UNIT 1  SEX AND SEXUALITY

Structure

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Key Elements of Sexuality
   1.2.1 Definition of sexuality
   1.2.2 Stages of Development of Sexuality
   1.2.3 Various sexual behaviours indulged by adolescents

1.3 Sexual Orientation and Identity
   1.3.1 Sexual Orientation
   1.3.2 Sexual Identity

1.4 Role of Teachers and Parents in developing Healthy sexual attitude

1.5 Let us sum up

1.6 Key words

1.7 Answers to check your progress

1.8 References

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of change for an individual. You may have learnt about the physical, cognitive, emotional/psychological changes in adolescents in Block 2 of theory course 1. Another significant change that occurs in this phase relates to reproductive and sexual organs, about which you have learnt in Block 3 of theory course 1. These changes are expressed in the form of certain behaviour in children up to 12 years that include discovering about self and the opposite sex, curiosity about the sex organs, playing “Doctor”. As adolescence sets in, the behaviour and experiences are expressed in the form of dreaming, fantasizing, hugging, dating, kissing, holding hands, touching their private parts.

People of all ages and at all stages of life experience sexual desire. They need information on sexuality to enjoy their lives free of fear, stigma and disease. In India, temple arts and structures represented sex and sexuality in an overt form. However, in our daily lives, sexual expression is governed and controlled by social factors by way of strict moral codes of conduct. There is a culture of silence around these topics. Information about sexuality has to flow through proper channel or else adolescents find other non trustable channels to gather information. This could mislead them. Because of shame and secrecy surround sexuality, people hesitate to seek help and information openly, much to the detriment of their health and well-being. Thus through this unit we will explore the science of sex and sexuality with authentic references so that the information could be passed on to our future generations.

Different individuals may influence and shape people’s sexuality differently. For example, parents may be hesitant to discuss topics related to sexuality with their
children while some teachers may find it comfortable to discuss the same with the adolescents or vice-versa. Since concerns about sexuality arise early in our lives, correct and complete information given in easy to understand and decent language helps to enhance the quality of lives of people, clarifying certain myths and misconceptions and helps to make informed choices. For example, protection from diseases/infection, unwanted pregnancies, sexual abuse and so on.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this units, you will be able to:

- define the terms sex and sexuality;
- explain the components of sexuality;
- identify the factors that shape our sexuality;
- differentiate between sexual orientation and sexual identity;
- state some common expressions of sexuality; and
- recognize your role in inculcating healthy sexual attitudes among adolescents.

1.2 KEY ELEMENTS OF SEXUALITY

Before you learn about the key elements of sexuality in detail, let us do a quick exercise.

**Activity 1**

Take a piece of paper and write all the words that you would associate with the term “sexuality” in your learning journal. You could take 5 minutes to complete this exercise.

1.2.1 Definition of Sexuality

Sexuality covers a wide range of issues, emotions and experiences. While there is no single agreed upon definition, the definition given below would help to understand the concept of sexuality in a comprehensive manner.

*Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors. (WHO draft working definition, 2002)*

It is evident by the definition given above that sexuality covers various components. Sexuality is more than the act of sexual intercourse.

**Concept of sex**

Sex refers to biological difference between females and males present at birth.
These include anatomical differences such as vagina (in females) and penis (in males), genetic differences found in a person’s chromosomal make up or physiological differences such as menstruation in females and sperm production in males. You have already learnt about these concepts in Block 3 units 1, 2 and 3 of Theory course I.

Sex can also be used to describe behaviours/physical acts that may produce sexual pleasure and reproduction. The most common expression of sexual intercourse is the male-female (penile-vaginal intercourse).

You have already learnt about concept of pregnancy in Block 3, unit 3 of Theory course I. sexually transmitted diseases are also caused due to unhealthy sexual counters. More information on STI will be provided to you in Block 3, unit 1 of theory course 2. As it is clear from the definition given above, sex is only a part of the larger term known as sexuality.

1.2.2 Stages of Development of Sexuality

In the following section the stages of development of sexuality will be discussed:

**Sensuality:** This constitutes awareness and feelings about your body and other’s bodies, especially of your sexual partner.

