

SEXUALLY EXPLICIT FORMS OF ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

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Abstract

This paper sought to categorize the sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality by examining relevant literature with a view to providing operational background for the guidance of the secondary school student. This paper examined how the adolescent comes to terms with their sexuality; development of sexual identity; adolescent solitary sexual behaviour; and spectrum of same-sex and heterosexual shared sexual behaviours. The outcome is the manifest of sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality. The implication being the two-pronged responsibility of the school counsellor to both the students and their teachers has been emphasized. Among the recommendations made are that the adolescent should be assisted to master emerging sexual feelings and form healthy sexual identity, and that the school should provide adequate co-curricular activities for meaningful and viable heterosexual interpersonal relationships to thrive.

Key words: sexually explicit; sexuality; sexual identity; manifest of sexual behaviours; heterosexual; interpersonal relationship

Introduction

Adolescents exhibit their sexuality in both sexually explicit and non-sexually explicit forms. The non-sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality are commonly expressed overtly and in the open. The sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality are not usually expressed in the open but must be done out of public glare solo or partnered.

The primary sign of sexual maturity in the adolescent male is the production of sperm at an average age of 13 (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2004) evident normally in nocturnal emission or wet dream. The primary sign of sexual maturity in the adolescent female is menstruation at an age range of 10-16 (Papalia et al, 2004) evident in menarche. The pubertal timing and changes in adolescents have profound psychological effects. Adults need to be sensitive to the potential impact of pubertal changes in order to help young

people experience them as positively as possible and form viable sexual identity. The adolescent has to undergo certain developmental stages to come to terms with a stable and viable sexual identity.

This paper, therefore, examines how the adolescent comes to terms with their sexuality; adolescent development of sexual identity; adolescent solitary sexual behaviour; adolescent same sex shared sexual behaviours; adolescent heterosexual shared sexual behaviours; From available literature an attempt would be made in this paper to categorize and highlight the common sexually explicit behaviours that indicate adolescent's emergent sexuality.

Psychosocial aspects of the quest for identity & how adolescents come to terms with their sexuality

The search for identity: Erikson (1968) defined identity as a coherent conception of the self, made up of goals, values, and beliefs to which the person is

solidly committed. Identity forms as young people resolve three major issues: 1) the development of a satisfying sexual identity. 2) the choice of an occupation. 3) the adoption of values to believe in and live by. The chief task of adolescence is to form a viable identity [sexual inclusive] so as to become a unique adult with a coherent sense of self and a valued role in the society.

The search for sexual identity comes into focus during the teenage years (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2004). To form a sexual identity, adolescents must ascertain and organize their sexual abilities, needs, interests and desires so as to express them in a socially acceptable context especially in intimate adult heterosexual relationships. The emergent urgent awareness of sexuality is an important aspect of sexual identity formation. Seeing oneself as a sexual being, recognizing one's sexual orientation, coming to terms with sexual stirrings, and forming romantic or sexual attachments all are parts of achieving sexual identity.

Adolescence provides the psychosocial moratorium—the 'time-out' period during which many young people search for commitments to which they can be faithful (Papalia et al, 2004). It is in adolescence that a person's sexual orientation generally becomes a pressing issue: whether that person will consistently be sexually, romantically, and affectionately attracted to persons of the other sex (heterosexual) or of the same sex (homosexual) or of both sexes (bisexual) (Papalia Olds & Feldman, 2004; Santrock, 2006).

Adolescent development of sexual identity

Sexual development and interest in sex are normal aspects of adolescent development while mastering emerging sexual feelings and forming a sense of sexual identity is a lengthy process (Santrock, 2006). The process of developing a sexual identity involves learning to manage sexual feelings (such as sexual arousal and attraction), developing new forms of intimacy, and learning the skills to regulate sexual behaviours to avoid undesirable consequences (Crocket, Raffaelli & Moilanen, 2003). The sexual identity must emerge in the context of physical, social, and cultural factors; and expressible (expressed) in terms of activities, interests and styles of behaviour (Buzwell & Rosenthal, 1966).

Adolescence is a time of sexual exploration and experimentation, of sexual fantasies and realities; of incorporating sexuality into one's identity (Santrock, 2006). Adolescents think about whether they are sexually attractive, how to do sex, and what the future holds for their sexual lives. Evidently, adolescents engage in both solitary and partnered/shared forms of sexual behaviours.

Adolescent Solitary Sexual Behaviour Adolescent Self-masturbation

The most prevalent form of solitary sexual behaviour in adolescence is masturbation being more common among males than females (Kelly, 2004). Most adolescents begin to learn about their bodies' sexual responses through masturbation. After their initial (sexual experiences) many adolescents begin to clarify the place sex will have in their adult relationships (Delamater &

Friedrick, 2002).

