

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN SEXUALITY

Sexuality is an essential and integral part of all stages of human life, yet the topic is still taboo in almost every country. Talking openly about sexuality is crucial for understanding sexual behavior, the growth and development of our bodies, how we experience our gender roles, what constitutes a healthy relationship, how to have children when and if we want to, how to communicate with our intimate partners, and how to prevent health problems and unwanted pregnancies. Opening lessons should provide young people with both the words and the comfort to talk about sexuality so they will participate more actively in class and, more important, so they will begin to develop skills for lifelong communication with parents, partners, health care providers, and, eventually, their own children. Opening lessons should also address values, though discussion of values will be relevant in many other topics. Although values are subjective and cannot be taught, sexuality educators can guide students to examine and clarify their own values and recognize how they powerfully influence behavior.

## Teaching Tips

- Make sure you are comfortable talking about sexuality. This is especially important in your first interactions with participants, as these sessions set the tone for the rest of the course.
- Spend time on introductory activities, warm-ups, and games if your participants are very shy. Consider discussing directly what gets in the way of talking openly and which topics are especially difficult.
- Have participants agree on a small set of classroom rules, such as listening and respect for others. These rules can be referenced if violations occur.
- Discuss course values, such as nondiscrimination and gender equality. These will form a basis upon which to guide students' thinking and behavior during the course.
- Examine and clarify the difference between facts and values. For example, "Masturbation is not harmful" is a fact. "People should not masturbate" is a value.

## Content Considerations

- Emphasize that sexuality encompasses a broad range of human experiences in addition to intercourse; it includes human development, emotions and relationships, sexual health, sexual behavior, and sexual violence.
- Compare the terms "sexuality" and "sex," as they are often confused.
- Talk about the continuum of sexuality throughout life, the range of events that may occur, and the many different expressions of sexuality.
- Discuss the differences and similarities in how people experience their sexuality by gender, sexual orientation, and age.
- Discuss and agree on the terms all participants will use in your course.

## SELECTED LESSON PLAN 1.1: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

### SOURCE

*Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education Curriculum of the State Pedagogical University, Adolescent Reproductive Health Project of the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 2002. Translated by Tumurbat Basaantseren. Adapted with permission.*

### Suitable for ages 15 to 18

### Summary

This lesson is a particularly good opener because it immediately engages participants in discussion and begins to define sexuality, breaking it down into five components: human development, sexual health, relationships and emotions, sexual behavior, and sexual violence. It may also be used for introducing the concept of sexuality to school administrators, parents, and other adults. Participants begin by discussing the difference between sex and sexuality, which allows the facilitator to gauge participants' prior knowledge and correct any misinformation. After the group discussion, participants break into small groups and work together to organize a jumbled list of subtopics into categories. This gives them an opportunity to think about how and why various aspects of sexuality fit together. The facilitator then works with participants to introduce and briefly discuss some of those aspects, including similarities and differences in the way that women and men experience sexuality and common misconceptions about sexuality.

### Teaching Notes

- Familiarize yourself with the model used and think about the reasons why each subtopic belongs where it is placed on the model.
- Develop questions to ask if you need to guide participants to the correct placement.

### Adapting the Lesson

- Look at the examples that are given for how the components are linked through puberty and adapt them to your culture.

## SELECTED LESSON PLAN 1.1: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

### UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY (45 MIN)

Adapted from *Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education Curriculum of the State Pedagogical University, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*, published by the Adolescent Reproductive Health Project of the UNFPA

#### Aim

To broaden participants' understanding of human sexuality by introducing its components and subtopics

#### Objectives

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Give a definition of "human sexuality"
2. Name the five main components of sexuality
3. Name two or three subtopics of each component

#### Key Messages

1. There are many different ways to define the term "sexuality."
2. Sexuality is an integral part of being human. It begins before birth and lasts until the end of life.
3. Sexuality is essential to the continued existence of humanity.
4. Sexuality is not just about the process of reproduction. Sexual behavior is only one part of sexuality.
5. To simplify the term "human sexuality," it can be split into the following five components:
  - Human Development
  - Sexual Health
  - Relationships and Emotions
  - Sexual Behavior
  - Sexual Violence
6. The components of sexuality and their subtopics are interconnected.

#### Materials

- A stack of large cards or paper, suitable for making signs
- Tape
- A copy of the handouts "An Explanation of the Components of Sexuality" and "The Components of Sexuality" for each participant, if possible

#### Preparation

1. On five of the cards print the main components of sexuality, one per card: Human Development, Relationships and Emotions, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Health, and Sexual Violence. Tape the five cards on the walls around the room, leaving plenty of space between each card.