**Intimacy:** This constitutes the ability to be emotionally close with another person and to accept closeness in return. Intimacy includes:

- **Sharing and Caring:** These make the personal relationships rich and worthwhile. Joys and pain are to be shared, which in turn express care.
- **Liking/Loving another person:** Having emotional connection apart from just physical contact shows intimacy.

**Sexual identity:** The three interlinked components of gender identity, gender role and sexual orientation constitute the sexual identity of an individual. It includes:

- **Gender Identity:** It is understanding whether one is male or female.
- **Gender role:** These are socially constituted roles of males and female in the society and are different from sex roles that are biologically determined (For example, females menstruate and males produce sperms). Gender roles expect the females to show “feminine” characteristics/behaviours like being soft, submissive, beautiful, dependant and so on. Gender roles also expect males to show “masculine” characteristics/behaviours like being strong, assertive/aggressive, macho and independent, in control, decision maker and so on. You will learn more about “gender” in unit 2, Block 4 of Theory course I.
- **Sexual orientation:** This determines whether a person’s basic attraction is towards people of same sex (Homo sexuality) or opposite sex (hetero sexuality) or both the sexes (bisexuality). Terms like gays, lesbians etc. are used to identify people’s sexual orientation. You will learn more about it in another section of this unit (Section 1.4).

**Reproduction and sexual health:** This constitutes a person’s ability to procreate and also enjoy healthy sexual life. It includes:
Adolescent Sexuality

- Factual information about reproduction: Knowledge about anatomy and physiology of male and female bodies, process of conception, pregnancy and child birth are important to make informed choices regarding sexual expression and to ensure well being of self and partner.

- Sexual intercourse/sex: A behaviour/act that produces sexual pleasures when penile-vaginal intercourse takes place.

- You will learn more about it in a later section (1.5) of this unit.

- Factual information on contraceptive methods: Comprehensive knowledge about this will promote healthy sexual expression, and prevent infection/diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

1.2.3 Various Sexual Behaviours Indulged by Adolescents

Though sex is understood and expressed in a physical manner, it is more than just a physical activity. Sex involves feelings, thoughts, beliefs and values. These sexual feelings and expressions engage people in different ways. For example, holding hands, fantasizing, gazing affectionately and kissing.

**Kissing** is the pleasurable touching of one’s lips against another’s or other parts of the body. Deep kissing is pressing the mouths together with the lips parted, which allows for one’s tongue to play in the other’s mouth.

**Masturbation** is the manual stimulation of one’s genitals. It may involve rubbing, stroking and caressing one’s own genitals. This can occur individually or with other person(s). It is a normal and natural activity, done by boys and girls, men and women. As long as people take care to not hurt themselves and do not let it interfere with the other things they have to do like games, studies etc., there is no harm in masturbating. There are a number of myths associated with masturbation, although it is one of the safest forms of sex in relation to HIV transmission. It is a personal and pleasurable act. The act is not dirty and it does not matter how often you masturbate.

**Fantasy:** Having day dreams/fantasies about sexual behaviour is normal among adolescents. For some adolescents heroes and heroines from cinema become the role models and they try to emulate them, often leading to disappointment.

**Experiencing pleasure:** When certain parts of the body are touched (like holding hands, hugging, kissing etc.) in loving and caring ways, feeling of pleasure is experienced by adolescents/youth.

**Obscene phone calls:** This is a punishable offence in India and complaint can be lodged with the police. In this the anonymous callers indulge in obscene talks which results in a feeling of helplessness and harassment on part of the receiver.

**Use of SMS through Mobile:** Sending vulgar messages through mobile phone via SMS is also one of the common sexual behaviours indulged by adolescents.

**Eroticism:** Feeling sexual excitement/enjoyment from certain actions/images etc.(For example, pornography)

**Sexual harassment:** It includes a variety of behaviours. For example, making fun/passing remarks about some one’s appearance/body parts; unwanted touching; demands by teacher or other people in authority in exchange for marks, promotion, salary raise; eve teasing and so on. These are behaviours that are manipulative
and people have a right to lodge a complaint against sexual harassment. This is a punishable offence in India.

