

Gender Identity and Gender Dysphoria- SLP

Page 426-430 in Varcarolis & Fosbre (2021)

Gender Identity and Sexual Disorders

- Regardless of gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, physical and mental health, or other demographic factors, we express our sexuality in a variety of ways throughout our lives.
- Sexuality is an individually expressed and highly personal phenomenon.
- There are no normal, universal sexual behaviors.
- Satisfying or normal sexual expression can be described as whatever behaviors give pleasure and satisfaction to those adults involved, without threat or coercion or injury to others.
- The United States is a sexually multicultural society.

1. Sexual Health

Characteristics

1. Knowledge about sexuality and sexual behavior
2. Ability to express one's full sexual potential, excluding all forms of sexual coercion, exploitation, and abuse
3. Ability to choose to be sexually active or not
4. Ability to make autonomous decisions about one's sexual life with a context of personal and social ethics
5. Experience of sexual pleasure as a source of physical, psychological, cognitive, and spiritual well-being
6. Capability to express sexually through communication, touch, emotional expression, and love
7. Right to make free and responsible reproductive choices
8. Ability to access sexual health care for the prevention and treatment of all sexual concerns, problems, and disorders.

2. Gender

- a. Gender Identity – is an individual, personal or private sense of identity as female or male.
 1. Sex refers to the biologic indicators of male and female and develops from an interaction of biology, identity imposed by others, and self-identity.
 2. Gender Assignment- an infant is assigned a sex (boy XY or girl XX) which is identity imposed by others according to the appearance of the external genitals (biology).
 3. Gender identity, the sense of maleness or femaleness, is not inborn but usually is established by the time a child is 3 years of age, the child says, "I am a girl" or "I am a boy" (self-identity). Although we may be predisposed to male or female gender orientation, gender identity is mainly a product of how we are raised.

3. Gender Dysphoria

Gender identity is the sense of knowing whether one is male or female, that is, the awareness of one's masculinity or femininity.

Gender Dysphoria occurs when there is incongruence between biological/assigned gender and one's experienced/expressed gender. This may also be referred to as being transgender.

The DSM-5 stipulates that a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, in addition to incongruence between assigned gender and expressed gender, requires that the client expresses significant distress in school, social, occupational, and performance functions for at least 6 months. It is not sufficient to make a diagnosis solely on parents or other people's discomfort with someone's gender identity.

- Treatment Issues:
 - Some seek therapy to learn how to cope with altered sexual identity.
 - Some desire hormonal therapy and surgical gender reassignment.
 - Extensive psychological testing and counseling
 - Live in the role of the desired gender for 2 years
 - Hormonal therapy

4. Paraphilic Disorders

The term paraphilia is used to identify repetitive or preferred sexual fantasies or behaviors that involve nonhuman objects, suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner, or nonconsenting persons.

According to the DSM -5, a paraphilia is only labeled a paraphilic disorder when specific types of sexual fantasies or behaviors are recurrent over a period of at least 6 months and cause the individual clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Many paraphilic behaviors are illegal sex acts and consequently an individual may come to the attention of legal authorities before being introduced to psychiatric treatment.

Types of Paraphilic Disorders

- **Exhibitionistic disorder** is characterized by recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the exposure of one's genitals to an unsuspecting individual. Masturbation may occur during the exhibitionism.
- **Fetishistic disorder** involves recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the use of either inanimate objects or specific non-genital body parts. A common sexual focus is on objects intimately associated with the human body. The fetish object is usually used during masturbation or incorporated into sexual activity with another person in order to produce sexual excitation.
- **Frotteuristic disorder** is the recurrent and intense sexual arousal involving touching or rubbing against a nonconsenting person. Sexual excitement is derived from the actual touching or rubbing, not from the coercive nature of the act. Almost without exception, the gender of the frotteur is male.
- **Pedophilic disorder** is sexual arousal from prepubescent or early pubescent children equal to or greater than that derived from physically mature persons. DSM-5 criteria specify that the behavior has lasted at least 6 months and is manifested by fantasies or sexual urges on which the individual has acted or which cause significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The age of the molester is at least 16 years, and he or she is at least 5 years older than the child.

- **Sexual masochism** disorder is recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the act of being humiliated, beaten, bound, or otherwise made to suffer. These masochistic activities may be fantasized and may be performed alone or with a partner.
- **Sexual sadism** disorder as recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the physical or psychological suffering of another individual. The sadistic activities may be fantasized or acted on with a consenting or nonconsenting partner. In all instances, sexual excitation occurs in response to the suffering of the victim. Examples of sadistic acts include restraint, beating, burning, rape, cutting, torture, and even killing.
- **Transvestic disorder** involves recurrent and intense sexual arousal from dressing in the clothes of the opposite gender. The individual is commonly a heterosexual man who keeps a collection of women’s clothing that he intermittently uses to dress in when alone.
- **Voyeuristic disorder** is identified by recurrent and intense sexual arousal involving the act of observing an unsuspecting individual who is naked, in the process of disrobing, or engaging in sexual activity. Sexual excitement is achieved through the act of looking, and no contact with the person is attempted. Masturbation usually accompanies the “window peeping” but may occur later as the individual fantasizes about the voyeuristic act.

5. Terminology for Sexual Identity and Sexual Attraction

- **Asexual:** Not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.
- **Bisexual:** Emotional, physical, and/ or sexual attraction to males and females.
- **Cisgender:** When a person’s sex assigned at birth aligns with their current gender identity.
- **Gay:** Male-identified individuals who are attracted to males in a romantic or emotional sense.
- **Lesbian:** female-identified individuals who are attracted to females in a romantic or emotional sense.
- **Nonbinary:** When a person’s gender expression doesn’t fit inside the traditional male or female categories. These labels can include someone who identifies as both male and female, neither male nor female, or some other gender altogether.
- **Pan/ Pansexual:** A person attracted to all genders on the spectrum.
- **Transgender:** Individuals whose gender expression and/ or identity differs from conventional expectations based on the sex they were born into.
- **Transgender Man:** A person whose sex assignment at birth was female but whose gender identity is male. Many transgender men identify simply as men.
- **Transgender Woman:** A person whose sex assignment at birth was male but whose gender identity is female. Many transgender women identify simply as women.