2. Print the following phrases on the remaining cards, one per card:

- Reproductive Physiology and Anatomy
- Puberty
- Reproduction
- Climacteric and Menopause
- Body Image
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity and Roles
- Families
- Friendships
- Loving, Liking, and Caring
- Attraction and Desire
- Flirting
- Dating and Courtship
- Intimacy
- Marriage and Lifetime Commitments
- Raising Children
- Contraception
- Abortion
- Reproductive Tract Infections, STIs and HIV/AIDS
- Genital Care and Hygiene
- Breast Self-Exam
- Testicular Self-Exam
- Prevention of STIs/HIV and Unwanted Pregnancy
- Prenatal Care
- Infertility
- Sexual Dysfunction
- Sexual Abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Manipulation through Sex
- Sexual Harassment
- Gender Discrimination
- Partner or Domestic Violence
- Harmful Practices
- Masturbation
- Kissing
- Touching and Caressing
- Sexual Intercourse
- Abstinence
- Pleasure and Human Sexual Response
- Fantasy

Mix these cards up and divide them into five sets of approximately the same number.

## **Introduction**

Introduce the topic briefly by saying that before learning about sexuality, one needs truly to understand what “sexuality” means, and that you all will spend the next hour talking about and exploring what sexuality is and how it is a part of every human life.

### **Activity 1: The Difference Between Sex and Sexuality**

1. Write on the board “What is sex?” and “What is sexuality?” Ask participants how they would answer these questions. Then ask what the difference is between them, if any. Participants may have different opinions. For example, some of them may think these two things both refer to sexual intercourse, while others may think sexuality is a much broader concept.
2. Using the participants’ opinions, bring out the idea that sexuality is a much broader concept than sexual intercourse.

### **Activity 2: Components of Human Sexuality**

1. Tell participants that you are now going to explore what sexuality consists of in more depth. Point to the five signs that you have posted on the walls and tell them that sexuality can be broken down into five main components or areas: Human Development, Relationships and Emotions, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Health, and Sexual Violence.
2. Divide participants into five roughly even groups, and give each group a set of cards. The group should read each card, discuss it, and decide which of the five components it best fits under. Tell the participants to tape each card under the component they think it belongs to.
3. After the groups have finished, bring them back together. Starting with one of the components, go through each card taped under it one at a time and generate a short discussion. For each card:
  - Ask the group as a whole: “Do you think this card belongs under this component?”
  - If there is any disagreement, ask the group that placed it there: “Why did you decide to put this card here?”
  - Ask others what they think. If they don’t agree, ask: “Why not? Where do you think it belongs?”
  - Ask questions and use the participants’ comments and ideas to guide them to the correct placement.
  - If a card has been misplaced, have a participant put it under the right component. Treat each card the same way regardless of whether it is correctly or incorrectly placed to generate discussion. Use information in the handout “An Explanation of the Components of Sexuality” to supplement the discussion and clarify points. However, do not get into a long discussion about any of the cards at this point. If necessary, tell participants that you will look more closely at these components later in the course.
  - If there is a lot of disagreement, you can note that many of the topics overlap and people may have different ideas about where they go, but you are trying to find the place where it fits best.
4. Ask participants the following questions:
  - “What surprised you about this activity?”
  - “What thoughts and feelings did you have while doing this activity?”
  - “Looking at these components, what part does sexual intercourse play in sexuality?” (Answer: A small part, it is only one subtopic of one of the five components.)
  - “What do you notice about sexuality?” (Answer: It is a very broad topic, has a lot of subtopics, is complex, etc.)

- “Which component do you already know the most about? Why do you think that is the case?”
  - “Which one raises the most questions for you? Why do you think that is the case?”
5. Explain to participants that each of these components has overlapping parts. Note that Puberty is under the component Human Development since it is a process that human beings go through as they grow up. Ask participants if they can name one or more parts of the other components that a teenager going through puberty might experience. (For example, under Relationships, participants might identify Love, Dating, and Intimate Friendships; under Sexual Behavior, Kissing, Touching, Holding Hands, and Masturbation; under Sexual Health, Sexual Hygiene, Breast and Testicular Self-Exam, Contraception Use, and Abortion; under Sexual Violence, Sexual Abuse, Rape, and Gender Discrimination.)