**Rape:** This is a criminal offence in India and the rapist may be sentenced up to 7 years in jail. The punishment is more severe if the victim is a minor. Rape means coercing/forcing/refusing to accept no in order to have genital contact with the other person. The rapist always uses strength/power/threat with the victim and induces fear, humiliation, guilt and low self-esteem in the victim. Sometimes the scars/psychological damage take many years to heal. People should lodge a complaint in case of rape. You will learn more about it in Block 3, unit 2 of theory paper II.

In conclusion, it is important to be aware of the various expressions, behaviours and activities relating to sexuality. This would help individuals to assess or seek information and services in order to protect themselves against the impact or consequences of these behaviours and activities. All of us have the right to express our sexuality freely and in a manner that does not harm others or cause violence. Expressing sexuality falls in the private domain and all forms of expression should be respected.

### 1.3 SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND IDENTITY

The key elements of sexuality have been discussed earlier. Mass media (both electronic media and print media) helps to shape our sexuality. It also throws up a few questions and increases our curiosity regarding some expressions/behaviour of people that may seem different at times. For example,

- Men dressing up as women in T.V. serials/cinema and showing feminine characteristics.
- Reports of protests or parade by gay, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender, in Newspaper/T.V.
- Transgender performing at events like marriage, child birth etc. and giving their blessings.
- Reports of people of same sex getting married and living as a couple, in newspapers/T.V.

This section will address these issues in detail.

#### 1.3.1 Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation defines a person’s sexual attraction to the other person. This sexual orientation or preference could be of three types:

a) **Heterosexuality** is a state of being when a person is sexually attracted to a person of the opposite sex. This is the most common and acceptable form of sexual orientation in our society.

b) **Homosexuality** is a state of being when a person is sexually attracted to another person of the same sex. You may be familiar with terms like gay (male homosexual) and lesbians (female homosexual) in this context. Homosexuals do not openly come out in public as they are not acceptable in society.
c) **Bisexuality** is a state of being when a person is sexually attracted to people of both sexes. Many bisexuals are in dual relationship as they are under pressure from family to get married and have children. At the same time, they have sexual attraction and relationship with partners of same sex.

Though sexual orientation may begin to emerge by adolescence or puberty, it gets strengthened/confirmed much later. Therefore, sexual play with same sex peers, crushes on same sex adult or sexual fantasies about same sex people are normal for adolescent and are not necessarily related to sexual orientation.

### 1.3.2 Sexual Identity

Sexual identity refers to how an individual feels on the inside as a sexual being. For example, a boy may feel that he is actually a girl trapped in a boy’s body. Some people express/manifest their sexual identity differently. Some of these include:

- **Transvestite**: Person, who dresses, uses cosmetics and acts like a person of the opposite sex.

- **Transsexual**: Person, who has taken measures to change his/her physical characteristics to completely resemble the sex to which s/he feels s/he belongs. For example, taking hormones and having a sex change operation etc.

- **Transgender**: Person who has characteristics of both transvestite and transsexual. For example, dressing like the opposite sex and taking hormones, but not having a sex change operation.

In short, how a person identifies himself/herself in terms of gender (social construct) and sexual orientation defines the sexual identity of that person.

To conclude, all forms of sexual preferences and identities should be respected. Heterosexuality may be a preferred choice of majority of individuals. But the sexual preferences/orientation of minorities (gays, bi sexual, lesbians, transgender etc.) should be accepted and allowed to be freely expressed and practiced. These sexual minorities should have equal rights as any other heterosexuals in terms of sexual preference and expression. They are not criminals or mentally ill. They should not be stigmatized or criminalized. The recent high court ruling related to legalizing consensual homosexual activity between 2 adults is a welcome step in this direction.

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<tr>
<th>Check Your Progress 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define the following terms:</td>
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<td>a. Seduction</td>
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<td>b. Transgender</td>
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Adolescent years are full of excitement, curiosity, confusion, dreams, aspirations, frustrations and disappointments. There are many things to deal with – studies, career, friend, parties and relationships and so on. Sexuality is a part of everyone’s life and it starts emerging around adolescence. Whether or not adolescents are sexually active, they need information so that they can be healthy and safe. Apart from getting the information, sexuality is shaped by peers, family and the larger society. Teachers and parents can contribute in developing a healthy sexual attitude amongst adolescents.

