An Introduction to Sexual Orientation and Identity
Sex
Gender
Sexuality
WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE SEX?
What is Sexuality?
Human Sexuality: how people experience the erotic and express themselves as sexual beings.
Sexuality exists in both a biological and social context.
**Biological Context**

- how people (and other organisms) use their reproductive organs in order to reproduce.
- *Sexual reproduction* is the creation of a new organism by combining the genetic material of two organisms.
Social Context - Humans have sex to bond socially- to create alliances, to cement relationships, to deal with tension and difficult emotions, to express control/power, to have fun, to make us feel good about ourselves....
culture regulates *sexual behavior* in all human societies (it dictates who can have sex with whom, how they can have sex, where they can have sex, how often they can have sex…)

culture dictates, to some extent not currently agreed upon, our *sexual desire* (who we want to have sex with, when, how…).

sex is also *gendered*. The ways in which men, women, or persons of other genders are expected to experience their sexuality is socially defined and learned.
Sexuality involves

- Emotional, physiological and social attraction
- Desire, behavior, and identity
- Sexual scripts
- Sexual socialization
- Sexual orientation
Sexual Scripts: sets of ideas and practices that answer the basic questions about sexuality within a culture.

- With whom do we have sex?
- What do we do during sex?
- How often?
- Why?
These scripts form the basic social blueprint for our sexual behavior and identities.

Over the course of our childhood and adolescence, even through adulthood, our understanding of our culture’s sexual scripts begins to cohere into preferences.

- this is sexual socialization.
Sexual identity refers to how one thinks of oneself in terms of whom one is sexually and romantically attracted to.

- It is not entirely the same as orientation
  - Not all people who desire or are attracted to people of the same sex identify as gay for example.
Sexual orientation refers to whom your sexuality is directed; it describes a pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to men, women, males, females, both sexes/genders, neither sex/gender, or another gender such as transpersons.
What are some sexual orientations?
- Homosexual
- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Asexual
Some other terms you may hear...

- **Pansexual or Omnisexual** refers to the potential for sexual attractions, sexual desire, romantic love, or emotional attraction, towards people of all gender identities and biological sexes.
Fluid Sexuality: a term currently used by some people who choose not to define their orientation. It usually means that the categories of people to whom one is attracted fluctuates over time.
How many people we estimate are homosexual depends on how we define homosexuality.
### How Many Gay People are There?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>Identified themselves as homosexual or bisexual</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>Had sex with person of same sex in past 12 months</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>Had sex with person of same sex at least once since puberty</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>Felt desire for sex with person of same sex</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>Reporting any homosexual activity</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>Total reporting some same-sex desires or experiences</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay or Lesbian</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heterosexuality Quiz
What do you think caused your heterosexuality?

When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?

Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?

Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?

Isn't it possible that all you need is a good same-sex lover?

Heterosexuals have histories of failures in same-sex relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?

If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?
Some Scenarios

Sexual Orientation and Identity in Real Life
#1: "You are working at your job, and your boss says, “My wife and I are having a cocktail party Friday night. Come over, and bring a date.”"
#2: “You’re hanging out with a group of people at a party, and someone wants to start a conversation. The person asks, "Girls, what do you look for in a guy?"
#3: “You’re eating lunch with your friend and some classmates at D-Hall, and one person says, “I can’t wait to get married. That’s every little girl's dream – a fairy tale wedding!”
#4: “You are filling out your HR paperwork for your new job, and you come to the personal information section. There’s a box asking your relationship status, with the choices ‘married,’ ‘single,’ and ‘divorced.’”