### **Conclusion**

1. Conclude the session by asking participants the following questions:
  - “Based on what you learned, what are some similarities in the ways in which men and women experience their sexuality?”
  - “What differences are there in the ways men and women experience their sexuality?”
  - “What cultural differences (differences based on race, religion, or national origin) have you observed in the way people express their sexuality?” (Examples might include differences in dressing, flirting, gender-restricted behavior, toilet training of children, dealing with menstruation or first ejaculations, courtship and marriage, etc.)
2. Ask participants to take turns finishing one of the following sentence stems:
  - This session taught me that . . .
  - One thing I never thought of in relation to sexuality is . . .
3. If you have copies of the two handouts for participants, give them out now.

## HANDOUT: AN EXPLANATION OF THE COMPONENTS OF SEXUALITY

### **Human Development**

Human development involves the interrelationship between physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth. This component includes:

Reproductive Physiology and Anatomy: The parts of the body that form the reproductive and sexual systems and their functions. Although the whole body is involved in human sexuality, these systems are central to sexuality and to understanding puberty, menstruation, erections, wet dreams, reproduction, and sexual pleasure.

Growth and Development: Includes the following key processes related to sexuality:

- *Puberty*: The physical and emotional changes that occur when the body matures during adolescence, including the development of secondary sex characteristics (such as broad hips and facial hair) and the maturing of the reproductive system. Puberty results in the ability to reproduce.
- *Reproduction*: The process of conception, pregnancy, and birth—the beginning of human development.
- *Climacteric and Menopause*: The physiological and psychological changes in our sexual and reproductive functioning that occur in midlife in both women and men, including the period leading up to menopause for women. Menopause occurs when menstruation stops.

Body Image: Attitudes and feelings about one's own body, appearance, and attractiveness that affect one's mental well-being, comfort with, and expression of one's sexuality.

Sexual Orientation: The direction of one's romantic and sexual attraction—to either the opposite, the same, or both sexes. Includes heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual orientations.

Gender Identity and Roles: Gender identity is one's internal sense of being either male or female, usually but not always the same as one's biological sex. Gender roles are the set of socially prescribed behaviors and characteristics expected of females and males.

### **Relationships and Emotions**

All people need to have relationships with others in which they experience emotional closeness. This component includes:

Families: The primary social unit to which most people belong and which includes people who are related by blood, marriage, or affection.

Friendships: Relationships between people based on liking, caring, and sharing; these relationships can differ in emotional depth, but usually do not include a sexual relationship.

Loving, Liking, and Caring: Feelings that are the basis of emotional bonds and positive connections and relationships between people.

Attraction and Desire: Emotional and physical feelings that draw someone to another person; these feelings may include emotional and sexual longing and passion.

Flirting: Playful romantic or sexual interactions that communicate attraction. Flirting can cross the line and become harassment if the recipient perceives it to be unwelcome or offensive.

Dating and Courtship: Meeting, spending time together, and going out as a part of the process of getting to know and love someone, sometimes with the purpose of deciding whether or not to marry.

Intimacy: Emotional closeness to others characterized by feelings of connectedness, openness, sharing, and reciprocity.

Marriage and Lifetime Commitments: The union, usually legal, of two people who make a

commitment to love and care for each other and share their lives and family responsibilities over the long term.

Raising Children: Bringing up, providing for, and nurturing children, usually as a part of a family.

### **Sexual Behavior**

Sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life from birth to death, which individuals express through a variety of behaviors. This component includes:

Masturbation: Giving oneself sexual pleasure, usually by touching or rubbing one's own genitals.

Shared Sexual Behavior: Includes, but is not limited to:

- *Kissing*: Touching and caressing someone with one's lips to express affection and love
- *Caressing and Touching*: Stroking gently to express affection and love; being in physical contact with someone
- *Sexual Intercourse*: Vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse

Abstinence: Not having sexual intercourse. Abstinence may include other types of sexual touching.

Pleasure and Human Sexual Response: The enjoyable response of the body to sexual touching, which may or may not include orgasm, a highly pleasurable release of built-up sexual tension.

Fantasy: Sexual or erotic thoughts, dreams, and imaginings that are sexually arousing but are not necessarily acted on or even desired in reality.

### **Sexual Health**

Sexual health includes having the knowledge and attitudes and taking the actions necessary to actively maintain the health of one's reproductive system and to avoid unwanted consequences of sexual behavior. This component includes:

Contraception: The use of various methods to intentionally prevent pregnancy; these methods include devices, agents, drugs, sexual practices, and surgical procedures.

