantasy, behavior, and self-identification; a person’s general makeup or alignment in terms of partner attraction. Sexual orientation is fluid and may range from or encompass identifications including, but not limited to same-sex orientations, male-female orientations, or a bisexual orientations.

• **Sexual Preference**: What a person likes or prefers to do sexually; a conscious recognition or choice not to be confused with the sexual orientation one identifies with.

• **Transgender**: used as an umbrella term and refers most broadly to those who transgress societal gender norms. Generally, people who identify as transgender exhibit some behavior or traits that fall outside of traditional gender expectations.

• **Transsexual**: A person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth. Some, but not all, transsexuals wish to change their bodies to be congruent with their gender identity through sex reassignment surgery. Many transsexual people refer to themselves as transgender.
Sexual Identity

- Defines who we are sexually

- Central aspect of our sexual identity is our sexual orientation

- Sexual Orientation – a person’s sexual interest toward, and sexual activity with, members of same, opposite, both, none.
Heterosexual Identity Development

- Normally starts in adolescents and is defined at the end of young adulthood

- Generally receive considerable acceptance and support from friends and family
LGBTQQIA

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer
- Questioning
- Intersex
- Ally
Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages

- Trust versus Mistrust (Birth to 12 months)
- Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (12 m. to 3 yrs)
- Initiative versus Guilt (3 to 6)
- Industry versus Inferiority (6 to 12)
- Ego Identity versus Ego Diffusion (12 to 18)
- Intimacy versus Isolation (18 to 40)
- Generativity versus Self-Absorption (40 to 65)
- Integrity versus Despair (65 to 65+)
Same Sex Experiences

- **Men 20-30**
  - 2.4% reported same-sex sexual contact in previous 12 months
  - 4.5% reported same-sex contact in their lifetime

- **Women 20-30**
  - 7.7% reported same-sex sexual contact in previous 12 months
Development issues

- Development can occur later for the LGBTQIA community because:
  - Lack of support from friends and family
  - Lack of healthy role models
  - Unable to explore sexual identity in adolescents without being corrected or shamed
  - When they “come out”
Gay & Lesbian Development

- Awareness
  - feeling different
- Exploration
  - Same sex feelings
  - Seeks knowledge
- Deepening
  - Clarity
  - Commitment
- Internalization
  - Acceptance
Bisexual Development

- Confusion
  - Attraction to both sexes
- Discover bisexuality
  - Finding a label
- Acceptance
  - Identify as bisexual
- Continued uncertainty
  - Gay & lesbian community pressure
  - Society pressure to live as a heterosexual
Gender Queer Development

- Gender conflict
- Awareness and distinguishing differences
- Gender exploration
- Gender internalization
- Gender affirmation and pride
Special Issues Cont.

• **Suicide**
  - LGBTQ are over five times more likely to have suicide ideations and over six times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexuals
  - LGBTQ are four times more likely to exhibit the symptoms of major depression than heterosexuals

• **Substance Abuse**
  - LGBTQ use illicit substances more frequently than heterosexuals and use more types of drugs than heterosexuals
Tasks of Early Adulthood

- Selecting a mate
- Learning to live with a marriage partner
- Starting a family
- Rearing children
- Managing a home
- Getting started in an occupation
- Taking on civic responsibility
- Finding a congenial social group
Tasks of Middle Adulthood

- Achieving adult civic and social responsibilities
- Establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living
- Developing adult leisure-time activities
- Assisting teenage children to become responsible and happy adults
- Relating to one’s spouse as a person
- Accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle ages
- Adjusting to aging parents
Havighurst’s Developmental Tasks-part 3

- Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
- Adjusting to retirement and reduced income
- Adjusting to death of spouse
- Establishing an explicit affiliation with one’s age group
- Meeting social and civic obligations
- Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements
Healthy Identity Importance

- Achieve developmentally
- Non-shaming
- Positive Self Image
- Positive Self Esteem
- Reduce Risk for Mental Health Issues
- Social Identification
Special Issues

- **Homelessness**
  - 20 - 40% of homeless youth are LGBT
  - 58.7% of homeless LGBT youth have been sexually victimized while 33.4% of heterosexual youth have been sexually victimize

- **Violence**
  - Hate Crimes
  - Abuse
  - Partner Violence
Special Issues Cont.

- Lack of positive role models
- Anti – LGBT laws
- Lack of resources
  - Professional
  - Facilities
- Lack of sensitivity and understanding
- Lack of support
- Lack of sex education
Same Sex Couples

- “Closeted vs. Out”
- Stereotypes
  - Male Fantasies
  - Gender Roles
- Lack of familial model
- Rights
- Conception and Reproduction
- Social Norms
- Partner Violence
Counselor Responsibilities

- Ethics
- Competencies
- New Research
- Create a Safe Space
- Pay attention to language
- Explore misconceptions
ALGBTIC Competencies

- understand that biological, familial, and psychosocial factors influence the course of development of GLB orientations and transgendered identities.
- identify the heterosexist assumptions inherent in current lifespan development theories and account for this bias in assessment procedures and counseling practices.
- consider that, due to the coming out process, LGBT individuals often may experience a lag between their chronological ages and the developmental stages delineated by current theories.
- recognize that identity formation and stigma management are ongoing developmental tasks that span the lives of LGBT persons.

http://www.algbtic.org/competencies.html
know that the normative developmental tasks of LGBT adolescents frequently may be complicated or compromised by identity confusion; anxiety and depression; suicidal ideation and behavior; academic failure; substance abuse; physical, sexual, and verbal abuse; homelessness; prostitution; and STD/HIV infection.

understand that the typical developmental tasks of LGBT seniors often are complicated or compromised by social isolation and invisibility.

affirm that sexual minority persons have the potential to integrate their GLB orientations and transgendered identities into fully functioning and emotionally healthy lives.
Online Resources

- ALGBTIC  [www.albtic.org](http://www.albtic.org)
- Equaity Texas  [www.equalitytexas.org](http://www.equalitytexas.org)
- Out Youth  [www.outyouth.org](http://www.outyouth.org)
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health  [www.WPATH.org](http://www.WPATH.org)
-  [www.transgender.org](http://www.transgender.org)
- Bisexual Resource Center  [www.biresource.net](http://www.biresource.net)
Online Resources Cont.

- OutProud [www.outproud.org](http://www.outproud.org)
- National Gay & Lesbian Task force [www.taskforce.org](http://www.taskforce.org)
- Lambda Legal [www.lambdalegal.com](http://www.lambdalegal.com)
- Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network [ww.GLSEN.org](http://ww.GLSEN.org)
- GLAD [www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)
- Human Rights Campaign [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)
Recommended Reading

- Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling
- Journal of Sexuality & Culture
- Journal of Feminism & Psychology