

# GLOSSARY:

## SEXUAL IDENTITY

Biological sex refers to physical characteristics such as external genitals, sex chromosomes, sex hormones and internal reproductive systems that inform whether a person is male, female, or intersex.

Intersex a term for people who has physical sex attributes or chromosome patterns that are not easily classified with typical definitions of male or female. Some intersex characteristics are recognized at birth; others do not become apparent until puberty or later. An outdated term for intersex individuals is hermaphrodites. Intersex conditions are also known as differences of sex development (DSD). (1)

Sexuality. The sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors of individuals. Its dimensions include the anatomy, physiology and biochemistry of the sexual response and reproductive systems; gender identity, sexual orientation, roles and personality; as well as thoughts, attachments, physical and emotional expressions, and relationships.

Sexualities. A sociological term for the many ways human beings engage in physically, emotionally and spiritually intimate behaviors and relationships. The term is typically used to suggest a diversity of sexual identities, rather than a single sexual norm.

Sexual Identity. An individual's sense of self as a sexual being, including gender identity, gender role, sexual orientation and sexual self-concept. Sexual identity may also refer to the language and labels people use to define themselves. Sexual self-concept refers to the individual's assessment of his or her sexual identity. Development of sexual identity is a critical part of adolescence.

Sexual Orientation. An individual's enduring romantic, emotional or sexual attractions toward other persons. "Heterosexual," "homosexual" and "bisexual" are examples of specific sexual orientations. Sexual orientation is a complex interaction between sexual attractions, behaviors, and self-identity. Sexual orientation refers to feelings and identity, not necessarily behavior. Individuals do not always express their sexual orientation through their sexual behaviors.

Asexuality. Experiencing little or no romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction or eroticism. Asexuality is different from celibacy, which is a decision not to engage in sexual behaviors with another person.

Bisexuality. An enduring romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction toward people of more than one sex or gender. A bisexual person may be more attracted to one sex than another, equally attracted to all sexes and genders, or may consider sex and gender unimportant. The intensity of a bisexual person's attractions toward one sex or gender or another may vary over time.

Homosexuality. An enduring romantic, emotional or sexual attraction toward people of the same sex or gender. The term "gay" can refer to homosexual women or men, while the term "lesbian" refers only to homosexual women. Homosexual is increasingly seen as a medical/scientific and is used less frequently to refer to individuals.

Heterosexuality. An enduring romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction toward people of another sex. The term "straight" is common term used to refer to heterosexual people.