Parents and teachers often fear that information on sexuality would encourage adolescent to indulge in sexual behaviour or other forms of sexual experimentation. In fact, studies have shown that when young people/adolescents have information about sexuality, they make responsible decisions like delaying sexual debut, engaging in healthy behaviour etc. (WHO-1996).

Parents and teachers need to have realistic expectation from adolescents.

- The strengths of the adolescents should be highlighted and built upon. They should be encouraged to improve their own standards/levels (academics, sport, extra curricular, health and nutrition etc.) and should not be compared with others. Comparison with others leads to frustration and depression where as improving one’s own standards/level increases self confidence and self esteem.

- Parents and teachers firstly need to overcome certain barriers before they can start communicating with adolescents. Barriers including their own prejudices/biases, lack of decent and appropriate language and terminology to address issues related to sexuality, hesitation and fears regarding consequences of sexuality education etc. Accurate and complete information...
given to the adolescents in a simple and decent language will promote healthy sexuality amongst them.

- Parents and teachers could help the adolescents in challenging certain values and beliefs and also experimenting with things like discovering and encouraging a skill/talent or aptitude, experimenting with different kind of dressing style/look, challenging certain gender stereotypes and so on. However, trying out new behaviour like drinking, smoking, experimenting with drugs etc. should not be encouraged, they may serve as a gate way to other forms of addictions, sexual abuse etc. Adolescents should be made aware of these undesirable behaviour and their consequences so as to help them to take proper decisions in their lives.

- If for some reason, teachers and parents are unable to communicate with adolescents on some issues related to sexuality, they could get them some people like social workers/counsellors who can talk with them.

- Encourage them to ask questions, seek clarifications, and express their opinions and so on. In order for this to happen, teachers and parents should have effective communicating skills. They should provide an environment of trust, respect, openness and confidentiality to facilitate proper interaction with adolescents.

- If adolescents are confused about their sexuality, encourage them to speak up and share. Ignoring or suppressing matters does not help. Similarly, if adolescents/children report about sexual abuse or unwelcome touch, parents and teachers should trust them and listen to them. They could assure the adolescents/children that it is not their fault. Counselling services could be arranged for these children/adolescents if required. Abusers should not be protected and cases of abuse should be reported to the concerned authority.

To conclude, everyone has a right to a life of dignity, to liberty and to health. As far as sexuality is concerned, adolescents have the rights to:

- Accurate inputs about sexuality
- Express or not express their sexuality, safely
- Make decisions about sexuality in their own lives
- Not to be forced in any way into being physical or sexual
- Say ‘No’ to an unwanted touch of any kind

*Source:* "The Blue Book of TARSHI"

**Check Your Progress 2**

Answer the following briefly:

a) Name and define two behaviours/expressions that adolescents/youth commonly use to express their sexuality.

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b) Explain with two examples how gender roles/characteristics influence sexuality in adolescents.

c) Name the key elements of sexuality. Categorize them into positive and negative aspects.

d) How is sex different from sexuality?

1.5 LET US SUM UP

Adolescence is a period of rapid changes in individuals. The most significant change is in the area of sexual development and being comfortable with one’s sexuality. The term sexuality, as you have learnt is complex and encompasses many aspects, both positive and negative. The positive aspects/elements include sensuality, intimacy, sexual identity and reproductive and sexual health. These elements/aspects contribute towards building positive self image, confidence, empowerment and pleasure in individuals. The negative aspects/elements include violent and cruel behaviours like rape and sexual harassment. The negative elements contribute towards inflicting fear, pain, guilt and low self esteem in individuals.

Healthy physical and emotional make up or attributes contribute towards confidence, approval and healthy sexual experience as well. Lack of acceptance for sex education, mass media, gender related norms and social values are some of the socio cultural factors that influence an individual’s sexuality.

The much in demand topic pertaining to sexual orientation and identity has been discussed in detail. Heterosexuality is a common and preferred choice of sexual
preference for a majority of individuals. However, the rights of minorities like Bisexuals, Homosexuals and transgender should be protected and respected.

