

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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Theoretical foundation

Biological Theories

- Genetic Factors
 - Brain Anatomical Factors
 - Hormonal Factors
- Psychosocial Theories
 - Interactionist Theory

definition

- Sexual orientation appears to emerge by the time both males and females reach adolescence.

MYTHS ABOUT GAY MEN (Berger and Kelly):

1. homosexuality caused by fear of women
2. compulsively sexual
3. molest children
4. flaunt homosexuality
5. are effeminate
6. have chosen to be gay
7. are threat to family life
8. are more sensitive and artistic
9. homosexuality is mental illness

Homophobia

- Homophobia is based on social control and often sanctioned by government.

1992 STUDY OF HETEROSEXUALS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIANS AND GAYS (Beran et al.):

- 54% against gay parents gaining custody of their children
- 43% would not vote for a known homosexual for public office
- 37% object to working with a gay or lesbian person
- 34% object to gays and lesbians as teachers
- 48% object to gays and lesbians as clergy

SOURCES OF HOMOPHOBIA (Herek):

1. traditional attitudes about gender and family roles
 2. perceptions that one's friends hold similar negative attitudes
 3. orthodox religious ideology
- generalization of an isolated negative experience with a gay or lesbian person

LIFE STAGES AND GAY/LESBIAN ISSUES:

- adolescence: stigmatization and violence; need for acceptance by family, support in school; need for openly gay/lesbian role models
- adulthood: isolation, financial problems
- late adulthood: discrimination by insurance companies and medical organizations, fear of nursing homes

SOCIAL WORK ISSUES

- The "coming out" stage
- AIDS/HIV
- gay/lesbian adolescents
- gays/lesbians among ethnic/racial minorities
- disabled gays/lesbians
- marriage and parenthood
- discriminatory public policies