



CREATING SAFE SPACES

Sexual Relationships

from stigma, shame and blame to healing and accountability

Establish class values



- We will be talking about sexuality, gender, pleasure, abuse and safety in these sessions. What will make this class a safe space for everyone to share, express their views and discuss freely?
- How do we want others to behave?
- How will we behave?

Group Activity



Looking at sexual relationships

Participants make groups of 4-6 persons

- A. Each group is given one of the following topics. They write what they understand by the term and list the beliefs they have / they have heard other people express about it.
1. Monogamy
 2. Polygamy
 3. Polyamory
 4. Casual sex
 5. Mixed orientation relationships
 6. Sex-less relationships
 7. Live-in relationships

40 minutes: Each group presents the definition they have written, and the beliefs they have noted and whether they agree with it or not.

Session is held after this is completed

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Sexual Relationships



- Humans are social beings who regularly make connections with each other, including sexual relationships which are usually when one is attracted to another person
- From an evolutionary perspective, sexual attraction is an important motivation for reproductive (sexual) activities to be pursued
- Other reasons that sexual relationships are pursued are:
 - to conform to expectations of society and maintain societal structures (marriage/ family)
 - to experience sexual pleasure
 - to express one's sexuality
 - to enhance the bonding in an existing relationship

What sexually attracts us about people?

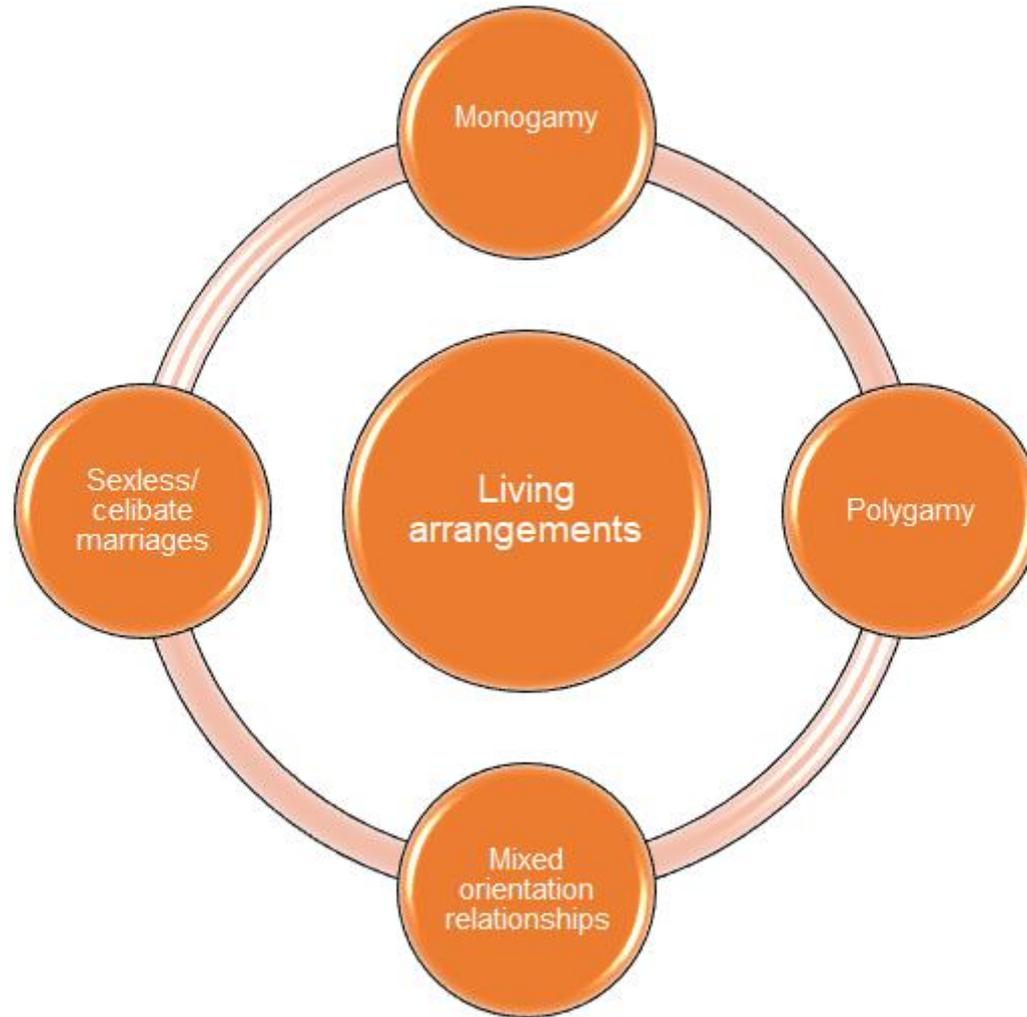


- Good health, fertility/ virility and resilient genes - indicated by secondary sexual characteristics like breadth of chest, width of hips, body hair; physical symmetry
- Physical characteristics we are drawn to are: the voice which indicates a sense of vigor, health, confidence; Smell; Feel of skin; Taste
- External factors like: physical familiarity, similarity in attitudes, social standing, academic and intellectual competence, professional success and achievements

Role of hormones, pheromones and neurotransmitters



- Infatuation - early stage of attraction where cortisol levels increase, levels of dopamine and noradrenaline increase, and serotonin decreases - analytical, evaluative mode that provides some sense of control gets set aside or deactivated
- Reward centre activated to make an individual want more of the experience
- State of infatuation can last 1.5 - 2 years before being replaced by more stable affectionate love
- The stress response system plays an important role in the formation of romantic attachments.
- **Activation or inhibition** of the stress response system regulates experiences of attraction, mate preference, and emotional connectedness.



Some types of living arrangements



- Monogamy - dyadic committed sexual relationship with just one other person during one's lifetime or at a time/ serially.
- Polygamy - one individual in committed relationships with multiple sexual partners. Common forms
 - Polyandry - one women in relationship with multiple male partners
 - Polygyny - one man in relationship with multiple women partners
- Mixed orientation relationships - couples in which one partner experiences same-sex attraction and the other does not
- Sexless relationships - relationship where one or all parties is/are not interested in sex but share an affectionate, maybe romantic bond

Non-monogamous relationships



- Sexual relationships between multiple sexual partners, with everyone's consent. This can be within the bounds of committed relationships.
- Common forms
 - Polyamory – committed relationships between multiple partners.
 - Open relationships – committed partnerships where external sexual relationships can be casual.

What does the law say?



- Article 21 gives all adults the “right to union” i.e., the right to have any kind of relationship/companionship.
- Live-in relationship is covered as a “domestic relationship” under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2005, allow an adult woman to report incidence of intimate violence.
- Adoption - Only allowed for married couples.

Way forward



- Relationships are unique and each one of us is free to create what we wish in a relationship, for oneself and the other.
- As individuals we can be mindful of our own rights and the rights of others and choose to be in relationships/ arrangements that best meet our needs of sexual pleasure, companionship, emotional connect and any other.

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Thank You!

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