A variety of sexual expressions have been discussed. Some of them are more acceptable than others. One needs to be non-judgmental as far as these expressions of sexuality are concerned as they fall in the private domain. The role of teachers and parents has been consciously incorporated as they influence value building among adolescents. Breaking the culture of silence around sexuality, giving the adolescents complete and correct information in a simple language, linking them with relevant health services will go a long way in reducing anxieties in them and will enable them to take proper decisions on sexual issues, thereby preventing infections and unwanted pregnancy and promoting good health and safety.

1.6 KEY WORDS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence (sexual)</td>
<td>refraining from sexual activity such as intercourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>the period of life beginning with puberty and ending, with completed growth and physical maturity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anal intercourse</td>
<td>sexual intercourse in which the penis is inserted into the partner’s anus</td>
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<td>Arousal (sexual)</td>
<td>heightened state of sexual excitement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>having a sexual interest in, or sexual relations with, both sexes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bi-sexuality</td>
<td>the state of an individual who engages in both heterosexual and homosexual relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circumcision</td>
<td>a surgical procedure in which the foreskin of the penis is removed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clitoris</td>
<td>the female organ devoted entirely to increasing sexual tension, located just above the urinary and vaginal openings</td>
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<td>Coitus</td>
<td>sexual intercourse between a male and female, in which the penis is inserted into the vagina</td>
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<td>Conception</td>
<td>the penetration of an ovum by a sperm, resulting in the development of embryo</td>
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<td>Douche</td>
<td>cleansing of vagina with a liquid, usually water, vinegar or a commercially prepared product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effeminate</td>
<td>not manly in appearance or manner, having feminine qualities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ejaculate</td>
<td>semen</td>
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<td>Emission</td>
<td>discharge of semen from the penis, especially involuntary as during sleep</td>
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</table>
Erection: the stiffening and enlargement of the penis, usually as a result of stimulation and sexual excitement

Erotica: materials, books, pictures and films that portray sex or sexual activity with the intent of arousing the viewer

Feminine: of or characteristic of female sex or gender.

Gay: another term for male homosexual

Gender: the psychological differentiation describing masculinity and femininity; largely the result of learned attitudes and behaviours

Gender identity: the individual’s concept of self as being male or female; a person’s inner belief or sense of being a woman or a man

Gender role: the different behaviours and attitudes that society expects of men and women; behavioural and personality characteristics associated with being feminine or masculine; e.g., a female being feminine by being emotional and playing the role of a home maker, or a male being masculine by being independent and ‘playing the role’ of a provider

Heterosexual: a person who is attracted to members of the opposite sex and who has sexual intercourse with opposite-sex partners only

Heterosexuality: the condition of being heterosexual

High-risk behaviour: term used to describe certain activities which increase the risk of transmitting an STD; includes frequent change of sex partners, anal and vaginal intercourse without using a condom, oral-anal contact, semen or urine in the mouth, sharing intravenous needles or syringes, intimate blood contact and sharing of sex toys contaminated by body fluids; often referred to as ‘unsafe’ activities

Homosexual: a person who is sexually attracted towards members of the same sex and who has sexual intercourse with same-sex partners only

Homosexuality: the condition of being homosexual

Incest: sexual intercourse between close relatives, such as father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister

Lesbian: a female homosexual

Lesbianism: the condition of female homosexuality

Masculine: of or characteristics of male sex or gender
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Adolescent Sexuality</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masturbation</strong> : self-stimulation of the genitals through manipulation, self gratification</td>
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<td><strong>Menstruation</strong> : the monthly vaginal discharge of blood and the lining of the uterus</td>
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<td><strong>Nocturnal emission</strong> : an involuntary male orgasm and ejaculation of semen during sleep</td>
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<td><strong>Oral sex</strong> : sexual activity which involves mouth contact with another person’s genitals or anus; contact may include kissing, sucking or licking of the sexual organs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ovulation</strong> : release of an egg from the ovaries for fertilization</td>
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<td><strong>Penis</strong> : the male genital organ</td>
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<td><strong>Period</strong> : common term used for days of menstrual flow</td>
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<td><strong>Pornography</strong> : the explicit description or exhibition of sexual activity in literature, photographs, films, etc. intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings</td>
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<td><strong>Promiscuous</strong> : engaging in sexual intercourse with many persons; engaging in casual sexual relations</td>
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<td><strong>Rape</strong> : forced sexual contact with a person</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safe-sex</strong> : term used currently to describe sexual activities most likely to reduce the risk of transmission of STD; includes always using a condom during sexual intercourse, mutual masturbation, dry kissing, massage, fantasy, touching, opposed to unsafe sex practices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seduction, to seduce</strong> : luring a person into sexual intercourse without use of force</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Semen</strong> : a cream-colored viscid fluid composed of secretions from the male reproductive organs, ejaculated from the penis of the orgasm; contains sperm cells and seminal fluid; about a teaspoonful is usually expelled as a result of ejaculation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong> : technically refers to the biological condition of being male or female; loosely used to refer sexual activity; genital organs etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Sex-drive</strong> : Desire for sexual expression</td>
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| **Sex-role stereotype** : an overgeneralization concerning expectations about ‘sex-appropriate’ activities, abilities, attributes and preferences; dictates what people should be like based on sex and thus limits and
channels them into prescribed roles which consequently affect their sex identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td>a general term for various forms of sexual expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual attraction</td>
<td>the act or power of being attracted to a person on the basis of dress, body language, behaviour, gender etc.</td>
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<td>Sexual intercourse</td>
<td>physical union associated with sexual stimulation; usually, but not exclusively, involves penetration of or by the sexual organs; in vaginal intercourse, the male penis enters the female vagina; in oral intercourse, the lips, the mouth and tongue are used; in anal intercourse, the anus is penetrated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>an aspect of the total personality that embodies all of one’s male and female feelings and behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sperm</td>
<td>male reproductive cells found in the semen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transsexual</td>
<td>a person genetically of one sex with a psychological urge to belong to the opposite sex. This may cause the person to undergo extended counseling and surgery to modify the sex organs in order to mimic opposite sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transvestism</td>
<td>to adopt the dress and often the behaviour of the opposite sex; dressing for pleasure as a person of the opposite sex; also called cross dressing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsafe sex</td>
<td>sexual practices allow the introduction of infected body fluids, especially semen, blood and vaginal secretions, into the body</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>a woman or girl who has never had sexual intercourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wet dream</td>
<td>an involuntary male orgasm and ejaculation of semen during sleep</td>
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### 1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

a) Seduction is luring a person into sexual intercourse by manipulation.

b) Transgender is a person who has characteristics of both transvestite and transsexual.

c) The state of an individual who engages in both heterosexual and homosexual relations.

d) Masturbation is self-stimulation of the genitals through manipulation for self gratification.
Adolescent Sexuality

Check Your Progress 2

a) Adolescents and youth commonly use kissing and masturbation as sexual expression.

Masturbation is self stimulation of the genitals through manipulation for self gratification. Kissing is a pleasurable touching of one’s lips against another’s or other parts of the body.

b) Please refer to section 1.3.3 relating to socio cultural factors that shape sexuality of an individual. Gender identity and norms are covered under this subsection.

c) Sexuality encompasses both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects include sexuality, intimacy, sexual identity and reproductive and sexual health. The negative aspect of sexuality is called sexualization. Refer to the section 1.2 relating to categories under which sexuality has been discussed. The key elements have been further discussed in detail under these categories.

d) The term ‘sex’ can be used to refer to the biological condition of being male or female. It can also be used to refer to behaviours or physical acts that may produce sexual pleasure.

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical and religious and spiritual factors.

Sex is an integral part of sexuality and sexuality encompasses many more aspects besides sex.

1.8 REFERENCES


Peer Facilitator Resource Guide (Jaago, Jaano, Jagao on HIV/AIDS Awareness), Levi Strauss Foundation, Breakthrough and The Naz Foundation India Trust

Training Manual for facilitators on Sexuality and Gender & Young People, MAMTA-Health Institute for Mother and Child, 2002.