Abortion: Induced termination of pregnancy.

Reproductive Tract Infections, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS: A range of infections that occur in the reproductive tract (such as yeast infections or vaginitis), or that can be acquired through sexual intercourse or intimate sexual contact (such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, and HIV/AIDS). Many can be transmitted in other ways as well, such as during childbirth.

Reproductive Health: Includes:

- *Genital Care and Hygiene*: Caring for and keeping one's genitals clean, healthy and free from injury.
- *Breast Self-Exam*: A simple self-help technique in which women feel their breast tissue in a prescribed manner every month to check for changes or lumps that may indicate a problem.
- *Testicular Self-Exam*: A simple self-help technique in which men feel their testicles in a prescribed manner every month to check for changes or lumps that may indicate a problem.
- *Prevention of HIV/STIs and Unwanted Pregnancy*: Decisions and actions taken to reduce the risk of infection with an STI or HIV and the risk of an unwanted pregnancy; includes abstinence, seeking advice and preventive care, open and honest communication between sexual partners, and the use of condoms and contraception.
- *Prenatal Care*: Regular check-ups with a trained health care provider during pregnancy to monitor the health of the woman and the fetus and to help to identify any problems early.



- *Infertility*: The continuing inability to bear a child.

Sexual Dysfunction: A psychological or physical problem that interferes with a person's ability to express or enjoy his or her sexuality to the fullest degree. Includes lack of desire, inadequate lubrication, and difficulties maintaining erections or achieving orgasm.

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is any violence (that is, abusive or unjust use of power) that has a sexual aspect or element. It includes the use of sexuality to influence, control, or manipulate others. This element includes:

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual contact or interaction between an older or more powerful person and a child or minor; this may or may not involve touch. The abuser is usually someone known to the child.

Incest: A sexual relationship between two people who are too closely related to get married by law or custom.

Rape: Forced or nonconsensual sexual intercourse or other intimate sexual contact. The force may be physical or psychological (that is, through threats or coercion). Sexual intercourse constitutes rape if one of the parties is not capable of giving consent for whatever reason.

Sexual Manipulation: Using sex to indirectly influence, control, coerce, or exploit someone to one's own advantage.

Sexual Harassment: Persistent unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances or conduct of a sexual nature, or demand for sexual activity in exchange for benefits, for example in a school or work setting.

Partner or Domestic Violence: Physical or sexual violence against a partner with whom one is in a romantic and/or marital relationship.

Gender Discrimination: Showing preference or prejudice or denying equal treatment to someone based solely on his or her gender.

Harmful Practices: A range of practices, whether traditional or modern, that decreases a person's sexual well-being or ability to experience his or her sexuality safely and pleasurably.

# THE COMPONENTS OF SEXUALITY

All aspects of sexuality are influenced by a person's self-esteem and personal sexual beliefs, attitudes, values, and knowledge. They are also influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural, and moral concerns.

## SEXUAL BEHAVIOR:

Sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life from birth to death, which individuals express through a variety of behaviors.

### SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- Masturbation**
- Shared Sexual Behavior:**
  - Kissing
  - Caressing & Touching
  - Sexual Intercourse
- Abstinence**
- Pleasure & Human Sexual Response**
- Fantasy**

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Reproductive Physiology & Anatomy**
- Growth & Development:**
  - Puberty
  - Reproduction
  - Climacteric & Menopause
- Body Image**
- Sexual Orientation**
- Gender Identity and Roles**

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:

Human development involves the interrelationship between physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.

## RELATIONSHIPS & EMOTIONS:

All people need to have relationships with others in which they experience emotional closeness and have it returned.

### RELATIONSHIPS & EMOTIONS

- Families
- Friendships
- Loving, Liking, & Caring
- Attraction & Desire
- Flirting
- Dating & Courtship
- Intimacy
- Marriage & Lifetime Commitments
- Raising Children

# SEXUALITY

### SEXUAL HEALTH

- Contraception
- Abortion
- Reproductive Tract Infections, STIs & HIV/AIDS
- Reproductive Health:
  - Genital Care & Hygiene
  - Breast Self-Exam
  - Testicular Self-Exam
  - Prevention of STIs/HIV & Unwanted Pregnancy
  - Prenatal Care
  - Infertility
- Sexual Dysfunction**

**SEXUAL HEALTH:** Sexual health includes having the knowledge and attitudes and taking the actions necessary to actively maintain the health of one's reproductive system and to avoid unwanted consequences of sexual behavior.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Sexual Abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Manipulation through Sex
- Sexual Harassment
- Partner/Domestic Violence
- Gender Discrimination
- Harmful Practices

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE:** Sexual violence is any violence (abusive or unjust use of power) that has a sexual aspect or element. It includes the use of sexuality to influence, control, or manipulate others.