Boys masturbate by some type of stimulation of the penis (penile stimulation) until orgasm takes place. The masturbating male may use some sort of lubricating jelly or liquid on his hand to create intense sexual sensations. Many males also enjoy rubbing their penises on blankets, beds, and other suitable objects.

Girls masturbate by inserting a finger or some suitable long object into the vagina, or manipulate the entire mons-area (Kelly, 2004 p.347). Other means of stimulating female genitals include rubbing the mons or other parts of the vulva against a pillow, bed, door knob or some other object.

Adolescent Shared sexual behaviours: Adolescent Same-Gender Sexual Behaviour

Early adolescence is a period when boys and girls tend to associate more with members of their own gender (Kelly, 2004). As youngsters experience pronounced physical changes in their sex organs and begin to become more aware of their sexual feelings, they may experiment with sex in encounter with same-gender peers (Kelly, 2004). By so doing they tend to validate their sexual possessions in readiness for heterosexual contacts. This is in tacit response to societal demand for adult intimate heterosexual relationships (Kelly, 2004). Failure to transit from the initial same-gender sexual behaviours to the heterosexual leaves the individual in same-gender sexual relationship in adulthood.

Mutual masturbation

Mutual masturbation is a genital-specific form of shared or partnered sexual behaviour that can occur between same-sex partners or heterosexuals. Most sexually active partners use some form of mutual manipulation of the genitals which is one of the most common forms of sexual sharing (Kelly, 2004) and provides a great deal of sexual gratification. Homosexual females [Lesbians] manipulate their vaginas in turns while males [Gays] manipulate their penises in turns. Heterosexuals also take turns to manipulate their genitals. These non-coital techniques are often used by sexual partners to stimulate each other to orgasm without intercourse (Kelly, 2004; VanPelt, 2002; Woody, Russel, D'Sauza, & Woody, 2000). This is done in an attempt to retain genital intimacy for marriage or to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (VanPelt, 2002). 'Technical virgins' participate in sexual acts to orgasm but not allowing intercourse to occur (Kelly, 2004). Mutual masturbation, however, has several hazards as well (VanPelt, 2002).

Adolescent heterosexual sexual behaviours [non-coital sex]

Sexual experimentation between males and females is an important step in the sexual identity development of many adolescents (Kelly, 2004). Eventually, most adolescents find someone with whom they try some form of sexual experimentation, and they soon become comfortable with their sexuality.

Heterosexual sexual contact usually proceeds through stages of intimacy or levels of sharing (Kelly, 2004). The first level of intimacy is kissing and tongue [French] kissing.

Bodily contact below the neck usually begins with hand-holding and touching one another's genitals through the clothing. The individuals may bring their genitals close together while clothed. It is common for males to ejaculate with their cloths on. Touching one another's genital directly. This is the heterosexual aspect of mutual genital manipulation of mutual masturbation. Direct genital touch may lead to orgasm on both sides. Generally, these later stages of sexual exploration can lead to intercourse (Kelly, 2004). The most typical form of heterosexual sexual sharing is body fondling.

Body fondling:

Body fondling is the exploration of each other's body by two unmarried persons who do not intend for intercourse to occur (VanPelt, 2002, p.166). Body fondling is a powerful force and dangerously progressive as each level of excitement demands the next level. It is a step beyond hugging and kissing and yet short of sexual intercourse. This leaves a wide range of body exploratory activities open to guess, question and negotiation. The three stages of body fondling listed by VanPelt (2002) are:

Stage 1. Preparatory stage [hands above the shoulder] includes light hugging and kissing without caressing or fondling of bodies.

Stage 2. [Hands above the waist] includes deep kissing, caressing each other's bodies inside or outside of clothing above the waist.

Stage 3. A more intense and intimate stage [Hands below the waist, inside of clothing/without clothing] includes caressing each other's body below the waist frequently to orgasm but without penetration.

Body fondling is sexually pleasurable and brings on sexual excitement. Within the bonds of matrimony, body fondling is called foreplay, which leads directly to intercourse (VanPelt, 2002) naturally.

Heterosexual Coital/Genital sex

Internationally, there are wide variations in timing of initiation of genital sex (Santrock, 2006). Girls and boys in most parts of the world begin sexual activity during adolescence, with a significant proportion reporting their first sexual experience before age 15. In 24 of 43 countries with national surveys, over 10 per cent of girls aged 15 to 19 reported having sex before age 15 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States, 2003). According to CDC's Youth Risk Behavioural Survey (YRBS), many young people begin having sexual intercourse at early ages: 47% of high school students have had sexual intercourse, and 7.4% of them reported first sexual intercourse before age 13 (Gupta & Mahy, 2003). The high incidence of teenage pregnancies is indicative of the fact that secondary school students do engage in genital to genital sexual intercourse. In the same vein, it may not be difficult to imagine that a greater majority of them may engage in other forms of non-coital sexual behaviours.

