



Continuum of Human Sexuality

Current socialization processes presuppose very specific ideas of normality when it comes to sexual orientation. Specifically, society teaches that two distinctive genders exist (male and female), and one sexual orientation (heterosexual) is acceptable. Narrow views of gender and sexuality serve to promote an oversimplification of remarkably complex constructs. In an attempt to educate professionals and the public, the American Psychological Association (2005) has defined sexual orientation as follows:

Sexual Orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to another person. It is easily distinguished from other components of sexuality including biological sex, gender identity (the psychological sense of being male or female) and the social gender role (adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behavior).

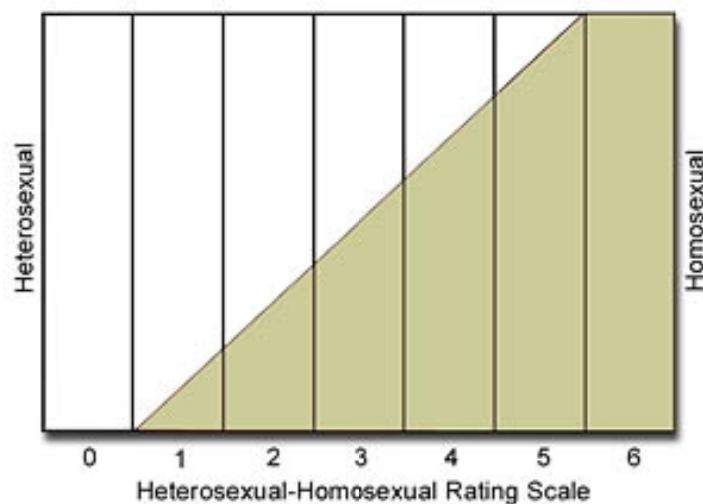
Sexual Orientation exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality and includes various forms of bisexuality. Bisexual persons can experience sexual, emotional and affectional attraction to both their own sex and the opposite sex. Persons with a homosexual orientation are sometimes referred to as gay (both men and women) or as lesbian (women only).

Sexual Orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings and self-concept. Persons may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors.

The Sexuality Continuum: An Introduction

Kinsey

During the 1940's, Alfred Kinsey and associates shocked Americans when he first published his work on male sexuality. His controversial research challenged traditional notions of sexuality as a one-dimensional construct. Through extensive research, Kinsey et. al pioneered the first comprehensive continuum of sexuality.



Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale Criteria

- 0- Exclusively heterosexual with no homosexual
- 1- Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
- 2- Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
- 3- Equally heterosexual and homosexual
- 4- Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
- 5- Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual
- 6- Exclusively homosexual

Klein

Building on the work Kinsey, Dr. Fritz Klein viewed sexual orientation as a "dynamic, multi-variable process." In an attempt to measure his hypotheses, he created the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid. Klein's work was significant because he attended to sexual and non-sexual variables, which fluctuate with time. Three factors address sexual self (attraction, fantasies, behavior), three variables focus on critical aspects of sexual orientation (emotional preference, social preference, heterosexual or homosexual lifestyle), and the final factor assesses self-identification.

Klein Sexual Orientation Grid

VARIABLE	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE	IDEAL
A. Sexual Attraction				
B. Sexual Behavior				
C. Sexual Fantasies				
D. Emotional Preference				
E. Social Preference				
F. Self-Identification				
G. Hetero/Gay lifestyle				

For variables A to E: 1 = Other sex only; 2 = Other sex mostly; 3 = Other sex somewhat more; 4 = Both sexes; 5 = Same sex somewhat more; 6 = Same sex mostly; 7 = Same sex only

For variables F and G: 1 = Heterosexual only; 2 = Heterosexual mostly; 3 = Heterosexual somewhat more; 4 = Hetero/Gay-Lesbian equally; 5 = Gay/Lesbian somewhat more; 6 = Gay/Lesbian mostly; 7 = Gay/Lesbian only