## SELECTED LESSON PLAN 1.2: WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

### SOURCE

Carol Hunter-Geboy, "What's Most Important?" Reprinted from *Life Planning Education: A Youth Development Program*, with permission of Advocates for Youth, Washington, DC, ©1995. [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org).

### Suitable for ages 12 to 18

### Summary

This lesson gets participants thinking about what is important to them and why. Participants individually rank a set of values statements in order of importance, then discuss them with the group. By adding the short activity described below, the lesson will encourage participants to link values with behavior, an essential step toward acting in accordance with one's own standards and morals.

### Adapting the Lesson

- Look at the list of values given and decide which ones are appropriate for your participants and situation and if there are any you would like to add.
- If you cannot make copies for all of the participants as suggested, write the values on the board and have participants make their own sheets. Another alternative is to write the values on the board and have participants first carefully decide their order and then write them into their notebooks in that order.

### Additional Activity

Have participants individually list their three most important values, and five behaviors that reflect each of them. Then have participants list behaviors that would contradict each value. Ask some participants to share their responses. Or ask participants to state one of their top values and an example of a behavior, not necessarily personal, that would affirm that value. Stimulate discussion by asking questions, such as:

- "How many of you found that you have at some time done something that went against one of your values?"
- "How do people feel when they act in a way that goes against the values that they hold?"
- "Why do you think people sometimes say they have a value but act differently from that value?"
- "What are some influences on teenagers that could make them act against their values?"
- "How can you deal with those influences?"

## What's Most Important?

**Materials:** Copies of the handout, "What's Most Important to Me," for each participant; scissors; tape and glue (several dispensers); pieces of construction paper or card stock for each participant; a business envelope for each participant; newsprint and markers or board and chalk

**Time:** 40-50 minutes

**Planning Notes:**

- ✓ Before conducting this activity, cut the **individual** handouts into strips and place each set of strips in an envelope, creating a packet for each participant.

**Purpose:** To become aware of values and priorities

- ✓ You may want to add values statements of your own before duplicating the handout.

- ✓ Create a poster of prioritized values for Step 3:

MOST IMPORTANT

SECOND MOST IMPORTANT

THIRD MOST IMPORTANT

**Procedure:**

1. Explain that for this activity teens will choose several intangible items and rate which they value most, which least and which fall between.
2. Go over instructions for the activity:
  - I will give each of you an envelope containing 20 strips of paper. Each strip has the name of something intangible written on it. Arrange these strips so that what is worth the most to you is on top and what is least important is on the bottom. (Display the illustration you have drawn.)
  - Move the strips around until the ranking matches what you really value. Then tape or glue your strips in the correct order to a piece of construction paper.
  - This may be frustrating because you can only have one top priority and sometimes we have conflicting priorities. Do the best you can.
3. Distribute an envelope and a piece of construction paper to each participant and tell them to begin. Circulate and offer help if anyone has trouble understanding what it is you want them to do. Caution teens to work slowly and think carefully about each item.
4. When most teens are finished, call "time," and conclude the activity using the Discussion Points.

**Discussion Points:**

1. What were your top three or four values?
2. Was it easier to choose the things you value the “most” or the “least?” Why?
3. Were there items on the list that you never really thought about before? Which ones?
4. Were you surprised by your completed list of values? Why?
5. How would the way you arranged the values compare to the way your parent(s) would rank them? Why?
6. What would you be willing to do to stand up for your top three values?

# HANDOUT

## What's Most Important To Me?

Making it on my own	Getting an education	Making a lot of money
Getting along with my parent(s)	Having a romantic relationship	Living according to my religious beliefs
Staying out of trouble with the law	Having a friend I can always count on	Having a job I really like
Having sex with someone I love	Being in good physical condition	Doing something that makes a difference in my community
Having time alone with myself	Becoming famous	Avoiding HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases
Being successful in sports	Being in style	Having others look up to me
Having children when I feel ready to raise them	Having fun	