Manifest of sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality

From available literature an attempt has been made in this paper to categorize and highlight the common sexually explicit behaviours of the adolescent that indicate their emergent sexuality as follows: solitary sex

[masturbation]; partnered/shared sex [non-coital sexual behaviours between same gender; and heterosexual partners]; heterosexual genital to genital sexual behaviours; promiscuity; prostitution/commercial sex.

A Solitary Sex: Masturbation

The commonest form solitary sex is self-masturbation as carried out by an individual male or female on the self when alone behind closed doors.

B Shared/partnered Sex- occurring between two persons behind closed doors
1) **Non-coital shared sexual behaviours**-between same gender and heterosexual partners:

genital-specific mutual masturbation with or without clothes on
kissing and hugging between partners
caressing with clothes on
breast and body fondling with or without clothes on
body and genital fondling with or without clothes on

2) **Heterosexual Genital to genital [coital] sexual behaviours** [either half-clothed or without clothes]:

pre-intercourse body fondling
sexual intercourse between two [intimate friends; casual friends; unknown partners]

Sexual intercourse with casual friends borders on promiscuity while sexual intercourse with unknown partners borders on commercial sex [prostitution].

C Venues for possible sexual contacts:

Sexual contact within the school premises can take place in uncompleted buildings, school farm, toilet/rest-room, play-ground, dormitory/hostel. Even though these specific locations have been mentioned, every location and situation

in the school provides an opportunity for sexual fantasies and possible sexual contacts. Sexual contact outside the school premises can take place in day-student's apartment, parent's residence, any other possible place.

Implications for the school counsellor

The school counsellor has a two-pronged responsibility to both the students and their teachers. The adolescent student may not quite understand the pubertal changes taking place in him or her and so becomes disposed to seeking answers from just anybody including peers and even magazines. The school counsellor and teachers should be able to help the students enhance their sexual awareness as well as monitor their sexual inclinations by providing them relevant information and modeled behaviours.

The spectrum of sexually explicit behaviours of the adolescents covering solitary and partnered types has been listed here to help counsellors to fully appreciate the kinds of sexual activities their students can engage in. The subject teacher should be enabled by the counsellor to quite appreciate the spectrum of sexually explicit behaviours of the students in order to help them to develop healthy sexually identity. The school counsellor should enlist the cooperation of other teachers as she or he cannot do it alone.

In the school system teachers have other forms of responsibilities such as form teacher, hostel master/mistress among others where they make direct contacts with the students. Such platforms provide extra opportunity for them to monitor, guide and model student behaviours.

Certain behaviours and conducts

of the students may be given sexual interpretations with a view to helping them to develop healthy sexual identity. Absence from school, lateness to school, loitering both during school hours and after school are some of the students' conducts of focus.

Both the school counsellor and the teachers should increase their surveillance on the possible locations of sexual contacts of the students in the school. However, adequate provisions should be made via co-curricular activities for meaningful and viable heterosexual interpersonal relationships to thrive in the school.

Conclusion

In their developmental efforts to have a viable sexual identity, the individual adolescent tends to explore various forms of sexual experimentation with the self, same-gender friends and with heterosexuals to arrive at the true sexual self with definite sexual preferences and choices. Erikson reckons that mature identity enables the individual arrive/navigate successfully without being lost in the crowd to arrive at adult intimacy without being isolated or standing alone. Common sexually explicit behaviours of the adolescent that indicate their emergent sexuality have been categorized and highlighted as follows: solitary sex [masturbation]; partnered/shared sex [non-coital sexual behaviours between same gender; and heterosexual partners]; heterosexual genital to genital sexual behaviours; promiscuity; prostitution/commercial sex.

Venues for possible sexual contacts both within and outside the school premises have also been highlighted. However, adequate co-

curricular activities should be provided for meaningful and viable heterosexual interpersonal relationships to thrive in the school.

Recommendations

1. The adolescent should be assisted to master emerging sexual feelings and form healthy sexual identity by learning the skills to regulate sexual behaviours to avoid undesirable consequences.
2. Adolescents should be enabled to articulate and organize their sexual needs and abilities so as to express them in a socially acceptable context especially in intimate adult heterosexual relationships.
3. The school counsellor and subject teacher should utilize the spectrum of sexually explicit forms of adolescent sexuality to guide students to develop healthy sexual identities
4. School counsellor and teachers-on-duty should increase their surveillance on the possible locations of sexual contacts of the students in the school.
5. The school should provide adequate co-curricular activities for meaningful and viable heterosexual interpersonal relationships to thrive.

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