



## Sexuality and Sexual Development

Sex, sexual development, gender identity, and sexual orientation are **important parts of who we are** as humans. They are shaped by **biology, psychology, and environment**. Understanding these concepts helps protect children, foster trust, and create safe spaces where they feel supported — even if adults have different personal, political, or religious beliefs.

### *Key Concepts*

- **Sex:** Biological traits — such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones — usually classified as male or female. Some people are intersex, meaning their biology doesn't fit typical male or female categories (rare).
- **Sexual Development:** The physical and hormonal changes that occur as a person matures. Includes puberty changes like breast growth or facial hair.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of being male, female, both, neither, or another gender. May or may not match the sex assigned at birth.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Who someone is romantically, emotionally, or sexually attracted to (e.g., heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual).

### *Supporting Children*

- Children are still developing their sense of self and may question their identity.
- Providing **love and acceptance** builds trust — and trust is essential for abuse disclosure.
- Adults can **support children's well-being** while also giving guidance in line with their own beliefs.

### *Sexual Behaviors and Human Psychology*

- Sexual behaviors don't always match a person's stated orientation.
- Past experiences, psychological makeup, and personal preferences all shape sexual behaviors.
- Researchers like **Alfred Kinsey** found that sexual behavior is more varied than many expect.

### *The “Peak Sexual Experience” Concepts:*

- **Morin's Formula:** *Desire + Obstacle = Excitement*
- **Gates' Formula:** *Pressure + Resistance = Excitement*
  - Pressure can be physical (touch) or psychological (seduction).
  - Resistance can be physical (barriers) or social (taboos, illegal acts).

### *Why This Matters for Abuse Prevention:*

Offenders may be aroused by the “taboo” or forbidden nature of harming children, which increases their risk of acting out.